

Autobus Prime's

BLURRY ROBOT THEATER


7

THE BEAST
AND THE BIRD

BLURRY ROBOT *CROSSOVER*



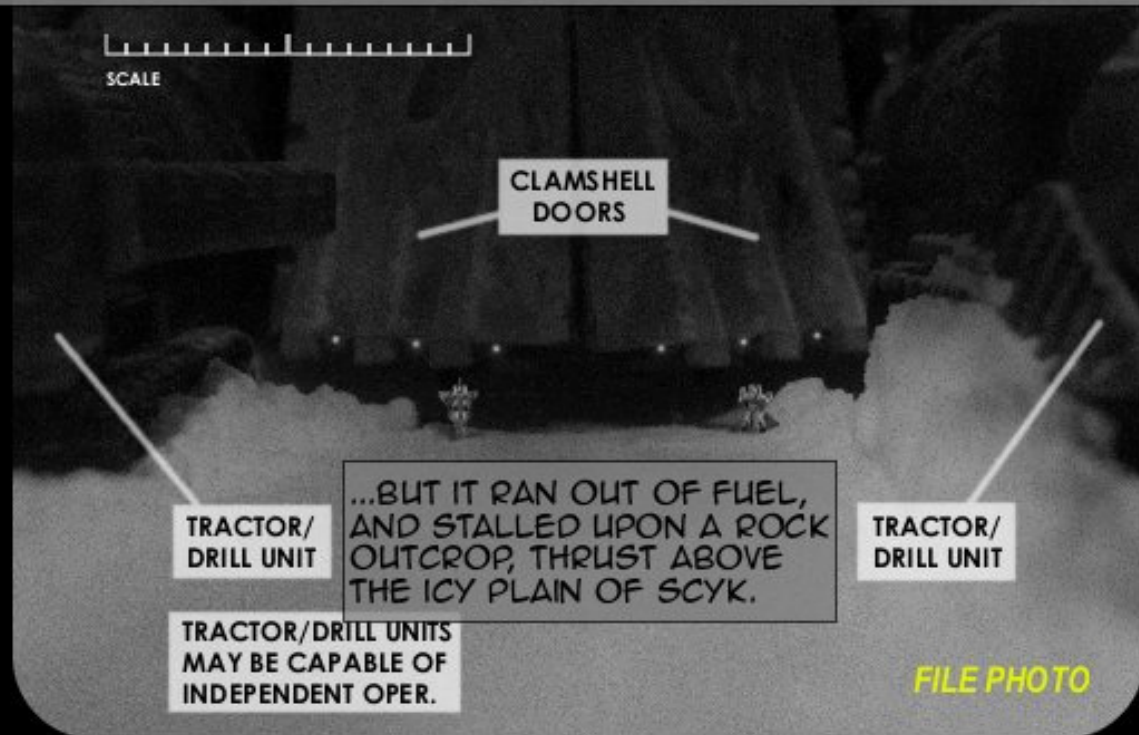
TransShinki World (and Friends)

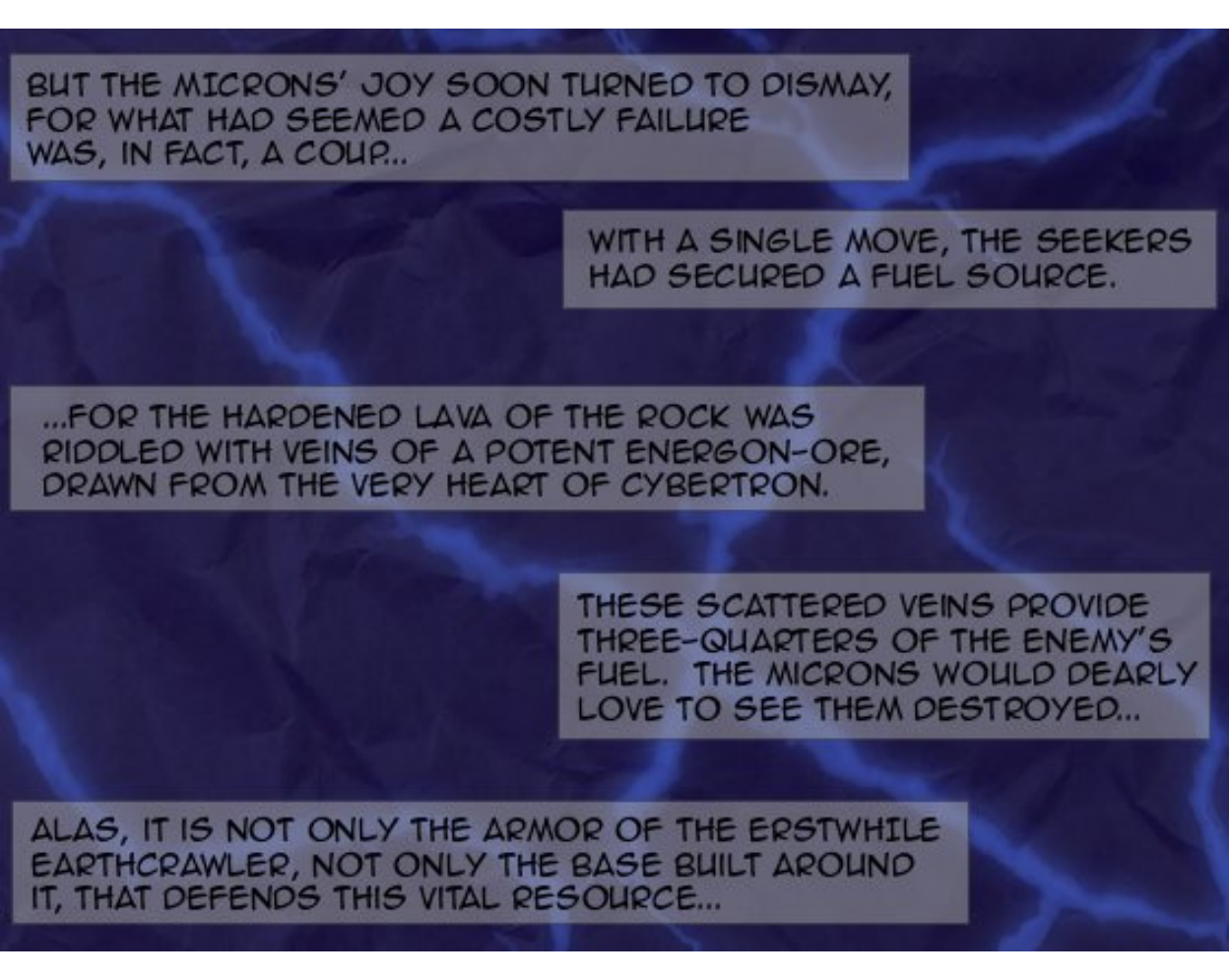


DEEP IN THE STANIX WILDERNESS,
THE GREAT BEAST SLUMBERS...

AT MICRONIA'S DOORSTEP IT CROUCHES:
THE SEEKER BASE OF FORT SCYK.

ITS CORE IS AN ANCIENT MINING MACHINE. THE SEEKERS BRIEFLY WOKE THE BEHEMOTH, ONCE. THE ICE QUAKED AS IT RUMBLLED TOWARD MICRONIA, AGAINST A FIERCE FIRESTORM OF MUNITIONS...





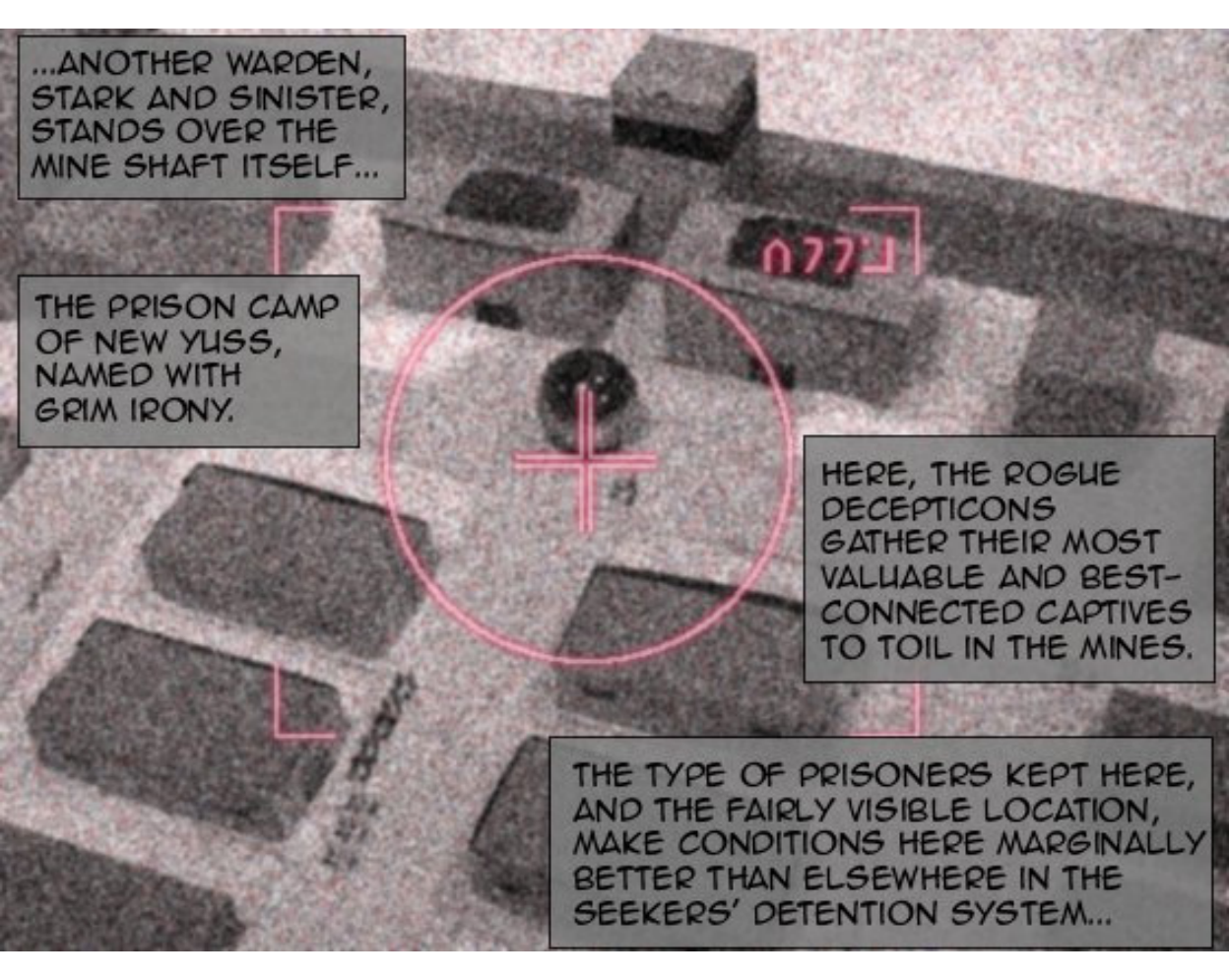
BUT THE MICRONS' JOY SOON TURNED TO DISMAY,
FOR WHAT HAD SEEMED A COSTLY FAILURE
WAS, IN FACT, A COUP..

WITH A SINGLE MOVE, THE SEEKERS
HAD SECURED A FUEL SOURCE.

...FOR THE HARDENED LAVA OF THE ROCK WAS
RIDDLED WITH VEINS OF A POTENT ENERGO-ORE,
DRAWN FROM THE VERY HEART OF CYBERTRON.

THESE SCATTERED VEINS PROVIDE
THREE-QUARTERS OF THE ENEMY'S
FUEL. THE MICRONS WOULD DEARLY
LOVE TO SEE THEM DESTROYED...

ALAS, IT IS NOT ONLY THE ARMOR OF THE ERSTWHILE
EARTHCRAWLER, NOT ONLY THE BASE BUILT AROUND
IT, THAT DEFENDS THIS VITAL RESOURCE...


An aerial photograph of a prison camp, identified as New Yuss. The camp is a complex of dark, rectangular buildings arranged in a grid-like pattern. A central building is circled in red, with a red crosshair targeting it. Other red markings, including a circle and a crosshair, are visible on the right side of the image. The surrounding terrain is light-colored and appears to be a mix of dirt and sparse vegetation.

...ANOTHER WARDEN,
STARK AND SINISTER,
STANDS OVER THE
MINE SHAFT ITSELF...

THE PRISON CAMP
OF NEW YUSS,
NAMED WITH
GRIM IRONY.

HERE, THE ROGUE
DECEPTICONS
GATHER THEIR MOST
VALUABLE AND BEST-
CONNECTED CAPTIVES
TO TOIL IN THE MINES.

THE TYPE OF PRISONERS KEPT HERE,
AND THE FAIRLY VISIBLE LOCATION,
MAKE CONDITIONS HERE MARGINALLY
BETTER THAN ELSEWHERE IN THE
SEEKERS' DETENTION SYSTEM...

A scene featuring several LEGO Technic robots. On the right, a large robot with a white and black body and a glowing green eye. In the center, a smaller robot with a purple body and a glowing blue eye. To the left, another robot with a grey and black body. The background is dark and indistinct.

THIS QUALITY, HOWEVER, IS RELATIVE.
...HORRIBLY RELATIVE.

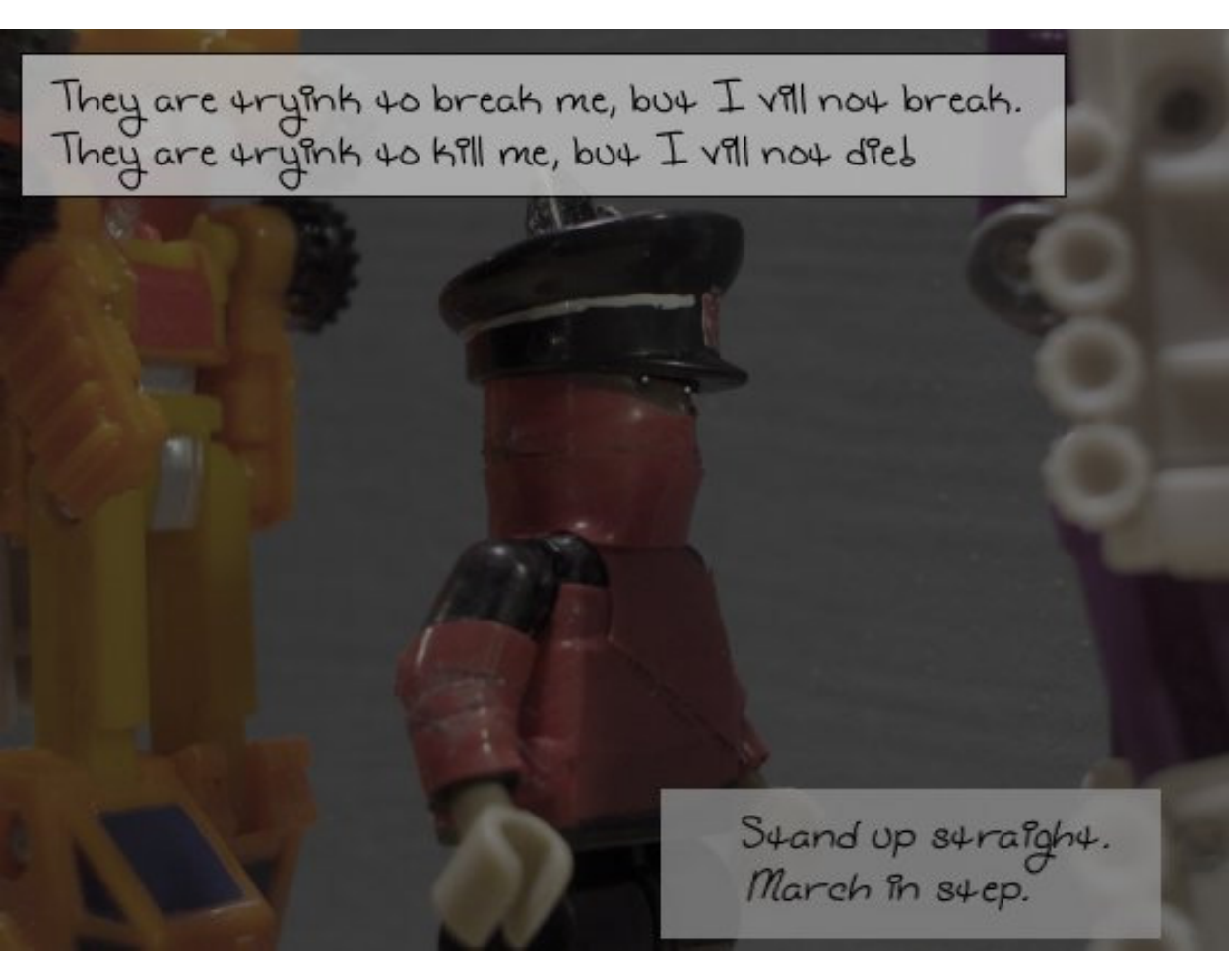
GROUP 24 IS STARTING
TO SHUT DOWN.
SEND THIS BATCH IN.
THEY'VE SUCKED UP
ENOUGH CHARGE.

AT ONCE,
MASTER.

GROUP 24 MUST BE
DEALT WITH. WE CAN
NOT TOLERATE
SUCH WEAKNESS!

I am Mummeltier, MMS type Panzer,
und I vill survive this day.

Do not cry out.
Do not show weakness.

A LEGO minifigure in a red uniform and black cap is the central focus. To its left is a yellow figure, and to its right is a purple figure. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

They are tryink 4o break me, but I vill not break.
They are tryink 4o kill me, but I vill not dieb

Stand up straight.
March in step.

I vill think of my friends; Ironhide, Tsugaru, Zelnograd.
I vill live to drink mit Ach, to play stupid games mit
Arnval. I vill live to hear zat idiot Schmet4erling sing
disgustink off-key karaoke, even ze "Powder Snow".

Watch
ze ice...


Do not
fall...



That is ze good ordinary life. That is reality.
This is a nightmare. The morning will come.



Single file.
Stay in line.
Do not draw
attention.




I am Murrelter,
MMS type Panzer.

I will live to see ze morning!

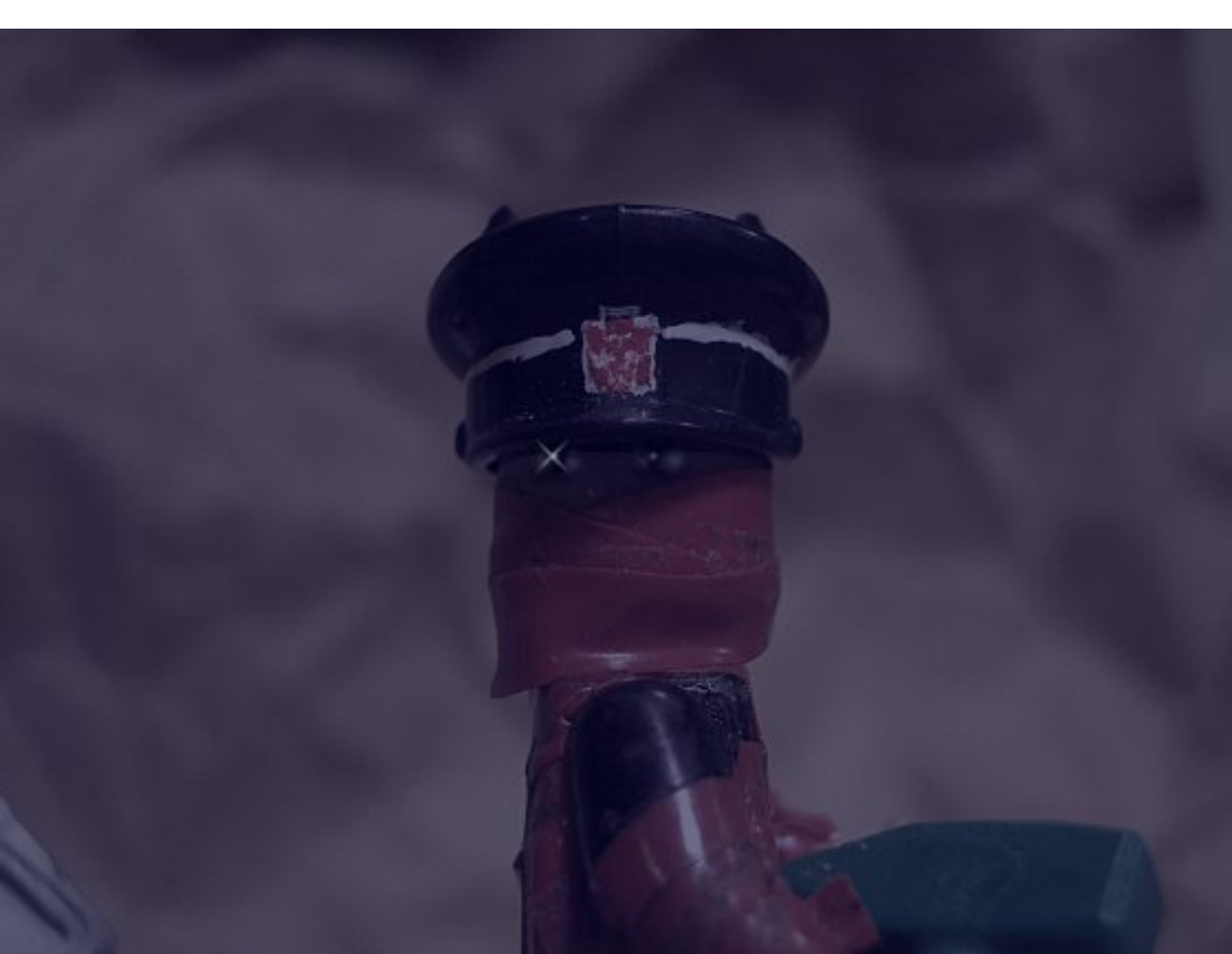


A LEGO Technic robot, primarily black and grey, is shown in a slumped, exhausted pose. It has a single glowing green eye. A speech bubble points to it from the left. The background is a dark, crumpled fabric.

TIRED?

A speech bubble pointing towards the robot, containing the text "YOU'RE TIRED?!"

YOU'RE
TIRED?!



POW!





Vell, so much for my good plans.

00:03:26:01



Ein! Zwei! Drei! Vier!

00:09:37:01



Ein....Zwei....Drei....

Pleasab I need
4o recharged

You must
let me

02:12:00:59



You monsters
Open the door

Open the door

04:22:07:33




Haff 40...
save...energy
Only...chance...

⇒CLINK!⇐





7.....fuel...




Ahhhhh
Sehr gu4b

Energon, I sink.
Vonderful stuffb

Hm. There is
some4hings
wri44ten on
ze casing...
"30038".

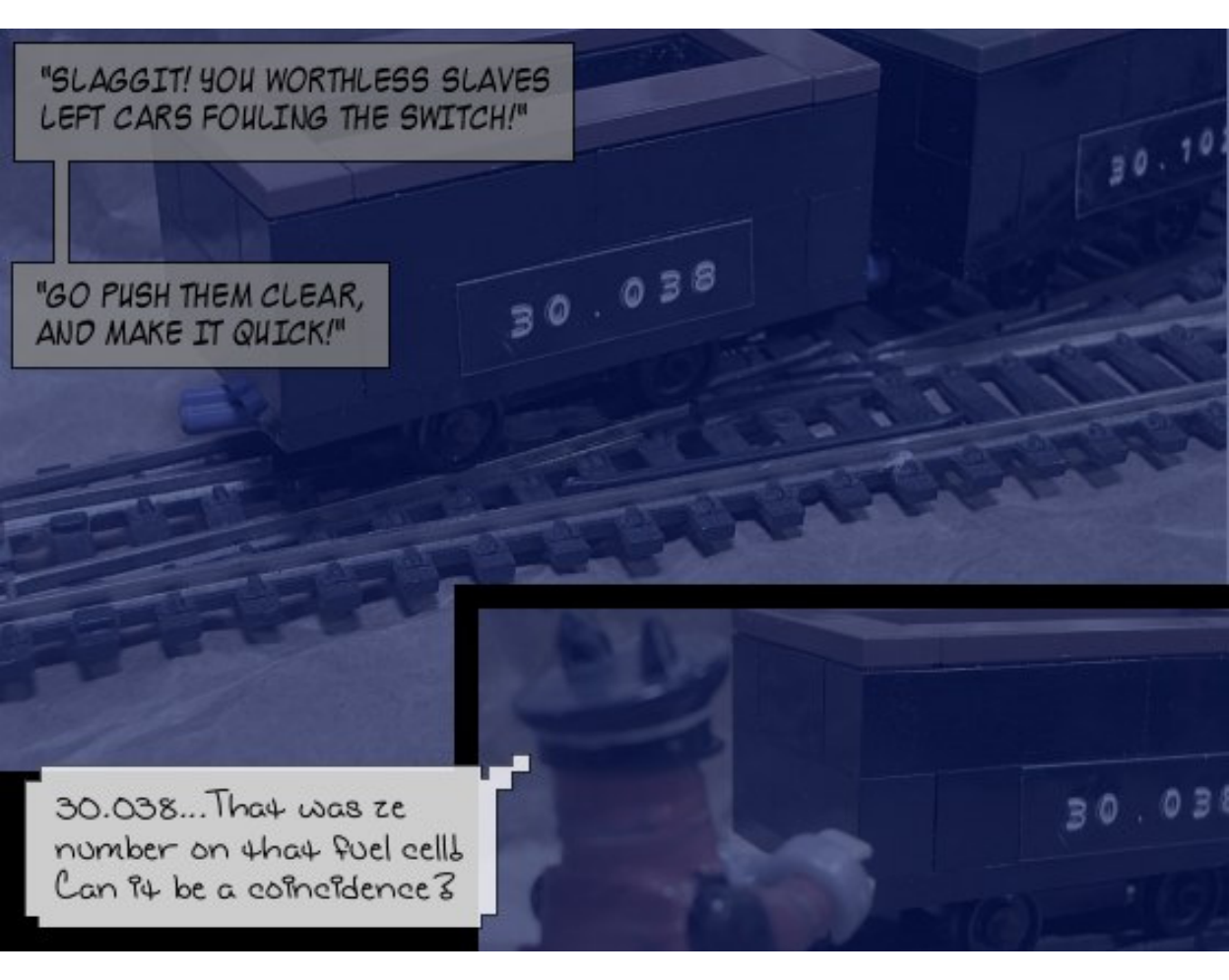
I have seen zis
before...I can not
sink where...



MORE SPEED,
SLAGGER!

YOU'VE HAD
FOUR DAYS
TO REST.

AND DON'T
SHAKE ME
UP SO MUCH!
LOOK AT ALL
THIS NICE
FUEL YOU'RE
MAKING ME
SPILL!



"SLAGGIT! YOU WORTHLESS SLAVES
LEFT CARS FOWLING THE SWITCH!"

"GO PUSH THEM CLEAR,
AND MAKE IT QUICK!"

30.038... That was ze
number on that fuel cell!
Can it be a coincidence?



FASTER!

FASTER!

**WORK
THOSE
SERVOS!**

IF YOU GET
BACK BEFORE
I FINISH THIS
FUEL, MAYBE
I'LL LET YOU
HAVE SOME.

Wh...what is happenink?




Poison! I am p-



Aaaggggggggggh!

WHAT IN
THE *PIT*?

⇒THUD⇒



I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
THE PATHETIC LITTLE
TURBOMOUSE HAS
SPARKED OUT ALREADY!

WHAT A PITY. I WAS
STARTING TO HAVE FUN,
BUT IT'S JUST JUNK NOW.
WHAT GOOD IS THAT?

EEEERT!

EEEERT!

EEEERT!

EEEERT!

WARNING! WARNING! WARNING!
ENERGON GAS DETECTED ON LEVEL 30!
ENERGON GAS DETECTED ON LEVEL 30!

S-SLAG ME
TO THE PIT!
NOT THIS AGAIN!



EEEERT!

EEEERT!

EEEERT!

EEEERT!

WARNING! WARNING! WARNING!

LEVEL 30 BLAST DOORS ACTIVATED.

LEVEL 30 BLAST DOORS ACTIVATED.

**NO! PLEASE!
WAIT FOR ME!**



EEEERT!

EEEERT!

EEEERT!

EEEERT!



EEEERT!

EEEERT!

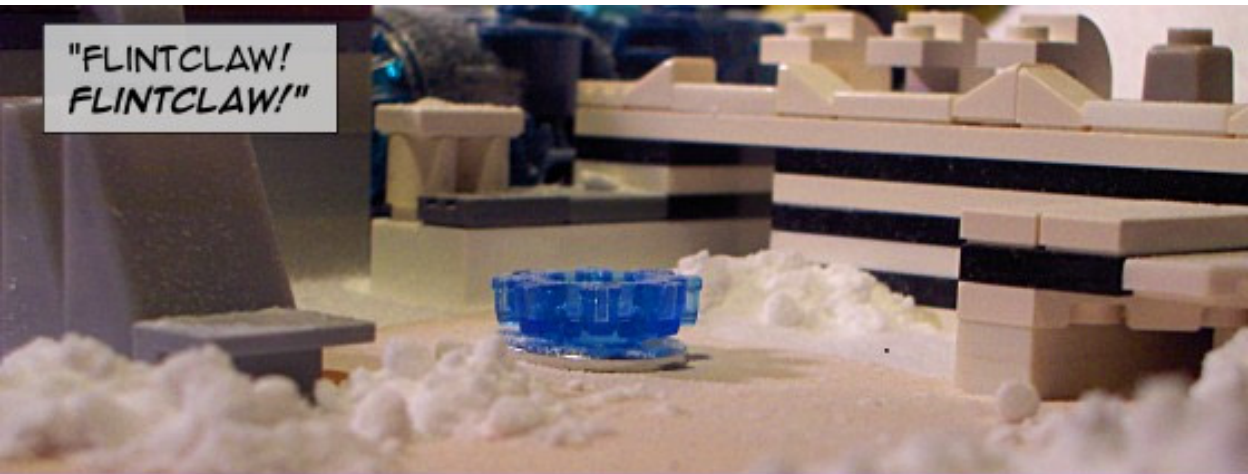
EEEERT!

EEEERT!



BOOOOM!

"FLINTCLAW!
FLINTCLAW!"



WHAT IS IT,
COMMANDER?



I CAN'T TALK LONG.
WE'RE WAY BEHIND
OUR QUOTA.

AGAIN.

DO I NEED TO REMIND
YOU WHO IS IN CHARGE
HERE?

WHAT'S THIS I HEAR
ABOUT A MINE ACCIDENT?


AN *INCIDENT*.

SMALL GAS EXPLOSION
ON LEVEL 30. BLAST DOORS
CONTAINED IT; NO PERSONNEL
WERE DAMAGED.


WE LOST SOME OLD
RAILCARS AND ONE
WORTHLESS DRONE.

MICRO-
PRETENDER.
NO BIG LOSS.





YES! A PRETENDER
THAT YOU HAD MY
DIRECT ORDERS
TO MAINTAIN IN
GOOD CONDITION!



I GET A LOT OF DIRECT ORDERS!
THE ONLY CONSISTENT ONES ARE
TO MEET *PRODUCTION QUOTAS*
AND KEEP THE DRONES IN LINE!

AND WHAT'S ONE DRONE?
THEY NEVER LAST. WE
SCRAP THEM CONSTANTLY!




THAT'S MY BUSINESS!
THERE WAS ANOTHER IN THE
SAME LOT...A BLACK TRUCK.
TAKE HIM...TAKE THAT ONE,
AND PUT IT ON LIGHT DUTY.

LIGHT DUTY!
I MEAN IT!


SURE, BOSS. IT'S NO
STEEL OFF MY NOSE.

OVERCAST NEEDS A
NEW LAB ASSISTANT.
HOW ABOUT THAT?


THAT SHOULD WORK...
BUT NO EXPERIMENTS!
OR YOU'LL ANSWER
TO ME FOR IT!

A blue and yellow Transformer robot, Flintclaw, is shown in a medium shot. He has a blue body with yellow accents on his shoulders and arms. He is looking towards the right.

NO GAMES, FLINTCLAW!
YOU'RE ON THIN ICE.


A grey and black Transformer robot, Thundercracker, is shown in a medium shot. He has a grey body with black and red accents. He is looking towards the left.

HA! YES, IF A GLACIER IS THIN!
FACE IT, THUNDERCRACKER.
I KEEP THE FUEL COMING.

A close-up shot of Flintclaw's head and shoulders. He is looking down with a serious expression.


YOU KNOW THAT...AND YOUR BOSS...
THE BIG BOSS...HE KNOWS IT, TOO!

...CLOSE US DOWN, AND THE FUEL STOPS.
STOP THE FUEL, AND THE WAR STOPS.

A close-up shot of Thundercracker's right hand, which is clenched into a fist. The hand is grey and black.


BUT YOU'RE THE BOSS.
YOU GO RIGHT AHEAD!



A scene featuring two Transformers toys on a tiled floor against a purple background. On the left is a pink and white toy with a speech bubble that says "FEEL BETTER?". On the right is a blue and grey toy with a speech bubble that says "NO.". In the center background is a large, stylized blue and white logo. The floor is made of tan tiles, and the background consists of purple cylindrical pillars.

FEEL
BETTER?

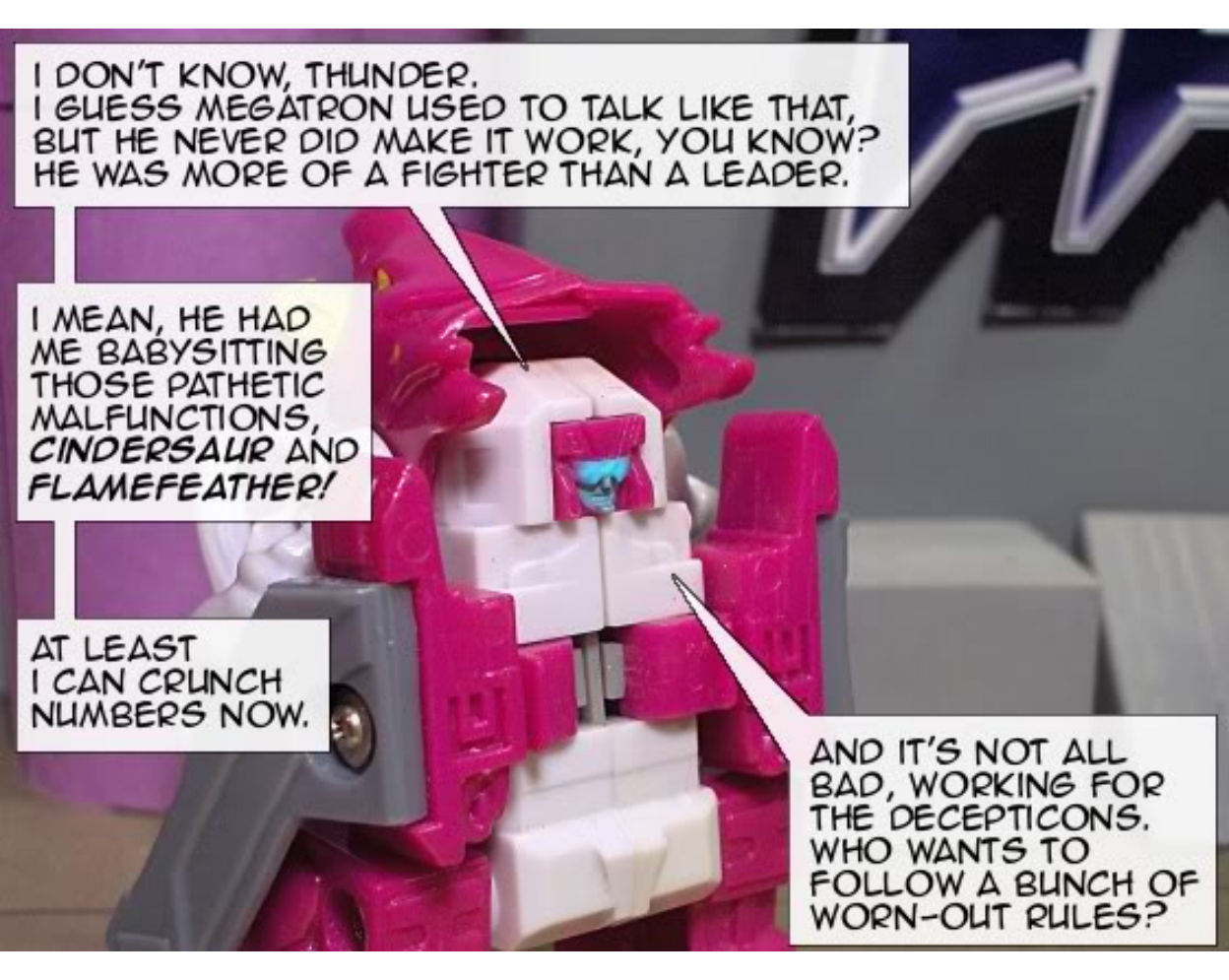
NO.



SLAVES...QUOTAS...
BULLYING...PETTY
BICKERING...

WHERE DID
WE GO WRONG,
SPARKSTALKER?

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO
COURAGE, TO FREEDOM,
TO A STRONG AND
PEACEFUL CYBERTRON?




I DON'T KNOW, THUNDER.
I GUESS MEGATRON USED TO TALK LIKE THAT,
BUT HE NEVER DID MAKE IT WORK, YOU KNOW?
HE WAS MORE OF A FIGHTER THAN A LEADER.

I MEAN, HE HAD
ME BABYSITTING
THOSE PATHETIC
MALFUNCTIONS,
CINDERSAUR AND
FLAMEFEATHER!

AT LEAST
I CAN CRUNCH
NUMBERS NOW.

AND IT'S NOT ALL
BAD, WORKING FOR
THE DECEPTICONS.
WHO WANTS TO
FOLLOW A BUNCH OF
WORN-OUT RULES?



ARE WE DECEPTICONS?
I'D FEEL MORE LIKE ONE
IF OUR *SYMBOL* WAS
THE RIGHT WAY UP.


AW, COME ON,
THUNDER. YOU
KNOW WHY IT'S
LIKE THAT!
REJECTION OF
OLD ORDER
AND ALL THAT...

AT LEAST STARScream
DOESN'T CARE WHICH
WAY WE WEAR IT.

I SHOULD FIX THIS ONE.

WELL...MAYBE AFTER
STARScream'S NEXT
INSPECTION. THAT'S
NOT TOO FAR OFF.

DON'T REMIND ME.



HERE'S YOUR
LAB ASSISTANT,
OVERCAST.

WHY, THANK YOU,
BREAKER! DOES
HE UNDERSTAND
CYBERTRONIX?

YES.

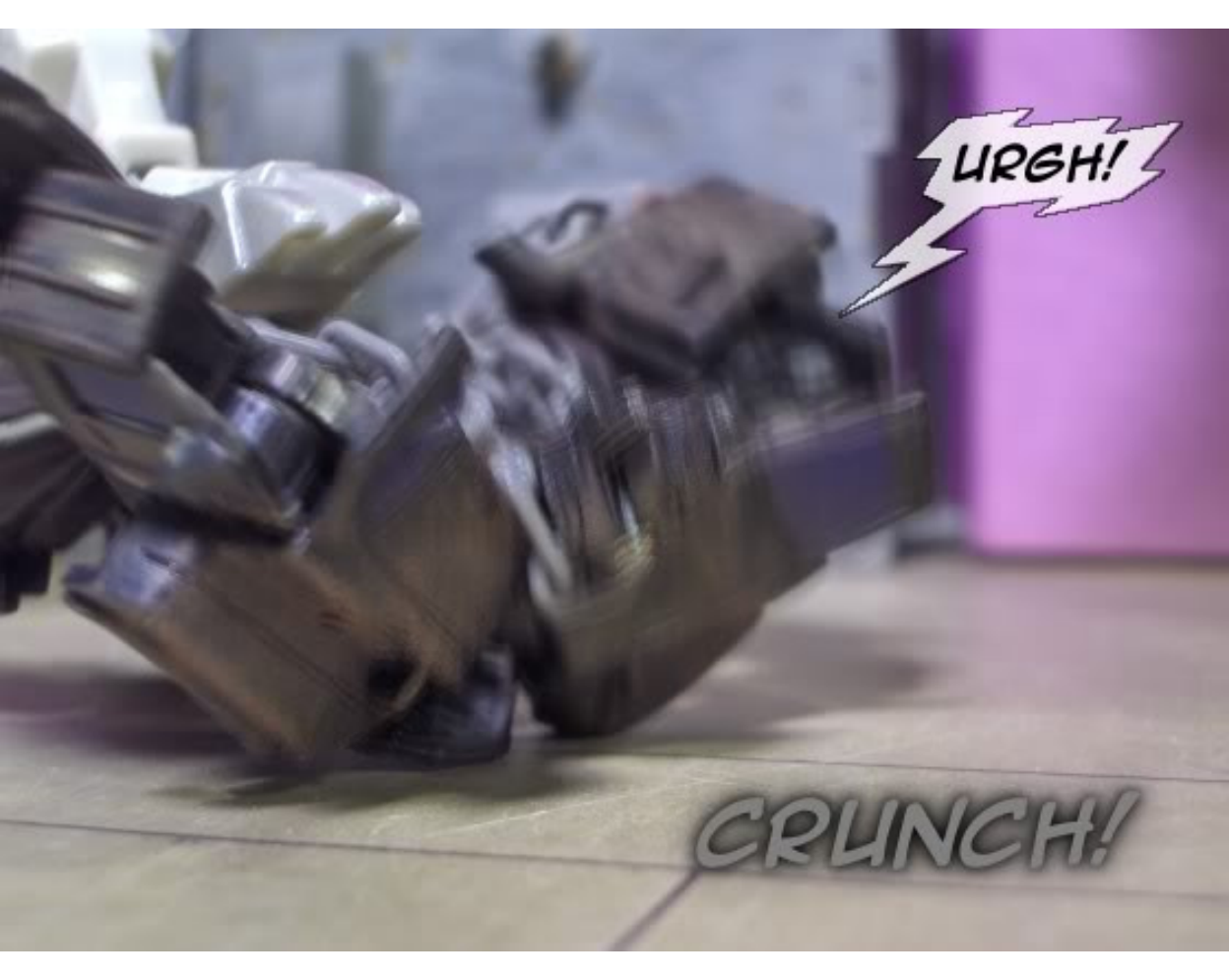
EXCELLENT!
WELL, LITTLE FELLOW,
ARE YOU READY TO WORK?

***DROP
DEAD.***




***MY
WORD!***






URGH!

CRUNCH!



SHOW SOME
RESPECT, WORM!
OR I'LL TEAR IT
OUT OF YOU!

PLEASE, BREAKER,
THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY.



WE MUST
BE PATIENT.
HE WILL
LEARN IN
TIME.

WHO KNOWS?
WE MAY EVEN
BECOME
FRIENDS!



GOODNESS ME, A
LAB ASSISTANT!
HOW VERY THOUGHTFUL
OF THE COMMANDER.

I MUST REMEMBER TO
SEND HIM A CARD...

AH, THANK YOU, LITTLE ONE.
THOSE BARRELS WILL DO
NICELY RIGHT THERE.

BY THE WAY, WHAT
IS YOUR NAME?



EAT SLAG
AND GET
DEFUNCT.

OH, MY!
THAT WON'T DO
AT ALL!


KRZZZZ!!





KRZZZZ!

GGHARAAGHH!



I'M AFRAID I REALLY
CANNOT ALLOW
BACKTALK, IF WE
ARE GOING TO
WORK TOGETHER.
YOU UNDERSTAND,
I AM SURE...

ZZZZZ!!

GGHRK
YRGGH!

...AND DO NOT WORRY. MY
VARIABLE-VOLTAGE BEAM IS
PRECISELY TUNED. YOUR
CIRCUITS WILL SUSTAIN NO
PERMANENT DAMAGE.

WELL, NOW!
LET US TRY
THAT AGAIN,
SHALL WE?





TELL ME,
LITTLE ONE.
WHAT IS
YOUR NAME?

GH... GHRR...



OH, I SAY! SUCH
COURAGE HAS ITS
ADMIRERS!

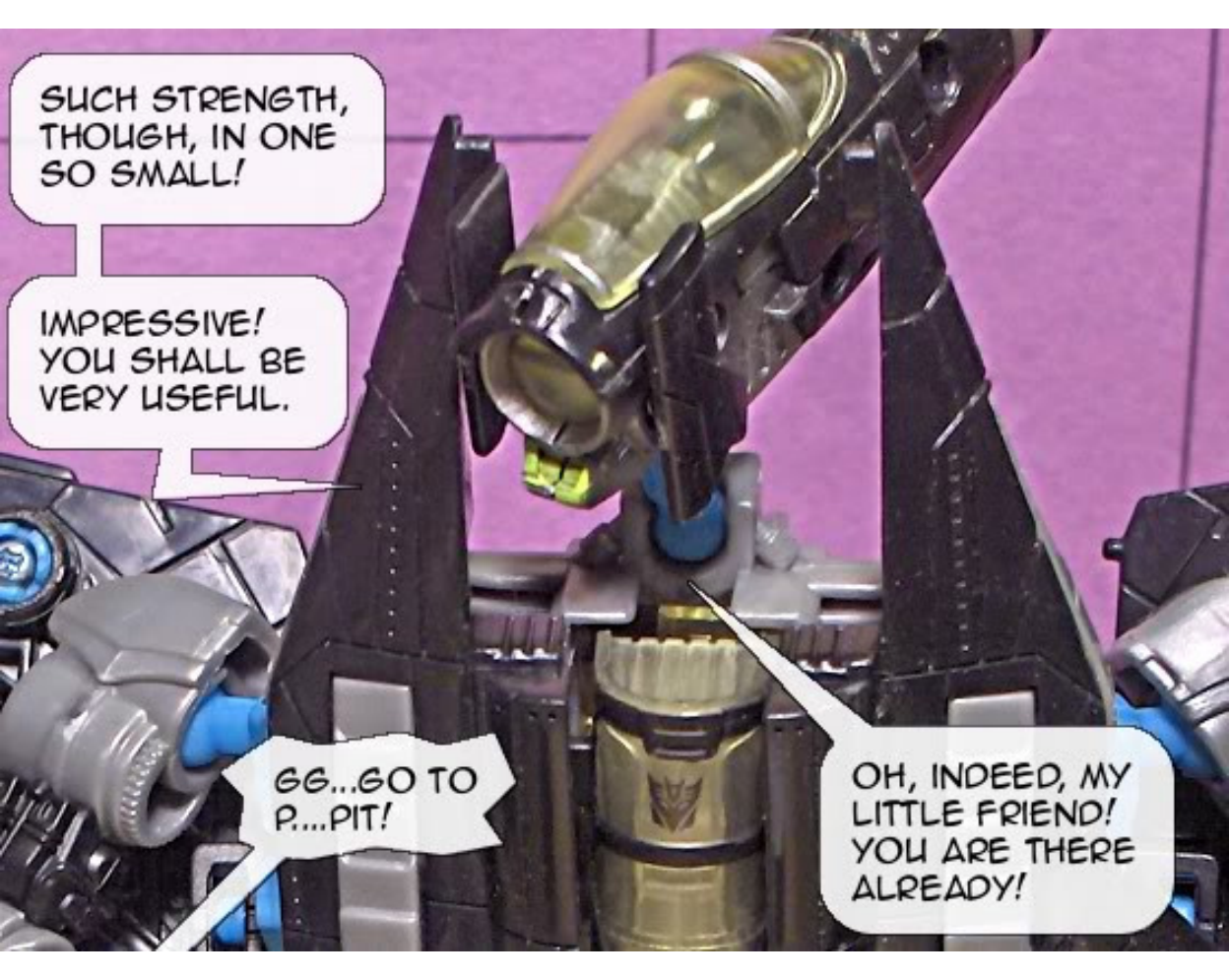
SADLY, I
AM NOT
ONE.

FRAZZ!

GRRACCHHK!

...AND IT IS
HARDLY FAIR!
I HAVE ALREADY
PROMISED YOU
NO LASTING
HARM, HAVE I
NOT?





SUCH STRENGTH,
THOUGH, IN ONE
SO SMALL!

IMPRESSIVE!
YOU SHALL BE
VERY USEFUL.

GG...GO TO
P...PIT!


OH, INDEED, MY
LITTLE FRIEND!
YOU ARE THERE
ALREADY!

WELL, CHAP,
YOU ARE A
SLOW ONE!
I SHAN'T
GIVE UP,
HOWEVER.

YOU ARE MAKING A
MOST DREADFUL
BOTHER ABOUT ALL
OF THIS, YOU KNOW...

=>SIP=<

...IRON...HIDE.



WHAT WAS THAT?

IRONHIDE.

MY NAME IS
IRONHIDE!

GOODNESS ME!
A BREAKTHROUGH!




HA! A
GOOD
STRONG
NAME.

I KNEW YOU
COULD BE
INSTRUCTED,
IRONHIDE.



SADLY, YOU DID NOT
ASK MY PERMISSION
TO STAND UP.



LET US
CONSIDER THIS
LESSON
NUMBER TWO.

KRZZZK!


GHRK!

...IRONHIDE.

WELL, OVERCAST, HOW
DO YOU LIKE YOUR
NEW ASSISTANT?

HE'S SPLENDID,
THUNDERCRACKER!
MOST OBEDIENT!





IRONHIDE?

BE A DEAR AND
FETCH US SOME
TEA, WOULD YOU?


YES, SIR.

IRONHIDE OBEYS...HE KNOWS NOT WHY.
IT IS NOT FEAR, NOR PAIN, BUT A LACK OF WILL.
HIS VERY THOUGHTS HAVE BEEN CONQUERED...
BUT OVERCAST'S VICTORY IS INCOMPLETE.



...I ...I HOPE. YOU...YOU
ARE GOING TO KILL HIM,
AREN'T YOU, IRONHIDE?


I...I'M
NOT SURE...



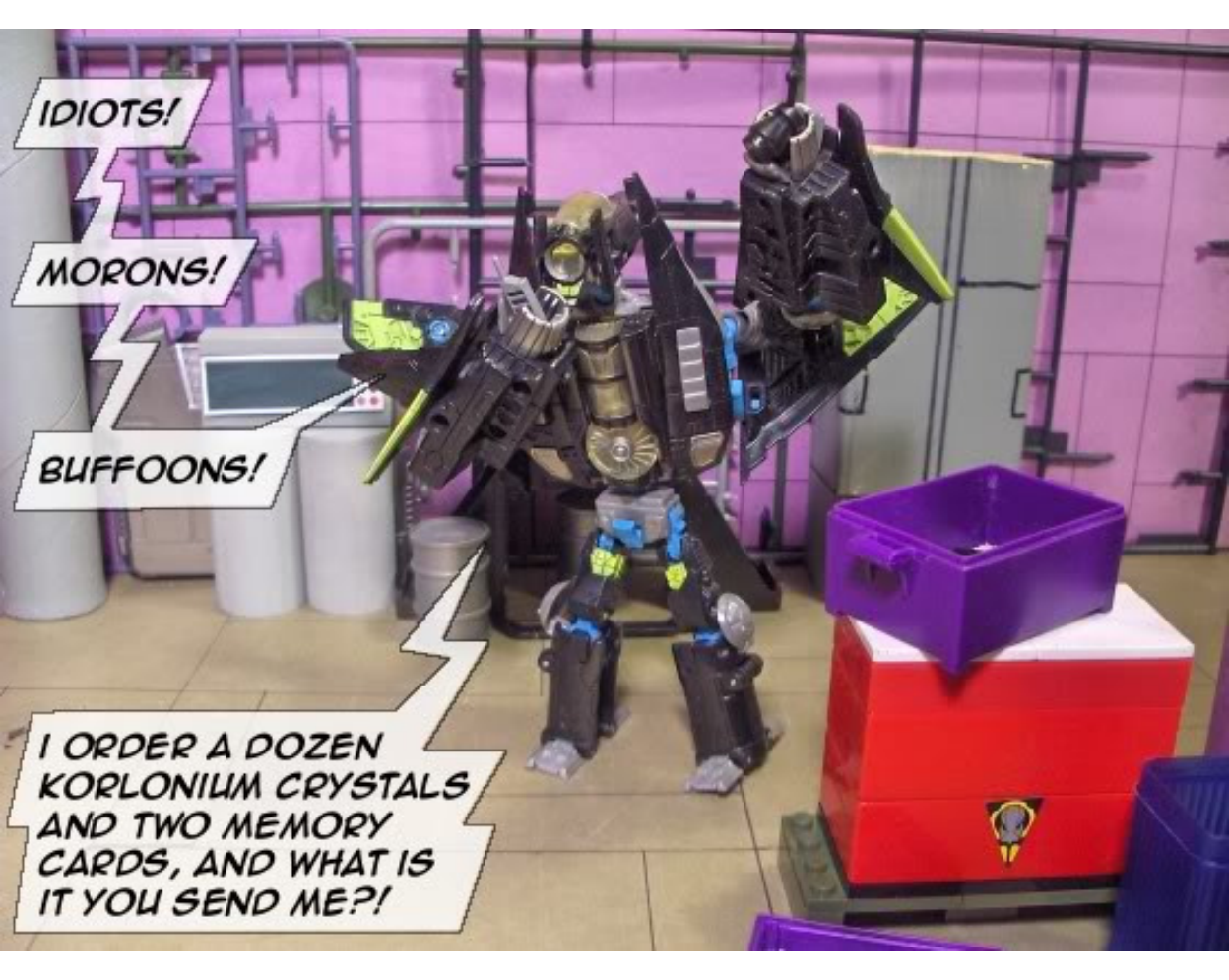
I DON'T KNOW HOW
YOU DID THAT, BUT
I'M WARNING YOU!
NO EXPERIMENTS!

The image shows two Transformers toys against a pink background. On the left is a blue and yellow robot with a purple insignia on its chest. On the right is a black and yellow robot with a yellow visor. Both have speech bubbles indicating a conversation.

YOU NEVER
LET ME HAVE
ANY FUN!



"I MEAN IT, OVERCAST.
IF YOU DAMAGE IRONHIDE,
I'LL HAVE YOUR NOSECONES
FOR A COFFEE MUG!"


A LEGO Technic robot, primarily black and grey with yellow and blue accents, stands in a workshop-like environment. The robot has a complex, mechanical design with various gears, levers, and sensors. It is positioned in the center of the frame. To its right is a red and white storage bin with a purple plastic container on top. In the background, there are shelves with various tools and equipment, including a computer monitor and some cables. The floor is made of light-colored tiles. The overall scene suggests a workshop or a laboratory where the robot is being built or used.

IDIOTS!

MORONS!

BLUFFOONS!

**I ORDER A DOZEN
KORLONIUM CRYSTALS
AND TWO MEMORY
CARDS, AND WHAT IS
IT YOU SEND ME?!**



A BLOODY BOX OF
ASHES AND TWO
BLACKENED CHUNKS
OF PLASTIC, THAT'S
WHAT!

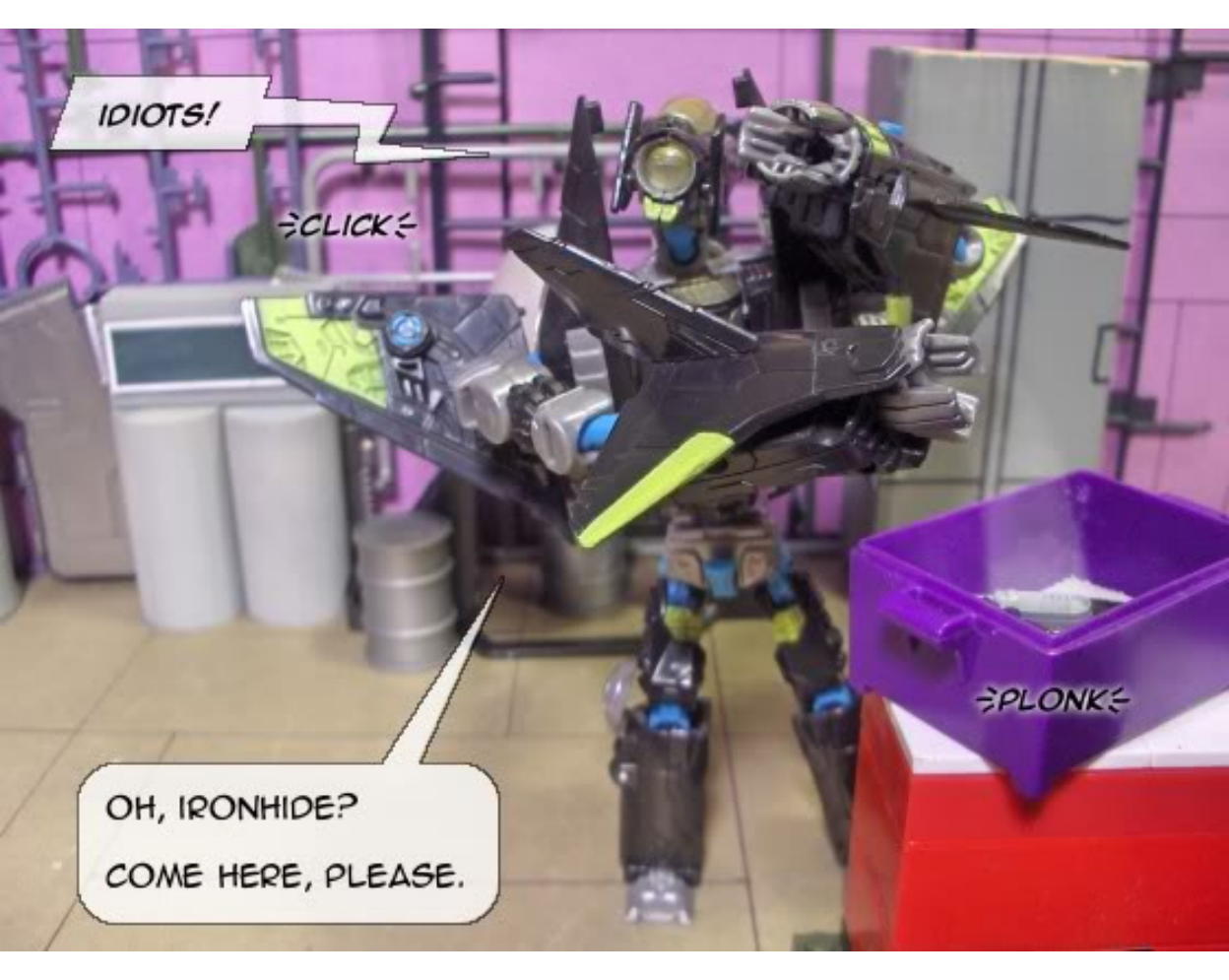
OF COURSE YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO USE
AN INSULATED MAILER! IT'S KORLONIUM,
YOU MOUTH-BREATHING MECHADRONE!



**YES, YOU HAD BETTER RUSH THE ORDER!
A WHOLE WEAPONS PLANT IS SHUT DOWN
WITHOUT THOSE MEMORY CARDS!**

YES! THAT IS A BAD THING!

**NO, I AM NOT
GOING TO PAY
EXTRA FOR
SPECIAL
HANDLING!**



IDIOTS!

⇒CLICK⇐

OH, IRONHIDE?
COME HERE, PLEASE.

⇒PLONK⇐




BZZZZHKK!


AHH.

MUCH
BETTER.

G-GHAK!



CLEAR DAY COMES FOR ONE AT LAST.
GRIM OVERCAST FOR ANOTHER.
UNDERGROUND, THE WEARY LIFE OF
TOIL GRINDS ALONG AS USUAL...

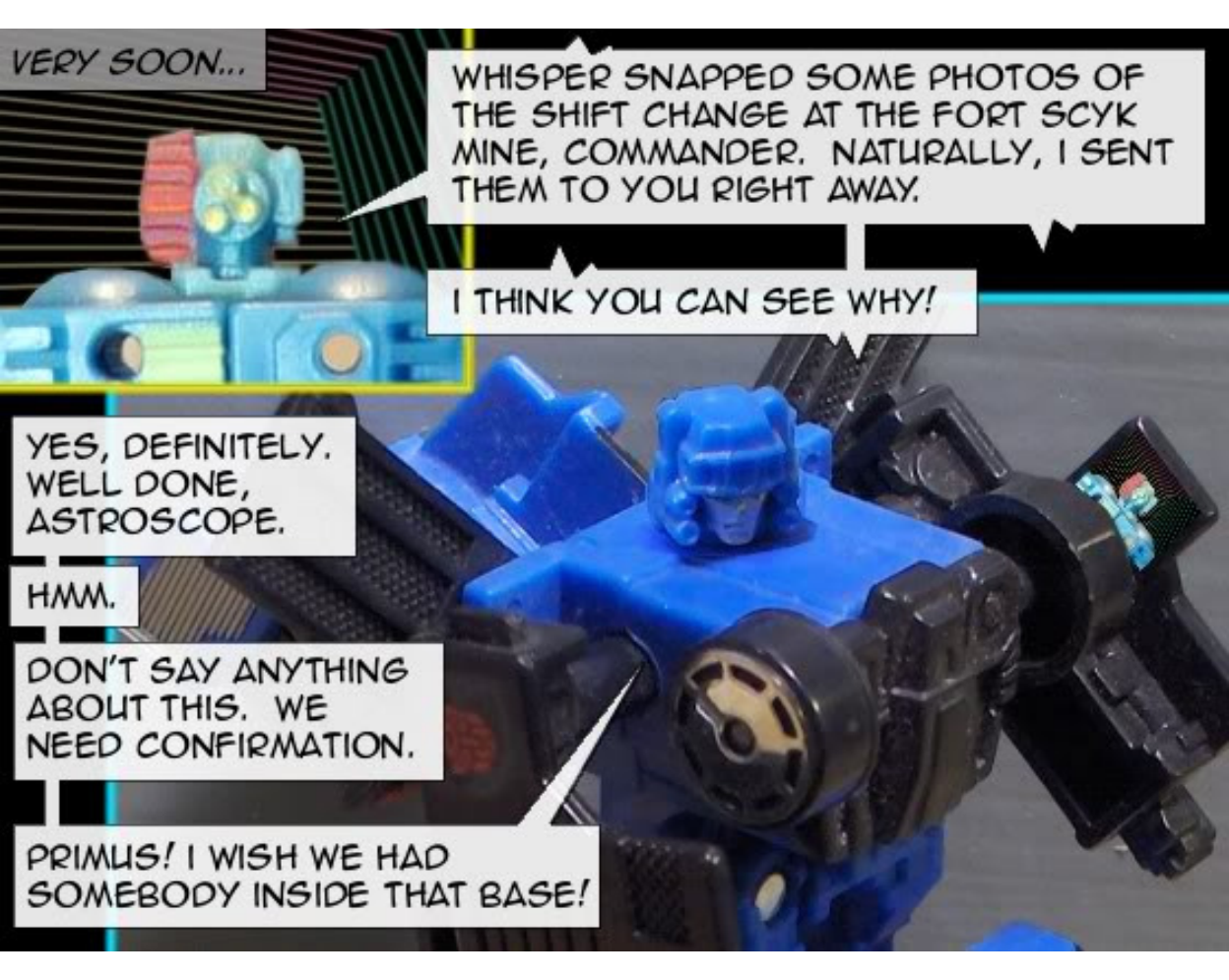


NOT UNOBSERVED.

WHISPER TO BASE: I'M STARTING
THE DOWNLINK.

MAKE SURE MAGNUS PUTS THAT
COFFEE POT ON!





VERY SOON...

WHISPER SNAPPED SOME PHOTOS OF THE SHIFT CHANGE AT THE FORT SCYK MINE, COMMANDER. NATURALLY, I SENT THEM TO YOU RIGHT AWAY.

I THINK YOU CAN SEE WHY!

YES, DEFINITELY.
WELL DONE,
ASTROSCOPE.

HMM.

DON'T SAY ANYTHING
ABOUT THIS. WE
NEED CONFIRMATION.

PRIMUS! I WISH WE HAD
SOMEBODY INSIDE THAT BASE!

"SHOULDN'T WE AT LEAST TELL THE PRETENDER, SIR?"

"NO. NOT YET, ANYWAY."

≡KNOCK
KNOCK≡

Come in


WHAT A FEELING!

BEING'S BELIEVING!

TSUGARU...HI. I WAS GOING TO... THE LIBRARY...
THOUGHT I'D STOP BY...UM...YOU SEEM BUSY.

Sideswipe! Wait a bit...






MY GOSH, LOOK
AT THE ROOM.

Take five,
boys!

THE HOTEL MANAGER
PROBABLY ISN'T
GOING TO LIKE THIS.




TSUGARU...I'M SORRY...
I DON'T USUALLY GET LIKE THAT.
I'M ALL RIGHT, REALLY.

Sideswipe,
please!

Don't apologize. You have nothing
to be ashamed of.


There's no need to explain, either.
Magnus told me everything.





PRIMUS! I *LIKE* YOU, PRETENDER!
YOU WOULD HAVE GOTTEN ALONG
SO WELL WITH -
...SORRY.

Don't be that way, Sideswipe.
If you have anything you
want to talk about...anything!
...you go right ahead!




...and don't
you dare start
that macho
act again...

...or I'll
kill you!




THAT'S NO IDLE THREAT!
ARE YOU REALLY PLANNING TO USE ALL THOSE?

Well, they're a start...
...hey! Don't change
the subject!

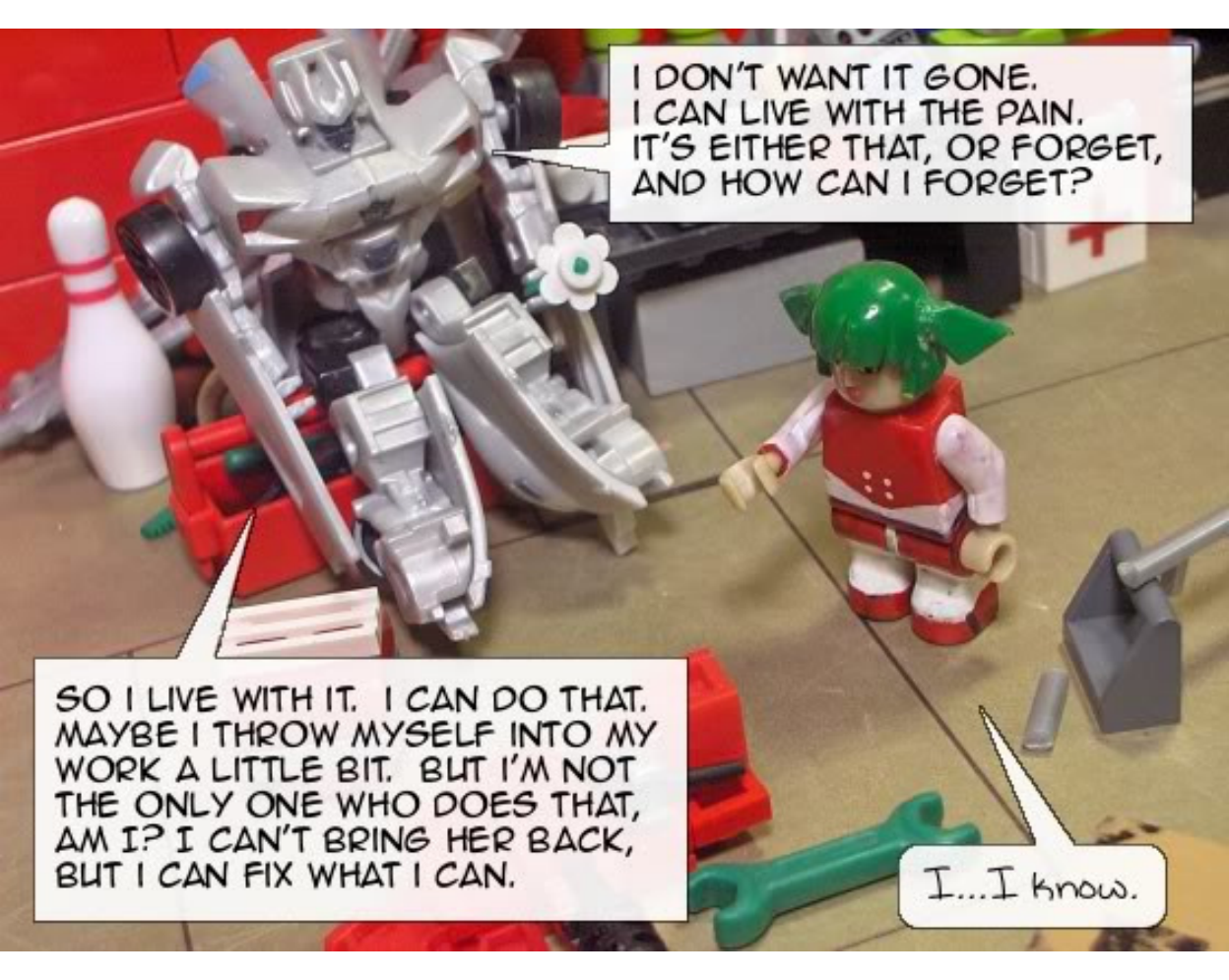


WHAT'S THERE TO SAY,
TSUGARU? SHE'S GONE.
STELLITE IS GONE AND
I MISS HER TERRIBLY.



SOMETIMES IT HITS ME
LIKE AN ARTILLERY SHELL.
I GUESS YOU KNOW THAT.


OTHER TIMES, IT'S
JUST A DULL ACHE.
BUT IT'S NEVER GONE.



I DON'T WANT IT GONE.
I CAN LIVE WITH THE PAIN.
IT'S EITHER THAT, OR FORGET,
AND HOW CAN I FORGET?

SO I LIVE WITH IT. I CAN DO THAT.
MAYBE I THROW MYSELF INTO MY
WORK A LITTLE BIT. BUT I'M NOT
THE ONLY ONE WHO DOES THAT,
AM I? I CAN'T BRING HER BACK,
BUT I CAN FIX WHAT I CAN.

I...I know.




Fixing things...it's something
we can do, isn't it?

I guess we've all got things to forget.
Mel... Ironhide... they were taken, and
it was all my fault.

I can fix Mel's armor...
but what good is that?

They say she's alive... Ironhide
is alive... I want to believe it,
but lately I'm not so sure of
myself. The more I find out,
the less I hope...




DON'T LOSE HOPE, TSUGU.
NEVER GIVE UP HOPE.

Thank you,
Sideswipe.
It's beautiful.


IT'S TECHNORGANIC.
KEEP IT WATERED.



Hope...



Yesb
I will hopeb

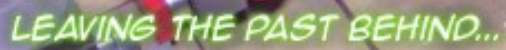


Break's over, boysb

Let's surprise
old Sideswipe
when he gets backb



YOU CAN FLY,
IF YOU TRY,



LEAVING THE PAST BEHIND...



HEAVEN ONLY KNOWS
WHAT YOU MIGHT FIND...



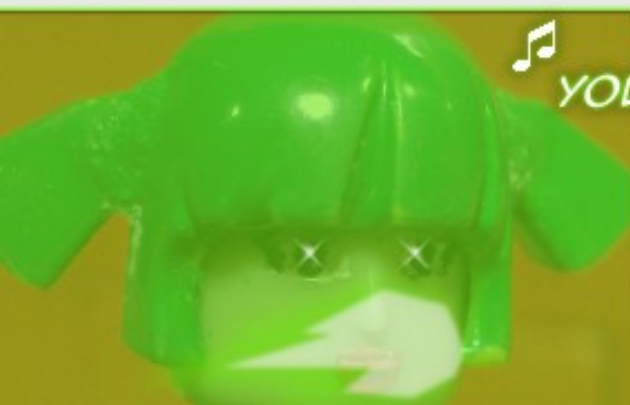
DARE!



DARE TO BELIEVE YOU CAN SURVIVE!



*YOU HOLD THE FUTURE
IN YOUR HAND!*




DARE!

DARE TO KEEP ALL OF YOUR DREAMS ALIVE!
IT'S TIME TO TAKE A STAND...

PRIMUS!

THAT'S
TSLUGH'S
ROOM!

AND YOU CAN WIN, IF YOU DARE!





*EVERYBODY'S TRYING TO BREAK YOUR SPIRIT,
KEEPING YOU DOWN...*

SEEMS LIKE IT'S BEEN FOREVER!

 BUT THERE'S ANOTHER VOICE IF YOU'LL JUST HEAR IT,
SAYING IT'S THE LAST ROUND... 



 LOOKS LIKE IT'S NOW OR NEVER! 



OUT OF THE DARKNESS
YOU STUMBLE INTO THE LIGHT



FIGHTING FOR THE THINGS
YOU KNOW ARE RIGHT





DARE - DARE TO BELIEVE YOU CAN SURVIVE!
THE POWER IS THERE AT YOUR COMMAND!
DARE - DARE TO KEEP ALL OF YOUR DREAMS ALIVE!
IT'S TIME TO TAKE A STAND!

AND YOU CAN WIN, IF YOU DARE!







DARE - DARE TO BELIEVE YOU CAN SURVIVE
YOU HOLD THE FUTURE IN YOUR HAND



DARE - DARE TO KEEP ALL OF YOUR DREAMS ALIVE
THE POWER IS THERE AT YOUR COMMAND





DARE!

Hi, Swipes!
Guess what?

TSUGARU!

YOU'RE ALL
RIGHT!

DARE TO KEEP ALL YOUR LOVE ALIVE!

DARE TO BE ALL THAT YOU CAN BE!

DARE! 


*THERE IS A PLACE WHERE DREAMS SURVIVE.
IT'S CALLING YOU ON TO VICTORY!*



Yes.

I'm all
right.

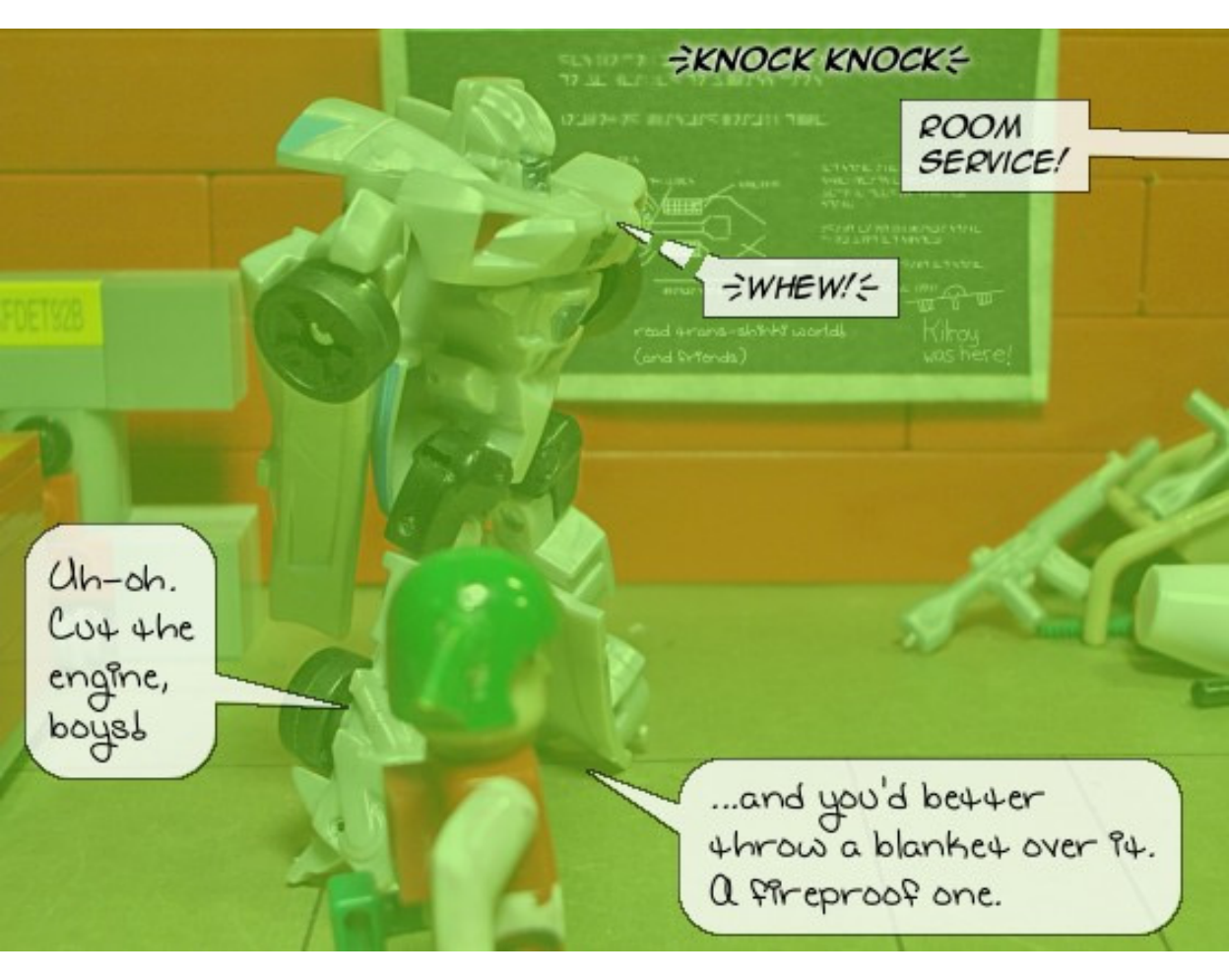
AND YOU CAN WIN IF YOU DARE.



TSUGARU, I...
...I'M SORRY.

THE FIRE...
I SAW IT...
I THOUGHT...

It's okay,
really




⇒KNOCK KNOCK⇒

ROOM
SERVICE!

⇒WHEW!⇒

Uh-oh.
Cut the
engine,
boys!

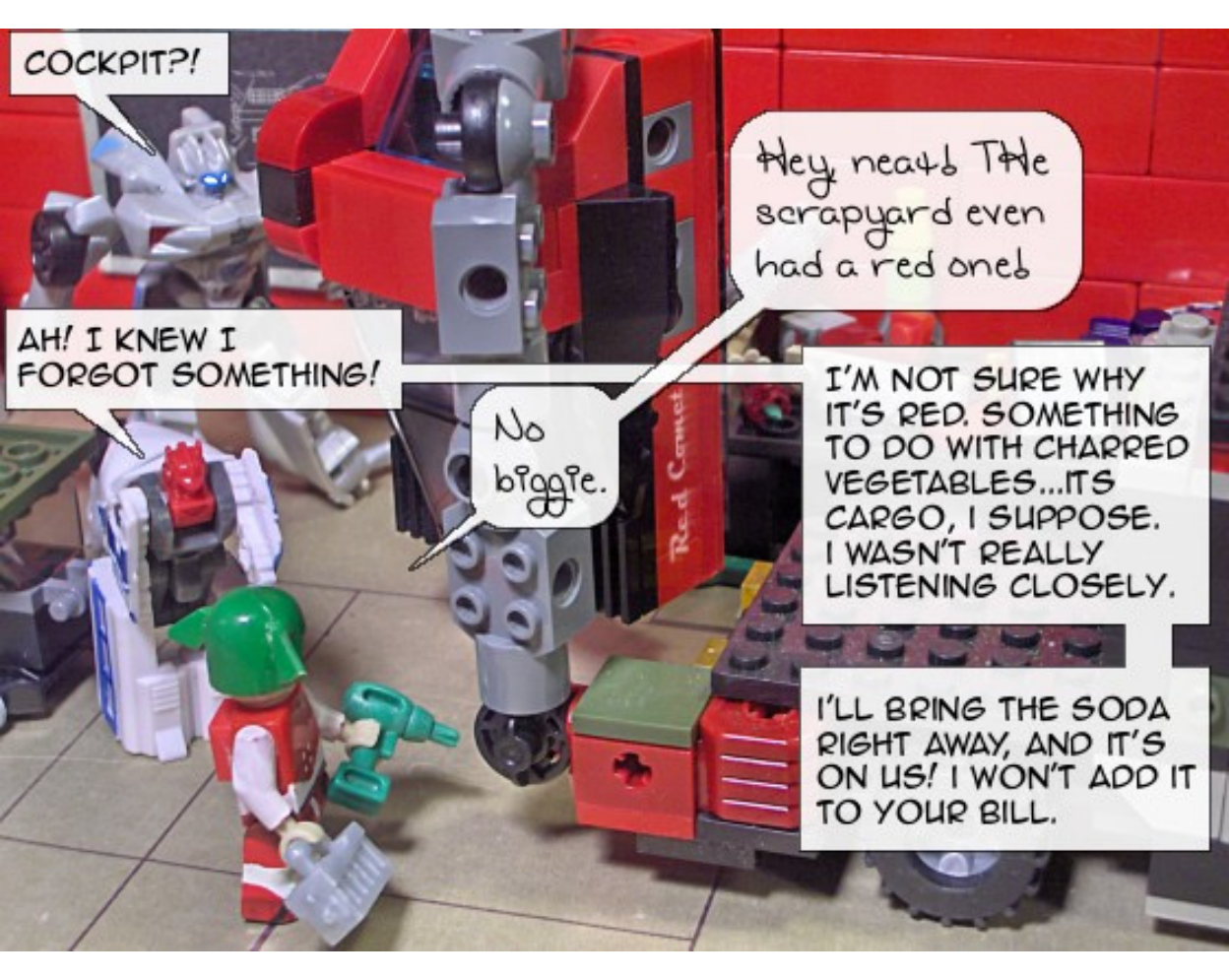
...and you'd better
throw a blanket over it.
A fireproof one.



ENGINE?

OKAY! YOU ORDERED SEVEN
HYDROBURGER PLATTERS
AND ONE COCKPIT SECTION
FROM A *SHIREI MAGNUS*
CLASS TRANSPORT! RIGHT?

Yep
And one
diet colab



COCKPIT?!

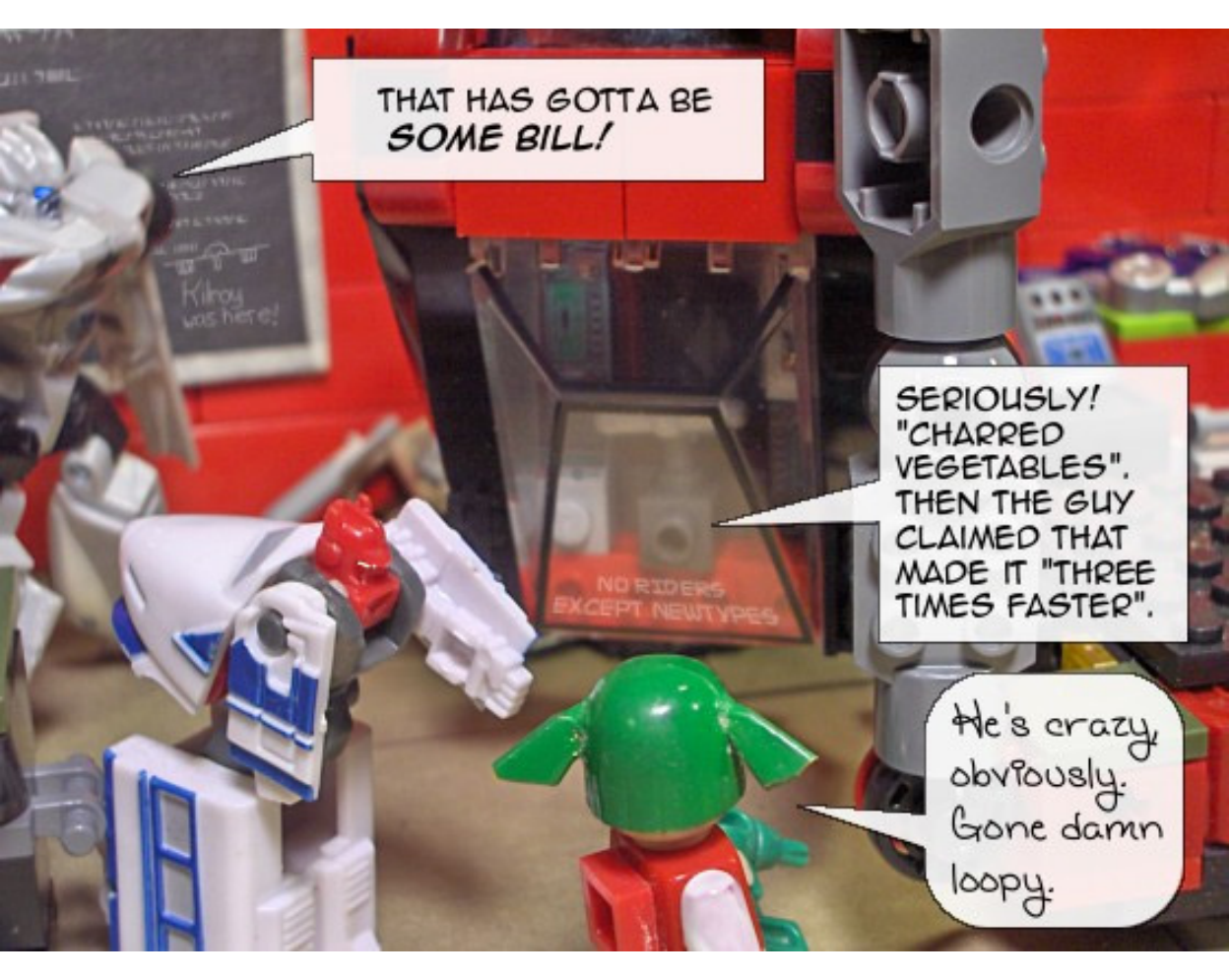
Hey, near the
scrapyard even
had a red one!

AH! I KNEW I
FORGOT SOMETHING!

No
biggie.

I'M NOT SURE WHY
IT'S RED. SOMETHING
TO DO WITH CHARRED
VEGETABLES...IT'S
CARGO, I SUPPOSE.
I WASN'T REALLY
LISTENING CLOSELY.

I'LL BRING THE SODA
RIGHT AWAY, AND IT'S
ON US! I WON'T ADD IT
TO YOUR BILL.



THAT HAS GOTTA BE
SOME BILL!

SERIOUSLY!
"CHARRED
VEGETABLES".
THEN THE GUY
CLAIMED THAT
MADE IT "THREE
TIMES FASTER".

He's crazy,
obviously.
Gone damn
loopy.



<AW, BOLTS!
MY MIX TAPE GOT
ERASED! MUST HAVE
BEEN TOO CLOSE
TO THE TEST STAND!>*


<BUMMER, DUDE.
YOU GOT ANY TUNES,
SUNRUNNER?>

<I'VE GOT THE
IRON EAGLE
SOUNDTRACK!>

<THAT'S ALL YOU
EVER LISTEN TO!>

<NOT TRUE! I'VE
GOT THE TOP GUN
SOUNDTRACK, TOO!>

*TRANSLATED FROM MICRONESE - AP



<...OR I CAN RUN HOME AND
GET FLIGHT OF THE INTRUDER,
OR MEMPHIS BELLE, OR ->


SO...WHAT, EXACTLY, ARE
YOU DOING HERE, PRETENDER?

<SAVE
US!>

Trying hard to
hear you over
all the beeping!

<SAYS MR.
BOXCAR
WILLIE!>

VERY FUNNY! BUT WHAT IN
THE PIT ARE YOU BUILDING?



Call it a
Pretender
shell, Swiper!

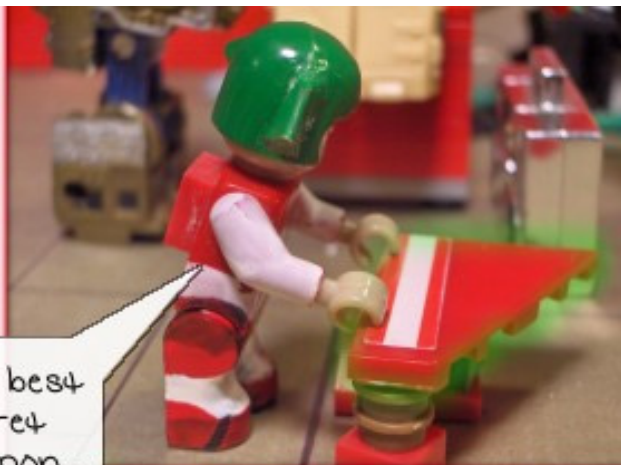
If that's what
people call me,
then slag it, I'll
be the biggest,
baddest
Skyhammer
they ever saw!

<BOXCAR WILLIE
IS CLASSIC, MECH!
CLASSIC!>

PRIMUS! I LIKE YOUR STYLE!

BUT IT WILL GET YOU KILLED.
STEALTH, NOT STRENGTH,
IS THE WAY TO WIN THIS.







THAT'S A GOOD TRICK, PRETENDER!

It's just
subspace
storage.

IF IT SHUTS SEEKERS DOWN HALF AS WELL
AS IT SHUTS MICRONS UP, I'M ALL FOR IT!

I'LL KEEP OLD MAGNUS OUT OF THE WAY.

I HAD A DREAM...

ONE GIRL,
ONE GOAL,
ONE MISSION!

ONE HEART,
ONE SOUL,
JUST ONE SOLUTION!

ONE FLASH OF LIGHT
YEAH! ONE GOD ONE VISION!



ONE STEEL
ONE BOLT
ONE TRUE RELIGION

ONE VOICE
ONE HOPE
ONE REAL DECISION

GIVE ME ONE VISION!

PC BOARD MUST BE GROUNDED

TYPICAL INSTALLATION

NO WRONG
NO RIGHT

I'M GONNA
TELL YOU
THERE'S NO
BLACK AND
NO WHITE


NO BLOOD
NO STAIN
ALL WE NEED IS ONE WORLD WIDE VISION





ONE STEEL ONE BOLT
ONE TRUE RELIGION
ONE RACE ONE HOPE
ONE REAL DECISION

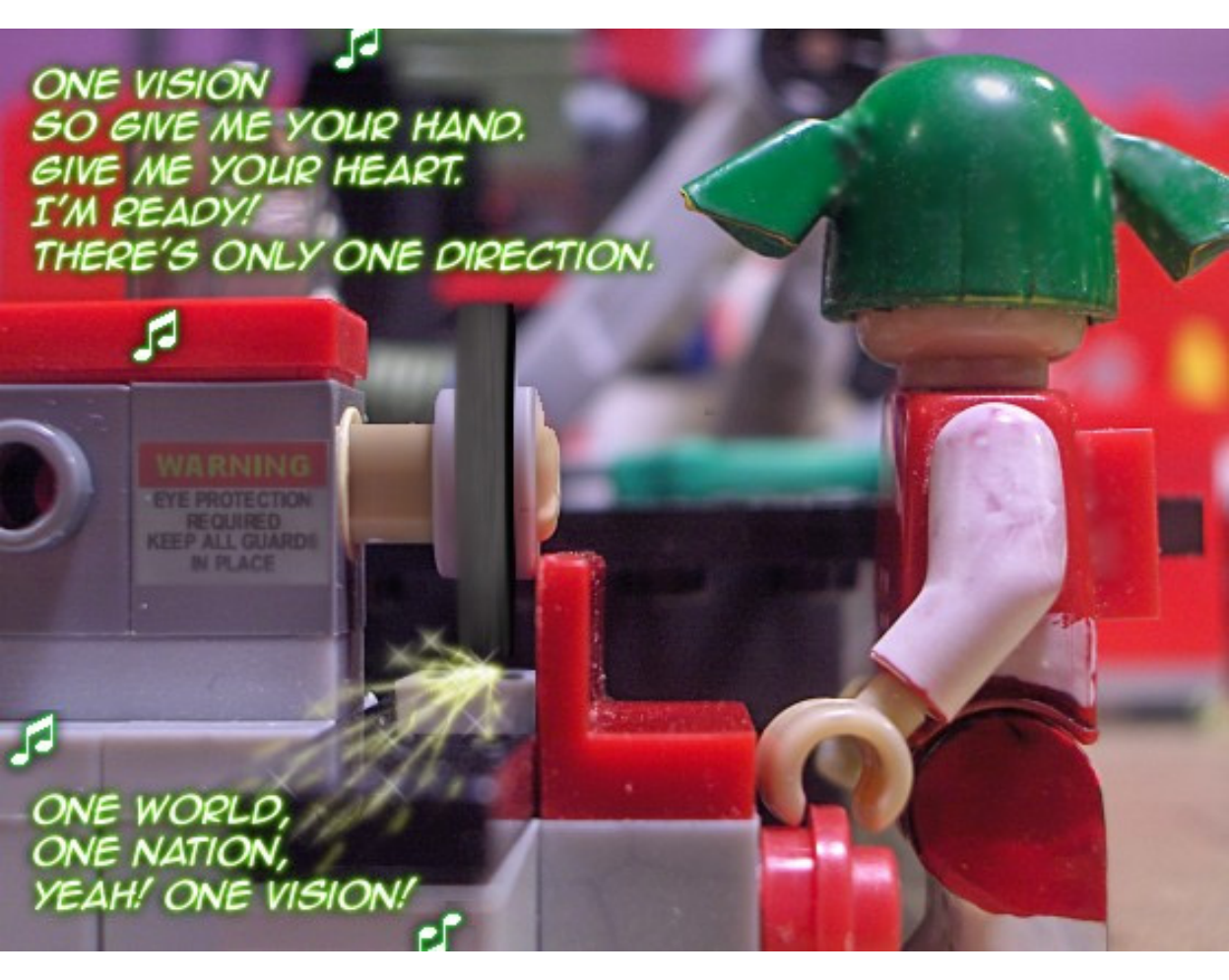
OH YEAH!
OH YEAH!
OH YEAH!



*I HAD A DREAM
WHEN I WAS YOUNG,
A DREAM OF
SWEET ILLUSION.
A GLIMPSE
OF HOPE AND UNITY,
AND VISIONS
OF ONE SWEET UNION.*

*BUT A COLD WIND BLOWS,
AND A DARK RAIN FALLS,
AND IN MY HEART IT SHOWS.*

LOOK WHAT THEY'VE DONE TO MY DREAM!



ONE VISION
SO GIVE ME YOUR HAND.
GIVE ME YOUR HEART.
I'M READY!
THERE'S ONLY ONE DIRECTION.

ONE WORLD,
ONE NATION,
YEAH! ONE VISION!

NO HATE, NO FIGHT,



(JUST DEMOLITION)

ALL THROUGH
THE NIGHT...

(AND WITH SOME REVISION)



WHOOOA-OH YEAH!

ONE ONE ONE ONE ONE ONE ONE





ONE STEEL, ONE BOLT,
ONE TRUE RELIGION...

ONE VOICE, ONE HOPE,
ONE REAL DECISION...

GIMME ONE LIGHT, YEAH!
GIMME ONE HOPE, HEY!
JUST GIMME...

ONE MECH,
ONE FEMME,

ONE DAY,
HEY HEY,

JUST GIMME, GIMME, GIMME, GIMME...

PSST!
TSUGU!
LOOK AT
THE
CAMERA!

FRIED CHICKEN!



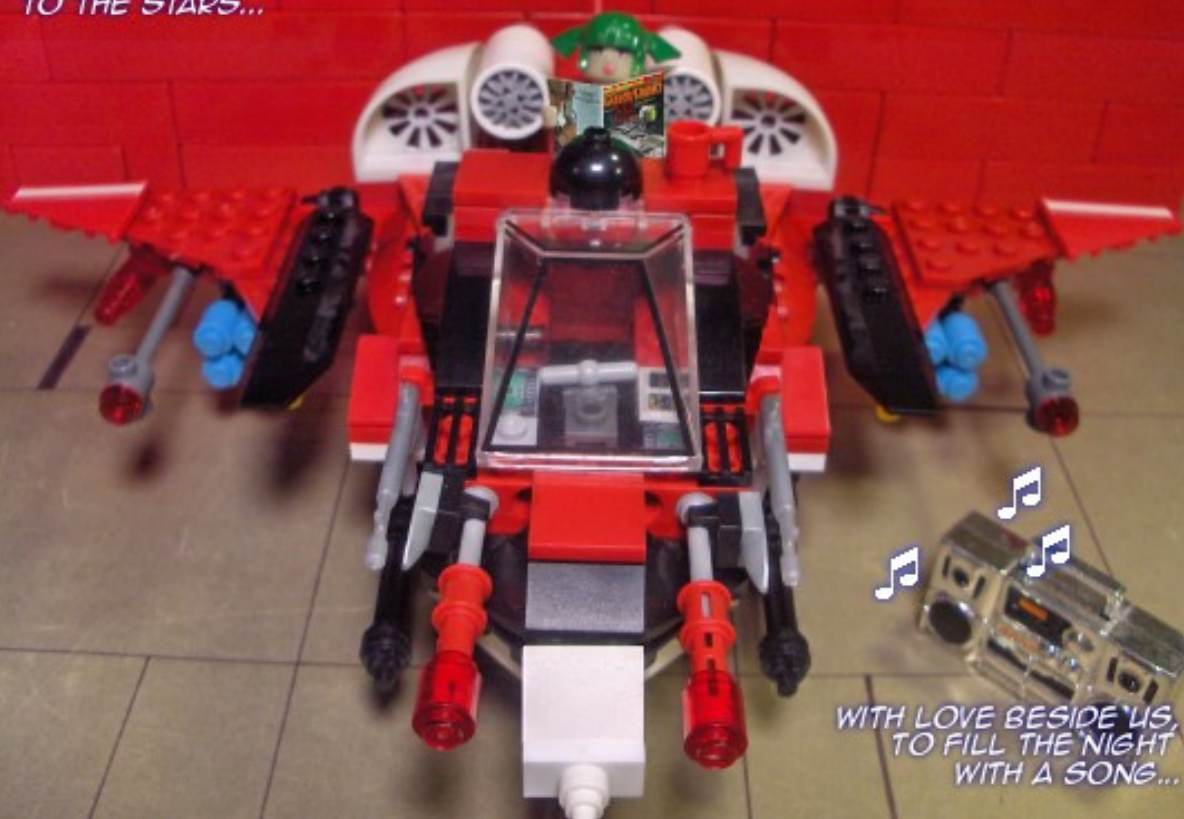


KONAMIMAN:
NEW HARDWARE!
WAIT PLEASE
FOR RECONFIGURE!




♪ LET'S BUILD
A STAIRWAY
TO THE STARS, ♪

AND CLIMB THAT
STAIRWAY
TO THE STARS...



WITH LOVE BESIDE US,
TO FILL THE NIGHT
WITH A SONG...



Ooooooooooh!



WE'LL HEAR THE SOUND OF VIOLINS
OUT YONDER WHERE THE BLUE BEGINS


THE MOON WILL GLIDE US
AS WE GO DRIFTING ALONG.



HI THERE!

Eeeek!

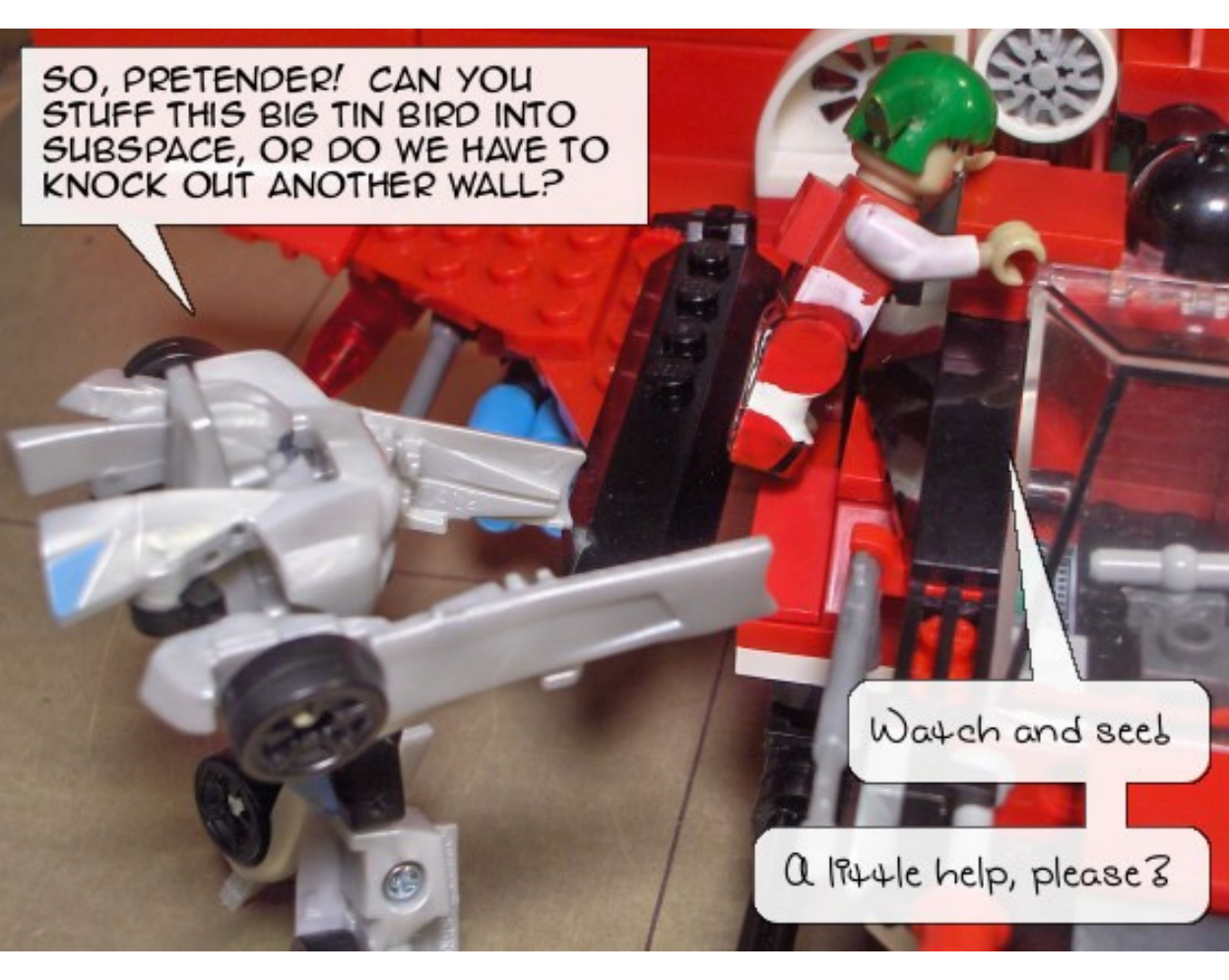




I wasn't looking at guns!
I mean I was!
For research!
It's not weird at all!

But please
knock
next time!

SORRY.



SO, PRETENDER! CAN YOU
STUFF THIS BIG TIN BIRD INTO
SUBSPACE, OR DO WE HAVE TO
KNOCK OUT ANOTHER WALL?


Watch and see!

A little help, please?

Activation code:
Fridge!



Now you see it...



Now you don't!

WOW! I GUESS
THERE WAS ROOM.

Plenty, and some left over!
A lot more than I thought
there was, actually.



THERE'S...
A LOT OF
ROOM IN
HERE, TOO.
YOU COULD
ALMOST
HAVE A
DANCE OR
SOMETHING.

Yes.

Yes, you
almost
could!

<THIS IS SUNDOR'S
SWING SESSION,
ON KMIC-AM!>

<YOU'VE CLIMBED
THAT "STAIRWAY TO
THE STARS"...>

<NOW CATCH YOUR
BREATH, AND GET
"IN THE MOOD"
WITH THE ANDROID
SISTERS!>



SLAG ME, I'M
OUTMANUEVERED
BY A PRETENDER!

It's not
so bad,
is it?

NO. IT'S NOT SO BAD.
IT'S NOT BAD AT ALL.

IN THE MOOD -
THAT'S IT, I GOT IT!
IN THE MOOD -
YOUR EAR WILL SPOT IT!

NOT TO MIX BUSINESS
WITH JITTERBUG...

...BUT ARE YOU
READY TO GO?

Never rush a lady, Swipers!



Almost ready!
I want to get
into the air,
first, and do
a little flying
before the
big battle.

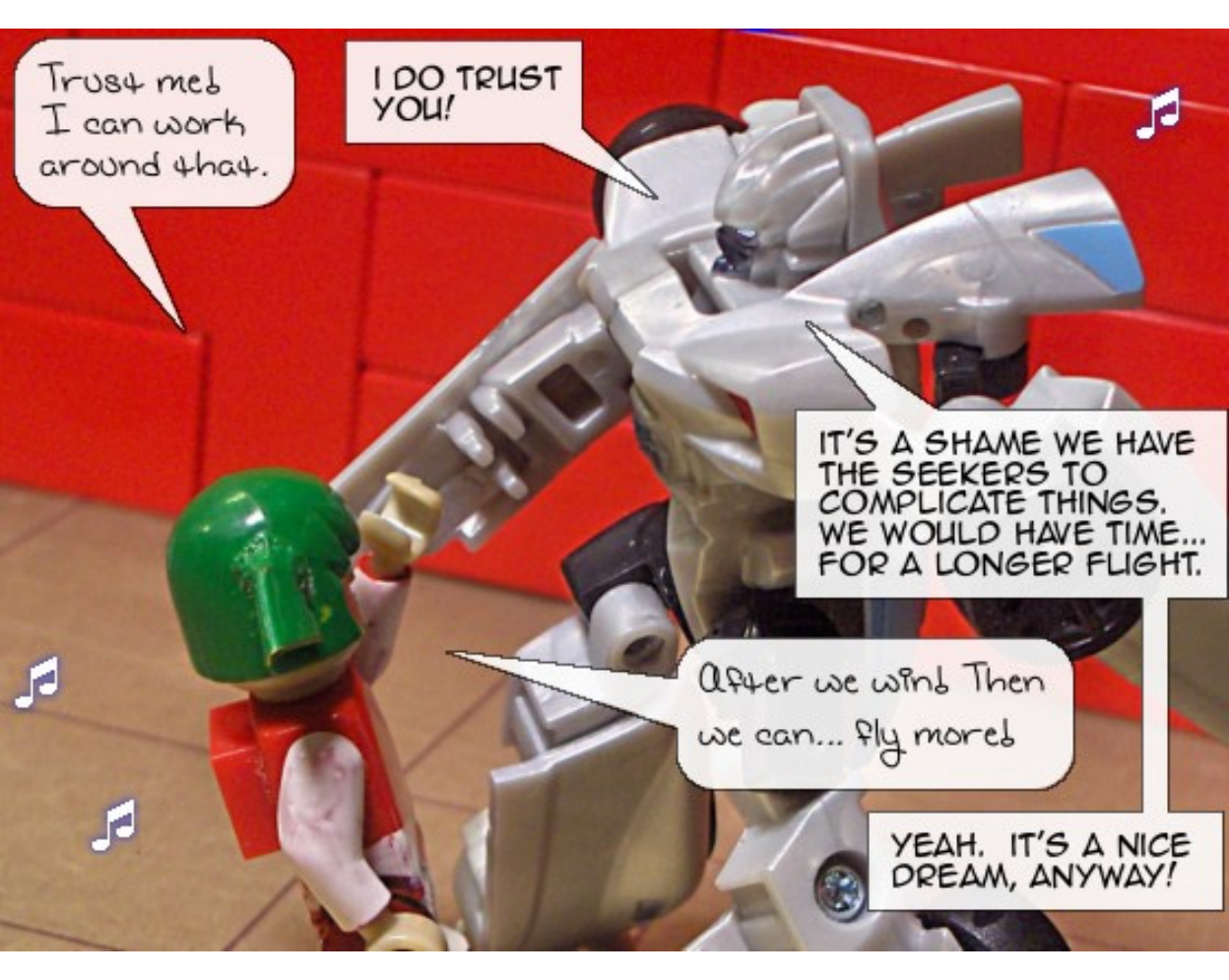
IN THE MOOD -
OH WHAT A HOT HIT!
BE ALIVE AND GET THE JIVE,
YOU'VE GOT TO LEARN HOW!

SOUNDS GOOD TO ME.
JUST TWO PROBLEMS...

TAKEOFF AND LANDING.

WE DON'T USE RUNWAYS.
LAUNCH BY CATAPULT,
LAND IN BOT MODE.





Trust me!
I can work
around that.

I DO TRUST
YOU!

IT'S A SHAME WE HAVE
THE SEEKERS TO
COMPLICATE THINGS.
WE WOULD HAVE TIME...
FOR A LONGER FLIGHT.

After we win Then
we can... fly more!

YEAH. IT'S A NICE
DREAM, ANYWAY!

GOT TO HOLD
ON TO THAT
DREAM!



I am,
Sideswipe!





HEH. YOU KNOW, DANCING WAS A LOT EASIER
WHEN WE WERE THE SAME SIZE, PRETEN-
...WHAT SORT OF MECHANOID ARE YOU, TSUGU?

Shinki.
Busou Shinki.

BUSOU SHINKI.
I LIKE THAT. IT
FITS, SOMEHOW!

WELL, SHINKI, MAYBE WE CAN WIN AFTER ALL!

<MOSHI MOSHI!
HOTEL HEAVYARMS!
SPARK, SPEAKING!>*

<SORRY, MAGNUS,
IT'S JUST ME TODAY.
EVERYONE ELSE IS
AT THE TEST FLI-
AT THE PICNIC.>

<YES, A PICNIC IN
WINTER, IN THE MIDDLE
OF A WAR ZONE.>

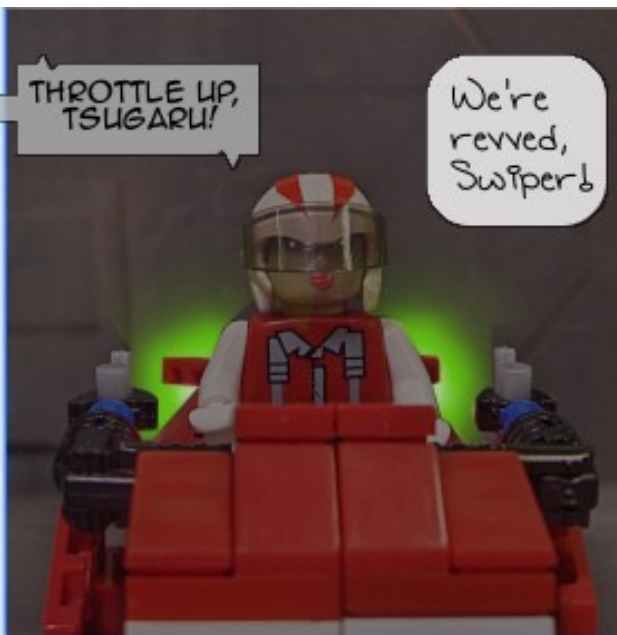
<OURS NOT TO
REASON WHY.>



NEVER SAY DIE!
IR-ON EAGLE!



*TRANSLATED FROM MICRONESE -AP



SHOOOM!





A LEGO Technic robot, constructed from blue, grey, and black bricks, stands on a white surface. It has a blue arm raised and a black arm extended towards a red rocket. The rocket is launching upwards, leaving a bright green trail. The background is a cloudy sky. The entire scene is framed by a blue border.

SHROOAR!

<OH YEAH!
LIFTOFF!>

<THE BIRD'S
IN THE AIR!>





<THANKS, DYNATRON!
KEEP WATCHING THE SKY!
THAT'S WHAT WE'RE OUT
HERE FOR...>

<...HM. ICEBERG-
I'VE GOT STATIC.>

<WORKING ON IT,
SWIPE. THINK IT'S
RFI FROM THE
ENGINES.>

<ROGER,
ICEBERG.>

SIDESWIPE
TO TSUGU -
HOW'S IT
WORKING?

Yeeee-
haaaaw!

Mm hmb
Damn, I'm goodb

HEY, SHINK!
NO STEALING
MY LINE!

Down 4here
it's yoursb
Up here, it's
all mineb

Okayb I'm at 18,000 feetb
Starting combine sequence,
semi-automatic modeb

Activation code:
SlayrIdel

KONAMIMAN:
Acknowledge!
Zero is mark!

Split!

KERCHUNK!

Wheel
Rush

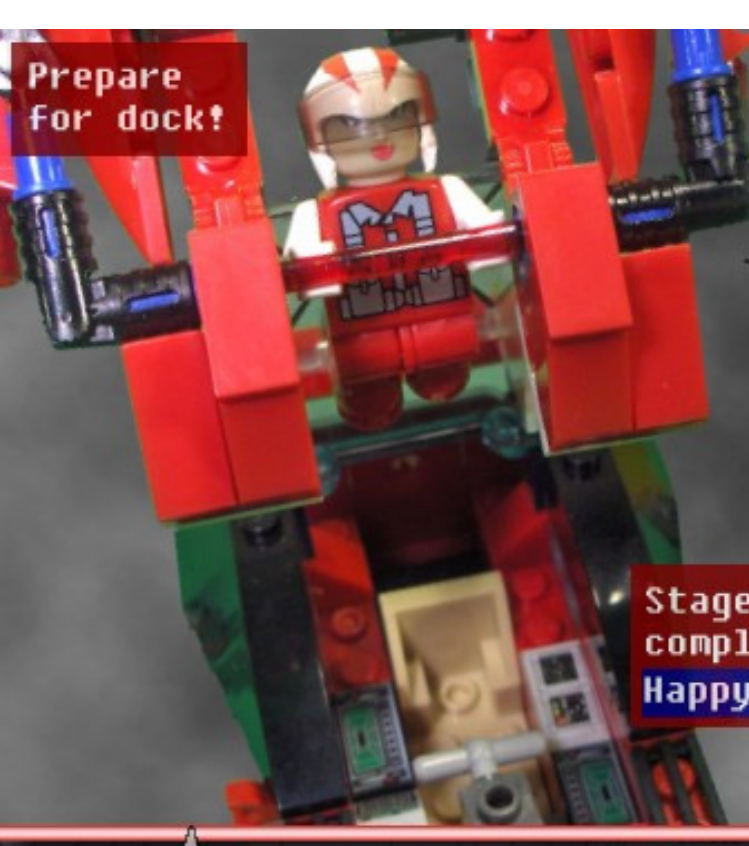
<SIDESWIPE TO ICEBERG-
STILL GOT STATIC, OVER.>

<ROGER, SIDESWIPE. IT'S GOT TO
BE INTERFERENCE. IT'S GETTING
MY RADAR, TOO. MAKE SURE
TSUGARU WATCHES HERS! I'LL
SEE IF I CAN FILTER THIS.>

**Load
cockpit!**



VWORP!




Prepare
for dock!

Bullseye!

Eukran4e,
eat your
heart4 out4

Stage 1
complete!
Happy!

TSUGARU - DID YOU COPY THAT?
CHECK YOUR RADAR! DOES IT WORK?



Just a sec...

Loading
drones!

...Tsugaru 40 Sideswipe - Radar is really noisy!

I'll run some maneuvers and
track my drones.

VWORP!

VWORP!

Descending 40 10,000 feet
Starting smoke generators!

SMOKE? WHAT FOR?



...NOW THAT'S
JUST SHOWING
OFF.

Activate
interlocks!



⇒POW!⇐

Detach
Comet
and Cupid
units!



Sideswipe-
The radar works!
I've got a lock on
Comet...



⇒KERCHUNK!⇐

Rudolf unit,
combine!

Blitzen unit,
combine!



⇒BRZT!⇐

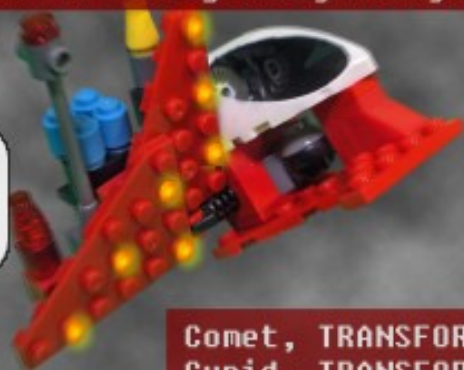
Fire main
thrusters!

WROOOOAR!

Whoa!
That did it!

Crazy radar
snowstorm,
Sideswipe!

Activate antigravity allay!



**Comet, TRANSFORM!
Cupid, TRANSFORM!**

SAN DIEGO THINKS
IT'S THE PLASMA
THRUSTERS, TSUGU.
THEY MUST BE
GENERATING A TON
OF MICROWAVES!

Slag! I'll be slow-cooked!
I don't want to be stew!



TSUGARU, STAY CALM. WE'VE STILL GOT RADIO, SO IT'S PROBABLY IN THE UPPER BANDS. MOSTLY SURFACE HEATING. YOU FEEL A SORT OF OVERALL WARM TINGLE?

Well, yeah, a little. Nothing major...



Sled rockets off!
Prepare for dock!



I mean...no more than I usually feel when I'm flying... normal, right?



SUCCESS!

Deploy
lunches
cover!



Engage bypass fans!

Retract
antigravity
array!



COMBINATION HAS COMPLETE! LET'S BLOW THINGS!

Oo-kay k-man.

So, Sideswipe-
what now?

POINT IT AT THE SKY
AND FIREWALL IT!



That's a big wilco!

YOU MUST
THINK YOU'RE
REAL CUTE!

Yep



Full throttle,
all engines!



Chase the
sun with me!



SHOOOM!



Four-zero, 40,000 feet
and climbing!

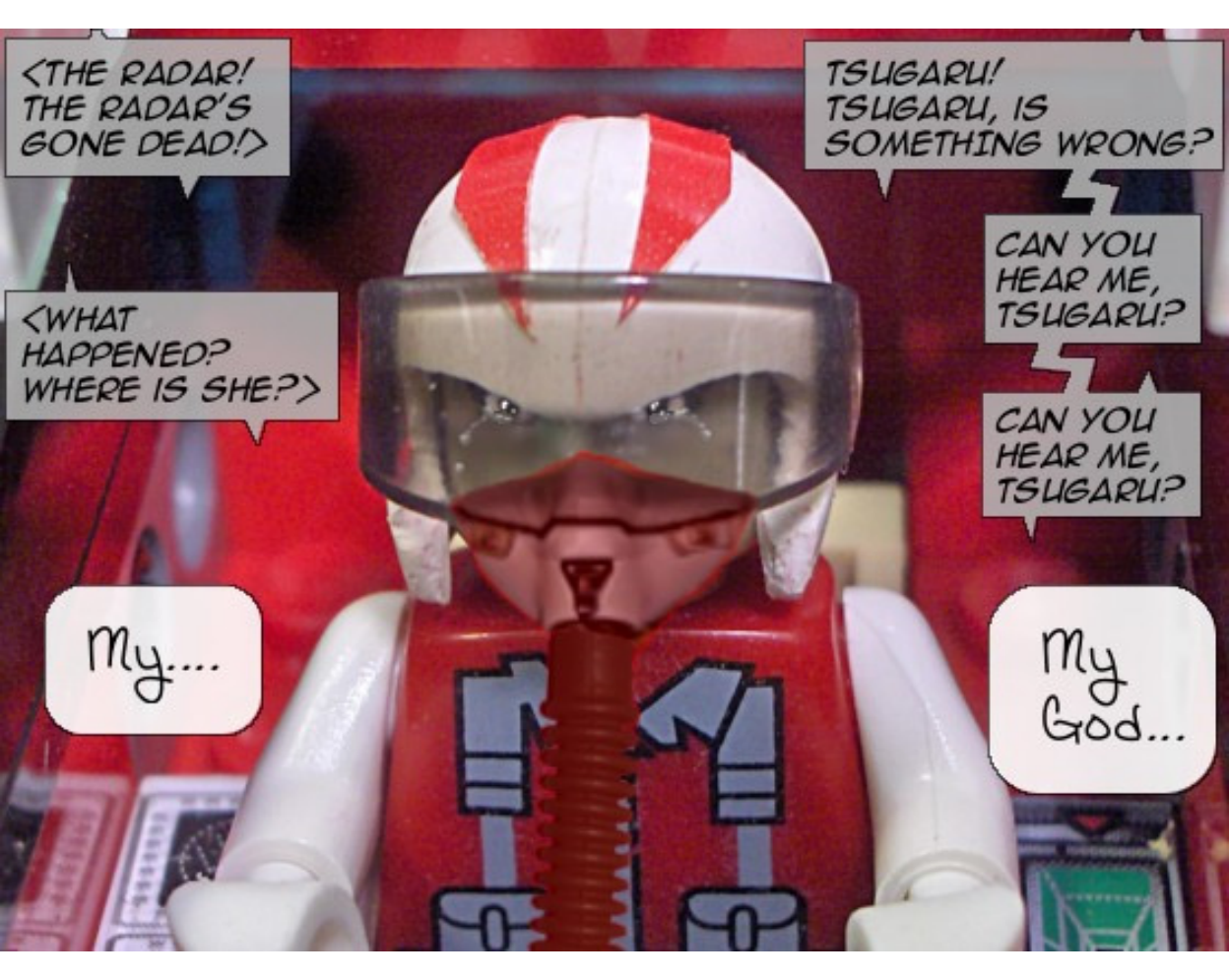


Yee-haw!

250,000 and still climbing! Rams at full extension! Starting anti-gravity array, and preparing to...



Oh, my...



<THE RADAR!
THE RADAR'S
GONE DEAD!>

TSUGARU!
TSUGARU, IS
SOMETHING WRONG?

<WHAT
HAPPENED?
WHERE IS SHE?>

CAN YOU
HEAR ME,
TSUGARU?

CAN YOU
HEAR ME,
TSUGARU?

My....

My
God...

Konami
The world...



...it's so
beautiful

PHOTO COURTESY NASA WITH ALTERATIONS BY AUTOBUS PRIME

<OH YEAH! LIFTOFF!
THE BIRD'S IN THE AIR!>*

WHISTLE!

=WHIRR!<

POCKETA
QWEEP!



HIGHWAY TO THE
DANGER ZONE!

RIDE INTO THE
DANGER ZONE!

=HIGHFIVE!<

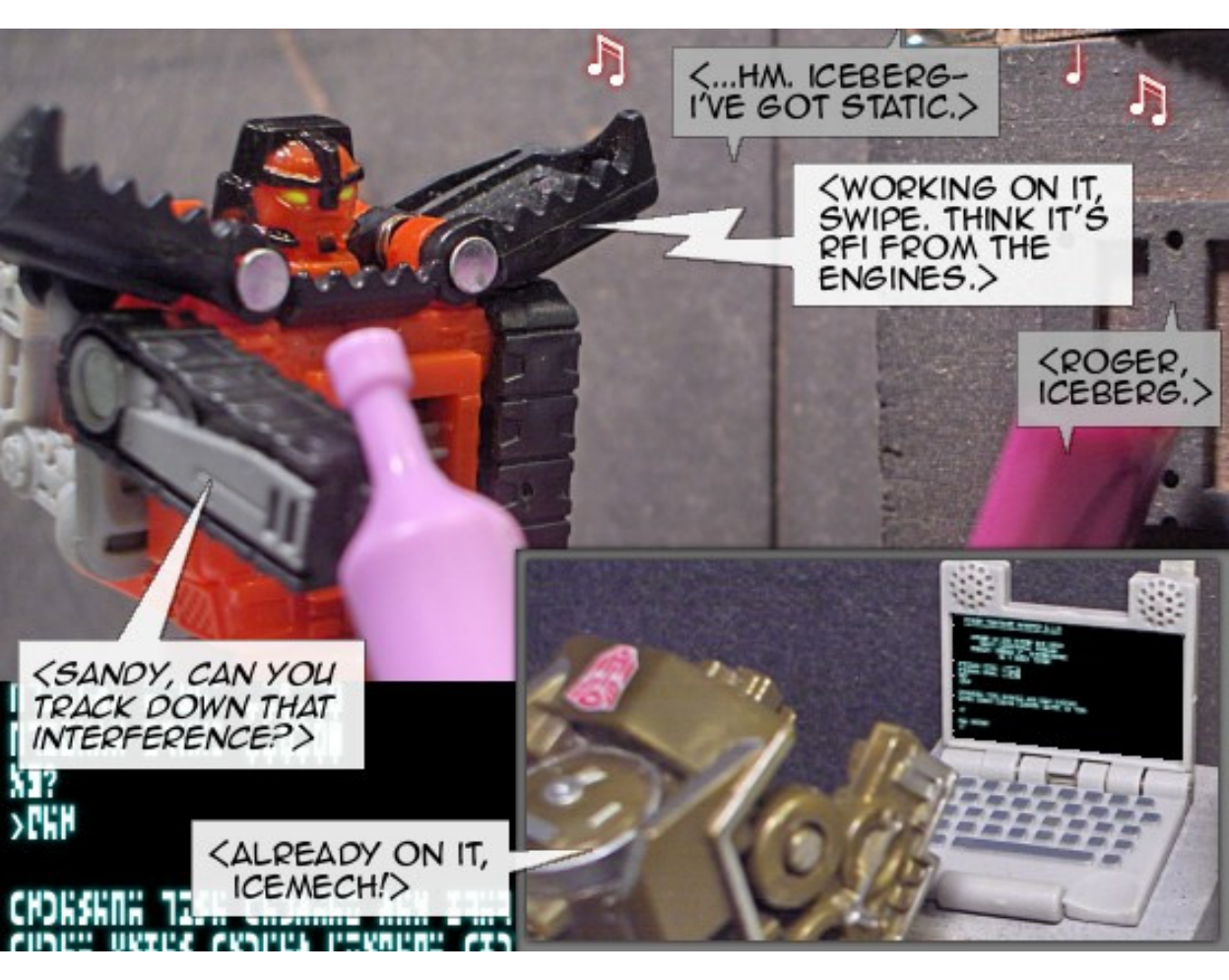
BEEP BEEP!

DEEDLE
BEEP!

HONK!

=FISTBUMP!<

*TRANSLATED FROM MICRONESE - AP



<...HM. ICEBERG-
I'VE GOT STATIC.>

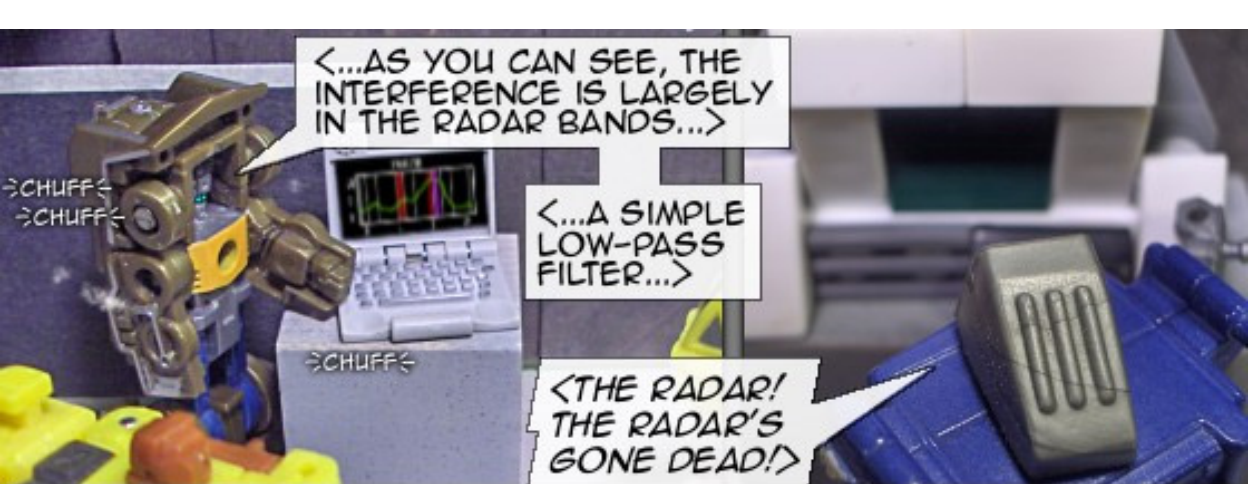
<WORKING ON IT,
SWIPE. THINK IT'S
RFI FROM THE
ENGINES.>

<ROGER,
ICEBERG.>

<SANDY, CAN YOU
TRACK DOWN THAT
INTERFERENCE?>

<ALREADY ON IT,
ICEMECH!>





<WHAT
HAPPENED?
WHERE IS SHE?>

<I...I DON'T KNOW! SHE
HIT 250,000, THEN...
WHAM! BLACKOUT!>



CAN YOU
HEAR ME,
TSUGARU?

CAN YOU
HEAR ME,
TSUGARU?

<WHY ISN'T SHE
ANSWERING
SIDESWIPE?>

<WHAT IS
GOING ON?>

<DO NOT PANIC, ICEBERG-SAN.
THE EYES MAY BE BLIND, BUT
THE FISTS WILL BE READY.>

<COME WITH ME, FRIENDS!
OUR PLACE IS OUTSIDE.>

>SCHLUFF<

<THANKS
KOBUSHI!>

<I WONDER IF WE
SHOULD ALERT THE
COMMANDER...>

<ONLY IF IT
GETS BAD,
SANDY!>

ICEBERG LITTLE RECKONS HOW BAD 'IT' IS ABOUT TO GET!
ABOVE THE CLOUDS, A STORM APPROACHES...
A CYCLONE OF METAL...A NIMBUS WITH A NAME...

THE THUNDER FORCE!

RAMJET...



DIRGE...



...AND STANDING IN FOR THE
TETRAJET THUNDERCRACKER,
THE MIGHTY WARRIOR REDSHIRT!



WHAT THE HEX
JUST HAPPENED
TO MY RADAR?!



HEY, GUYS? I WANT YOU TO KNOW
THAT IT WAS TOTALLY COOL OF YOU
TO TAKE ME ALONG!
YOU'RE THE GREATEST!



**DON'T
MENTION IT.**



OH, DON'T MIND HIM, REDSHIRT.
HE'S JUST CRANKY BECAUSE HIS
SANDMAN COMICS GOT STOLEN.



VERY FUNNY,
RAMJET.

...ESPECIALLY AS IT
WAS YOU WHO TOOK
THEM.

OF COURSE I DID.
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO
MAKE FUN OF YOU IF I
DON'T DO RESEARCH...

...YOU MORPHEUS
WANNABE!

ALSO, DEATH
IS KIND OF...

WHAT THE HEX
JUST HAPPENED
TO MY RADAR?!





NOISY, RIGHT? THAT'S THE STANIX RADIO ANOMALY, KID. TUNE YOUR RADIO TO 573 KHZ. WHAT DO YOU HEAR?

UH...KIND OF A LOUD WHISTLE.

THAT'S HOW YOU KNOW. NOISE ALL OVER THE UPPER BANDS, ONE SPIKE AT 573 KHZ.

TURN YOUR RADAR OFF. IT'LL PASS SOON.



HOW DID YOU PACK ALL THAT INTO YOUR POINTY HEAD?



BY LISTENING TO SPARKSTALKER AT THE BRIEFINGS - WHEN CERTAIN OTHERS WERE WRITING POETRY ON NAPKINS!

IT WAS GOOD POETRY!

AND HAD YOU REALLY LISTENED,
YOU WOULD KNOW THAT THE STANIX
RADIO ANOMALY IS ASSOCIATED WITH
STRONG STORMS IN THIS REGION...

WHICH WE HAVE NOT HAD FOR MONTHS!



WELL, WE'RE
ABOUT TO
HAVE A
WHOPPER...

OR SHOULD
I SAY...



≧COUGH≦

...THE DARK
SKIES SHALL
WEEP TEARS
OF FROST...



UH...HEY, SORRY TO INTERRUPT...

...BUT MY INFRARED SENSORS JUST
SPOTTED TWO MICROS ON THE
GROUND...

WAIT... THAT'S WEIRD...



WHAT'S WEIRD, REDSHIRT?



WELL, I ZOOMED IN FOR A VISUAL CHECK...



...AND I THINK ONE OF THEM HAS A BLANKET AND A COOLER.

HA! A FINE DAY FOR A PICNIC...
UNTIL WE BRING THE THUNDER
AND THE DARK RAIN OF DEATH!

YOU'RE REALLY TRYING, AREN'T YOU, DIRGE?

YOU SAY THERE'S
TWO OF 'EM?

YES, RAMJET. A BLUE OLDTYPE
AND A SILVER SPORTS CAR.

GROUNDPOUNDERS. I'LL
TAKE ONE, YOU TAKE ONE.
YOUR CHOICE, REDSHIRT!

I'VE GOT
THE CAR!

DIRGE, YOU STAY HERE.
PAINT YOUR NAILS OR
SOMETHING.

DO NOT PROVOKE ME,
RAMJET. MY ANGER
IS SLOW, BUT -

OH, STUFF IT UP YOUR JETS.





NOW,
LISTEN,
KID...

...WE ARE
GOING IN
LOW AND
FAST, DO
YOU COPY?

AFFIRMATIVE,
RAMJET, BUT
THUNDERCRACKER
SAID...

FORGET WHAT THAT COAL-BURNER SAID!
THE SKY IS OUR CASTLE! WE RULE LIKE
KINGS, AND WE FIGHT LIKE MECHS!

THIS IS THE DAY YOU MAKE YOUR NAME!

"ATTACK!"

KRAKOOOM!





SEEKERS!

SEEKERS!
WE'RE
UNDER
ATTACK!

MAYDAY!
MAYDAY!

TOO SLOW,
ANTIQUE!

BRAKKARAKKARAKKA

"MAYDAY--"

SPAKK!

SPAKK!

SPAKK!

SPAKK!

SPAKK!

SPAKK!



IIROOOAR!



THAT'S COOL
SKYWRITING!
I WONDER WHO
MADE IT!

HERE WE GO!
LOW AND FAST!

THERE'S
THE TARGET!

ACTIVATE IR
SCANNER!

THIS ONE
WILL COUNT!



THERE'S
THE SPARK!

0000 0000

ALMOST
IN RANGE...

0000 0000
0000 0000
0000 0000

0000 0000
0000 0000
0000 0000

0000 0000
0000 0000

YAHOO!
SCRATCH ONE,
REDSHIRT!

COPY, RAMJET!
GREAT JOB!

GOSH!
HE'S NOT
EVEN MOVING!

MUST NOT
HEAR ME OVER
THE WIND!





THIS IS GONNA
BE A CINCH!



REDSHIRT'S
AIM IS DEADLY...



HE IS ALMOST
IN RANGE...
AND VICTORY
IS CERTAIN!



...BUT IN A
SINGLE FLUID
MOTION,
SIDESWIPE
SNAPS INTO
AUTO MODE...



TOSSING THE
BURNING RAG
INTO HIS
COOLER OF
ENERGON...



KRAKOOM!

FORWARD
SPRINGS
THE SILVER
SPORTSCAR!

...WARMED
BY THE SHOT
THAT ROARS
HARMLESSLY
OVERHEAD!

**BUT BEFORE
REDSHIRT
CAN REACT-**

KAWHOOME!

**THE COOLER
ERUPTS WITH
BLAZING
LUMINANCE!**

FOR A MOMENT,
THE SEEKER'S
OPTICS ARE
DAZZLED!



GYAAAGH!
ICE CREAM
HEADACHE!

...IN THE CONFUSION,
THE SILVER SPEEDSTER
HAS A CHANCE TO ESCAPE...

VAROOM!



...A CHANCE
HE DOES NOT
TAKE!



SILVER SPORTS CAR...

SILVER SPORTS CAR...

SLAG! SILVER SPORTS CAR!



KACHUNK!



RAMJET! RAMJET!
SIDESWIPE!
YOU SENT THE KID
AFTER SIDESWIPE!



SLAG!



RRIP!

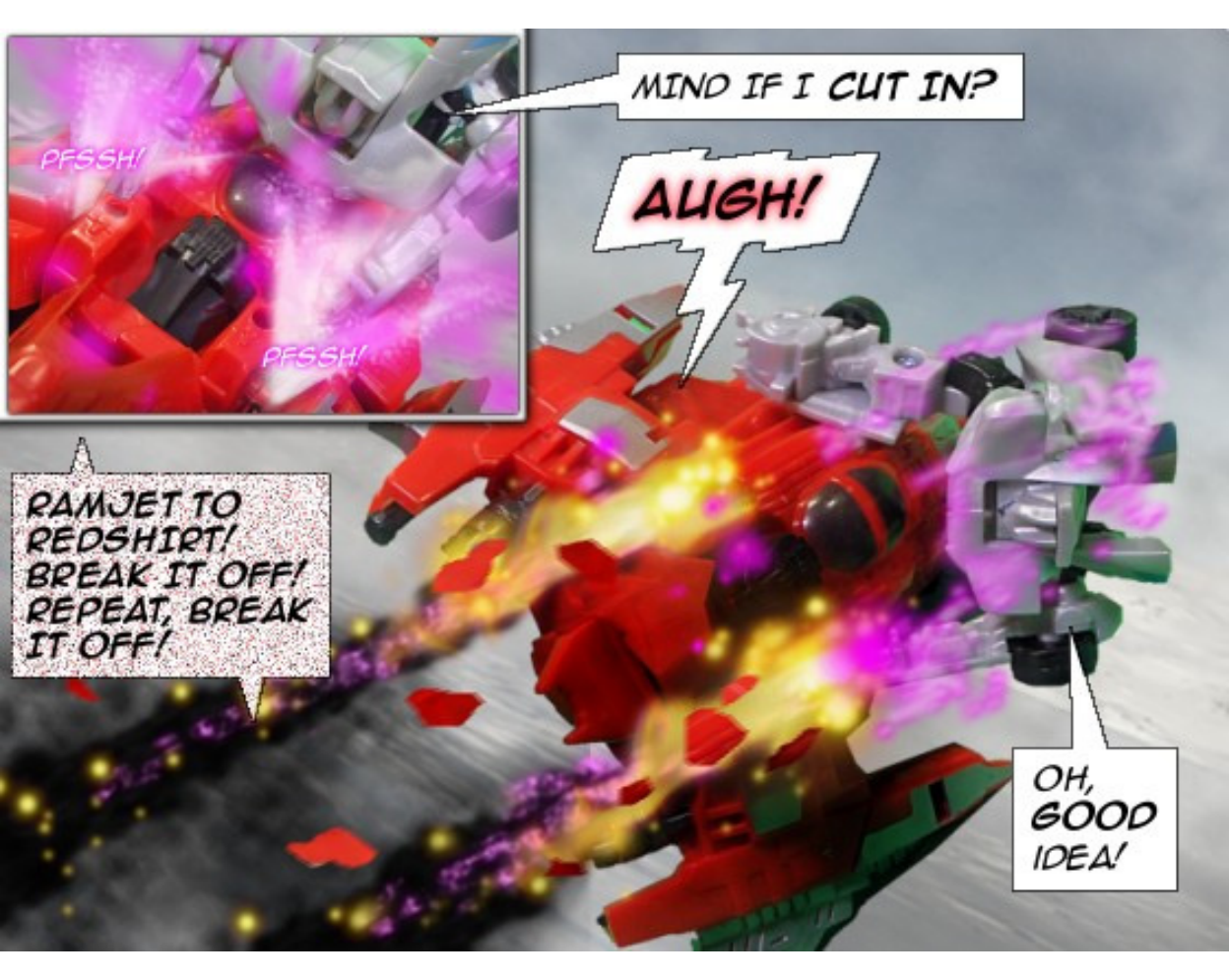


WHOOSH!



CLANK!

WHAT THE HEX?!



MIND IF I CUT IN?

ALIGH!

RAMJET TO
REDSHIRT!
BREAK IT OFF!
REPEAT, BREAK
IT OFF!

OH,
GOOD
IDEA!

EEAUGH!
MY WING!

HAVE A
NICE
CRASH,
SEEKER
SCUM!

RAMJET!
DIRGE!
HELP!

PLEASE!

DIRGE! RAMJET!
I'M GOING TO -

CRASH!

POOR
BASTARD.



<SIDESWIPE!

...YOU'RE A MESS!>

<TSUGARU!
WHERE IS SHE?>

<WE DON'T KNOW!
THE RADAR PREAMP WAS FRIED!
CAN'T CONTACT HER, EITHER. NO
LONG-RANGE RADIO!

ICEBERG HAD TO TAKE THE
RADIO REPEATER DOWN TO
WORK ON THE PREAMP!>

<SLAG!>

<DYNATRON...
IS HE ALIVE?>

<HE'S HANGING ON. LIFTOR
AND KOBUSHI ARE LOOKING
AFTER HIM. THEY'LL JOIN US
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.>

<THAT BETTER
BE SOON! WE
ARE IN DEEP,
DEEP SLUDGE,
GRINDOR!>

<RAMJET'S
DEFINITELY UP
THERE...DIRGE,
TOO, I'M
PRETTY SURE...>



<AND WE CAN'T
WARN TSUGU...>

<PRIMUS!
I HOPE SHE'S
ALL RIGHT!>



THE SILVER
SUPERCAR
SCANS THE
SKY, OPTICS
STRAINING
VAINLY TO
PIERCE THE
GATHERING
CLOUDS...

...TO THE SKY'S
VERY TOP, WHERE
TSUGARU SOARS...



...CAUGHT UP IN
BLISSFUL AWE...

EACH STAR IS A BLAZING JEWEL, SET IN DEEPEST BLACK;
ALPHA CENTAURI'S BURNING RADIANCE FLOODS THE NIGHT,
SPLASHING UPON THE PONDEROUS ORBS OF TWIN MOONS,
ILLUMINATING THE CLOUDS BELOW WITH PAINFUL BRILLIANCE.

LOST IN WONDER, TSUGARU GAZES,
AND UNDERSTANDING BEGINS TO GROW...



...ALL THIS GLORY, ALL THIS BEAUTY, IS
BUT THE TINIEST FRAGMENT OF THE
VAST UNIVERSE - THE VERY UNIVERSE
SHE HAS BEEN ORDERED TO PROTECT!

THE HOPES OF HALF A TRILLION GALAXIES RIDE WITH HER!
IN EACH, BILLIONS OF STARS - UNNUMBERED WORLDS AND
COUNTLESS LIVES - ALL WITH DREAMS, LOVES, AND
STORIES YET UNWRITTEN!

...AND WHAT HAS TSUGARU
TO OFFER THEM?



...TWO Z-PINCH PLASMA RIFLES, TWO ELECTROMAGNETIC LAUNCHERS,
EIGHT GUIDED BOMBS, TWO HEATSEEKING MISSILES, TWO RADAR
HOMING MISSILES, FOUR BEAM CANNONS, TWO ROTARY CANNONS
AND TWO AUTOMATIC RIFLES...

...WELL, OKAY, IT SOUNDS LIKE A LOT IF YOU
PUT IT THAT WAY. TRY TO WORK WITH ME HERE.

NEXT TO THE INTREPID
GYNOID'S ARSENAL,
RAMJET SEEMS
POORLY EQUIPPED...

TWO AUTOCANNONS
AND TWO RATHER
UNIQUE WEAPONS...

SOME CALL THESE
CLUSTER BOMBS...OTHERS,
CONCUSSION MISSILES.

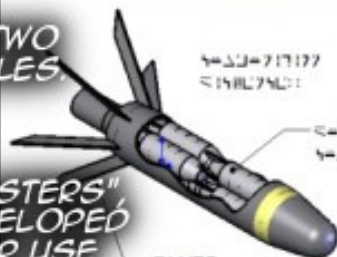
PERHAPS IT IS TIME TO SET
THE RECORD STRAIGHT...
THEY ARE BOTH!



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HE IS CARRYING TWO
TS/TR-85 MISSILES.

NICKNAMED "TOASTERS"
THESE WERE DEVELOPED
SPECIFICALLY FOR USE
AGAINST MICRONS...

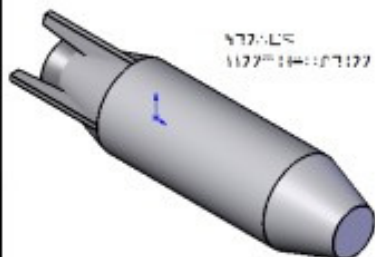


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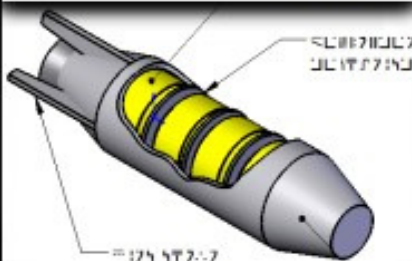
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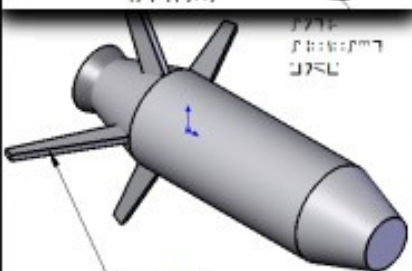
הקטור
המרכזי



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*FIRE FROM A DISTANCE, THE TS/TR-85
DEPLOYS SIX SMALL RADAR-HOMING
MISSILES.*

*ONE OF THESE BROUGHT TSUGARU DOWN
IN HER PREVIOUS BATTLE.*

*EACH MISSILE CAN ALSO DISPENSE ITS
PAYLOAD AS FOUR SENSOR-FUZED
PROJECTILES - "BRD" FOR "BOMB,
REMOTELY DEPLOYED."*

...NICKNAMED "BREAD", OF COURSE.

*FALLING, THESE SCAN FOR GROUND
TARGETS AND FIRE A KINETIC PENETRATOR,
OR, FAILING TO ACQUIRE, EXPLODE INTO
LETHAL FRAGMENTS.*

*THE DESIGN IS INGENUOUS, EFFECTIVE...
AND COMPLEX, WITH ROCKET MOTORS
SENSORS, AND PLENTY OF ELECTRONICS
EVERYWHERE.*

REMEMBER THAT.

ALL THIS TECHNOLOGY DOES NOT COME CHEAP.
INDEED, EACH "TOASTER" COSTS FULLY AS MUCH
AS RAISING SIX TARGETS FROM PROTOFORMS.

DIRGE APPRECIATES THIS GRIM IRONY.

RAMJET HIMSELF HAS LITTLE USE FOR IRONY,
AND HE JUST DOESN'T LIKE HIS "TOASTERS".



ATTACKING FROM A DISTANCE ISN'T
HIS STYLE. HE'D RATHER RAM THE
TARGET...OR GET DOWN ON THE DECK
AND STRAFE IT TO ATOMS!

BUT THIS STYLE JUST SENT A COMRADE INTO THE GROUND...

*A ROOKIE WITH A TON OF POTENTIAL AND A FRIENDLY WORD
FOR EVERYBODY, EVEN DIRGE...*

*A SCARED KID WHOSE LAST WORDS ARE NOW ETCHED
IN RAMJET'S MEMORY CHIPS...*

*....FOR IT WAS RAMJET WHO SAW THAT POTENTIAL,
WHO PULLED STRINGS TO BRING THE KID ALONG...*

*...AND IT WAS RAMJET WHO TOLD HIM TO IGNORE
HIS TRAINING AND FLY IN LOW...AT AN ENEMY THAT
RAMJET SHOULD HAVE RECOGNIZED AS DEADLY...*

...AND DIRGE, WELL...

LET'S JUST SAY DIRGE ISN'T HELPING MUCH...



WHERE IS SIDESWIPE?
I'LL KILL THAT FRAGGER!

REDSHIRT IS DEAD,
DIRGE! SIDESWIPE
KILLED HIM!

HA HA!
DON'T WORRY, RAMJET.
I'M SURE HE'LL CONCEDE
YOU THE *ASSIST*.

LOOK NEAR THAT SMOKE PLUME,
WASN'T IT HELPFUL OF REDSHIRT
TO LEAVE THAT FOR YOU?



ADRIFT IN REVERIE AT THE EDGE OF SPACE,
TSUGARU WONDERES AT HER OLD SELF...

DID SHE EXPECT TO SAVE THE UNIVERSE?
WHAT MONSTROUS ARROGANCE!

HER DESTINY IS AS VECTOR PRIME SAID...
FAIL, AND JOIN THE ALLSPARK, OR WHATEVER
AWAITS HER KIND...

MIGHT AS WELL MEET IT
IN THIS BEAUTIFUL PLACE!



ABSENT ANY CONTROL INPUTS, HER FIGHTER
HOLDS ITS STEADY COURSE, SWIFT AND SMOOTH
IN THE RAREFIED AIR.

BEREFT OF THE BASE SIGNAL, HER RADIO
SCANS THROUGH FREQUENCIES...

AND HER OXYGEN SLOWLY RUNS DOWN.

FAR BELOW THE DRIFTING PILOT, THE CHURNING CLOUDS HAVE UNLEASHED THEIR FURY! RAMJET KNIFES THROUGH AN ICY STORM, STRAFING WILDLY AND WITHOUT AIM, HEADLESS OF THE STACCATO CRACK OF SMALL-ARMS FIRE, BLINDED BY SLEET AND WIND, BY RAGE AND HORROR!



I'LL KILL YOU,
SIDESWIPE!
I'LL CUT YOU
TO METAL
SHAVINGS!



HA-HA! YES, THAT'S
THE GENERAL IDEA, RAMJET!
TOO BAD YOU STARTED OFF
WITH REDSHIRT! HA-HA-HA!

ABOVE THE STORM, LOST IN DREAMS,
TSUGARU SUDDENLY HEARS HER RADIO
CRACKLE TO LIFE!



SHE HEARS A NAME...
ONE SHE KNOWS, AND LOVES...

I'LL KILL YOU,
SIDESWIPE!

SHE HEARS A LAUGH.

HA-HA-HA!

A DULL, JOYLESS
CACKLE...



SHE KNOWS IT...
AND DETESTS IT!

...AND SUDDENLY TSUGARU SEES HER PATH!

SHE CAN'T SAVE
EVERYONE...

...BUT SHE CAN
SAVE SIDESWIPE!

SHE CAN'T FIX
EVERYTHING...

...BUT SHE CAN
WIPE THAT SMIRK
OFF DIRGE'S
UGLY MUG!

...AND IF SHE JOINS THE ALLSPARK,
SHE'LL GO DOWN **FIGHTING!**

I'm coming
Sideswipes!



SHROOOAR!



Seekers! They couldn't
have known about this!
On patrol, probably!

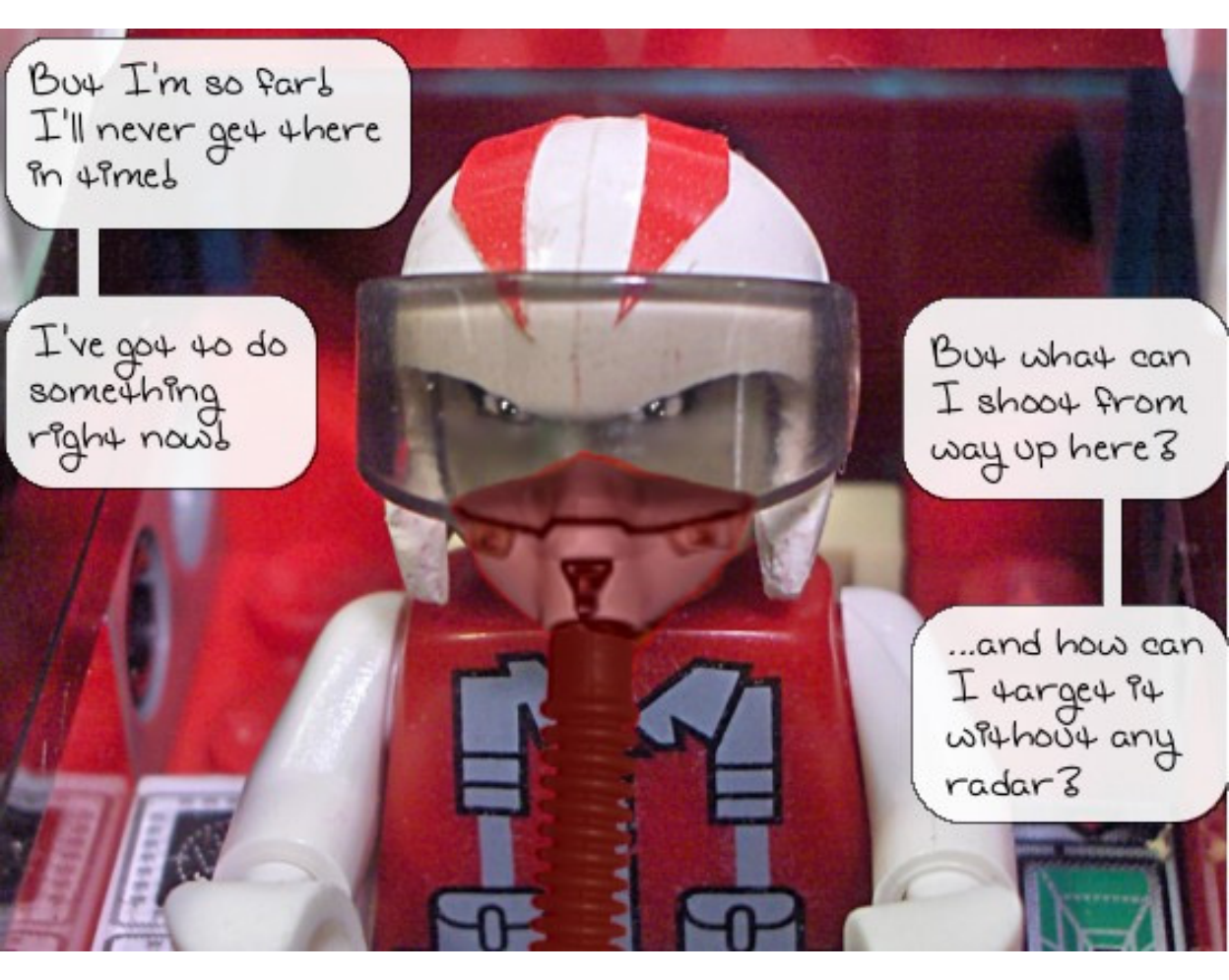
I'll surprise
them...

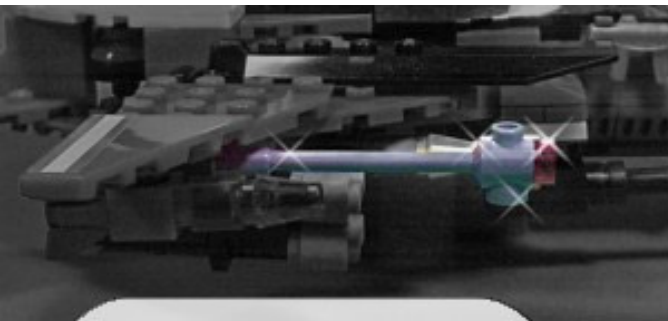
But I'm so far
I'll never get there
in time

I've got to do
something
right now

But what can
I shoot from
way up here?

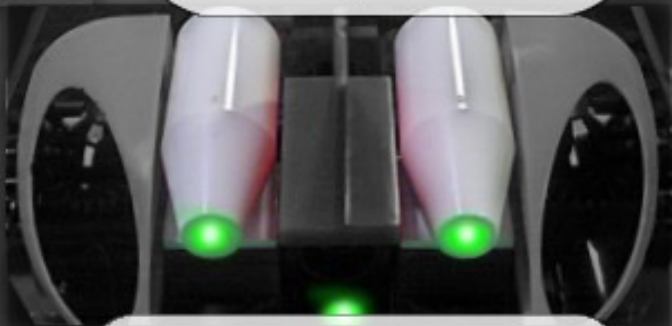
...and how can
I target it
without any
radar?





The zeta-pinch rifles
can reach that far—
and their capacitors
hold enough energy for
one firing...

If I shut off the ion
overthrusters for a bit,
I can probably lock on
before the ship gets too
unstable...



It's going to be hard
to see anything through
this mess...

...but it's
worth a shot



"Konami! I hope it's not too late!"



TSUGARU! TSUGARU!
THIS IS SIDESWIPE!
DO YOU COPY?

TSUGARU!

<GET READY, SWIPER!
HE'S COMING BACK AROUND!>

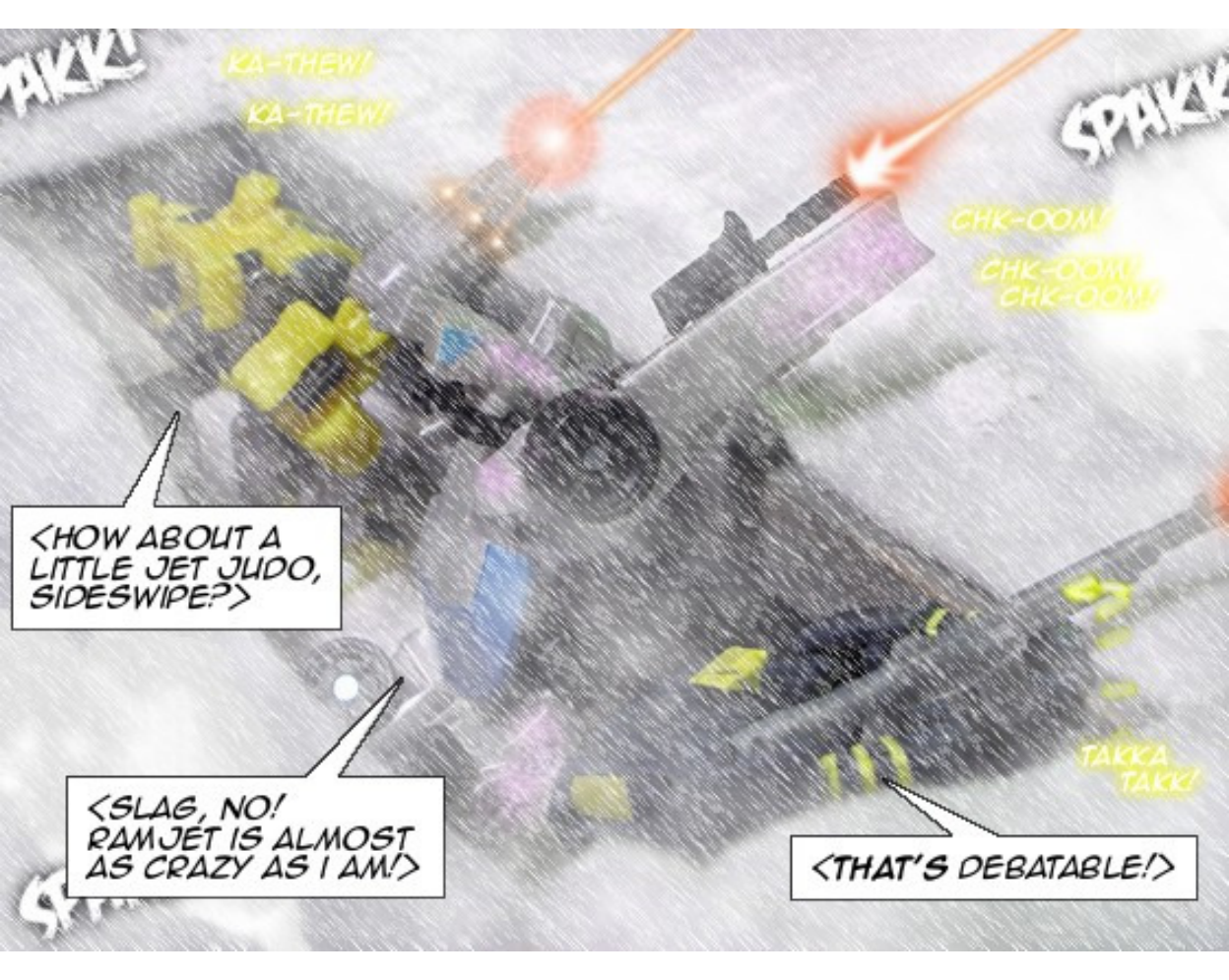


<I'M SURE
SHE'S OKAY!>

<MAYBE SHE IS!
HIS RADAR'S OUT.>

<HOW CAN YOU TELL?>

<HE'S FLYING LIKE AN IDIOT,
IT ISN'T RAINING BOMBS,
AND WE'RE NOT DEAD.>



<HOW ABOUT A
LITTLE JET JUDO,
SIDESWIPE?>

<SLAG, NO!
RAMJET IS ALMOST
AS CRAZY AS I AM!>

<THAT'S DEBATABLE!>

GHHRARRGH! AKKARAKKA

**DIE, YOU LITTLE GLITCH!
DIE! DIE! DIE! DIE!**



HA, HA, HA!
MAYBE YOU SHOULD TRY
ASKING NICELY, RAMJET!

BRAKKARAKKARAKKE

TO LIVE ONE MORE MOMENT...IN THE MIDST OF TERROR AND DEATH...
TO THIS HOPE THE MICRONS CLING, POURING FIRE AGAINST FIRE...
...AND THEN THE STORM BEGINS TO DIE!



<SLAG!>

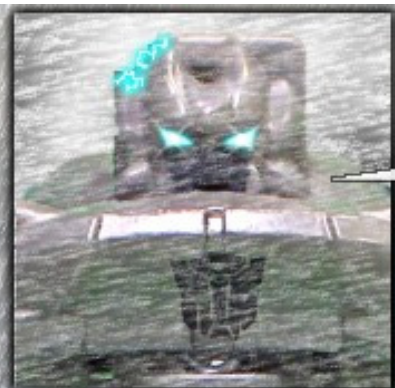
<MONOCLE! GET YOUR
DAYGLO AFT DOWN!>

BUT BEFORE THE
RAGING RAMJET
CAN PRESS HIS
ADVANTAGE...

KREKKA-
ZAMM!



YEAUGH!



<ALIVE!>

<SLAG IT,
SHE'S ALIVE!>

AAAARGH!

DIRGE! DIRGE!
I'VE BEEN STRUCK
BY LIGHTNING!

I CAN'T FEEL MY WING!



LIGHTN-HA! HAHA!
HAHAHAHA!

AW, DOES THE
WIDDLE SEEKER
HAVE A BOO BOO?

HAHAHAHA! DON'T CRY,
WIDDLE WAMJET! DO YOU
WANT DIWGE TO KISS IT
BETTER? HAHAHAHAHAHA!

CRY?!

CRY?!!

I'LL MAKE YOUR
TAILPLANES CRY,
YOU SON OF A
SUCTION PUMP!



RAMJET, WAIT! YOU'RE
NOT THINKING RIGHT!
THE LIGHTNING MUST HAVE
SCRAMBLED YOUR CIRCUITS!

NOT THE SLIGHTEST
BIT, DIRGE!




YOU'VE ASKED FOR
THIS FOR YEARS, AND
NOW YOU'RE GOING
TO GET IT!

...I'M ...SORRY?

WAY TOO LATE! MY TOASTER'S
GOT YOUR NAME ON IT!

DIRGE IS WRONG. IT WASN'T LIGHTNING AT ALL. IT WAS A VOLLEY OF PLASMA TOROIDS AT 3% OF LIGHT SPEED, PRODUCING MINOR BURNING AND MASSIVE ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSES UPON IMPACT.

RAMJET'S WELL-SHIELDED BRAIN REMAINS AS UNSTABLE AS EVER, BUT SOME CIRCUITS TOOK DAMAGE. DIRGE'S NAME MAY BE DOWN FOR ONE MISSILE, BUT THE OTHER CAN'T BE FIRED! HOWEVER...




IT LITERALLY DOES HAVE A NAME ON IT...AND THE NAME?

MUDSLINGER!




A MICRON...
FORMER LAB
ASSISTANT TO
OVERCAST...

...THE NAME OF A CAPABLE AND
DEDICATED WORKER...A NAME
RUBBED OUT WHEN A BOMB
EXPLODED DURING ASSEMBLY...



BUT HE LEFT HIS MARK.

MUDSLINGER ASSEMBLED THIS
PARTICULAR MISSILE WITH A SMALL
UPGRADE. A RATHER CRUCIAL FILTER
CAPACITOR WAS REPLACED WITH A
SIMPLE, ROBUST SUBSTITUTE...



A PAPER CLIP.

IT WORKED...PERFECTLY. WHEN THE EMP HIT, LEAKAGE IGNITED A ROCKET,
AND IT BEGAN GETTING TOASTY INSIDE THE TOASTER'S CASING!
...RAMJET, HIS WING NUMBED, DOES NOT FEEL THIS,
AND IT'S NOT THE ONLY THING HE'S MISSING...



<HE'S
COMING
BACK!>

<HOLD YOUR
FIRE! THAT'S
NO SEEKER!>





YEAH!

**GIVE 'EM
HELL,
SHINKI!**



WHOOOSH!

**RUST IN HELL,
SLUMP SUCKER!**

**RAMJET! STOP!
DON'T DO THIS!**

**TRY AND
STOP M-**

WHOMP!

**THERE
IT IS!**



DIRGE AND RAMJET
DON'T ALWAYS
GET ALONG.

WEEEEOW!

RAMJET!



BUT RAMJET SAVED DIRGE,
JUST MONTHS AGO...

...AND NOW IT'S DIRGE'S TURN.



HIS MOTIVES ARE PURELY ALTRUISTIC.
HE'S NOT THINKING OF BLACKMAIL, OR A CHANCE
TO ADVANCE HIS OWN STAR AT RAMJET'S EXPENSE...

NOT YET...



RAMJET IS HAVING A BAD DAY.

IT ISN'T EVEN LUNCHTIME, AND HE HAS
LED A COMRADE TO DISASTER, MADLY
WASTED MOST OF HIS AMMUNITION,
AND ASSASSINATED HIS REPUTATION.
HE HAS BEEN STRUCK BY LIGHTNING,
AND BLOWN UP BY HIS OWN MISSILE...



...AND HE'S BEEN RESCUED BY DIRGE.



HE REALLY NEEDS TO BREAK
SOMETHING RIGHT NOW...

...AND, RIGHT ON CUE...

DAKKA
DAKK!

SHROOOAR!

DAKKA
DAKK!

WHERE IN THE PIT
DID THAT COME FROM?!

WHO CARES?
I'LL SEND
IT BACK!

WAIT! IT'S
JAMMING
RADAR!

POW!

YOU'LL
MISS!

WHAT A
SHAME!

ZING!

SHROOOOM!

POW!

ZING!

I GUESS I'LL JUST
HAVE TO RAM IT!

<MOSHI MOSHI! HOTEL H->

<HULLO, SPARK! THIS IS MONOCLE!>

<MONOCLE!>

<HOW IS DYNATRON?>

<HE'S... BEING TAKEN
TO MICRONIA GENERAL,
RIGHT NOW...>

<DID YOU
REACH
MAGNUS?>

<YES, I
DID!>

<SUPER! NOW
STALL HIM
TEN MINUTES.>

<WHAT?>

<BIG RED BIRD. VERY RARE.
SIDESWIPE'S WATCHING IT.>

<AH. NO DISTURBANCES.>

<YES. MONOCLE OUT.>

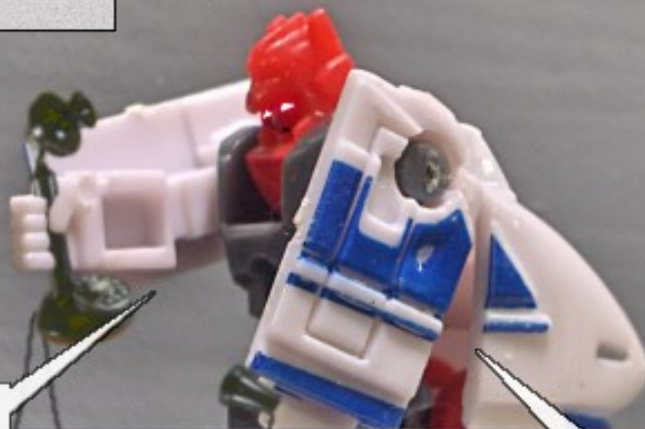
YOU'RE LISTENING
TO BLOCKROCK'S
ROCK BLOCK, ON
TWINCAST RADIO!

THAT WAS BONNIE
TRYLON, "HOLDING
OUT FOR A HERO!"

NOW LET'S TAKE
YOU STARVIN'
SHARKTICONS
INTO LUNCH HOUR
WITH A LITTLE
"HUNGER"!

DIG IN!

<STALL MAGNUS...
NOW HOW AM I
SUPPOSED TO
DO THAT?>





WHEN I SEE WHAT I WANT,
I'M GOING TO TAKE IT!

IF IT'S AGAINST SOME LAW,
YOU CAN BET I'LL BREAK IT!



MY NEED TO FEED
GIVES ME THE WILL TO SURVIVE!

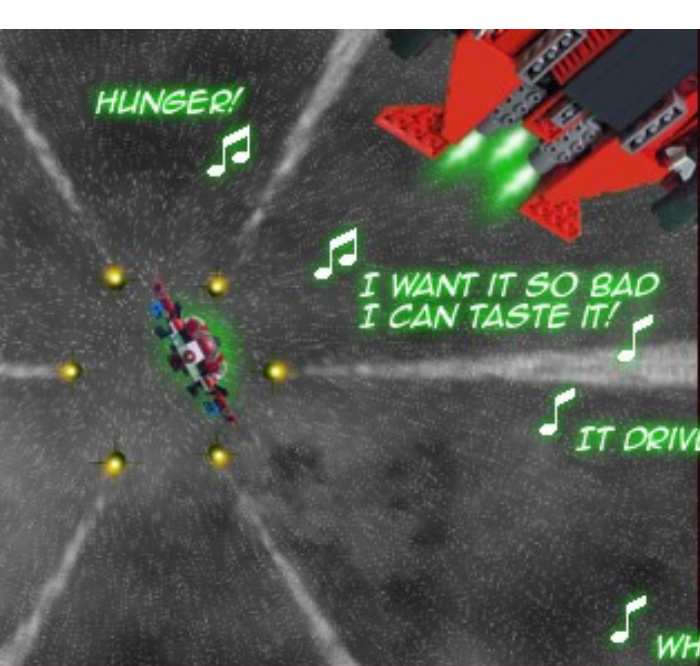


I GOTTA FIND IT FAST
TO KEEP ME ALIVE!



I CAN'T BELIEVE MY...







I'M HUNGRY!

SHROOOOAR!







HUNGER!

I WANT IT
SO BAD
I CAN...



KRRK!



TASTE IT!



KRRK!

IT DRIVES
ME MAD
TO SEE IT...



WASTED!



WHEN I NEED IT SO BAD THAT IT'S...





♪ BURN!
ING! ♪
♪ ME!



♪ I'M HUNGRY!
♪



♪ IT'S BURNING ME!
♪

Burn6







IT'S BURNING ME!
IT'S BURNING ME!

IT DIDN'T
MISS...
BEFORE...

BY THE PIT!
IT'S TOYING
WITH ME!

TIME IS RUNNING OUT AND I AIN'T FOUND IT YET!

IT'S BURNING ME!

NO!



I WILL NOT
ALLOW THIS!

TIME IS RUNNING OUT AND I AIN'T FOUND IT YET!

I MUST PREVAIL! BUT HOW?

I CANNOT OUTFLY
THIS MONSTER!

...NOT IN
THIS MODE,
WITH THIS
DAMAGE,
IN THIS
WEATHER...

WEATHER!
OF COURSE!

I'LL MAKE SOME WEATHER OF MY OWN!

IT'S BURNING ME!
-TIME IS RUNNING OUT
AND I AIN'T FOUND IT YET!

IT'S BURNING ME!
-TIME IS RUNNING OUT
AND I AIN'T FOUND IT YET!

IT'S BURNING ME!
-TIME IS RUNNING OUT
AND I AIN'T FOUND IT YET!

IT'S BURNING ME!
-TIME IS RUNNING OUT
AND I AIN'T FOUND IT YET!





I WILL PREVAIL!

IT'S BURNING ME!
-TIME IS RUNNING OUT
AND I AIN'T FOUND IT YET!

I AM DIRGE, THE
FEAR-MASTER!

BY DAY I WAKE
THE NIGHTMARE!

FROM THE
MIND'S LOST
DEEPS, I MINE
COLD DREAD!

...AND I AM
NOBODY'S
PLAYTHING!



THE SEEKER'S TIME
IS AT HAND!

FOUR MASSIVE CANNONS
SHALL SING HIS DIRGE...

Laugh this off,
Mister Happy!

BUT SUDDENLY...

CLOUD
NINE
BURST!



GOODNESS!
WHAT A NAME!

OH, WELL...

A MASSIVE PRESSURE WAVE ERUPTS
FROM THE SEEKER'S ENGINES!

WITH A TERRIFYING HOWL, THE SHOCKWAVE SLAMS INTO TSUGARU!

OWOOOOOOO!

HER CRAFT TUMBLES
LIKE A LEAF, AND AS SHE
FIGHTS FOR CONTROL,
ANOTHER WAVE HITS...

...AN UNSEEN WAVE
OF ELECTROMAGNETIC
RADIATION, AT ALL
POSSIBLE HARMONICS
OF 573 KILOHERTZ!

THIS PULSE IS DESIGNED TO
OVERLOAD EMOTIONAL DAMPERS,
FLOODING THE FEAR CIRCUITS...

IT'S NOT LETHAL TO CYBERTRONIANS,
AT LEAST NOT DIRECTLY...

...BUT TSUGARU ISN'T
FROM CYBERTRON.

DIRGE DID NOT
CHOOSE 573
KILOHERTZ.

THE FREQUENCY
WAS THE LAST
SELECTED...
STORED WHEN
RAMJET
PONTIFICATED
ABOUT THE
WEATHER...

...BUT HE IS
HORRIBLY
LUCKY!

TSUGARU
IS GIVEN LIFE
BY A SYSTEM
OF THREE
RESONANT
CRYSTALS...

...AND 573
KILOHERTZ IS
A CRITICAL
FREQUENCY!



THINK OF
IT AS A
HEART
ATTACK...
ONLY
WORSE!

DIRGE DOES NOT KNOW THIS.

HE DOES KNOW THAT HE HAS DOOMED HIMSELF.

BEARINGS SQUEAL AND BENT TURBINE
BLADES SCREECH AGAINST CRACKED
HOUSINGS. INSULATION BURNS FROM
WHITE-HOT WIRING!

HE MUST STOP!
HE MUST LAND!
AN ENGINE
FAILURE IS
CERTAIN DEATH!

BUT HE SEES HIS
ENEMY REELING,
AND THE THRILL OF
CONTROL SURGES
THROUGH HIM!

DIRGE INCREASES THE POWER...
AND DIRGE LAUGHS!

RESONANCE!
EVERY BEAT OF THE GYNOID'S TRIPARTITE HEART
MEETS A COUNTERPULSE FROM DIRGE!

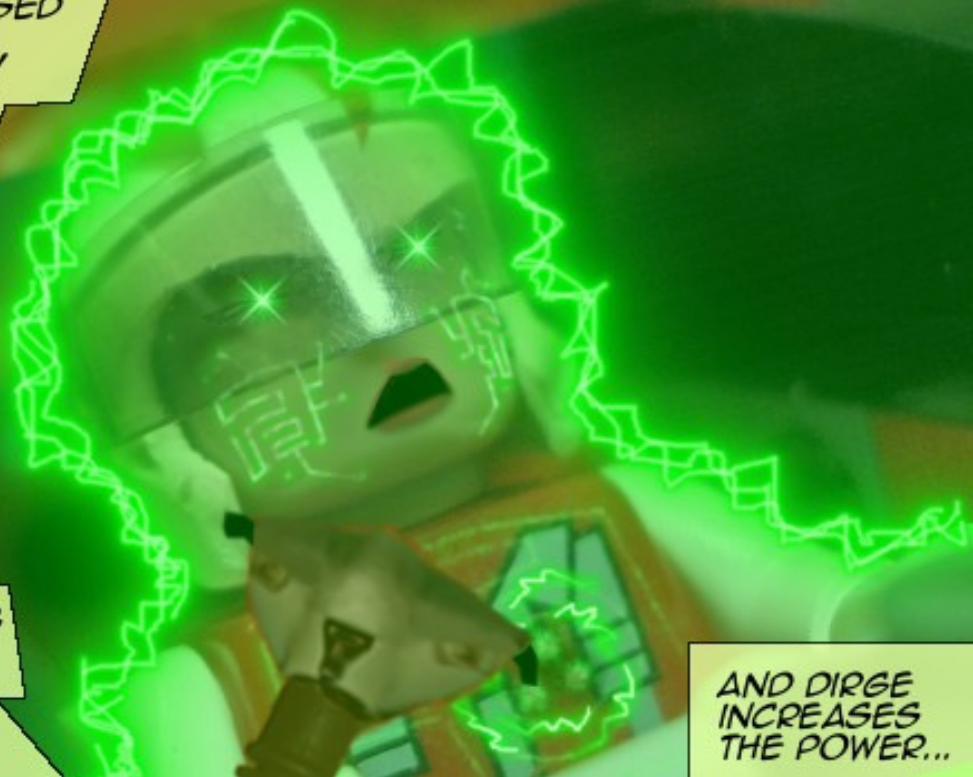
A SINGLE MISSED
BEAT AND ALL
WILL BE LOST!


NO MEMORY,
NO MIND,
NO LIFE.

ONLY A
BATTLE-
READY
BLANK
SLATE...

HER SYSTEMS
PUSH BACK
WITH AN
AGONIZING
OVERLOAD!

AND DIRGE
INCREASES
THE POWER...





THE STORM ITSELF SEEMS
TO HOWL IN SYMPATHETIC RAGE!
HURRICANE WINDS TOSS THE
COMBATANTS AS THEY TUMBLE
TOWARD EARTH!

DRIVING SLEET PELTS DIRGE!
ONLY THE FLAMES THAT
SLOWLY CONSUME HIS AIRFRAME
WARD OFF THE DEADLY ICE!

...HE LAUGHS, AND INCREASES THE POWER!

HER BODY IS ON FIRE!
EVERY CIRCUIT,
OVERLOADED!

THIS MUST STOP
OR ALL IS LOST!

COPPER DRIPS AND
STEEL BURNS! CHIPS
ARE POPPING, ONE
BY ONE!

IF THIS STOPS,
CONTROL IS LOST!

DIRGE SCREAMS, AND INCREASES POWER...

OOPS!

KRAKK!

KABLAAM!

KABLAAM!

**"BY THE PIT,
WHAT -?"**

**"ITS BOMBS!
THEY EXPLODED!"**



IT'S...IT'S BARELY
SCRATCHED!

DIRGE SUDDENLY
FEELS VERY COLD...



AND TSUGARU
FEELS...
POWER!

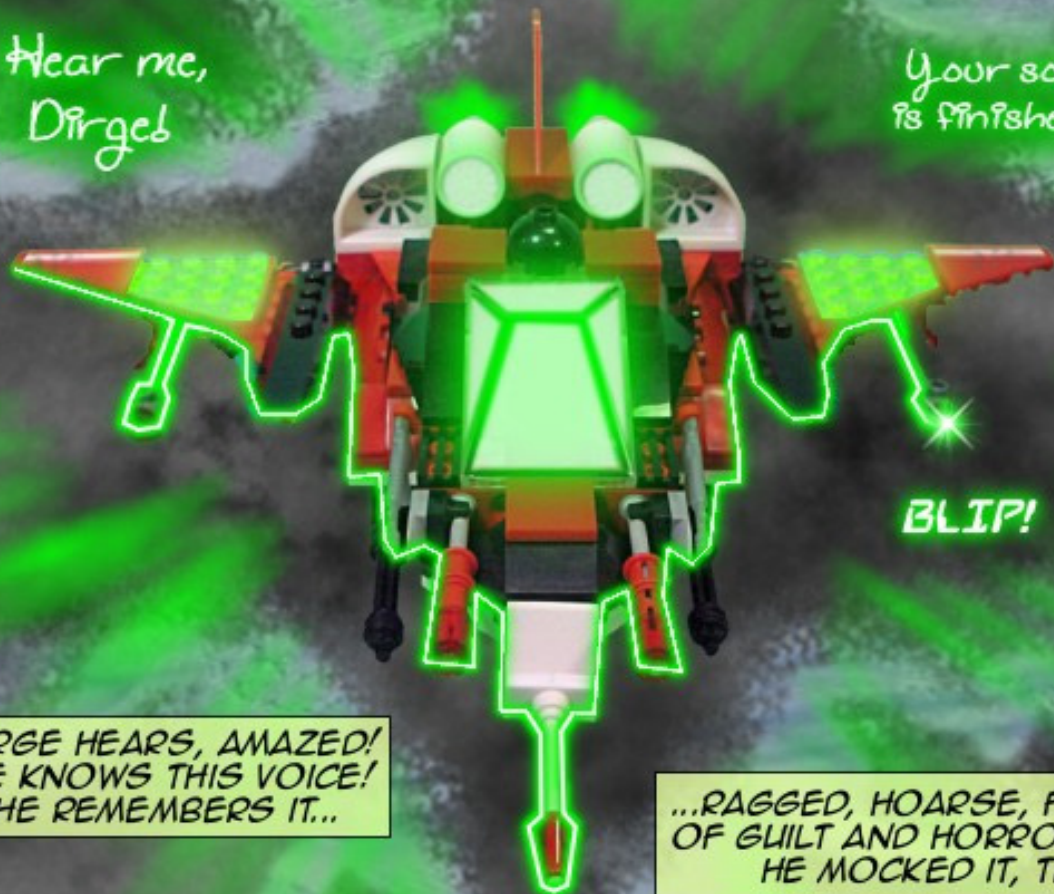


INCREDIBLE
POWER...

...POWER SHE HAS
FELT BEFORE...
...BUT STRONGER,
MUCH STRONGER!

Hear me,
Dirge!

Your song
is finished!



BLIP!

DIRGE HEARS, AMAZED!
HE KNOWS THIS VOICE!
HE REMEMBERS IT...

...RAGGED, HOARSE, FULL
OF GUILT AND HORROR...
HE MOCKED IT, THEN...

...NOW GROWN TERRIBLE, IT RINGS LIKE A RIFLE SHOT!

*You prey
on the weak*

*You delight
in pain*

*You will
do so
no more*

I forbidd

HIS FUEL ALL BUT SPENT
ON HIS FUTILE ATTACK,
DIRGE CANNOT FLEE.

HE COULD TURN,
LOOK AWAY...

BUT FOR SOME
REASON...
HE DOESN'T.



HE SHOULD BE TERRIFIED,
YET HE FEELS ODDLY CALM.
IT IS VERY STRANGE...



DIRGE IS NO MORE.

THE SKY IS CLEARING.



*MORE STORMS
MAY COME...*

*...BUT THIS ONE
IS ENDED!*



Swiper!



A LEGO minifigure is being crushed by a hammer. The minifigure has a red head, a green leaf-like piece on its back, and a grey torso. It is lying on a light-colored, textured surface. A hammer with a black handle and a silver head is positioned to the left of the minifigure. The minifigure's head is being crushed by the hammer's head. The text "CLANK!" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font in the upper left corner. A speech bubble in the lower right corner contains the text "GMPH!".

CLANK!

GMPH!



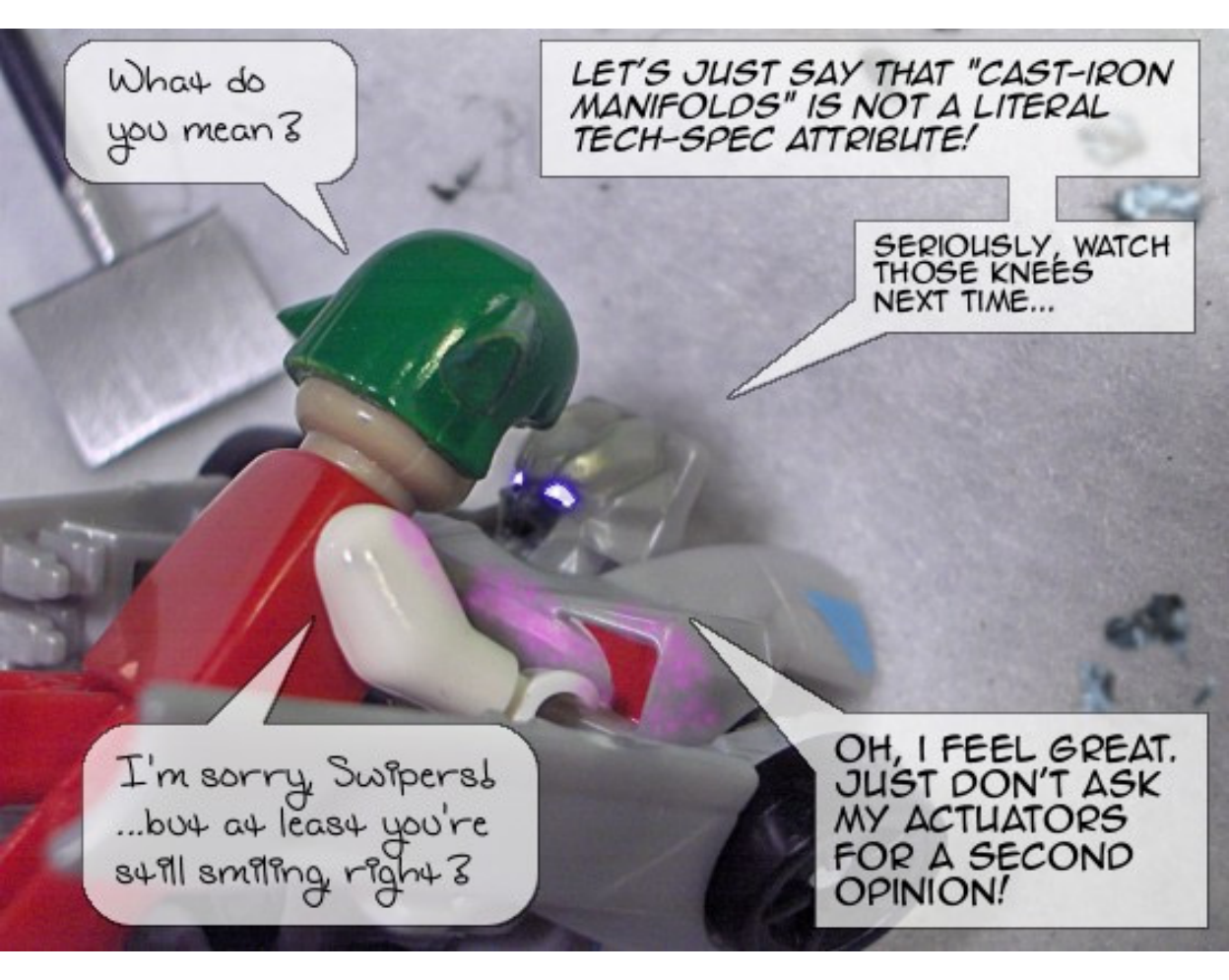
HIYA, SHINKI!

THANKS FOR DROPPING IN!

A COUPLE SEEKERS
WERE HERE EARLIER,
BUT YOU MISSED 'EM.

I didn't miss them
I kicked their afts

YOU SURE DID!
...AND THAT'S NOT
ALL YOU KICKED!



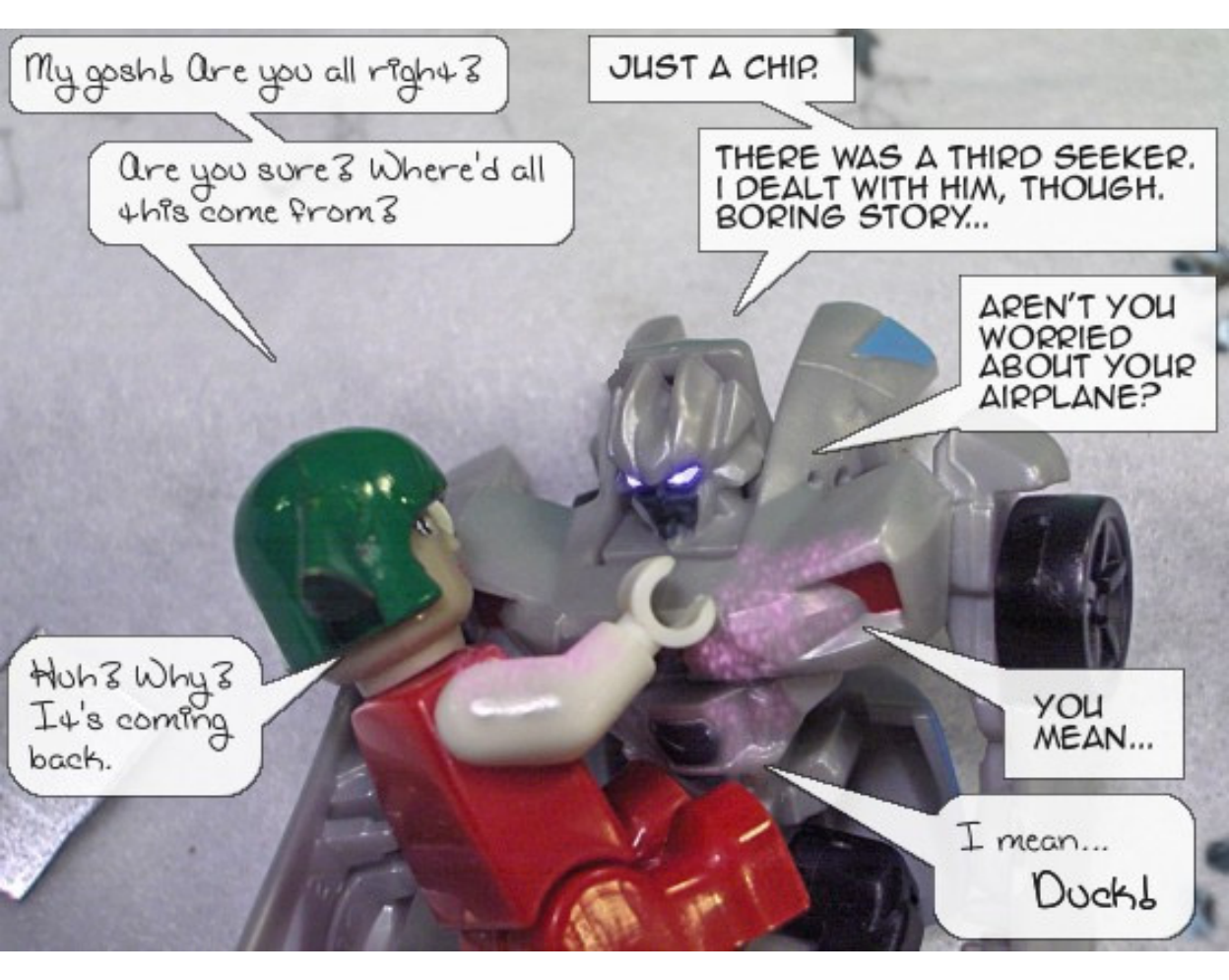
What do
you mean?

LET'S JUST SAY THAT "CAST-IRON
MANIFOLDS" IS NOT A LITERAL
TECH-SPEC ATTRIBUTE!

SERIOUSLY, WATCH
THOSE KNEES
NEXT TIME...

I'm sorry, Swipers!
...but at least you're
still smiling, right?

OH, I FEEL GREAT.
JUST DON'T ASK
MY ACTUATORS
FOR A SECOND
OPINION!



My gosh! Are you all right?

Are you sure? Where'd all
this come from?

JUST A CHIP.

THERE WAS A THIRD SEEKER.
I DEALT WITH HIM, THOUGH.
BORING STORY...

AREN'T YOU
WORRIED
ABOUT YOUR
AIRPLANE?

Huh? Why?
It's coming
back.

YOU
MEAN...

I mean...
Duck!

"BUT... I'M ALREADY -!"

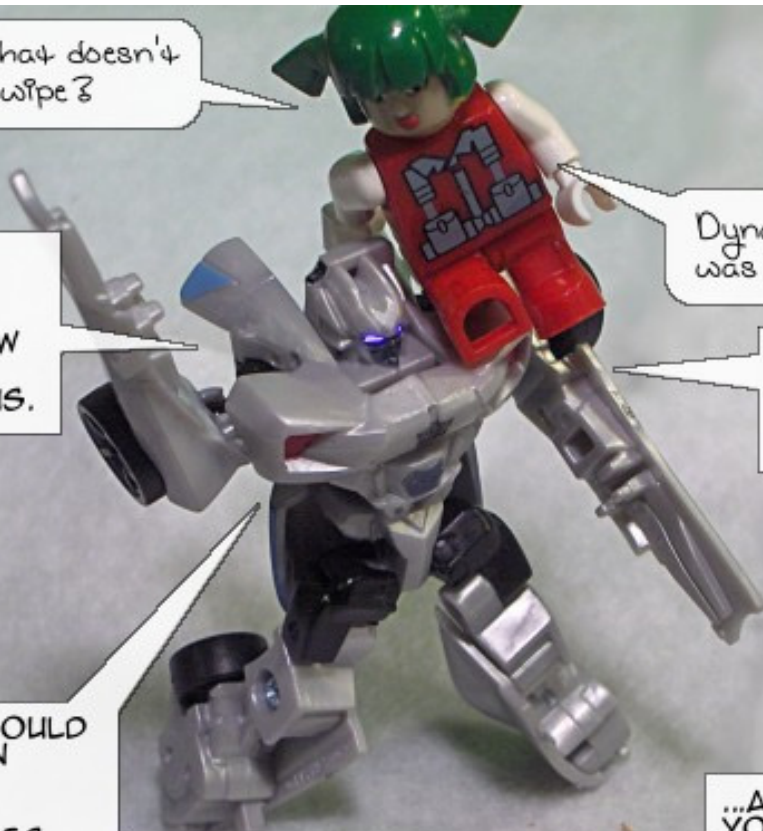
SHROOOOAR!

Ahahahahahaha

Ohohohohohoh

YOU'RE CRAZY,
YOU KNOW THAT?

REALLY,
REALLY,
REALLY
CRAZY!



You sure that doesn't hurt, Sideswipe?

IT'S FINE.

LISTEN,
WE'D BEST
HURRY. I
DON'T KNOW
HOW BAD
DYNATRON IS.

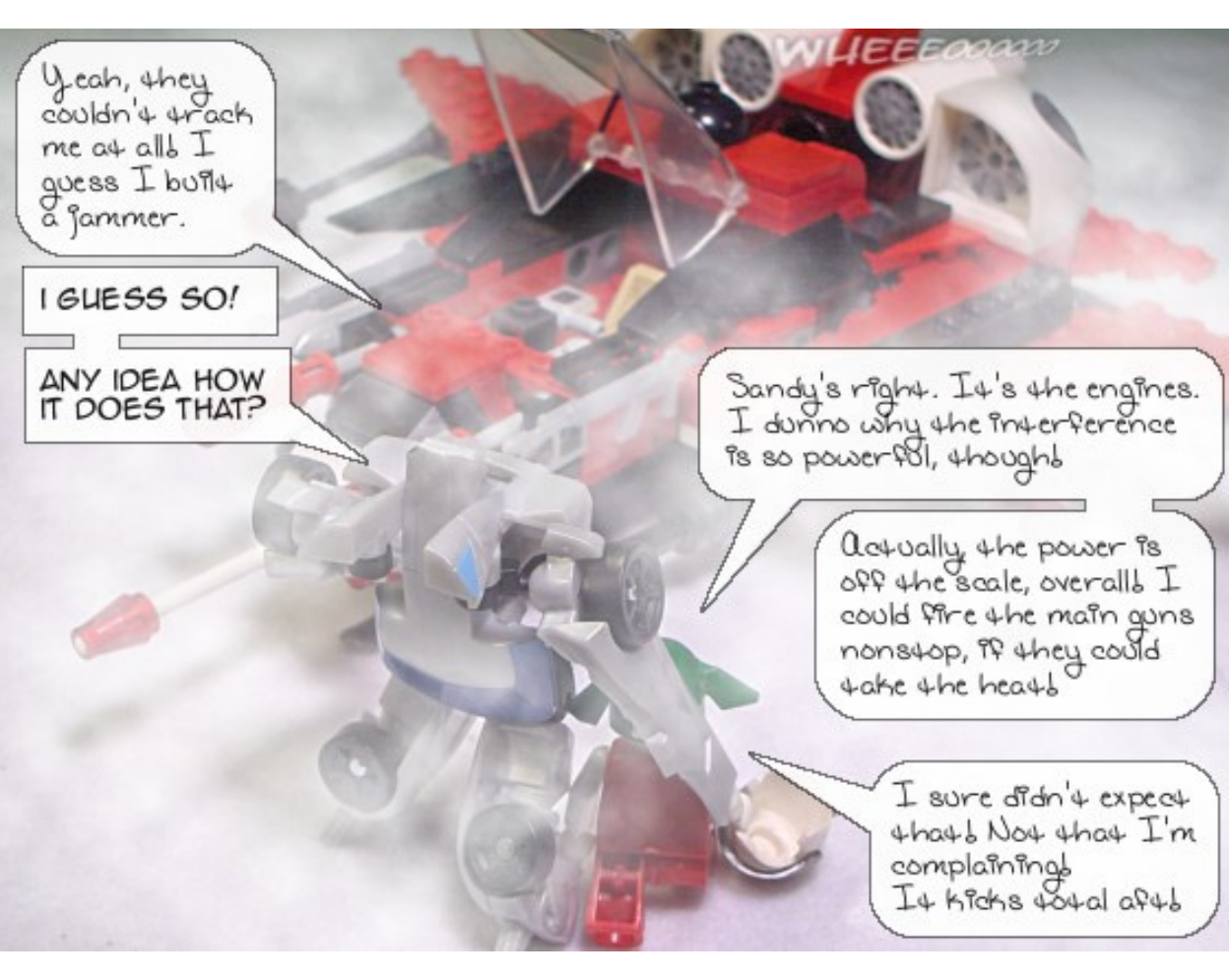
Dynatron
was hurt?

YES. RAMJET
SHOT HIM UP.
IT GOT ROUGH
DOWN HERE!

STILL, IT COULD
HAVE BEEN
WORSE!

NO MISSILES,
THANK PRIMUS...

...AND ALSO TO
YOU AND THAT
MATRIX-SLAGGED
FLYING RADAR
BLACKOUT!



Yeah, they
couldn't track
me at all. I
guess I built
a jammer.

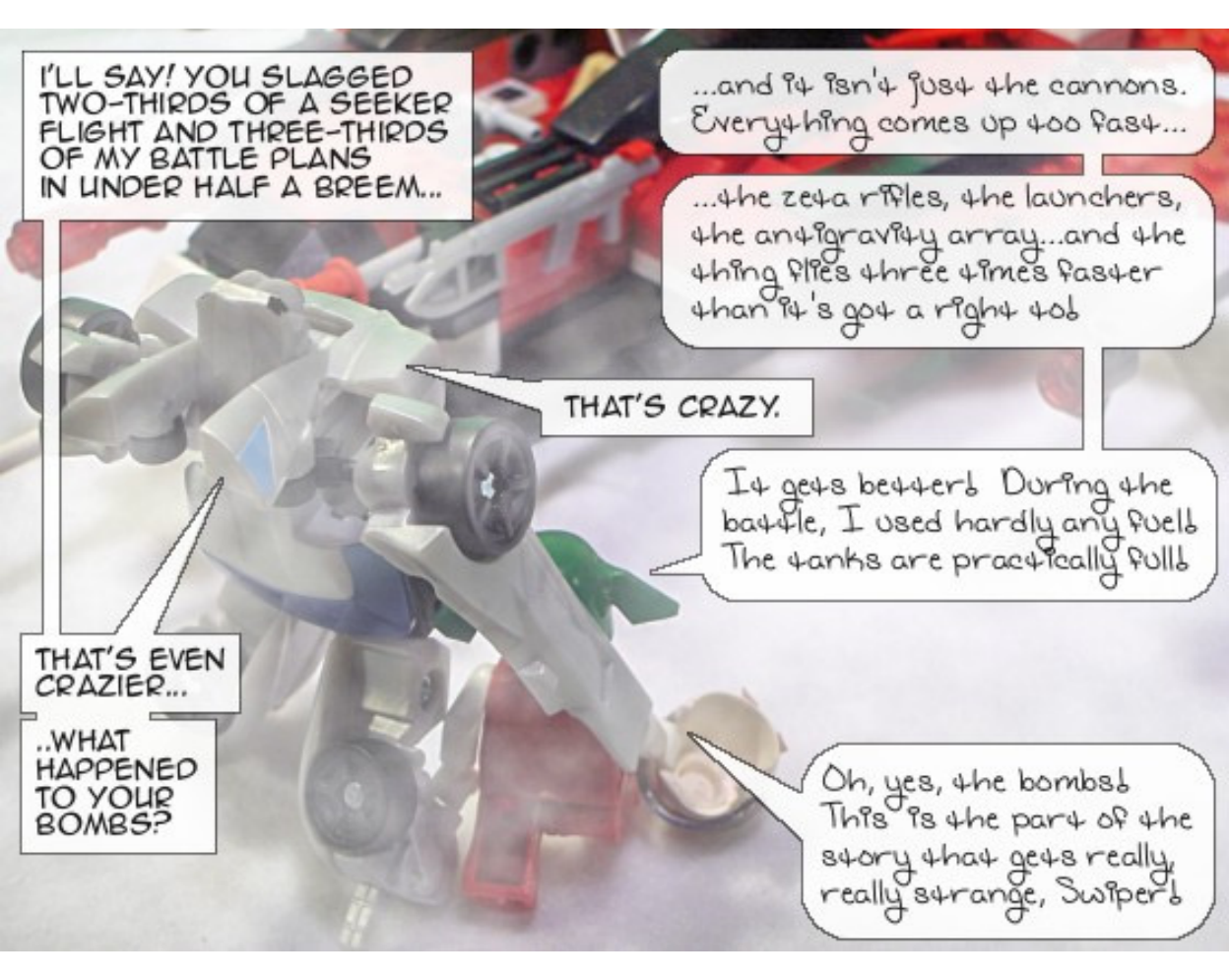
I GUESS SO!

ANY IDEA HOW
IT DOES THAT?

Sandy's right. It's the engines.
I dunno why the interference
is so powerful, though.

Actually, the power is
off the scale, overall. I
could fire the main guns
nonstop, if they could
take the heat.

I sure didn't expect
that. Not that I'm
complaining.
It kicks total ass.



I'LL SAY! YOU SLAGGED
TWO-THIRDS OF A SEEKER
FLIGHT AND THREE-THIRDS
OF MY BATTLE PLANS
IN UNDER HALF A BREEM...

...and it isn't just the cannons.
Everything comes up too fast...

...the zeta rifles, the launchers,
the anti-gravity array...and the
thing flies three times faster
than it's got a right to be


THAT'S CRAZY.

It gets better! During the
battle, I used hardly any fuel!
The tanks are practically full!

THAT'S EVEN
CRAZIER...

..WHAT
HAPPENED
TO YOUR
BOMBS?

Oh, yes, the bombs!
This is the part of the
story that gets really,
really strange, Swiper!



The cannons took care of Ramjet, so I ran some weapon tests...

...I had Dirge in my sights. It was over...and then he hit me with this massive shockwave from his engines. I didn't know he could do that!

"DIRGE WAS PRETTY SMART, SHINKI. NEVER GIVE SOMEONE LIKE HIM A CHANCE TO THINK! IT SOUNDS LIKE HE TRIED TO USE THUNDERCRACKER'S ABILITY."

I guess so. It probably hurt him way more than it hurt me, but it bought him some time, and he didn't waste it!

...All of a sudden, there was this horrible, horrible feeling! It was like being choked, crushed, and drowned, all at once...

...I couldn't move, couldn't breathe, couldn't think! I was burning up like a Christmas pudding!

DIRGE'S FEAR ATTACK?
THAT ISN'T USUALLY LETHAL!



I don't know. It was awful. It kept getting worse, and worse... I felt this... this... nothingness... this cold, empty blackness, spreading through me... more horrible than the pain... But there was something else there, something that was there last time, when I let my friends down...

I can't explain it. I felt like there was a... a light, like a sliver of light shining through a crack... and I thought that if I could just reach it, I would be safe, safe from the blackness.

It wasn't a vision. It felt so... solid. I reached out... I pushed...



And then...pow!
Suddenly, the world
just lit up like a
Christmas tree!

And I felt like...well,
it's hard to describe...

...just like last time,
when I took a direct
hit from a missile and
only some fragments
got through.

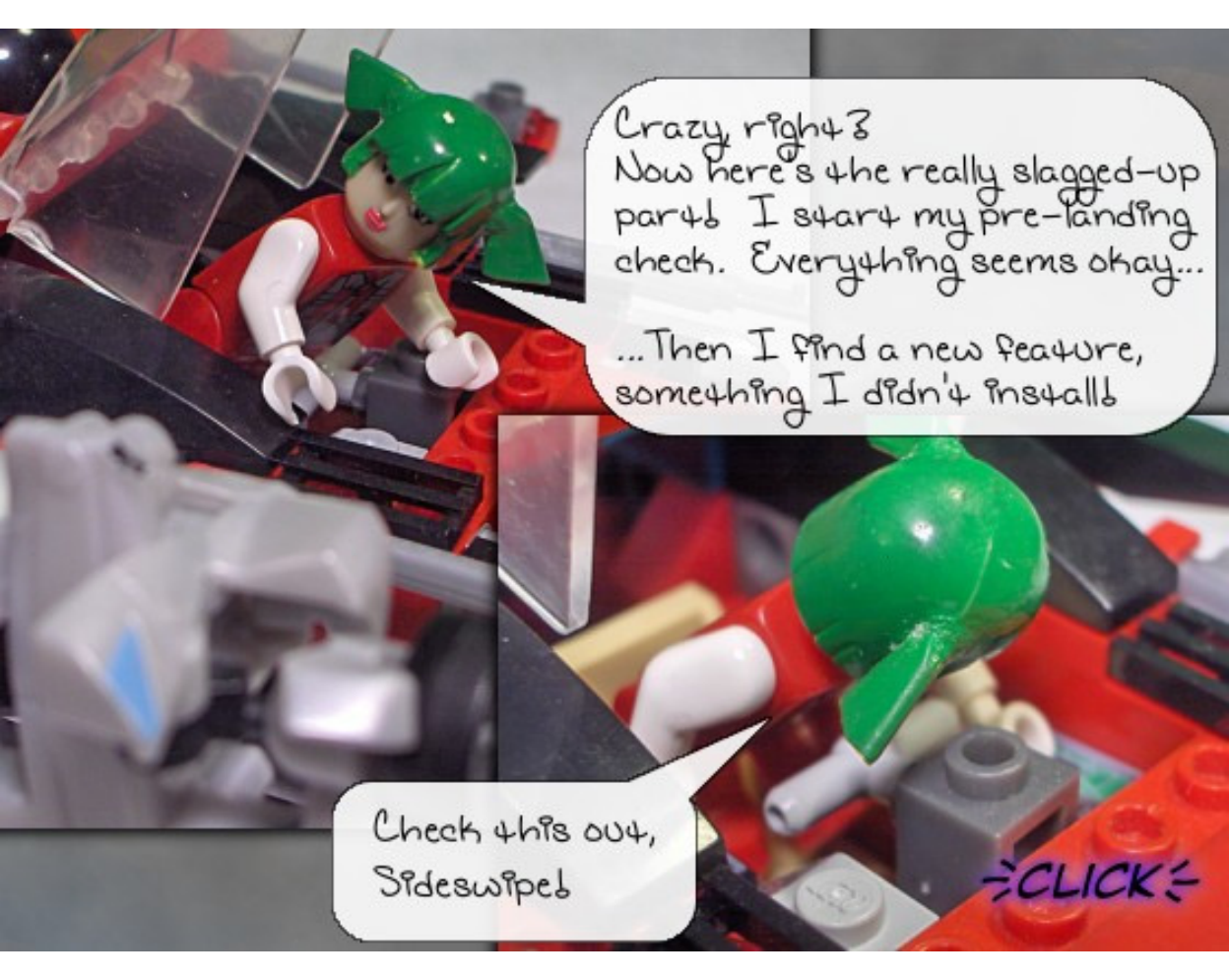
It was like...the best flight ever,
or the best charge ever, 4 times
a thousand!

Then the bombs and missiles
went, but the wings only took
a little damage...

It's murky after that. I think
I flew right through Dingo!

Next thing I remember, the storm
was gone. The radar was back, and
there wasn't a Seeker in the sky!





Crazy, right?

Now here's the really slagged-up part. I start my pre-landing check. Everything seems okay...

...Then I find a new feature, something I didn't install.

Check this out,
Sideswipe!

≡CLICK≡

Ow oooooo!





OWO

ALIGH!

OOOOO!

NO!
TURN
IT OFF!

STOP!
PLEASE!



TSUGARU!
TSUGARU!

Sideswiped

I... I'm shutting
it off right now



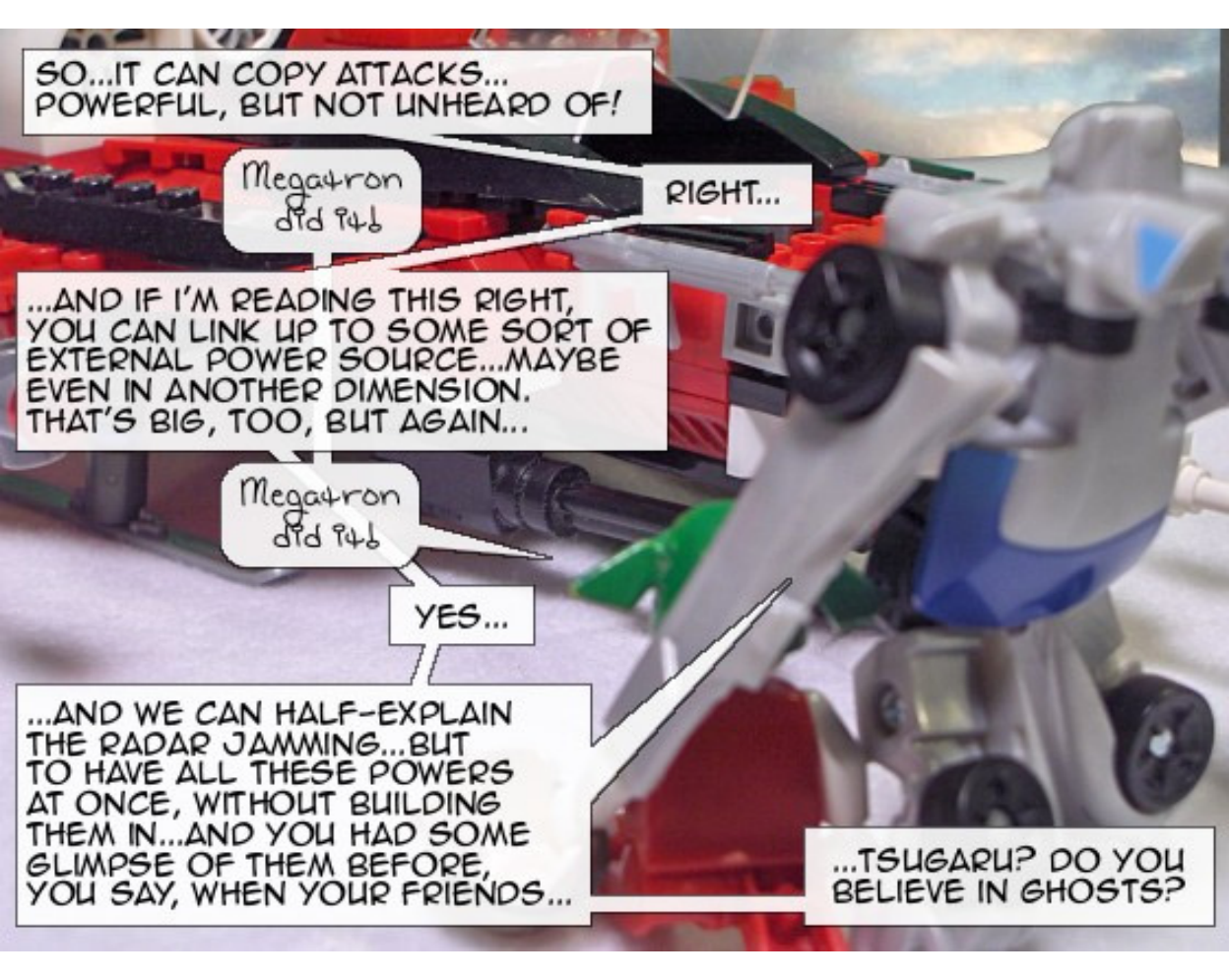
YOU...YOU TOOK HIS POWER,
SOMEHOW...THAT'S AMAZING...

I'm sorry, Sideswipe!
I'm so sorry!

I didn't
think you
were afraid
of anybody!

DIRGE WAS RIGHT, SHINKI.
WE ALL KNOW FEAR.

THERE IS ONE MECH ON THIS
PLANET WHO TERRIFIES ME...
LET'S LEAVE IT AT THAT.



SO...IT CAN COPY ATTACKS...
POWERFUL, BUT NOT UNHEARD OF!

Megatron
did it

RIGHT...

...AND IF I'M READING THIS RIGHT,
YOU CAN LINK UP TO SOME SORT OF
EXTERNAL POWER SOURCE...MAYBE
EVEN IN ANOTHER DIMENSION.
THAT'S BIG, TOO, BUT AGAIN...

Megatron
did it

YES...

...AND WE CAN HALF-EXPLAIN
THE RADAR JAMMING...BUT
TO HAVE ALL THESE POWERS
AT ONCE, WITHOUT BUILDING
THEM IN...AND YOU HAD SOME
GLIMPSE OF THEM BEFORE,
YOU SAY, WHEN YOUR FRIENDS...

...TSUGARU? DO YOU
BELIEVE IN GHOSTS?



No.

GOOD.
I DON'T,
EITHER...

...I'M SURE THERE'S A RATIONAL
EXPLANATION FOR ALL THIS...
...BUT, YOU KNOW, TSUGU...
SOME DO BELIEVE IN GHOSTS...



MAYBE WE
CAN USE
THIS...

...BUT LEAVE THAT FOR LATER. LET'S PACK UP AND
HEAD BACK. DYNATRON'S HURT, AND MAGNUS IS
PROBABLY ON HIS WAY. I REALLY DON'T LIKE
HAVING TO EXPLAIN THINGS TO HIM.

...It's boring?

EXACTLY!

WAITING ROOM - MICRONIA GENERAL HOSPITAL.



<GREETINGS,
COMMANDER!
WHAT'S GOING
ON WITH
DYNATRON?>

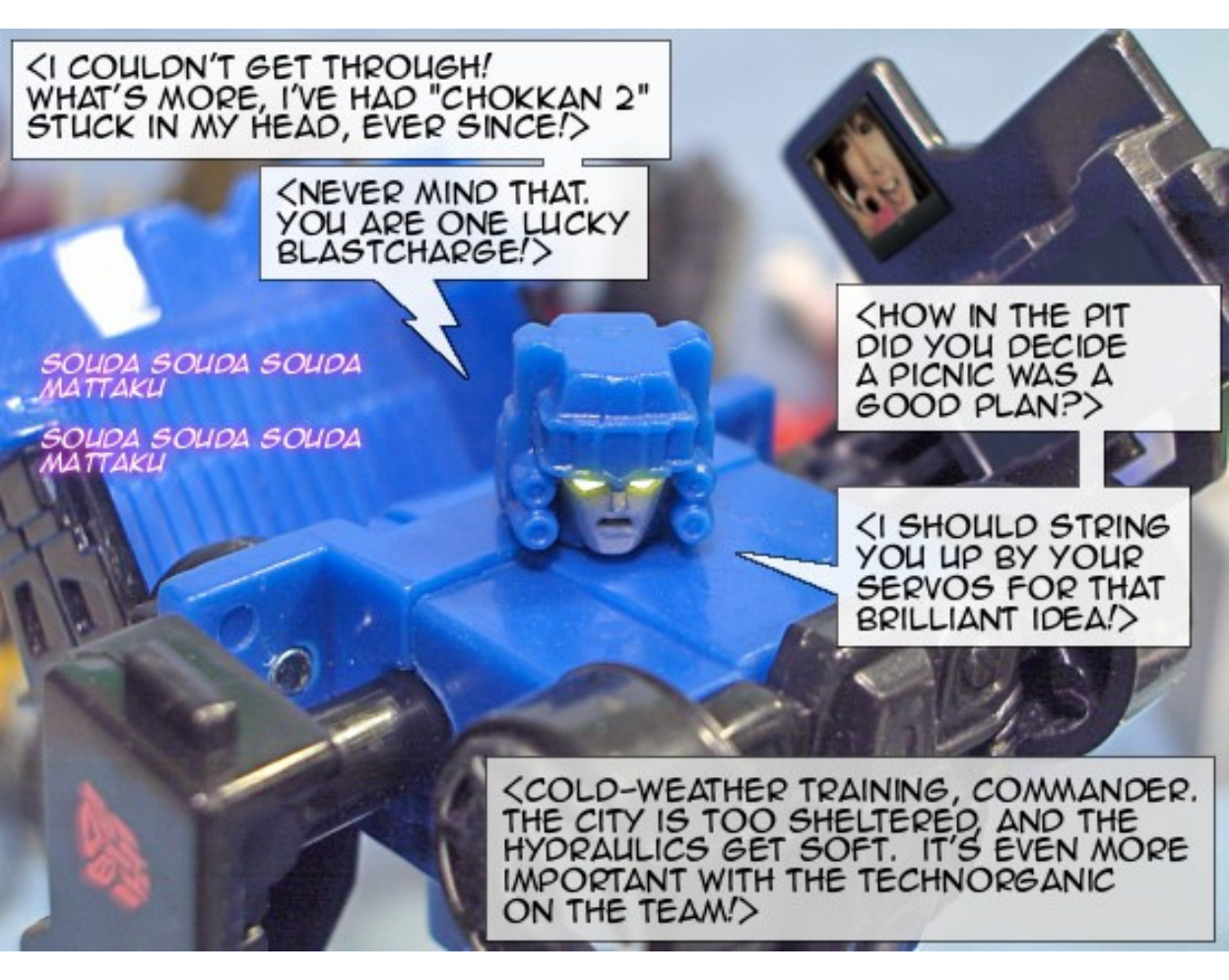
<HELLO,
SIDESWIPE.

<I'M AFRAID I
DON'T KNOW
ANY MORE THAN
YOU DO.>

<I APOLOGIZE FOR THE DELAY IN
SENDING HELP. THERE WAS
A COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEM...>

"<SOME IDIOT WAS PLAYING MORNING MUSLIME
OVER ALL OPEN CHANNELS. I SWEAR, IF I
EVER CATCH THAT SLAGGER, I'LL HAVE HIS
SPARK EXTRACTED!>"





<I COULDN'T GET THROUGH!
WHAT'S MORE, I'VE HAD "CHOKKAN 2"
STUCK IN MY HEAD, EVER SINCE!>

<NEVER MIND THAT.
YOU ARE ONE LUCKY
BLASTCHARGE!>

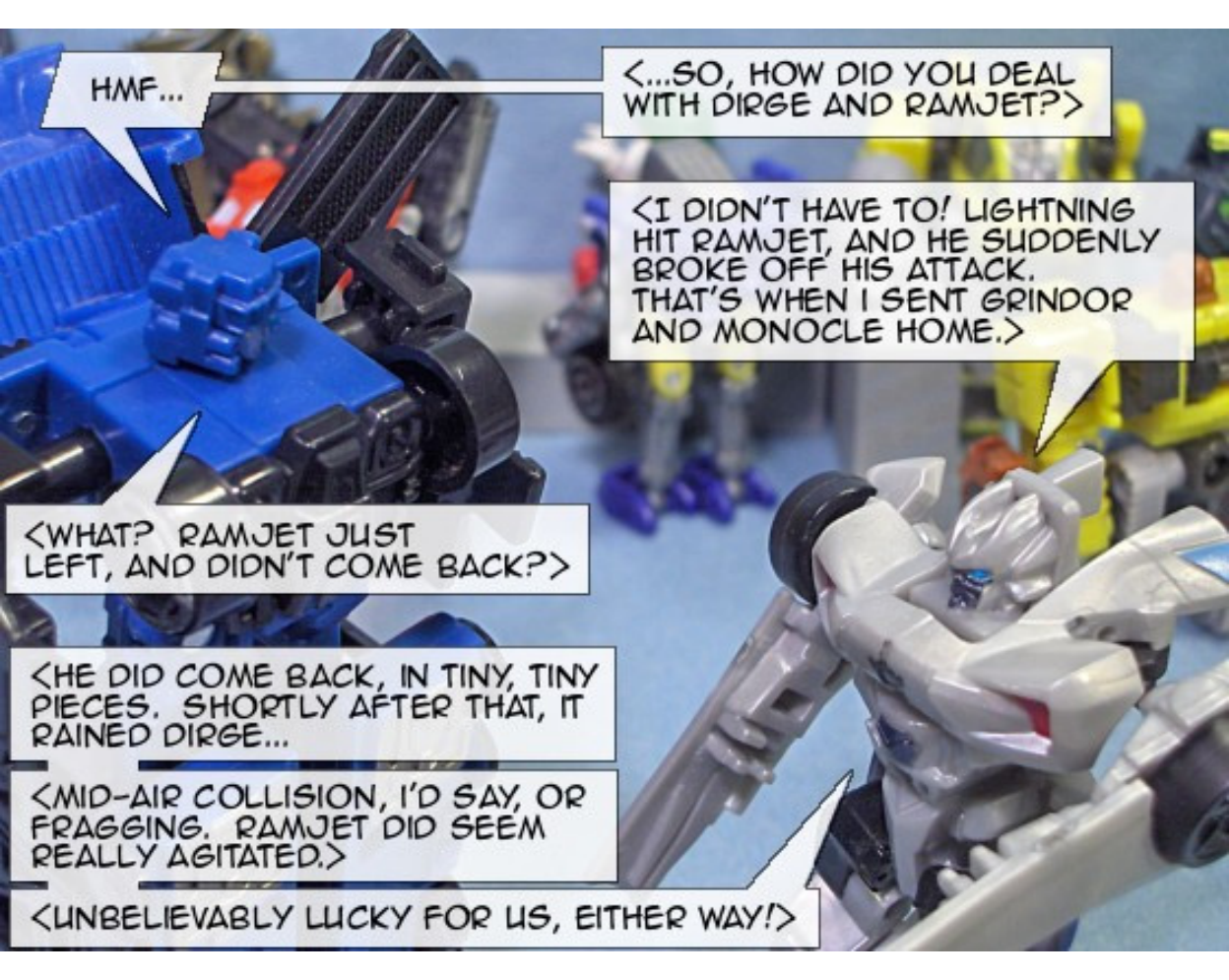
SOUDA SOUDA SOUDA
MATTAKU

SOUDA SOUDA SOUDA
MATTAKU

<HOW IN THE PIT
DID YOU DECIDE
A PICNIC WAS A
GOOD PLAN?>

<I SHOULD STRING
YOU UP BY YOUR
SERVOS FOR THAT
BRILLIANT IDEA!>

<COLD-WEATHER TRAINING, COMMANDER.
THE CITY IS TOO SHELTERED, AND THE
HYDRAULICS GET SOFT. IT'S EVEN MORE
IMPORTANT WITH THE TECHNOORGANIC
ON THE TEAM!>



HMF...

<...SO, HOW DID YOU DEAL WITH DIRGE AND RAMJET?>


<I DIDN'T HAVE TO! LIGHTNING HIT RAMJET, AND HE SUDDENLY BROKE OFF HIS ATTACK. THAT'S WHEN I SENT GRINDOR AND MONOCLE HOME.>

<WHAT? RAMJET JUST LEFT, AND DIDN'T COME BACK?>

<HE DID COME BACK, IN TINY, TINY PIECES. SHORTLY AFTER THAT, IT RAINED DIRGE...

<MID-AIR COLLISION, I'D SAY, OR FRAGGING. RAMJET DID SEEM REALLY AGITATED.>

<UNBELIEVABLY LUCKY FOR US, EITHER WAY!>



<YES...UNBELIEVABLE, INDEED!>

<COMMANDER!
YOU CUT ME TO THE QUICK!
WHEN HAVE I EVER GIVEN YOU
A REASON TO DOUBT ME?>

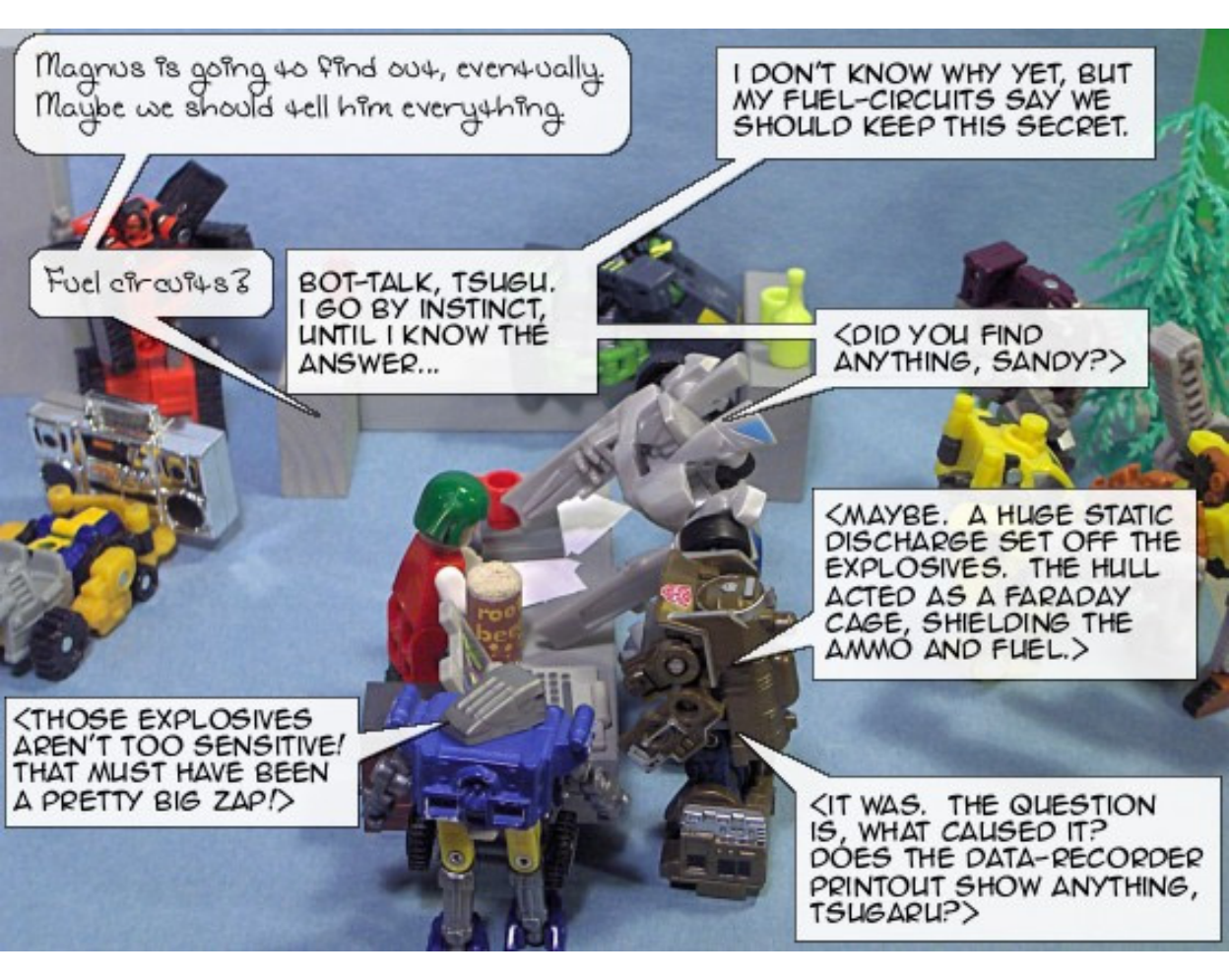
I'VE TOLD YOU THE TRUTH!>

<OH, I DON'T DOUBT
THAT EVERYTHING YOU
HAVE TOLD ME HAS
BEEN TRUE...>

<...BECAUSE YOU KNOW
VERY WELL I'LL HAVE TO
INVESTIGATE ALL THIS.>

<THAT'S
PLANE.>

<TAKE CARE, SIDESWIPE.
I'LL TRY AND GET THE DOCS
TO LET US SEE DYNATRON.>



Magnus is going to find out, eventually.
Maybe we should tell him everything.

I DON'T KNOW WHY YET, BUT
MY FUEL-CIRCUITS SAY WE
SHOULD KEEP THIS SECRET.

Fuel circuits?

BOT-TALK, TSUGU.
I GO BY INSTINCT,
UNTIL I KNOW THE
ANSWER...

<DID YOU FIND
ANYTHING, SANDY?>

<MAYBE. A HUGE STATIC
DISCHARGE SET OFF THE
EXPLOSIVES. THE HULL
ACTED AS A FARADAY
CAGE, SHIELDING THE
AMMO AND FUEL.>

<THOSE EXPLOSIVES
AREN'T TOO SENSITIVE!
THAT MUST HAVE BEEN
A PRETTY BIG ZAP!>

<IT WAS. THE QUESTION
IS, WHAT CAUSED IT?
DOES THE DATA-RECORDER
PRINTOUT SHOW ANYTHING,
TSUGARU?>

Yeah. A big spike on the CSC system monitor, like I get when I do the subspace thing.

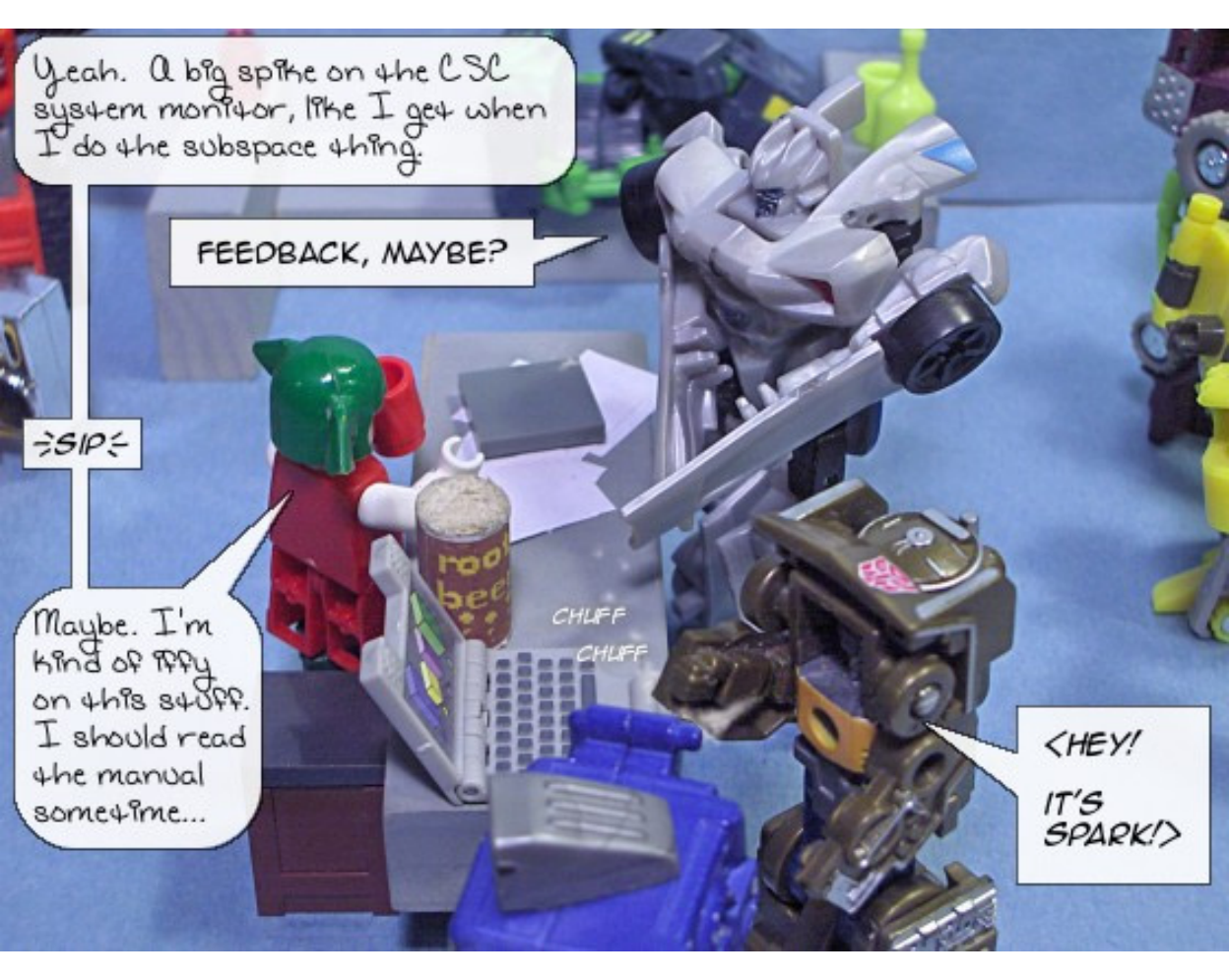
FEEDBACK, MAYBE?

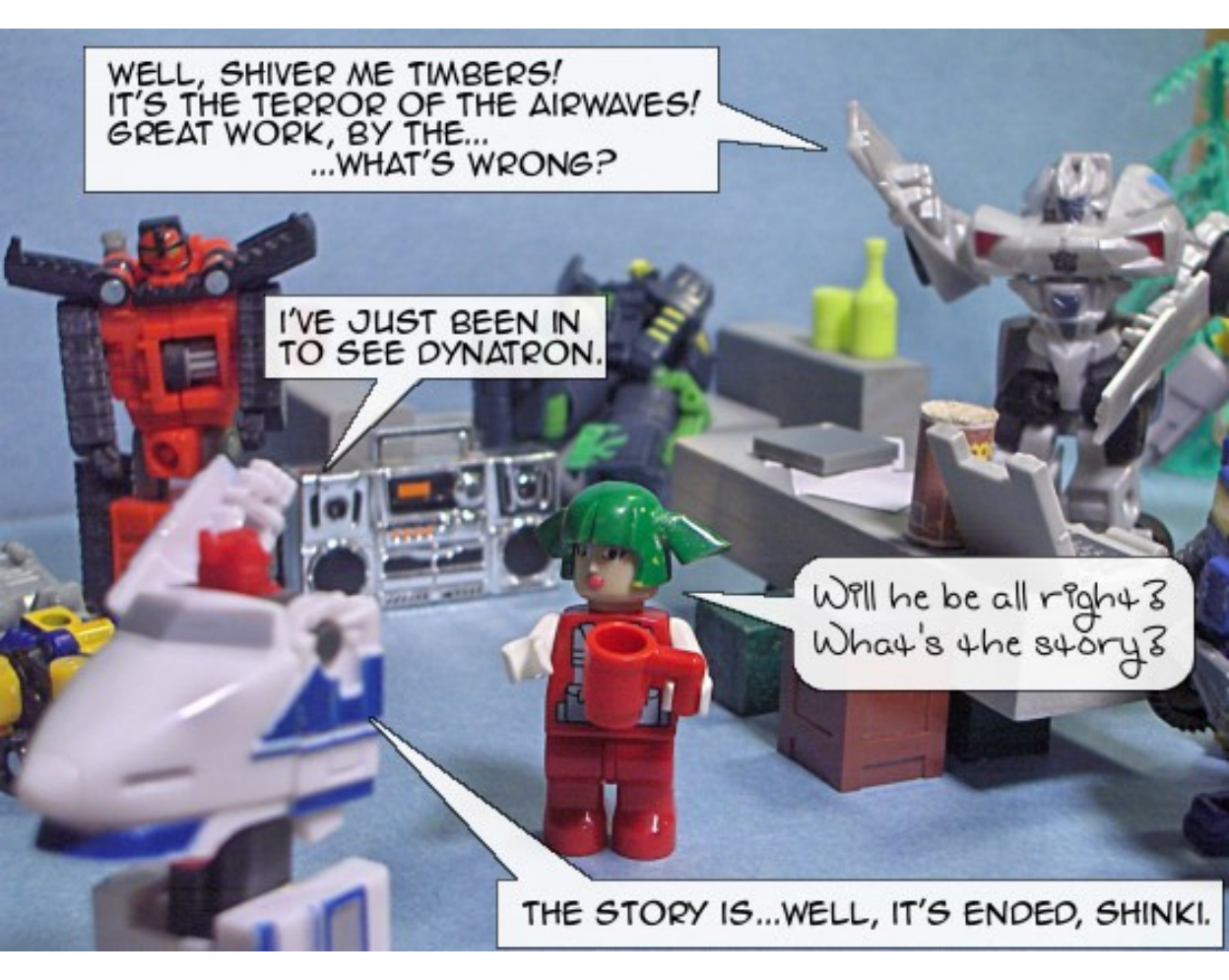
≡SIP≡

Maybe. I'm kind of rrry on this stuff. I should read the manual some4time...

CHUFF
CHUFF

<HEY!
IT'S
SPARK!>



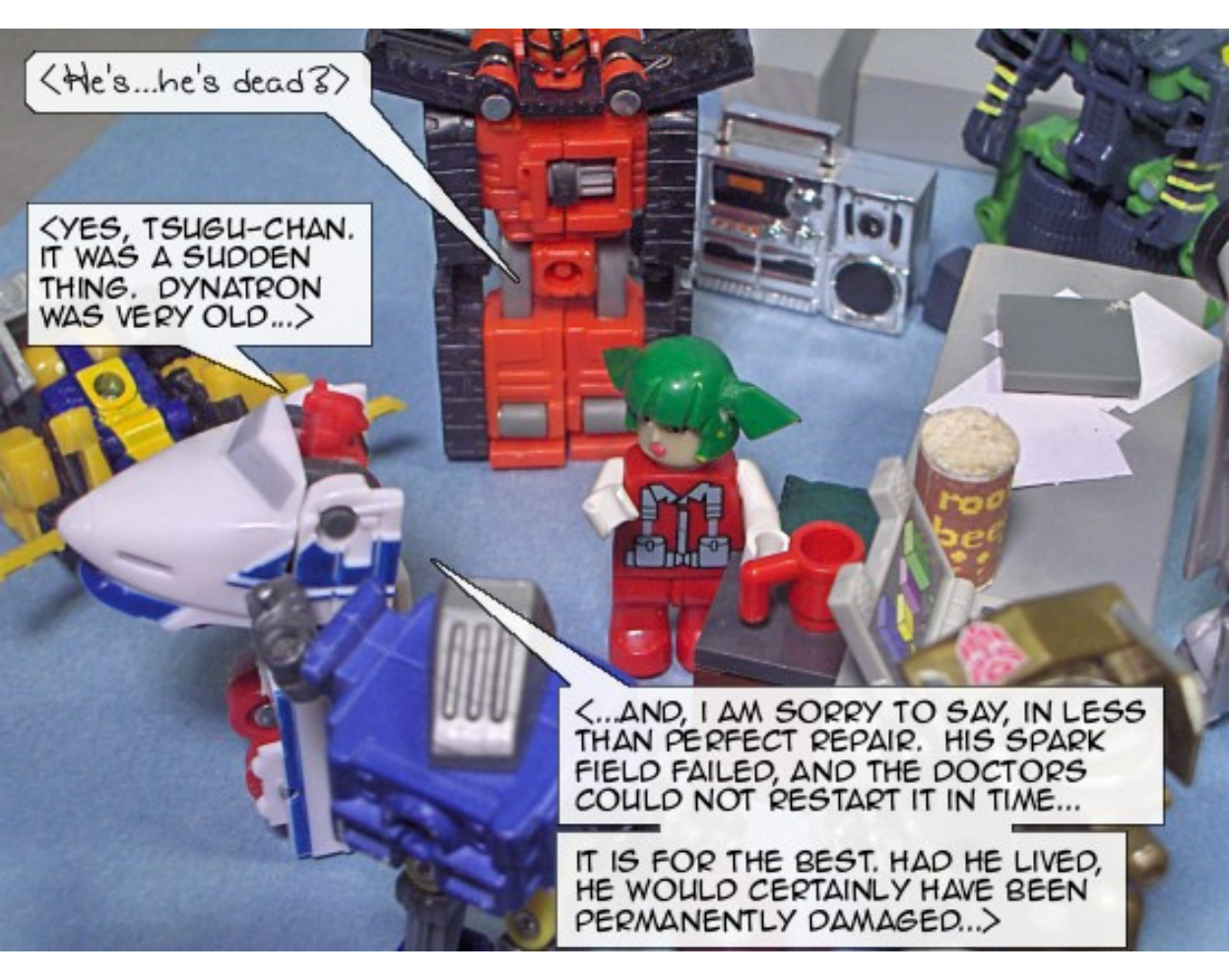
A LEGO minifigure scene set on a blue baseplate. In the center, a minifigure with green hair, a red shirt, and red pants holds a red mug. To the left is a large red Transformer (Optimus Prime). To the right is a large white Transformer (Megatron). In the background, there's a silver boombox, a grey sofa with yellow bottles, and a white car. A speech bubble from the top left contains text.

WELL, SHIVER ME TIMBERS!
IT'S THE TERROR OF THE AIRWAVES!
GREAT WORK, BY THE...
...WHAT'S WRONG?

I'VE JUST BEEN IN
TO SEE DYNATRON.

Will he be all right?
What's the story?

THE STORY IS...WELL, IT'S ENDED, SHINKI.



<He's...he's dead?>

<YES, TSUGU-CHAN.
IT WAS A SUDDEN
THING. DYNATRON
WAS VERY OLD...>

<...AND, I AM SORRY TO SAY, IN LESS
THAN PERFECT REPAIR. HIS SPARK
FIELD FAILED, AND THE DOCTORS
COULD NOT RESTART IT IN TIME...

IT IS FOR THE BEST. HAD HE LIVED,
HE WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE BEEN
PERMANENTLY DAMAGED...>



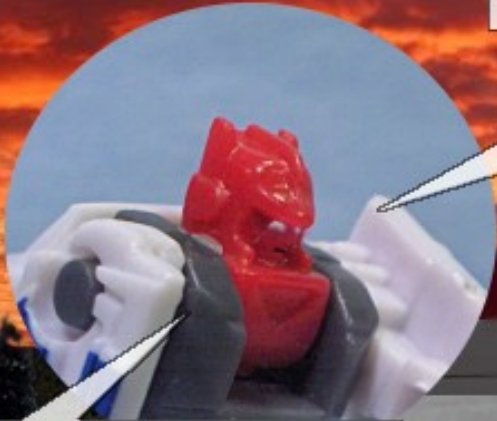
<Dead.
Just like that...
and for what?
A test flight...>

<How can you say it's
for the best?>

<I SAY IT BECAUSE....
...BECAUSE DYNATRON
WAS MY FRIEND.>

<I SEE YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND.
PLEASE... LET ME EXPLAIN.>





<DYNATRON-SENPAI WANTED TO FLY.>

<HE SAVED FOR YEARS, HOPING TO
UPGRADE HIS BULKY FRAME, AND
ALSO COLLECTED ALL SORTS OF
ODDITIES HE THOUGHT A FLIER
MIGHT FIND USEFUL.>

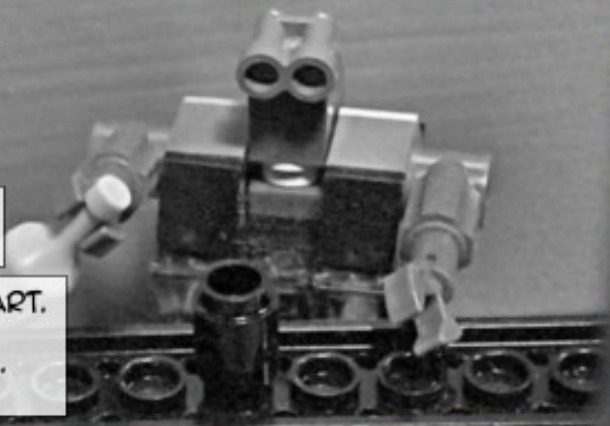
<WE ALL HAVE OUR DREAMS.>

<BUT THEN CAME THE WAR.>

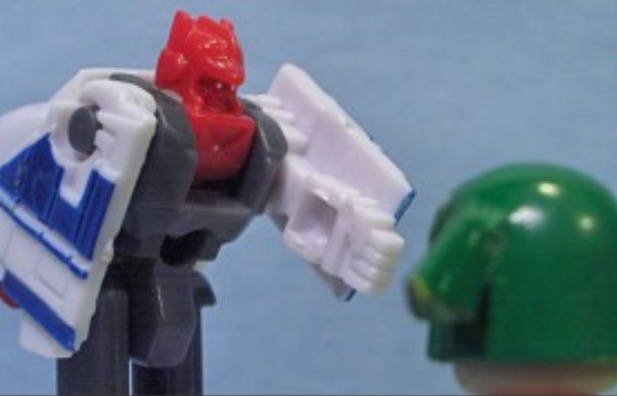
<ONLY THE MILITARY COULD GET
UPGRADES. THEY REJECTED MY
FRIEND. TOO OLD, YOU SEE.>

<HE WAS CRUSHED. FROM THERE,
IT WAS DOWNHILL, QUICKLY.>

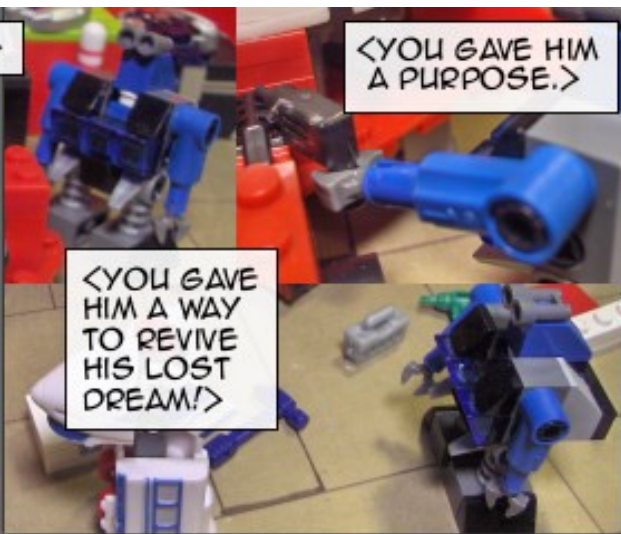
<AT WORK I WATCHED HIM FALL APART.
DEFERRING VITAL MAINTENANCE,
OVERENERGIZING ALL NIGHT LONG.
HE HAD NOTHING TO LIVE FOR.>



<YOU GAVE HIM HOPE, SHINKI-CHAN.>



<YOU GAVE HIM
A PURPOSE.>



<YOU GAVE
HIM A WAY
TO REVIVE
HIS LOST
DREAM!>

<I WAS NOT AT
THE TEST FLIGHT.>

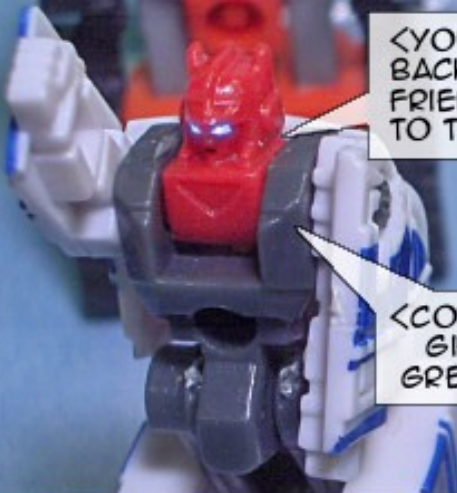


<I CAN ONLY
IMAGINE HIS
EXCITEMENT...>


<...FOR WHEN YOU
SHOOK OFF GRAVITY
AND SHOT INTO THE
STRATOSPHERE, YOU
DID NOT FLY ALONE.>




<YOU FLEW
WITH DYNATRON..>



<YOU DIDN'T TAKE HIS LIFE! YOU GAVE IT BACK...AND MORE! YOU PULLED MY FRIEND FROM THE DEPTHS, AND FLEW HIM TO THE TOP OF THE HEAVENS!>



<COULD ANY GIFT BE GREATER?>



<I WISH I COULD THANK HIM FOR HIS GIFT, SPARK.>


<HE WARNED ME OF THE SEEKER ATTACK, JUST BEFORE HE WAS SHOT.>



<MAYBE HE WOULD HAVE, SIDESWIPE-SENSEI.
HAD HE GOTTEN THAT CHANCE, WHO CAN SAY
WHAT HE MIGHT HAVE GIVEN IN RETURN?

<HOWEVER, HE DOES
HAVE ONE MORE GIFT
TO GIVE, AND THAT IS
WHY I AM HERE NOW.>

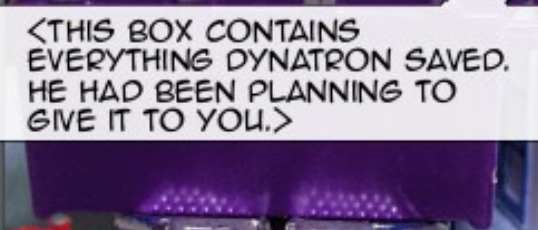
<RANGER-SAN!
BRING IT IN!>




<THANK YOU,
RANGER-SAN.>





<MERRY
CHRISTMAS,
TSUGU-CHAN.>



<THIS BOX CONTAINS
EVERYTHING DYNATRON SAVED.
HE HAD BEEN PLANNING TO
GIVE IT TO YOU.>



<HERE IS THE KEY.
MAYBE YOU WILL FIND
SOMETHING THAT YOU
CAN USE. >



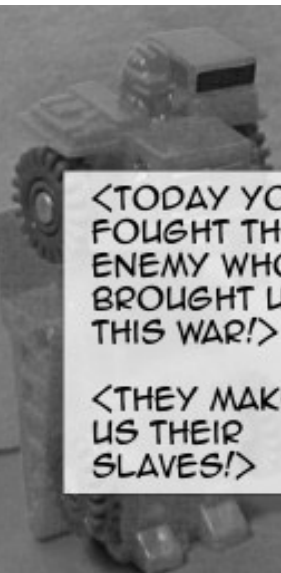
<FOR OUR PART, THE HOTEL
HAS DECIDED TO WIPE OUT
YOUR BILL. IT IS THE LEAST
WE CAN DO FOR A FRIEND.>



<WHY ARE YOU
ALL SO SAD?


<THIS IS A
TIME TO
BE HAPPY!

PFSSH!



<TODAY YOU
FOUGHT THE
ENEMY WHO
BROUGHT US
THIS WAR!>

<THEY MAKE
US THEIR
SLAVES!>




<THEY WRECK
OUR HOMES,
DESTROY OUR
DREAMS...>

<THEY TAKE
AWAY OUR
BROTHERS...>



<...AND
OUR
FRIENDS.>



<FOR TOO
LONG THEY
HAVE
ESCAPED
JUSTICE!>

<TODAY THEY MET
THEIR MATCH...>

<..AND THAT IS A
REASON TO CHEER!
LET'S HEAR IT FOR
THE SHINKI!>

HOORAY!



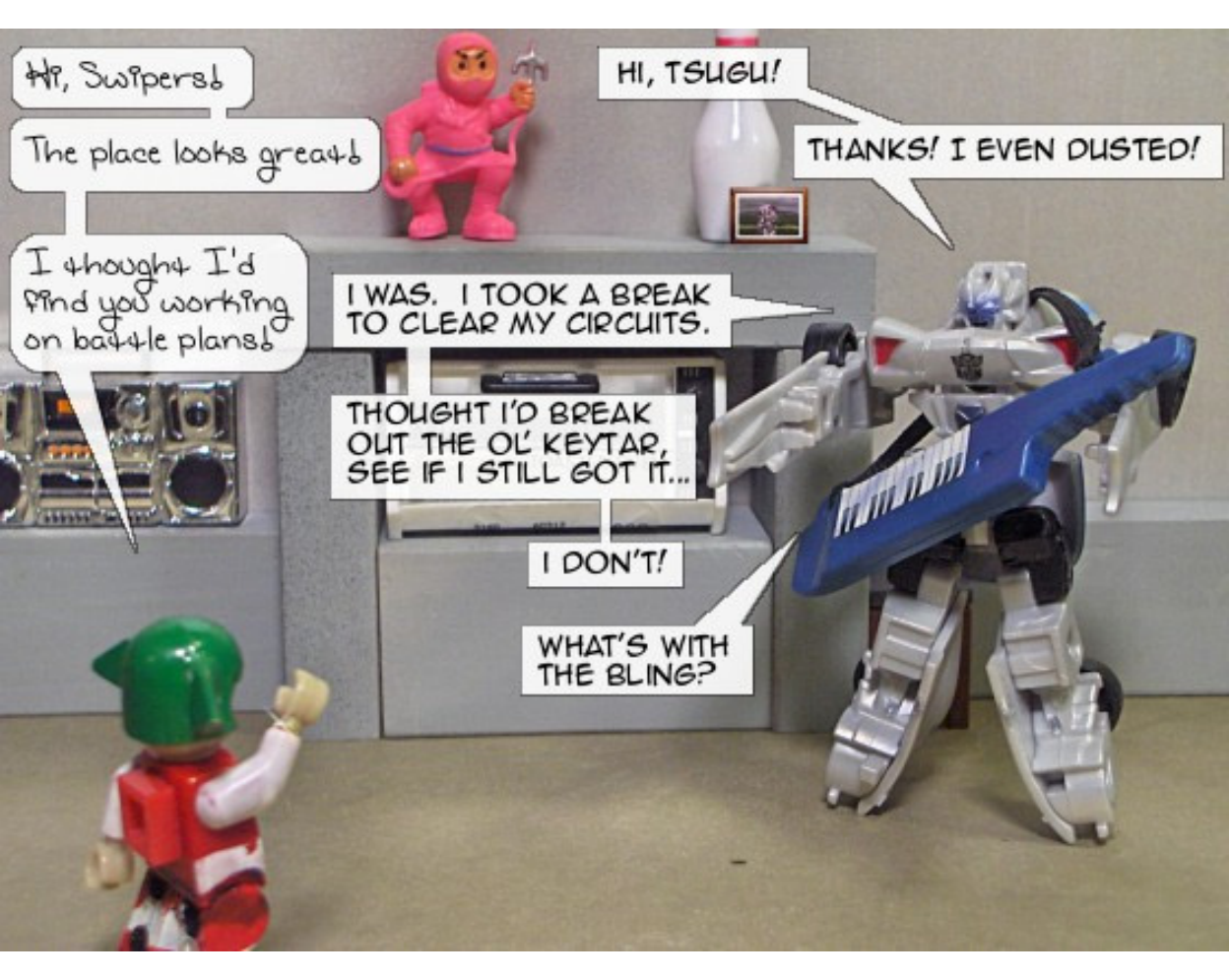


<Merr...>

<...Merry
Christmas,
everybody.>



A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR
FROM ALL OF US AT
BLURRY ROBOT PRODUCTIONS.



Hi, Swipers!

The place looks great!

I thought I'd find you working on battle plans!

Hi, TSUGU!

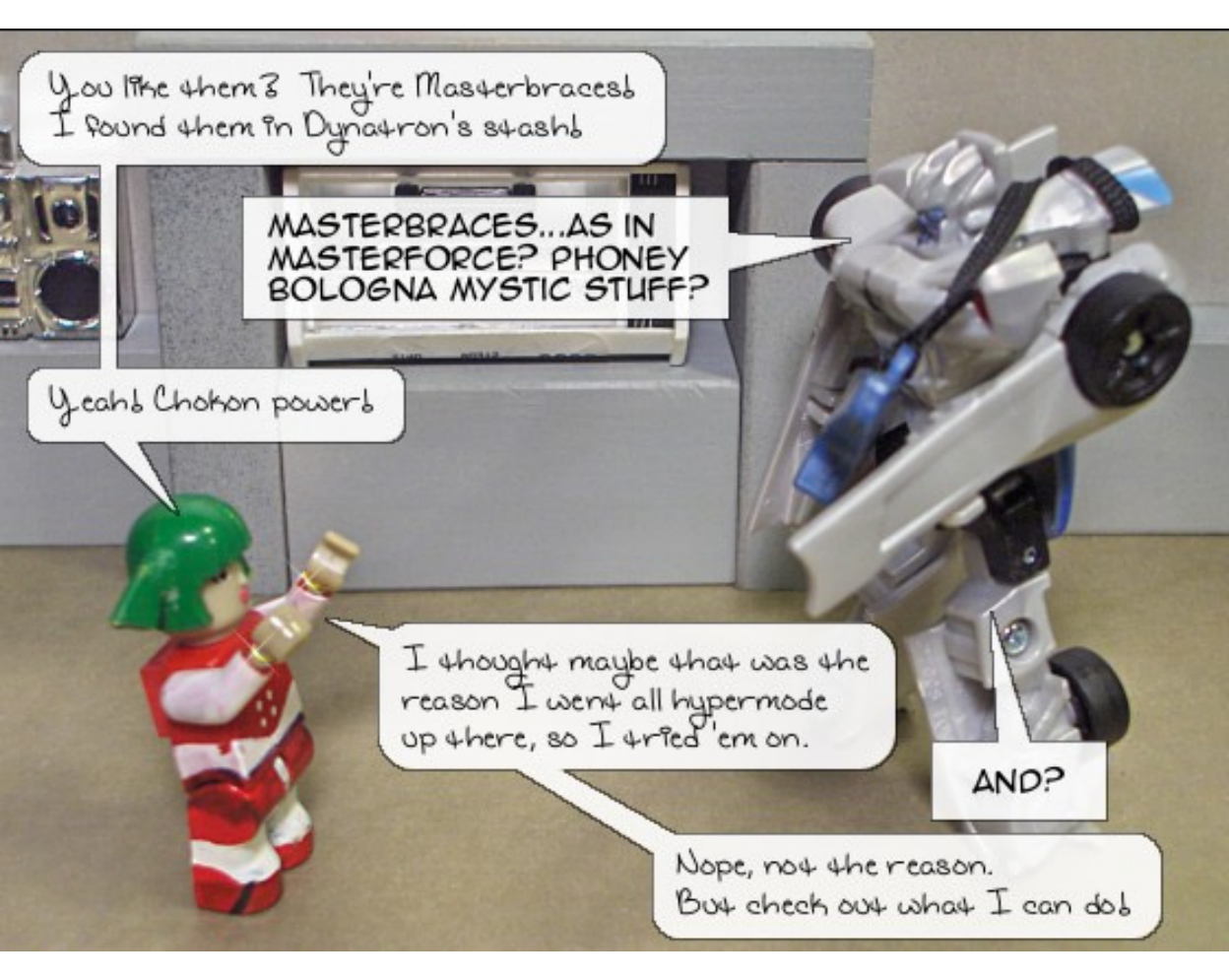
THANKS! I EVEN DUSTED!

I WAS. I TOOK A BREAK TO CLEAR MY CIRCUITS.

THOUGHT I'D BREAK OUT THE OL' KEYTAR, SEE IF I STILL GOT IT...

I DON'T!

WHAT'S WITH THE BLING?



You like them? They're Masterbraces!
I found them in Dynatron's stash!

MASTERBRACES...AS IN
MASTERFORCE? PHONEY
BOLOGNA MYSTIC STUFF?

Yeah! Chokon power!

I thought maybe that was the
reason I went all hypermode
up there, so I tried 'em on.

AND?

Nope, not the reason.
But check out what I can do!

Mas-4er-forced



♪ **MASTERFORCE THEME** ♪

Thanks for
the music

NO PROBLEM!

What do
you think?

CUTE! YOU LOOK
LIKE MEGAMAN'S
PSYCHO SISTER.

Watch it,
buster!

HONESTLY, IT'S CUTE!
CAN YOU STILL USE
YOUR POWERS?

I sure can!

Stuff On!



Whoops!

⇒TINK!⇐

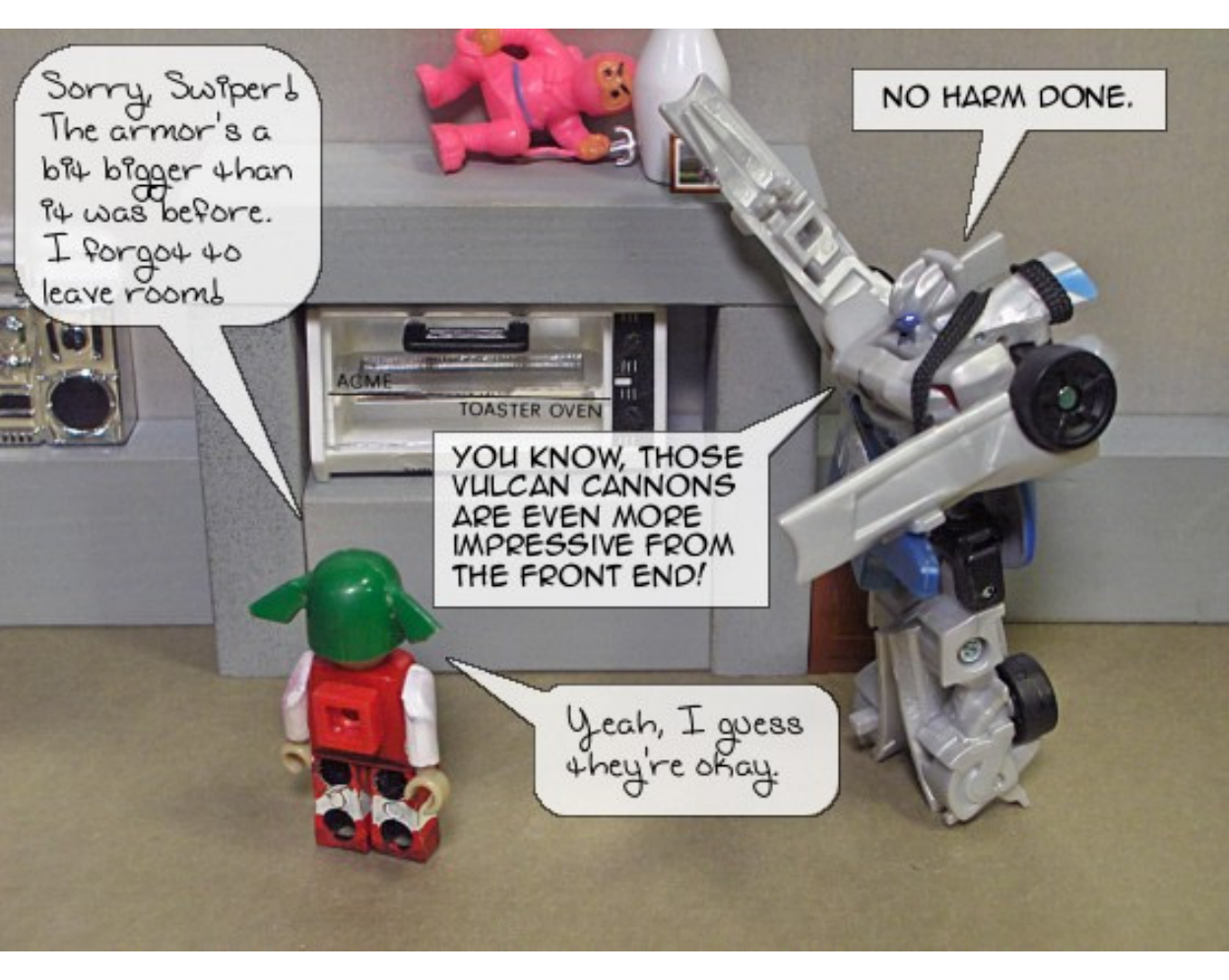
⇒CLINK⇐

⇒WOBBLE⇐

⇒TEETER⇐

YIKES!





Sorry, Swiper!
The armor's a
bit bigger than
it was before.
I forgot to
leave room.

NO HARM DONE.

YOU KNOW, THOSE
VULCAN CANNONS
ARE EVEN MORE
IMPRESSIVE FROM
THE FRONT END!

Yeah, I guess
they're okay.

Maybe I should have gone with something a little bigger...

Maybe?

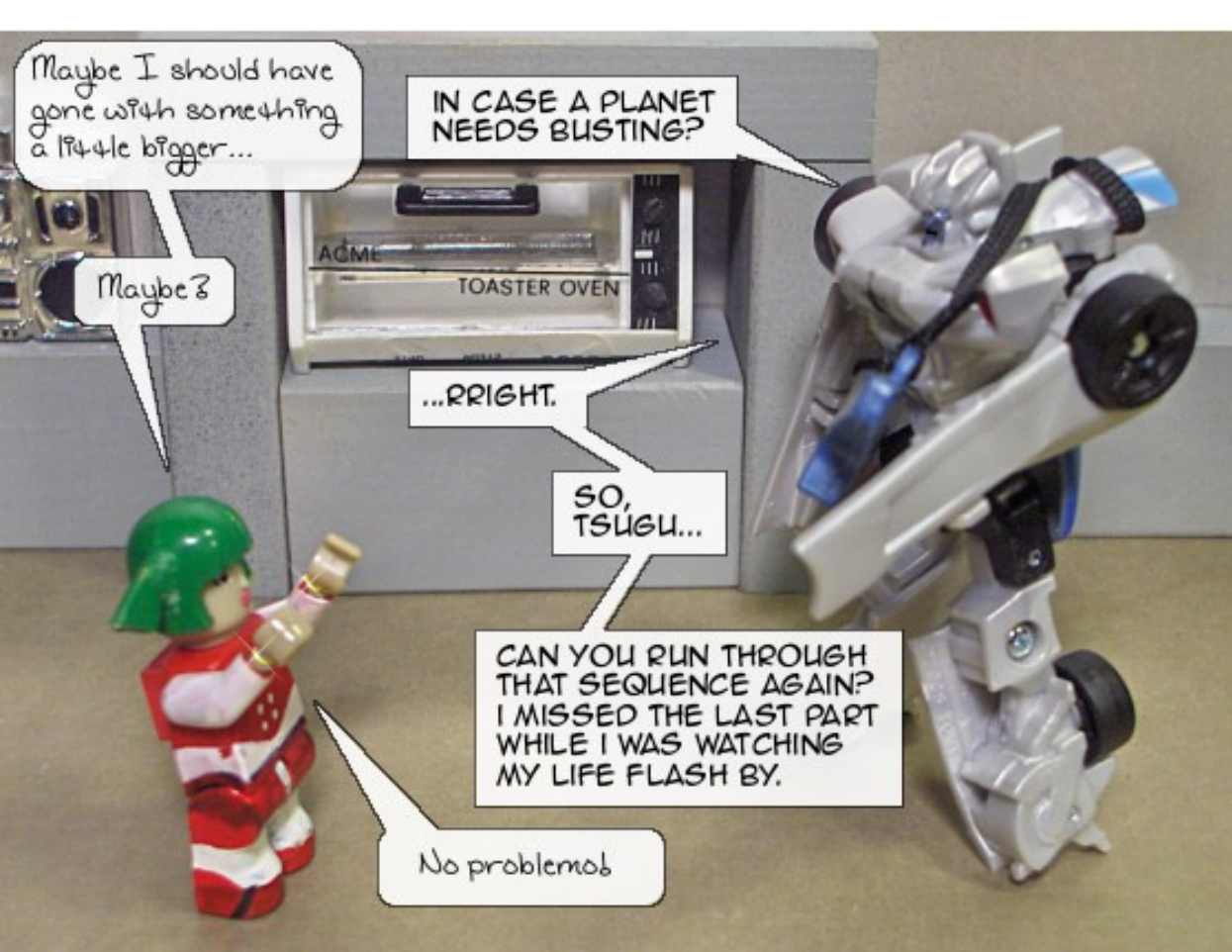
IN CASE A PLANET NEEDS BUSTING?

...RRRIGHT.

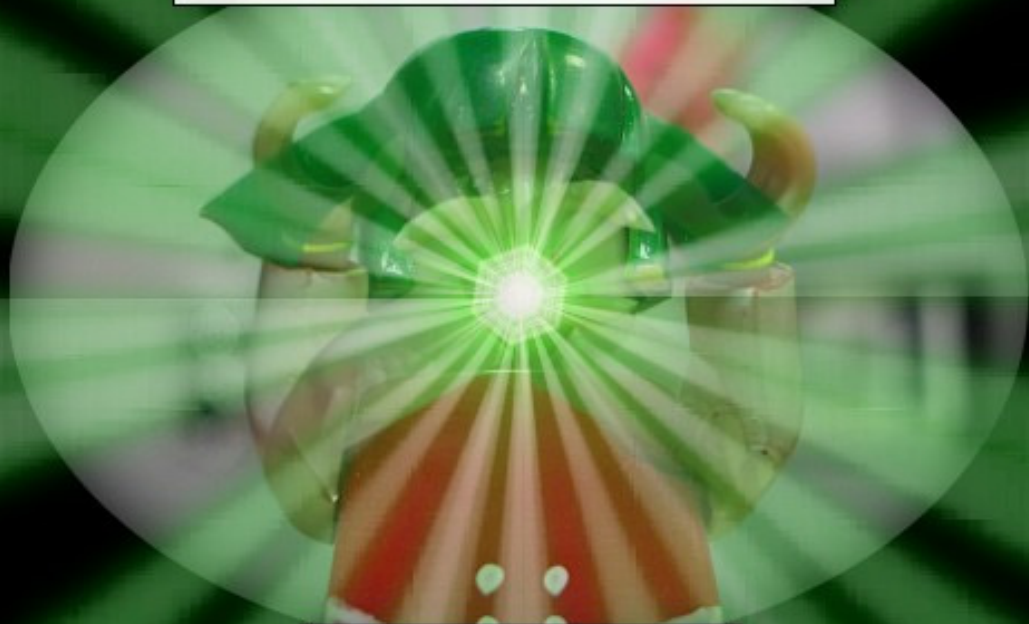
SO,
TSUGU...

CAN YOU RUN THROUGH THAT SEQUENCE AGAIN? I MISSED THE LAST PART WHILE I WAS WATCHING MY LIFE FLASH BY.

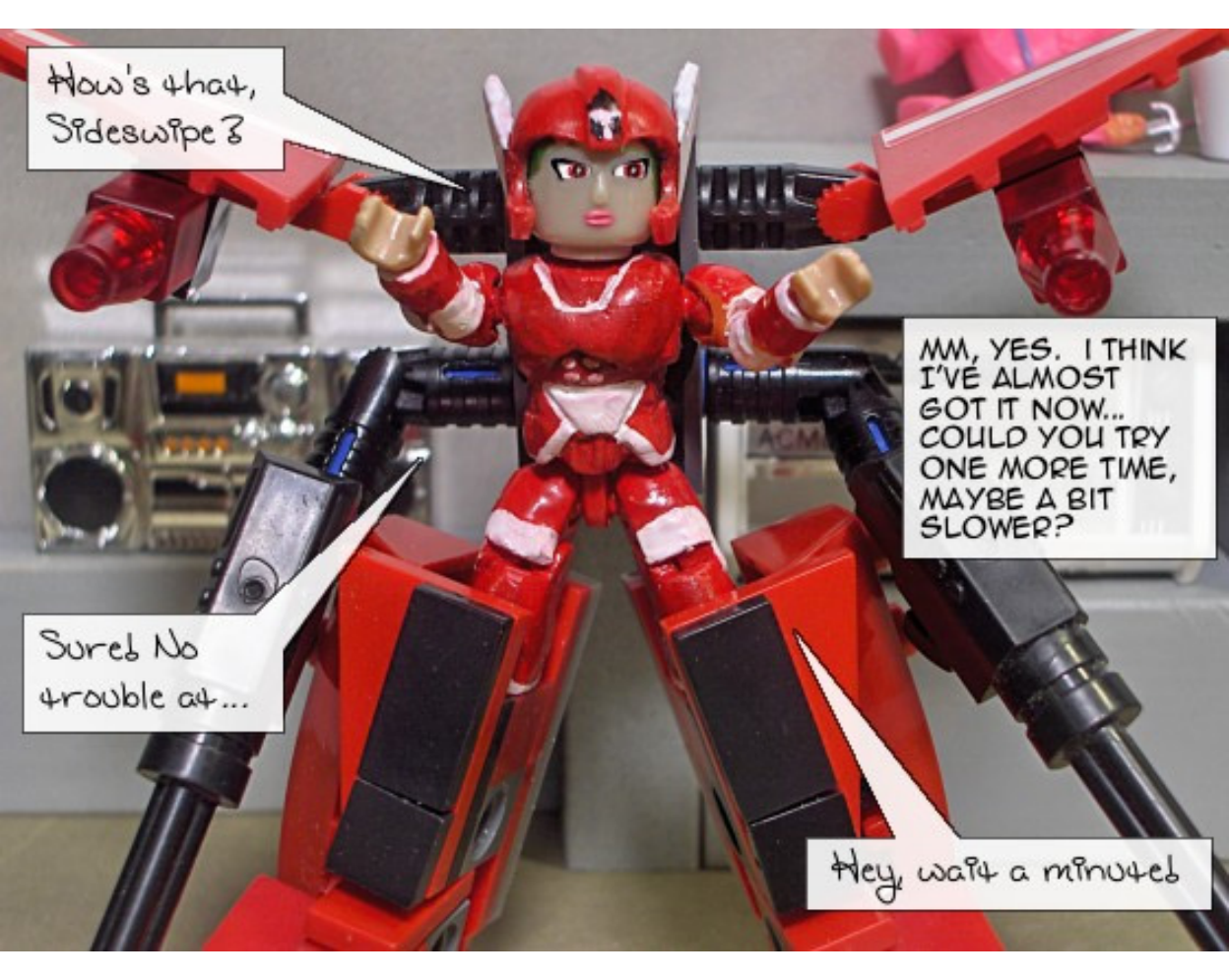
No problemo!



Mas-4er-forced



Stuff Onb



How's that,
Sideswipe?

MM, YES. I THINK
I'VE ALMOST
GOT IT NOW...
COULD YOU TRY
ONE MORE TIME,
MAYBE A BIT
SLOWER?

Sure! No
trouble at...

Hey, wait a minute!

Why is your engine running like that?

OH, IT'S A FAST IDLE. PERFECTLY NORMAL.

NO NEED TO STOP WHAT YOU'RE DOING OR ANYTHING!

Oh...

You mean...

What happened to "technorganiacs are icky"?

YUP!

=VRRRR=

OH, I'VE GOTTEN WAAY PAST THAT, NOW... PARTICULARLY IN THE LAST FEW MINUTES.

