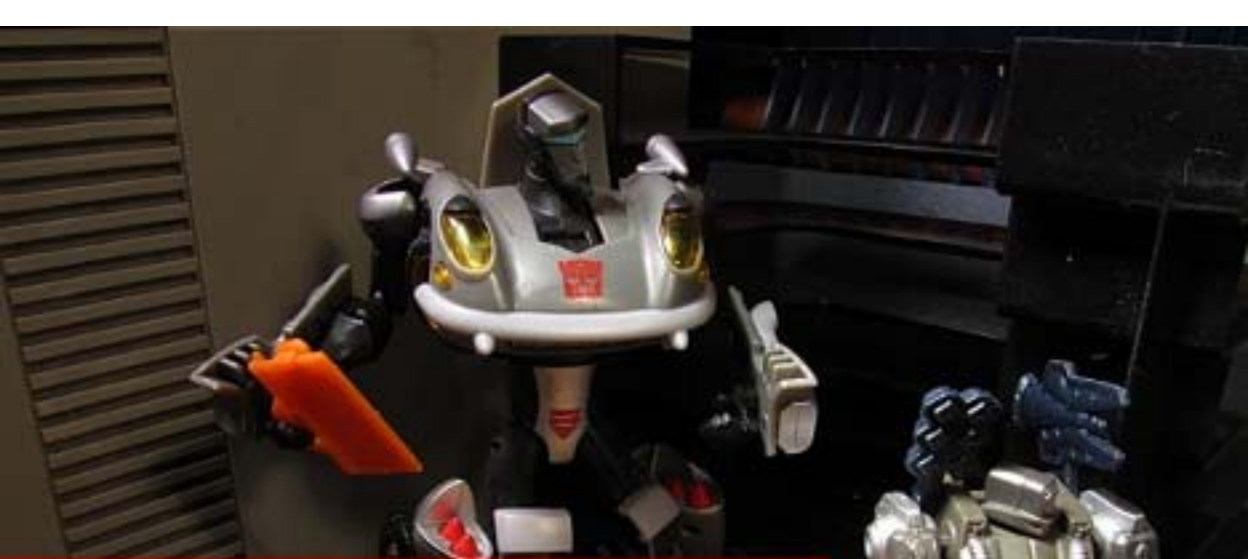


Blurry Robot Theater

15



**HYPE-1!
CATCH!**



⇒FLIK!⇐




WHAT'S THIS,
BURNOUT?



YOUR NAMETAG. YOU'RE
WORKING FOR BURNOUT
ENTERPRISES, NOW.

DIDN'T SIGN
ANYTHING...


NEITHER DID POMOCK,
PARTIO, RIN, OR SCREAMY.

A scene from a Transformers comic. On the left, the head and shoulder of Optimus Prime are visible, constructed from red and blue plastic. In the center, a small white robot with a yellow visor and gold accents is shown. On the right, a portion of another robot is visible. The background is dark with some mechanical details.

WHAT'S LINDONE CAN'T BE DONE.

IT'S NOT
LINDONE
YET, NOT
HERE.

BUT MAYBE
WE SHOULD
LET IT BE.
HAVEN'T
YOU EVER
WANTED AN
'UNDO',
BURNOUT?

A close-up of Optimus Prime's head, showing his blue and silver faceplate and orange eyes. He is positioned on a red plastic base.

MANY TIMES.
HAVEN'T WE ALL?
THAT'S NOT THE
POINT, HYPE.

NOBODY ASKED
ANY OF THEM.



SO, I'M GOING TO ASK YOU, HYPE...
DO YOU REALLY WANT TO GO BACK
AND SEE EVERYTHING UNDONE?

IF YOU DO...GO!
BUT LEAVE THOSE BOXES.
THE NOTES AND DATA...

...BECAUSE I'M GOING TO DO
WHAT I CAME HERE FOR!



YOU COULDN'T
BEGIN TO
UNDERSTAND
MY NOTES...

BOSS.

....BUT WE
CAN'T DO
THIS ALONE.



LEND ME YOUR PHONE, HYPE.
...YOUR *SPECIAL* PHONE.




SHADOW'S PLOT
NEEDS A *TWIST*...

SO I'M CALLING MY
PRETZEL SUPPLIER.

WHO YOU GONNA CALL?



A close-up of Optimus Prime's head from the Transformers franchise. He has a blue helmet with a white visor and a red and white face. His eyes are glowing red.

HELLO, JACK.
IT'S BURNOUT.
I'M ON HYPE'S
PHONE. LET'S
TALK.

YEAH, LET'S!
BUT NOT ON DA PHONE.
HANG ON A SEC'...

A full-body shot of Optimus Prime standing in a fiery, orange-hued environment. He is surrounded by wreckage, including a car wheel and a small robot. He has a determined expression.

SVWORP!<

HELLO, BOY-ES,
WELCOME TO MY SHIP!




I GOTTA VERY
GOOD PRICE.


NOT SO PLUSH AS NEBBY'S SHIP.
SHE'S A REFITTED ORBIT SWEEPRAH,
BUT SHE CAN TRANSWAHP AHRIGHT!




HMF. YES, I'M SURE IT'S
VERY NICE, WHEELJACK...




YOU SENT FOR US.
DID YOU KNOW
SHADOW WAS
GOING TO STOP
THE OPERATION?



I HADDA
HUNCH.




SO... WHAT DO YOU
THINK, ABOUT THAT?



I DUNNO, WHADDA
YOU BOYS THINK?

I THINK YOU
SHOULD
HAND OVER
YOUR KEYS.



HUH-?

WH-WHAT ARE
YOU DOING?

NICE
DRILL.
BY DA
WAY

HYPE AND I ARE
TAKING OVER.
WE NEED YOUR
SHIP, AND YOUR
TRANSPORTER.


DON'T WORRY.
YOU'LL RECEIVE
COMPENSATION.

AND A FREE
VACATION.

SET UP JACK'S
TRANSPORT,
MARSMAN...



...BEFORE HE GETS
BORED.




HOW ABOUT THAT UNIVERSE?
ALTERNITY CODE WW-0805...

AH, THE PLANET
OF OPEN-MINDED
SUPERMODELS.

OK TO
VISIT...

BUT THE
COMPARATIVE
PHILOSOPHY
IS INTENSE,
AND NONE OF
THE CLOTHES
EVER FIT.






WE'VE GOT TO SEND
WHEELJACK SOMEWHERE.
HOW ABOUT WW-O7O2,
ON THE SAME VECTOR?

BRR-RR. TOO
MANY BUGS.

HEY! YOU GUYS
ARE SERIOUS!
YOU'RE REALLY
GONNA DO IT!

YES, WHEELJACK.
WE ARE GOING TO
RESCUE THOSE
CHILDREN, WITH
NO INTERFERING
FROM YOU, OR
ANYONE ELSE.

INNA'FERE? ME?
CONTRARIWISE!
I WANNA' HELP YA!



FOR REAL.


FRAK YEAH! WHY YA THINK SWIPE
GAVE YA SCHMUCKS MY NUMBA'?

...KEEP YOUR
FINGER ON
THAT BUTTON,
MARSMAN.

AND YOU'RE
NOT THE ONLY
ONES HE WENT
'ROUND TA'!

I FIGURED THAT AFTA' PUTTIN'
ALL KINDS TIME AND EFFAHT
INTA' THIS CRAZY THING, SOME
MIGHT NOT WANNA' QUIT!

SOME,
LIKE ME!



SO WE'RE IN
THE SAME BOAT!

SHIP...

RIGHT!

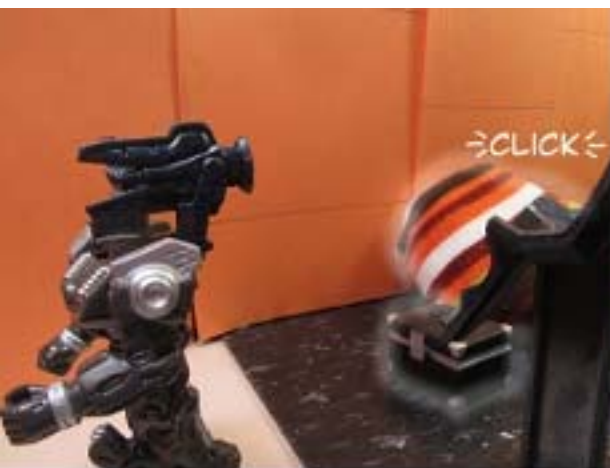
AND WE AIN'T
THE ONLY ONES!

A LOT OF SHADOW'S OTHER
FREELANCERS ARE ON BOARD!
C'MON! I'LL TAKE YA' TO 'EM!

YOU HEAR THAT, HYPE?
WE'VE GOT A TEAM NOW!.

SEEMS THAT WAY, BURN.
...C'MON, MARSMAN.

➡BEEP
CLICK?←



THE PREDICTION RATE
IS BETTER THAN RANDOM,
BUT NOT MUCH, HACKER!

MAYBE COMBINE IT
WITH A DRUNKARD'S
WALK ALGORITHM?


GREAT IDEA, TALA!
THAT WAY WE DON'T
HAVE TO SEARCH
THE ENTIRE ORBITAL
FOR THE KIDS!




IT WOULD HAVE TO
BE FAST, THOUGH!

GO SEE MERCH-HOUND, TALA, HE'S GOT
ALL KINDS OF ODD CODE SOCKED AWAY.

I'LL STAY HERE AND RETEST THE
PREDICTIVE TARGETER WITH SOME
NEW PARAMETERS.




SHE'S
GONE!



TELL ME...IS TALA INTO ME?
DO I HAVE ANY CHANCE
AT ALL, WITH HER?


SCSI
NERD




⇒TAPPATAK⇐



SNOWBALLS
CHANCE IN
HELL...
NERD.



I DO HAVE
A CHANCE
WITH TALA!



WAS
THERE
EVER
ANY
DOUBT?

IT'S
PRONOUNCED
'SCUZZY'



HACKER
X3!!!

BOSS!

NO...WAIT. YOU'RE
NOT MY OLD BOSS.
YOU GOT WINDOWS,
STRARF HAD-

BOOBS!

I'VE GOT NO
TIME FOR
BOOBS,
HACKER!

I'M BURNOUT.
REMEMBER?


OH, YEAH,
BURNOUT!

YOU'RE THE ONE I BRIEFED
BACK ON NEBULACUS' SHIP.
HOW'S THE LADDER HANGING?



FEAR





LIKE A BOSS!
I'M TAKING CHARGE
OF THIS WHOLE
OPERATION.

YAY?

CAN I GET BACK TO WORK?
I'VE GOT THINGS TO DO.
VERY IMPORTANT THINGS.


IN A MINUTE. I'M NOT NEW HERE, BUT SHADOW
DIDN'T TELL ME MUCH. I NEED YOU TO EXPLAIN
HOW WE'RE GOING TO CRACK THAT SYSTEM.

AND MAKE IT FAST!

OO! CAN I BE MILDLY
CONTEMPTUOUS AND
PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE?

WHATEVER
FLOATS YOUR
DECIMAL POINT.

FEAR



IT'S A VIRTUAL WORLD, HOSTED
ON A UNIVERSE-SCALE SERVER?

YES. CALLED 'ALLSPARK',
EVIDENTLY. I.E. 'AFTERLIFE'.
CUTE, HUH?

WE'VE GOT A SCRAP OF ITS
CODE. IT'S BEAUTIFUL.
I NEEDED A COLD SHOWER.


COMPLEX
STUFF, EH?

SIMPLE.

TOO SIMPLE TO
UNDERSTAND.


HOW CAN A THING BE TOO
SIMPLE TO UNDERSTAND?

HOW SIMPLE IS A
UNIFIED FIELD THEORY?



IF WE CAN'T
COMPREHEND IT,
HOW CAN WE
CHANGE IT?

WE CAN'T, OF COURSE...
BUT THE ALLSHELL...
THE STUFF THE DAEMON
TACKED ON, I NAMED IT...
THAT'S ANOTHER STORY.



THE LEGION NET'S A MESS.
IT LEAKS LIKE A SIEVE.
ALL TOO EASY TO HIDE CODE,
AND I FOUND A BUFFER
OVERFLOW WE COULD USE
TO EXECUTE THAT CODE...

I FOUND THIS BY
CREATING A NEW
CHARACTER, AND
GETTING EATEN
OVER AND OVER
AND OVER AGAIN.

IT WAS...TRAUMATIC.



YYES...I CAN SEE HOW
THAT WOULD BE...UM...
NIGHTMARE-INDUCING...



YOU DON'T KNOW
NIGHTMARES, 'TIL
YOU'VE SEEN...
...ANYWAY...

THE OVERFLOW
OCCURS WHEN
THE LEGION TRY
TO ASSIMILATE
AN OBJECT AS
IT SPAWNS AN
IDENTICAL COPY
OF ITSELF.


IN-GAME, IT PLAYS LIKE THIS -
I'M GOING IN, UNDERCOVER, CARRYING
A SLIMEBALL, TO WHICH MERCH-HOUND
HAS ATTACHED SOME EXTRA DATA...

I THROW THE
SLIMEBALL,
A LEGION
EATS IT, AND
IMMEDIATELY
UPGRADES
ITSELF...

THE LEGION, BY DESIGN,
EASILY ACCEPT UPGRADES.
EVIDENTLY, THE DAEMON
DIDN'T REALIZE HOW THIS
COULD BE EXPLOITED...

IN-GAME, THE LEGION GAINS
A DRILL...AND AN EXPLOSIVE
BREEDING RATE. IT NEEDS
MATERIALS FOR THAT...





YOUR AVATAR
IS...UH...

SHADDUP.



FEAR

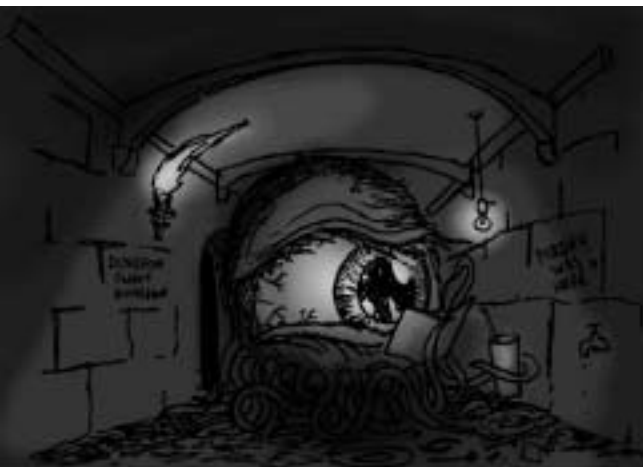
OUR 'UPGRADE' WILL
IMMEDIATELY DRILL INTO
THE GROUND, AND START
SPAWNING MORE UPGRADED
LEGION...WITH THE SAME
ABILITIES.

EXPONENTIAL GROWTH
MEETS FINITE SYSTEM
RESOURCES...AND WITH
EVERYTHING HAPPENING
BENEATH THE SURFACE...

WHEN THE DAEMON FINDS OUT,
IT WILL BE TOO LATE.

RIGHT. HE WON'T BE ABLE
TO KILL LEGION FAST
ENOUGH. HE'LL HAVE TO
REBOOT 'ALLSPARK', OR
WATCH IT CRASH...

EITHER WAY,
GAME OVER.






You stare down the floating eye.
The floating eye explodes. -more-

Welcome to
level 457.

FENIX!!






PROBLEM,
JACK?

NOT AT ALL! WE GOT BURNOUT,
AND A BUDGET, AND WHEN HE'S
DONE TALKIN' TO HYPE, WE'RE
READY TA LAUNCH!

READY TO
RE-START,
YOU MEAN.

NOPE.

SEE YA SOON,
HALCONFENIX!



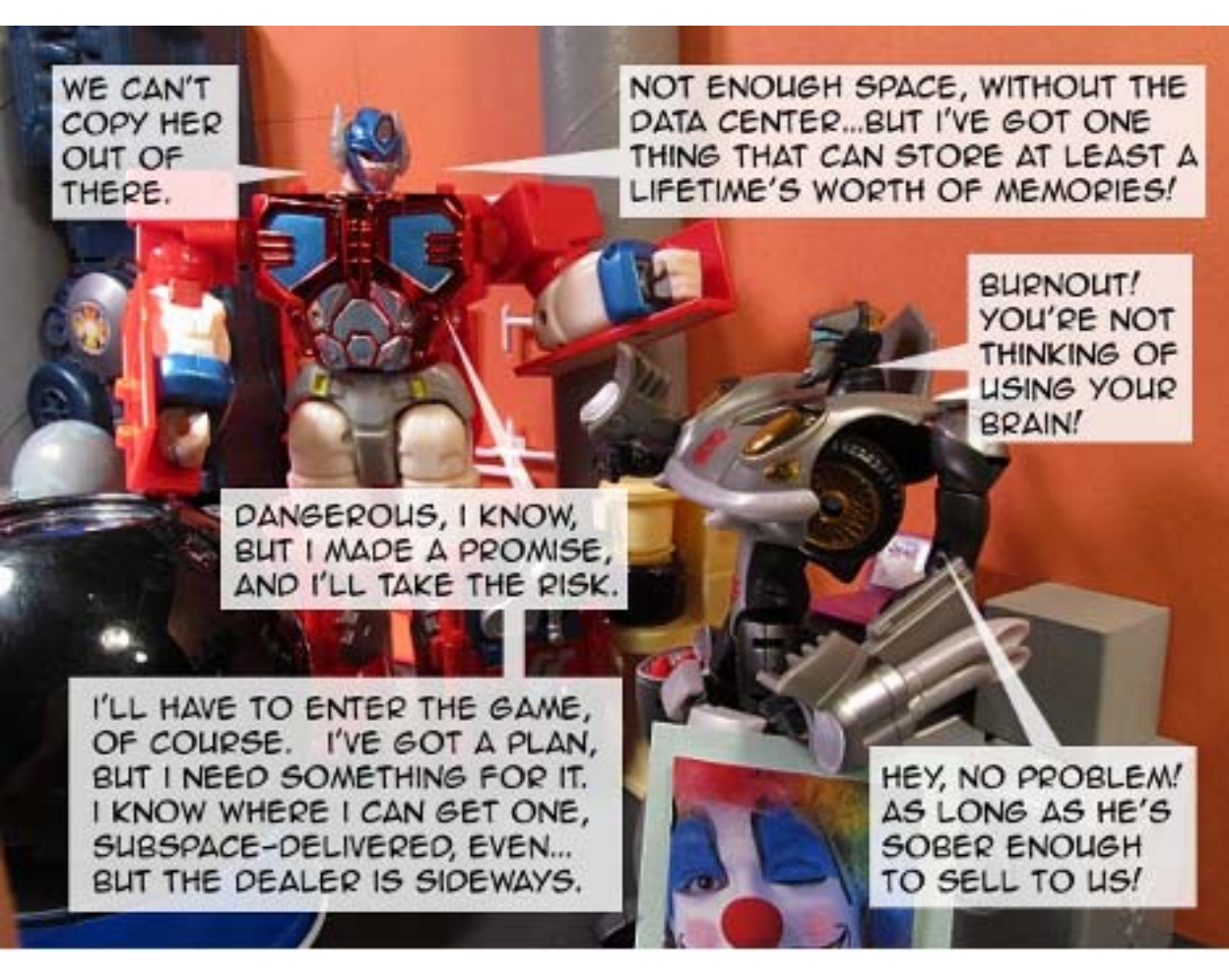
PROBLEM, HYPE.

...TWO PROBLEMS.
BURN THAT THING.

THE HACK SEEMS LIKELY
TO WORK...IF THE DAEMON
DOESN'T CATCH IT EARLY.

...BUT IT DOESN'T FREE
MS. KAGAMINE.

THIS?



WE CAN'T
COPY HER
OUT OF
THERE.

NOT ENOUGH SPACE, WITHOUT THE
DATA CENTER...BUT I'VE GOT ONE
THING THAT CAN STORE AT LEAST A
LIFETIME'S WORTH OF MEMORIES!

BURNOUT!
YOU'RE NOT
THINKING OF
USING YOUR
BRAIN!

DANGEROUS, I KNOW,
BUT I MADE A PROMISE,
AND I'LL TAKE THE RISK.

I'LL HAVE TO ENTER THE GAME,
OF COURSE. I'VE GOT A PLAN,
BUT I NEED SOMETHING FOR IT.
I KNOW WHERE I CAN GET ONE,
SUBSPACE-DELIVERED, EVEN...
BUT THE DEALER IS SIDEWAYS.

HEY, NO PROBLEM!
AS LONG AS HE'S
SOBER ENOUGH
TO SELL TO US!

THE PLANET OF OPEN MINDED SUPERMODELS:

CERTAINLY ETHICS ARE DEFINABLE, BARBARA, BUT IT DOES NOT NECESSARILY FOLLOW THAT MORAL IMPERATIVES EXIST A PRIORI, APART FROM SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE.

I DO NOT DISAGREE THAT EXPERIENCE IS SUBJECTIVE, JENNIFER; I SIMPLY HOLD THAT EVALUATION WITHOUT A PRIORI CONSIDERATIONS INEVITABLY DEVOLVES TO ABSURD CIRCULARITY.

"DO YOU MEAN TO SAY, BARBARA, THAT EVERY GUIDING PRINCIPLE MUST BE TRUE OF ITSELF? WHAT'S UP WITH THAT?"

"-WHAT'S UP WITH THE SKY?!"




≡SOCK!≡

B-BEANBAG...
CHAIR??

→BLEEP← ME
SIDEWAYS!

MEANWHILE, SOMEWHERE ELSE... (SIGNAL VIA REPEATER P-0209)



SORRY, NOT IN THE
LOVE BUSINESS.

COMPUTER, SWITCH
BARBARA TO ALTERNITY
02P9-0901, AND
GO TO THE NEXT CALLER.


AND BY PLANET X, NOT
ANOTHER CLOWN TO
WASTE MY TIME...

≡CLICKAWHIRRR≡

HELLO! THANK YOU
FOR CHOOSING
SIDEWAYS'S TRANS-
DIMENSIONAL
SUPPLY COMPANY!

HOW MAY WE
ASSIST Y-



A red and blue Transformer-like robot stands in the center, holding a large red block. To its right, another robot holds a framed picture of a clown. The clown has a large red nose and a wide, toothy grin. The word "FEAR" is written below the picture. A speech bubble points from the clown picture to the red robot. The background is a plain orange wall.

EXCELLENT.
THEN LET'S TALK
BUSINESS!

FEAR



I'M IN THE
ENTERTAINMENT
INDUSTRY,
SIDEWAYS.
I'VE A DREAM
I WANT TO
SHARE WITH
AN AUDIENCE.



WRITE A ONE-ACT
PLAY, AND PLEASE
DON'T SEND ME
ANY TICKETS.




I WANT TO SHARE MY DREAM
WITH THEM...MORE DIRECTLY.

MICRONS,
SIDEWAYS.

AH! PIPE A PICTURE INTO
THE BRAIN, EH? KINKY!
NOT ALWAYS PRACTICAL.
WHAT'S THE AUDIENCE?





MICRONS?
EASY! USE
A CYBER KEY
TO ACCESS
THE LINKAGE.


THEY'RE...

25,000
CREDITS.

⇒CLICKA
TICK⇐

⇒CLICKA
CLACK⇐


SOME SCRATCH-
AND-DENT FOR
LESS; CERTIFIED
CRUELTY-FREE
FOR 325,000,
IF THAT'S YOUR
BAG, CLOWN.



CRUELTY...
...FREE?

CERTIFIED. BUILT NEW.
MUCH CHEAPER TO MAKE
THEM FROM UNSALABLE
MICRONS, BUT SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY IS
BIG, THESE DAYS.

MARKETING,
IT'S EVERYTHING.



CRUELTY.-FREE...YES...
THAT SOUNDS GOOD.
I'LL TAKE ONE OF THOSE.

YOU WON'T BE SORRY, CLOWN! PRINT IT
NICE AND BIG, ON YOUR PROGRAMS. YOU'LL
SEE THAT PAY OFF IN EXTRA BUSINESS!

I SEE YOU'VE MADE THE CREDITS AVAILABLE,
THAT'S GOOD. LET ME SET UP DELIVERY...

ALL RIGHT, BUYER, GIVE ME SOME
RELATIVE COORDINATES FOR DELIVERY.

UH...15, 5, 10,
CYLINDRICAL.

15,5,10, ROGER.
ONE CYBER KEY
COMING UP,
GUARANTEED
TO WORK, AND
CERTIFIED NICE
AND ETHICAL...

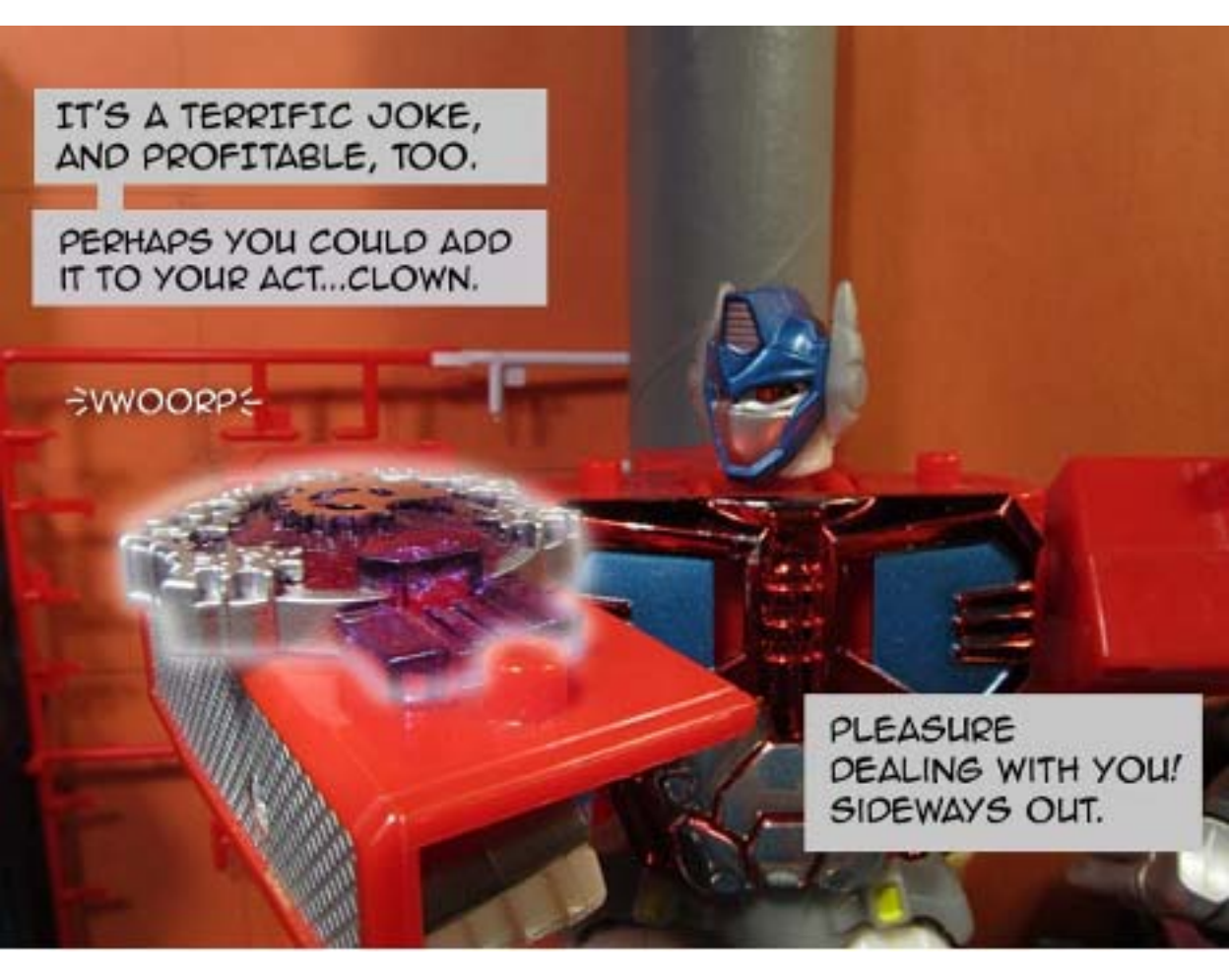
IT'S GOOD BUSINESS, THIS ETHICAL STUFF.
A GOOD JOKE, TOO, CLOWN. EVERY ONE OF
THESE CERTIFIED KEYS I SELL LETS ME BUY UP
DOZENS OF PLAIN OLD NONCERTIFIED ONES.
MAYBE NEW, MAYBE REBUILT, THEY ALL SELL.


IT'S A TERRIFIC JOKE,
AND PROFITABLE, TOO.

PERHAPS YOU COULD ADD
IT TO YOUR ACT...CLOWN.

⇒VWOORP⇐

PLEASURE
DEALING WITH YOU!
SIDEWAYS OUT.




A photograph of a collection of toys on a table. On the left, a white and grey robot with yellow eyes and a red shield on its chest stands on a red base. In the foreground, a red toy car is partially visible. To the right of the robot, there are several grey blocks and a blue box with a clock face. The background is an orange wall.

WE MADE A DEAL WITH THE DEVIL
TO GET THAT KEY, BURNOUT...

HA HA!
YES WE DID.

BUT HE WON'T
GET A PENNY
OUT OF IT.

A close-up shot of a robot's head, primarily red with blue accents. The robot has a blue visor with red glowing eyes. A white speech bubble with a black outline points from the robot's mouth area towards the top left. The background is dark and out of focus.


I DEPOSITED THE FUNDS
IN A BANK THAT'S ABOUT
TO GET SWALLOWED UP
BY SHADOWDRAGON'S
REBOOTED TIMELINE.

HE'LL FIND THE MONEY
WAS NEVER THERE.

I'M SURE IT WON'T
SIT WELL WITH
OLD SIDEWAYS...

...BUT, RIGHT NOW,
I DON'T REALLY CARE.


PUT ME UNDER, HYPE.
IT'S TIME I JOINED
THE ALLSPARK.



...AND REMEMBER...
THE MOMENT WE
MAKE CONTACT...WITH
THE TARGET MICRON...

THAT'S WHEN
YOU TELL
WHEELJACK
TO START.

OKAY,
HYPE?



WILL DO, BURNOUT.

GOOD...GOOD LUCK...IN THERE.

⇒KLIK⇒

PINKY SWEAR...

MS. KAGAMINE.



THE DIMENSION CALLED THE LINKAGE
JOINS THE PEOPLE CALLED MICRONS
ACROSS TIME AND SPACE...

THE FUTURE...
THE PRESENT...

WHAT IS LEFT
OF A PAST...

AS THE KEY'S
DATA DISC SPINS UP,
BURNOUT FEELS HIS
OWN THOUGHTS
RECEDING...

BURNOUT
HAS ENTERED
THE LINKAGE.





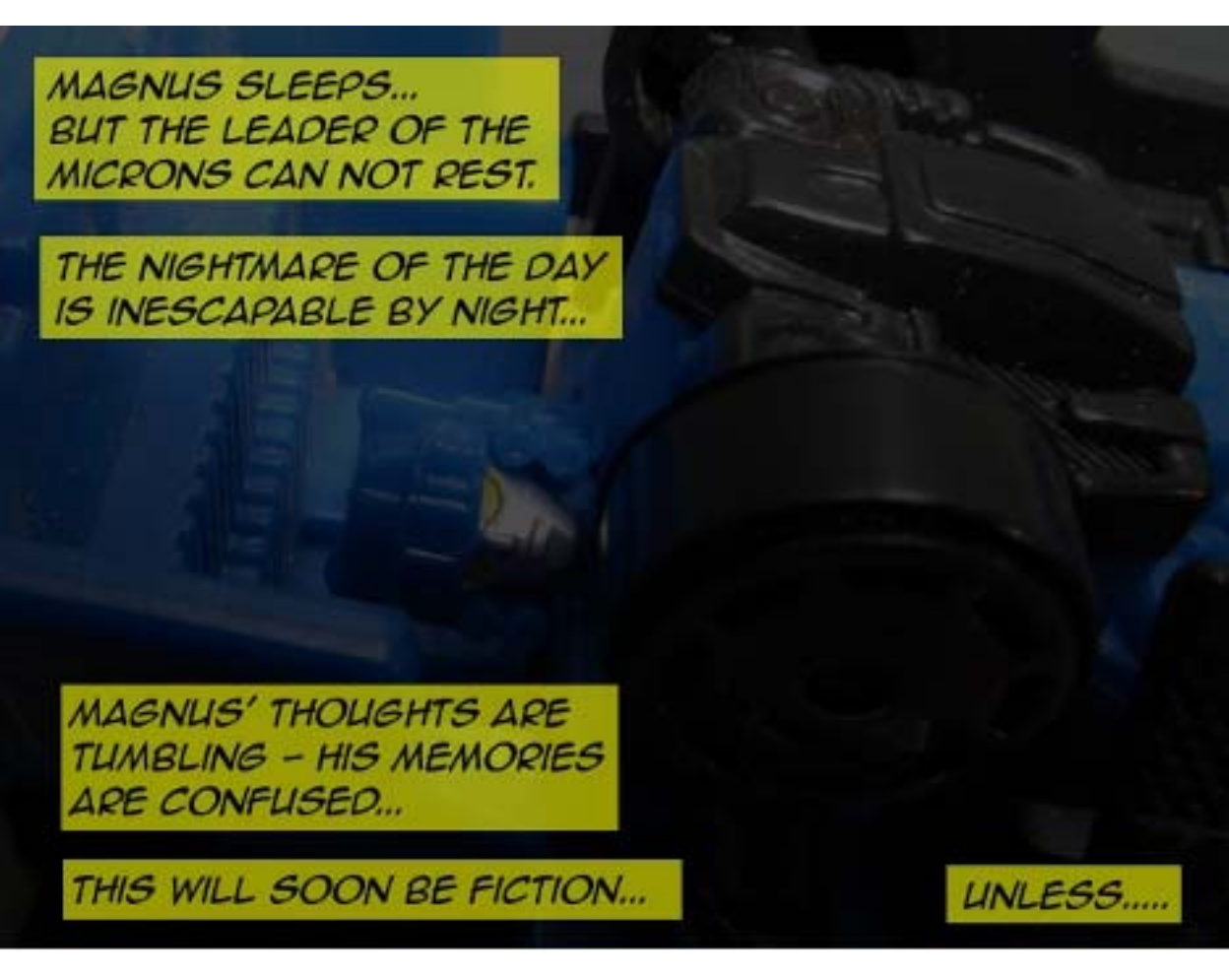
TIME IS CHANGING QUICKLY.

THE NIGHT LONGVIEW FELL...

THE NIGHT THE FLIERS
DID NOT COME BACK...

THE NIGHT THEY
FOUND ONE SLIVER...
JUST ONE FRAGMENT...

SOON THAT
NIGHT WILL
NEVER HAVE
HAPPENED.



MAGNUS SLEEPS...
BUT THE LEADER OF THE
MICRONS CAN NOT REST.

THE NIGHTMARE OF THE DAY
IS INESCAPABLE BY NIGHT...

MAGNUS' THOUGHTS ARE
TUMBLING - HIS MEMORIES
ARE CONFUSED...

THIS WILL SOON BE FICTION...

UNLESS.....

MAGNUS!



W-WHO--?

YOUR ACCUSER!

LOOK,
MAGNUS!



*LOOK WHAT YOU
HAVE DONE!*



*BURNOUT.
I AM BURNOUT!*


WE ARE LINKAGE!

LOOK, MAGNUS!

LOOK INTO OUR EYES!

LOOK INTO OUR MIND!


*I AM BURNOUT.
I MUST NOT FORGET...*

A close-up of a robot's head, primarily blue with red accents. The robot's eyes are glowing white, and there is a bright light source behind the head, creating a strong lens flare effect. The robot appears to be wearing a helmet or a mask with a visor-like structure. The background is dark and indistinct.

**LOOK, MAGNUS!
SEE THE LOVE DESTROYED
BY YOUR HATRED!**



**I AM BURNOUT...
I HAVE TO... REMEMBER...**



LOOK, MAGNUS! LOOK!
DEAD! ALL OF THEM!
BECAUSE OF YOU!

NO! PLEASE, I ONLY
WANTED TO PROTECT-

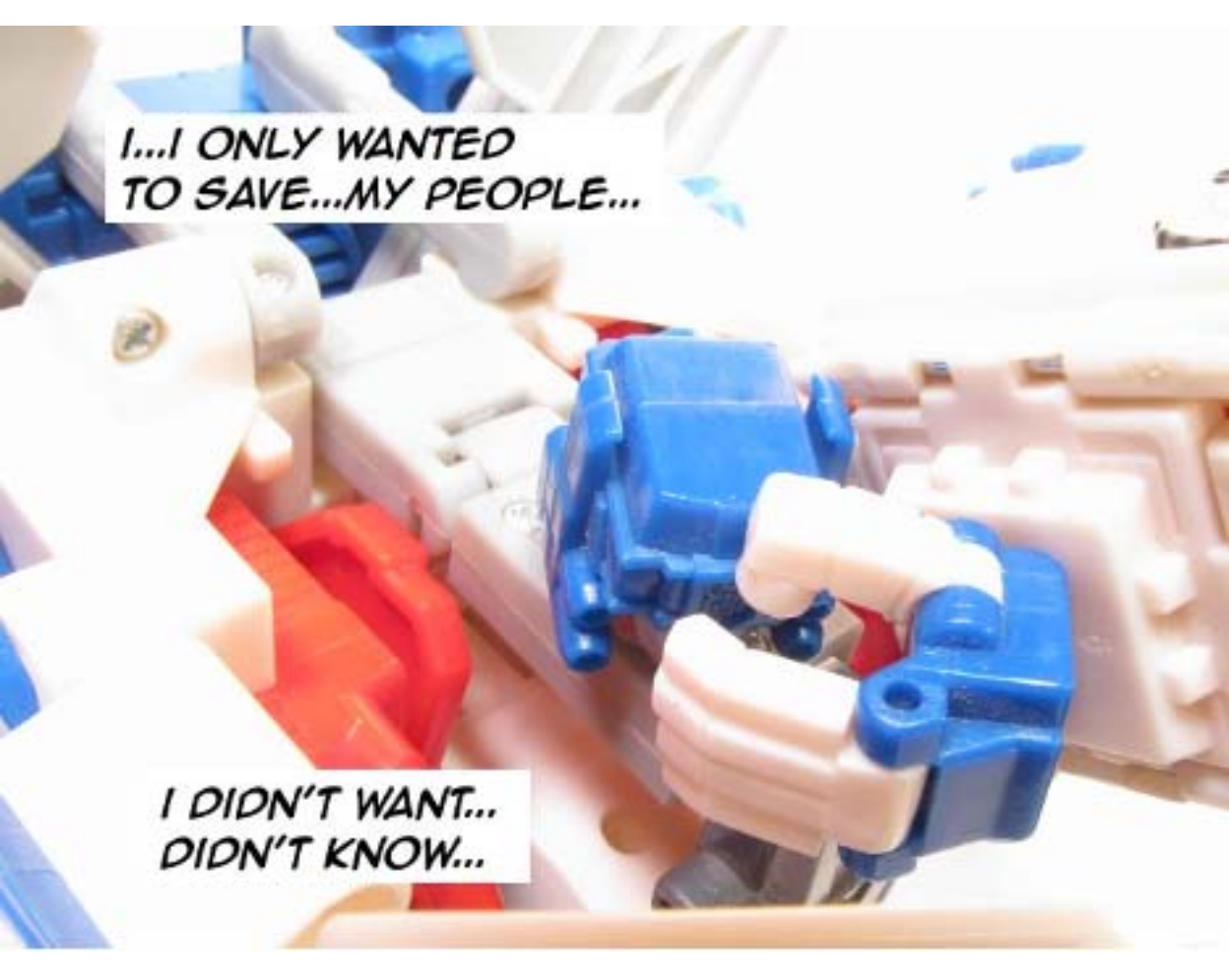


PROTECT. YES.
FROM HER...

YOUR
ENEMY.

LOOK AT
HER, MAGNUS.

...MY
PURPOSE.



*I...I ONLY WANTED
TO SAVE...MY PEOPLE...*

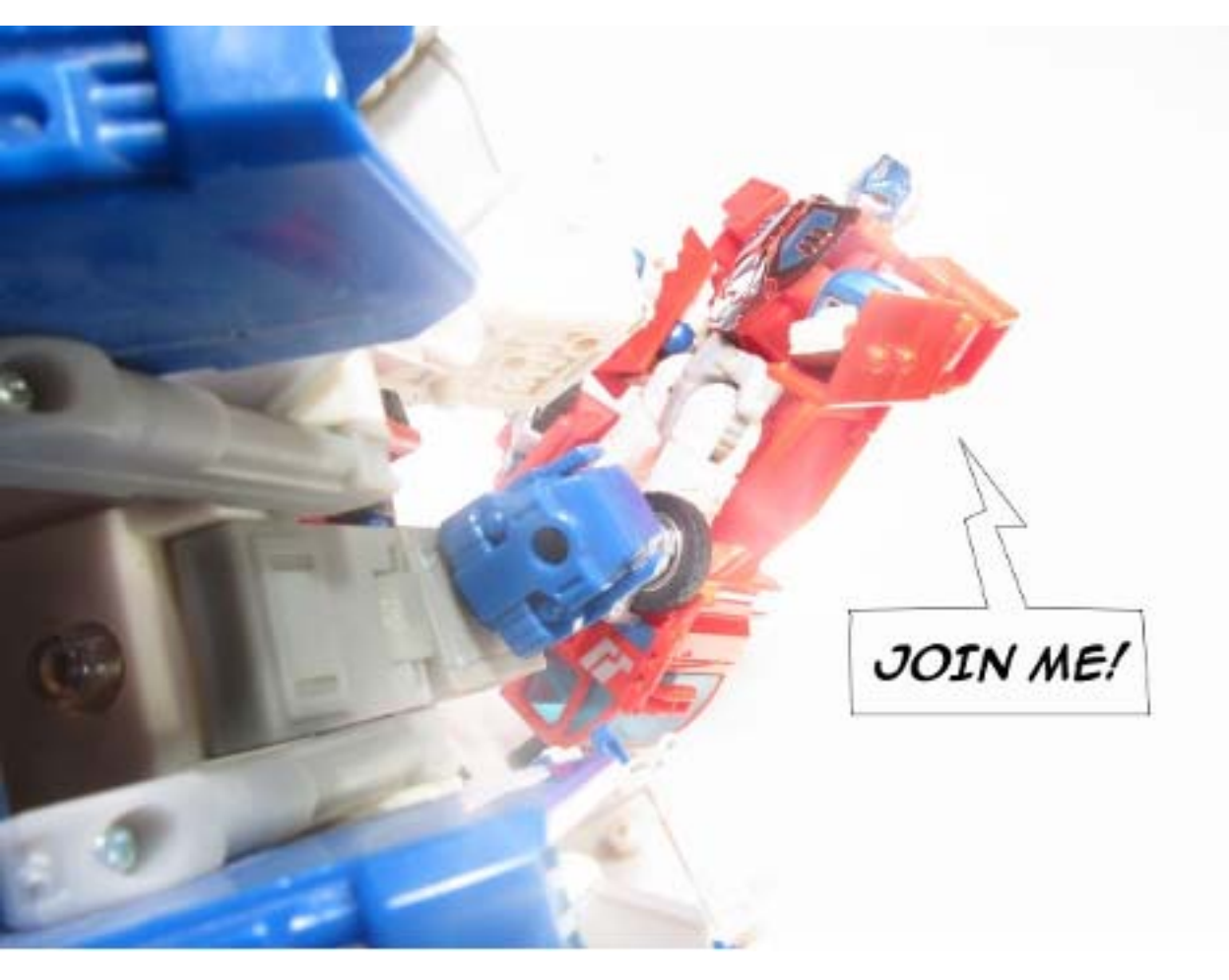
*I DIDN'T WANT...
DIDN'T KNOW...*



NEITHER
DID I,
MAGNUS
OF THE
MICRONS.

JOIN ME,
MAGNUS.

AND LET'S PAY
DOWN OUR DEBT.



JOIN ME!

AAH!



АHH! АHH-ННННН!



***HA HAAAA!
IT'S WORKING!***





**IT'S
WORKING-**

**-WHAT HAVE
I DONE?!!**

GGHAAAUGHH!



**IT HAS TO STOP IT HAS
TO STOP IT HAS TO
STAAAAAGGH-HHGH-H-**



-AH?

BUT...
WHO...

WHO
AM I?



I...

I AM
BURNOUT....

I AM
MAGNUS...

**BY THE LINKAGE...
WE ARE OMEGA!**



**OUR MISSION...NO!
WE CANNOT REMEMBER...**


I AM BURNOUT...

I AM BURNOUT, AND...


*BY THE LINKAGE,
MS. KAGAMINE!*



*...PINKY SWEAR,
MS. KAGAMINE.*



**BURNOUT!!
YOU THERE?!**



Y-YES!

**THE OTHERS -
DON'T HAVE THEM
START YET!**

**RIN, WHERE
IS RIN?!**



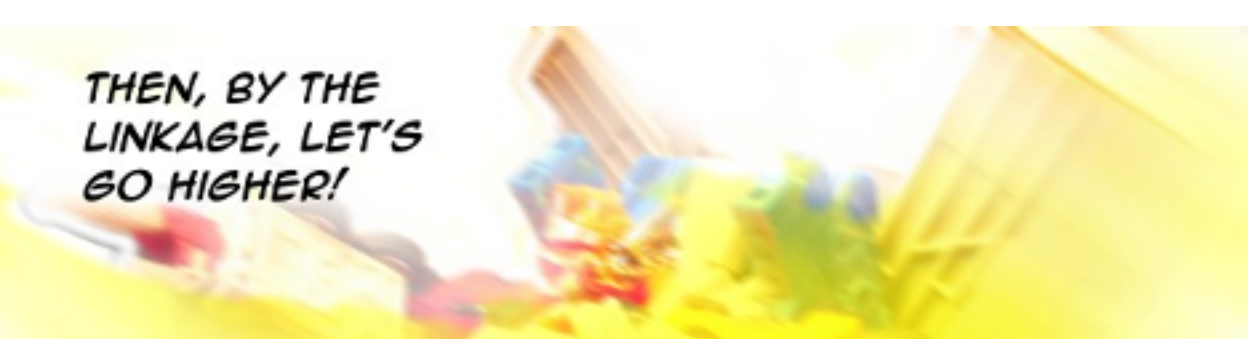
BY THE
LINKAGE,
WHERE IS
KAGAMINE?!

WE ARE LINKAGE.
YOU ARE MAGNUS.
SHE IS NOT IN YOUR DREAM.
FROM THIS LEVEL, NO MORE
CAN BE KNOWN.




ARE THERE OTHER LEVELS?

HIGHER AND LOWER.




THEN, BY THE
LINKAGE, LET'S
GO HIGHER!



STARS!
WHAT IS THIS?

IT IS A UNIVERSE OF THOUGHTS AND DREAMS...

ALL ABLAZE ONCE...
BUT TIME RUNS SHORT,
AND THE LIGHTS GO OUT.



THE GREEN STAR,
LINKAGE..BRIGHT AND
ALONE IN THE VOID...
WHAT IS ITS NAME?

WE ARE THE LINKAGE...
WE KNOW MANY THINGS...
WE DO NOT KNOW HER NAME...

NOR DOES SHE.



A GREEN
STAR...

A STAR
WITH NO
NAME...

THE LADY
IN GREEN...
TSUGARU'S
DARK DOOR...

LET'S GO!




WHERE AM I, HYPE?

YOU'RE ALL RIGHT, BURN! YOU'RE
HERE WITH ME. LOOKS LIKE YOU
HAD A BAD REACTION TO THE KEY...

I'M GOING TO EASE IT OFF..
EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE OKAY!

NO!
DON'T!

HYPE, I'M FINE!



**HYPE, IT'S AWESOME! WE CAN
MOVE AROUND THE LINKAGE
IN THIS NEW FORM! WE CAN
GO ANYWHERE WE WANT!**

**AND I KNOW WHERE
I NEED TO GO, HYPE!**

**THROUGH HELL, HYPE!
THE LINKAGE FOUND HER!
IT SAID SHE DIDN'T HAVE ONE!**




BURNOUT...YOU'RE NOT
MAKING A LOT OF SENSE...
YOU'RE TRIPPING, OR I WAS
NEVER AT CYBERSTOCK '98.

I DON'T RECALL IT,
THEREFORE I MUST
HAVE BEEN THERE.



***I AM NOT
TRIPPING!***

***IT'S NOT A HALLUCINATION, HYPE!
I CAN SEE TSUGARU'S GREEN LADY!
THE ONE WITH NO NAME, HYPE!!***



THE ONE THAT
TRAPS SOULS?
THE ONE THAT
LIVES IN HELL?

THAT'S
THE ONE!

I'M GOING TO
FLY RIGHT
THROUGH HER
DIMENSION
AND INTO THAT
DAMNED VIDEO
GAME ALLSPARK
ALLSHELL BLACK
HOLE THING!

YOU SEE, HYPE?
DREAMWORLD TO
UNDERWORLD TO
DIGITAL WORLD!

THE SAME
ROUTE TSUGARU
TOOK, HYPE!

BUT IT'S NOT
GOING TO END
THE SAME,
NOT THIS TIME!

RIGHT! TELL
HIM IT'S TIME
TO START!

YES. HE'S
TRIPPING...
I HOPE.

DEFINITELY.

'CAUSE,
IF HE
ISN'T...

...YEAH. I'D
BETTER CALL
JACK. RIGHT
NOW...

PROBABLY.

DON'T DO THAT,
BY THE WAY.



⇒BRR-RING!<⇒

⇒BBBBBBBBB-
RING!<⇒

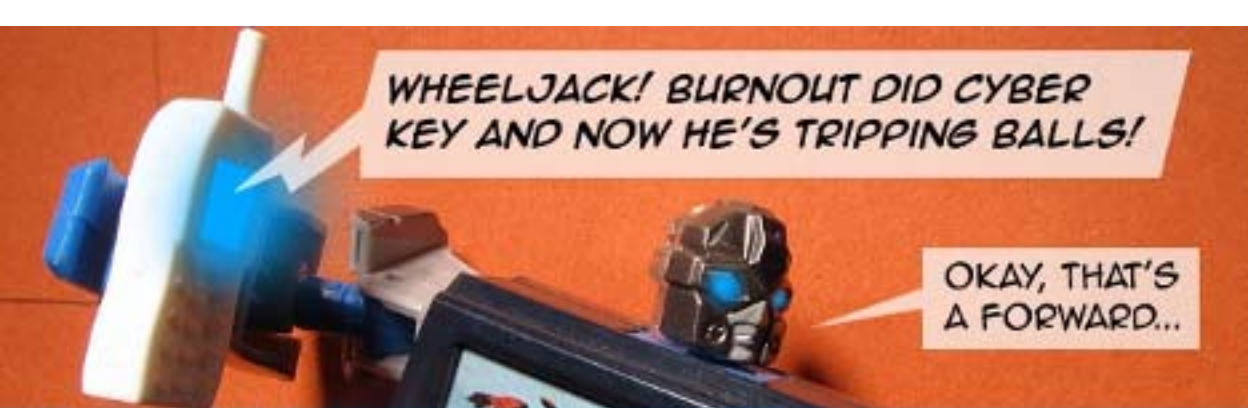
⇒GRUMBLE<⇒

BRAIN THE
SIZE OF A
PLANET AND
HERE I AM
PLAYING
ANSWERING
MACHINE FOR...

⇒BBBBBBBBB-RRRINGGG!<⇒

HEL-LO,
HACKER X3
SPEAKING,
WHEELJACK
IS OUT-





WHEELJACK! BURNOUT DID CYBER
KEY AND NOW HE'S TRIPPING BALLS!

OKAY, THAT'S
A FORWARD...


SOTO NO
SEKAI NI WA



HIKARI WA
ARU NO KA




MY PHONE!
AWRIGHT!
IT MUST BE
TIME TA START!



HIYA, HYPE MAN!
TIME TA GET THIS
PAHTY STAHTED, EH!

WAIT--!

SOON....



BURNTOUT USED A
CYBAH KEY TA DIVE
INTA MAGNUS THE
MICRON'S DREAMS?

YEAH. TO PATCH HIS MIND INTO
THE MICRON LINKAGE, AND USE
IT TO BRING BACK THE RIN
PROGRAM. THAT WAS THE PLAN...

THAT'S COOL AS FRELL!
DID IT WORK, HYPE?

HE CAME BACK A LITTLE TO SAY HE GOT IN,
BUT THEN HE GOT WEIRD... SAID HE WAS MAGNUS,
SAID HE FOUND TSUGARU'S GREEN LADY...
SAID HE WAS GOING TO GO THROUGH HELL...

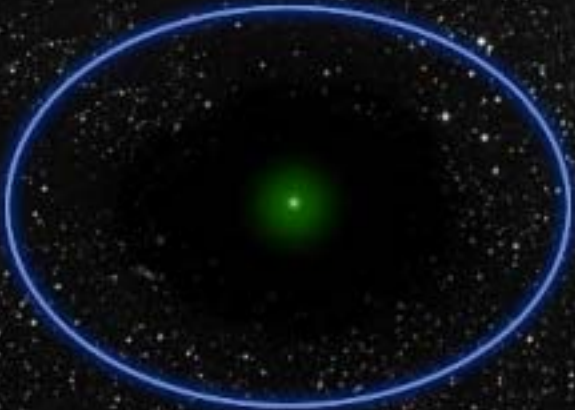
IF IT'S JUST
TRIPPY ROBOT
THEATER, I
SHOULD LEAVE
THE KEY ON,
LET HIM RIDE
IT OUT. SAFEST
FOR HIS BRAIN
THAT WAY...

BUT IF HE'S REALLY THERE...
WITH THE REAL GREEN LADY,
THE DIGITIZED DEMONS...

...THEN, WELL,
I DON'T KNOW...







*DARKNESS BEHIND,
ONE LIGHT AHEAD...
ONE NIGHT LEFT...*

...AND I DARE TO DREAM...






SOMETIMES
WHEN YOUR HOPES
HAVE ALL BEEN
SHATTERED

AND THERE'S NOWHERE
TO TURN...

YOU WONDER
HOW YOU KEEP
GOING...




THINK OF ALL THE
THINGS THAT REALLY
MATTERED, AND THE
CHANCES YOU'VE
EARNED...



THE FIRE IN
YOUR HEART
IS GROWING!

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
YOUR
DREAMS
ALIVE...*

IT'S TIME TO TAKE A STAND....



*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...


A dark, industrial scene with a bright light source illuminating a complex structure. The scene is filled with various mechanical components, pipes, and structural elements, all rendered in a dark, monochromatic style. The lighting creates a strong contrast between the illuminated areas and the deep shadows.

DARE!

A dense, chaotic scene of industrial debris and machinery. The scene is filled with various mechanical components, pipes, and structural elements, all rendered in a dark, monochromatic style. The lighting creates a strong contrast between the illuminated areas and the deep shadows.


*DARE TO BELIEVE
YOU CAN SURVIVE!*



A character in a dark, futuristic suit with glowing green lights, holding a large green sword. The character is wearing a helmet with a visor and has a confident expression. The background is dark with some green highlights.

AND YOU CAN WIN,
IF YOU DARE!

BURNOUT.



MOONSCREAM!

**BUT...YOU'RE
ALL DEAD!
AM I SEEING
GHOSTS?**

**IF WE'RE GHOSTS,
WHAT ARE YOU?**

**AND HOW IN THE HELL
DID YOU GET SO TALL?**




LINKED UP WITH MAGNUS...
THAT'S HOW I GOT HERE...

HOW DID ALL
YOU MANAGE IT?



SAME AS YOU.
WE FOLLOWED
THE STORY!

NOW, YOU
FOLLOW
ME...



IF YOU-

DARE!





*DARE TO BELIEVE
YOU CAN SURVIVE!*

*YOU HOLD THE
FUTURE IN
YOUR HAND!*


DARE!

*DARE TO KEEP ALL
YOUR DREAMS ALIVE!*

*THE POWER IS THERE
AT YOUR COMMAND!*

DARE!



A glowing green horizontal bar, possibly a light or a stylized object, is centered in the upper half of the image. It has a bright, saturated green color and a slightly textured, brush-like appearance. The background is dark and indistinct, with some faint green highlights on the left and right sides, suggesting a dark environment with some light sources.

DARE TO KEEP ALL YOUR LOVE ALIVE!
DARE TO BE ALL THAT YOU CAN BE...

DARE!

*THERE IS A PLACE
WHERE DREAMS
SURVIVE...*

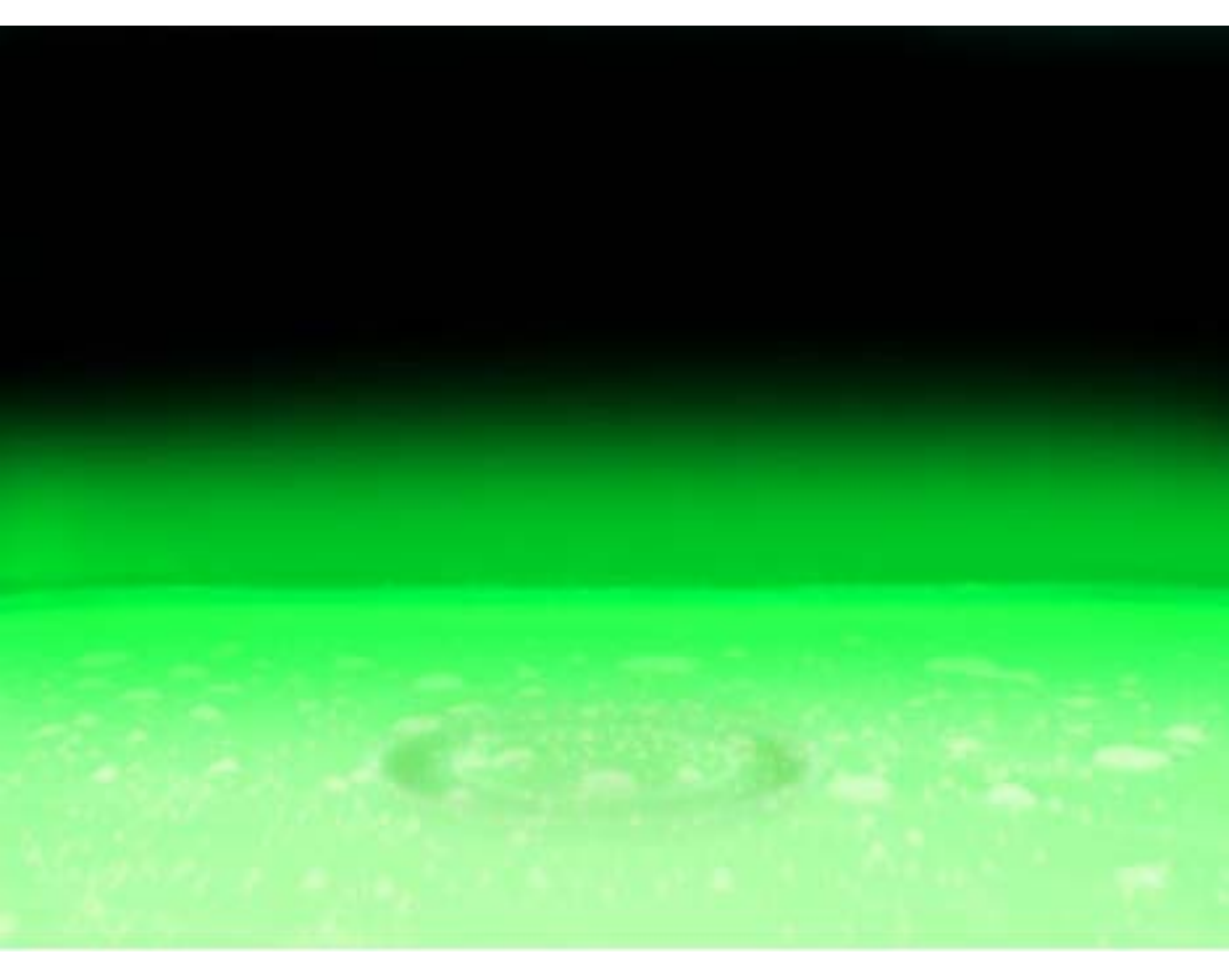


*IT'S CALLING YOU
ON TO VICTORY...*





DARE!




"IN RARE CASES,
SEIZURES MAY OCCUR.
IF SO, DO NOT PANIC."

Burning Injustice

The Facts About
Cyberkey

Just say
"No way!"

"PREVENT INJURY
BY CLEARING THE
SURROUNDINGS.
DO NOT ATTEMPT
TO RESTRAIN THE
VICTIM OR PLACE
ANYTHING IN HIS
OR HER MOUTH."



NO PROB, HE
HASN'T GOT
A MOUTH...

"...THE FIRST WARNING
OF IMPENDING SEIZURE
IS OFTEN A LOUD AND
INVOLUNTARY GROAN..."

≡GGROAAAAH≡



BBAM!!

THUDD!

"...THIS WILL BE FOLLOWED
BY A PERIOD OF STRONG
AND UNCONTROLLABLE
MOTOR ACTUATIONS.

THE POTENTIAL FOR INJURY
IS HIGH AT THIS STAGE."

"IN CASES WHERE THE
VICTIM IS LARGE OR
STRONG, THE RISK TO
CAREGIVERS SHOULD
NOT BE IGNORED."



⇒CRASH⇐

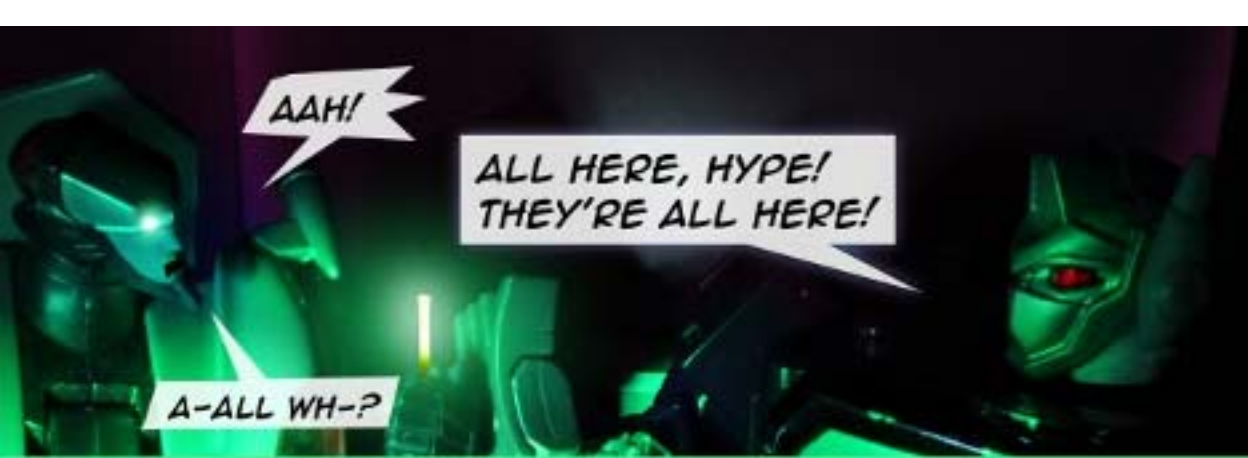
⇒SMASH⇐

⇒BANG⇐

⇒BOOM⇐

⇒SNAP⇐

FF-FRAK...



AAH!

ALL HERE, HYPE!
THEY'RE ALL HERE!


A-ALL WH-?



LIAR!

SHE ISN'T HERE!
SHE SHOULD
BE HERE!

WHERE IS SHE,
AUTOBOT?!!



K...KAGAMINE?


NO...AUTOBOT...

WHERE...IS...

MY.....

⇒WREEEEEEN!⇐

WREEEEEEN! WREEEEEEN!



YA' OKAY,
HYPE MAN?


MORE OR LESS.
HOW ABOUT YOU?

⇒KOFF⇐
PEACHY!

I THINK I BETTA' GET
STAHTED ⇒KOFF⇐
LIKE, NOW.

WHATEVAH THE DEAL
IS WITH BURNOUT.

-WHAT IS TH' DEAL
WITH BURNOUT?



SLEEPING.
I GUESS HE'LL BE
OUT FOR A WHILE.

WHY'D YA LET HIM DO IT, HYPE?

WHAT WERE YA'
SMOKING?

NOTHING!

MUCH....

I MEAN, NOTHING
MUCH THAT WOULD
SERIOUSLY IMPAIR...

...UH...

I GUESS...JACK...
I JUST WANTED
TO BELIEVE HIS
CRAZY PLAN
COULD WORK...
THAT BURNOUT
COULD SAVE RIN..

YA' WANTED TA'
BELIEVE--!

WHAT KINDA'
ANALYST ARE
YA', HYPE-1?


UH...I GUESS...I'M THE KIND...THAT'S GOT
SOME THINGS HE WANTS TO BELIEVE IN?

THINGS?
WHAT ELSE?
HOLLOW
EARTH?
MIRACLES?

**BURNOUT
ENTERPRISES**

HELLO
MY NAME IS

JUST ONE MIRACLE, JACK...
A LONG, LONG TIME AGO...



WE MADE IT!
IT'S A MIRACLE!

HAW
HAW!

IF YOU CAN CALL
'GOING TO HELL'
A MIRACLE...

CALL IT WHAT
YOU WANT,
E.C.R. FORMER.
I'M GOING TO RIN.

SHOW US THE
WAY, MOONSCREAM!

I DON'T ACTUALLY KNOW THE WAY OUT.

I GOT US HERE BY
FOLLOWING THE STORY...
BUT THE STORY HAS A GAP.

TSUGARU DID GET OUT...
SO THERE MUST BE A WAY.
I JUST DON'T KNOW IT.




YOU DON'T KNOW-!
NOW YOU TELL US!

MOONY, IF YOU
WEREN'T DEAD,
I WOULD KILL YOU!

ANO, IF YOU
WEREN'T IN
HELL, I'D
TELL YOU TO
GO THERE!





MOONSCREAM!

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
ARE YOU SAYING WE'RE
STUCK HERE?

I HAVE TO SAVE RIN!
I'M NOT EVEN DEAD!

WHAT ARE YOU
GOING TO DO,
MOONSCREAM?

ANODYTHE, I'M GOING TO DO
SOMETHING UNPRECEDENTED
IN SKYRAIDER HISTORY...



NO WAY!
...UH...
ASK WHOM?

I'M GOING TO...
ASK FOR DIRECTIONS!

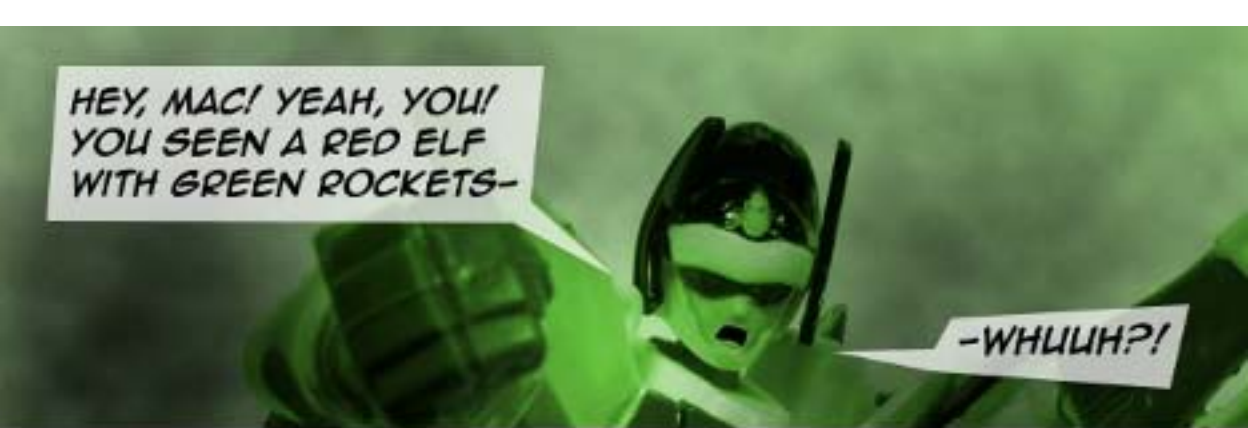
DON'T KNOW.

BUT I BET THE LOCAL
LEGIONS HAVEN'T
FORGOTTEN TSUGU...



SPAGHETTI DEMONS A-GAIN?!

NONE OF YOUR SAUCE!
HERE COMES SOMEONE...

A close-up shot of a character wearing a flight suit and a helmet with a visor. The character has a surprised or excited expression, with their mouth open. A speech bubble is positioned to the left of the character's head.

HEY, MAC! YEAH, YOU!
YOU SEEN A RED ELF
WITH GREEN ROCKETS-


-WHUUH?!

A full-body shot of a character in a flight suit standing on a ledge or platform. The character is looking towards the camera with a surprised expression. A speech bubble is positioned to the left of the character.

HAIL,
FRIENDS OF
TSUGARU!


THE SEEKER
OF NAMES
REQUIRES
YOUR
ASSISTANCE.






DIRGE?!

*YES, MILADY.
I AM DIRGE...*



*...FEARLESS
AT LAST.*




SO! MS. GREEN TOOK
AWAY YOUR FEAR...THAT'S COOL.
BUT YOU'RE STILL STUCK IN HELL.

HELL ONLY TO
THOSE IMPRISONED.
I CHOSE TO STAY...
TO REPAY MY DEBT
TO THE SEEKER
OF NAMES...

YOU WOULD.

WEIRDO.



...BUT, SEE, WE DON'T OWE MS. NO NAME ANYTHING, AND IF YOU BEG TO DIFFER, THEN I WILL SHOVE YOUR CONVENIENTLY POINTED HEAD UP YOUR AFTERBURNERS.


UM...WHAT MOONSCREAM MEANS, DIRGE, IS THAT WE'RE IN A TERRIBLE RUSH. SHE'D PREFER YOU DIDN'T INTERFERE.



INDEED,
WE MUST
HURRY.

TSUGARU
IS IN
GRAVE
DANGER!

I MUST DEFEND THE ELF MAIDEN.
SO WILL THE SEEKER OF NAMES.
BUT I KNOW NOT WHITHER-



~MAIDEN?


HAPPY
REUNION!

IS! YOU SAID 'IS'!!
TSUGARU 'IS' IN DANGER!

⇒CRACK⇐

OF COURSE!
IT'S EARLIER!
FURTHER BACK
IN THE STORY!


IT HASN'T
HAPPENED YET!!

The background of the page is a comic book illustration. It depicts a city street at night or in a dark environment. In the center, Optimus Prime is shown in a dynamic pose, looking towards the right. He is surrounded by other Autobots, including a Decepticon (Megatron) on the right, who is holding a large, glowing red object. The scene is filled with smoke and debris, suggesting a recent battle. The overall color palette is dominated by dark blues, greys, and the reds of the Transformers' armor.

*...WHAT HASN'T
HAPPENED...YET?*

*AND MAYBE IT
DOESN'T HAVE TO!*

*LET'S GO, SPIRIT SQUAD!
WE GOT A STORY TO FINISH!*



I've got
plans for
the evening...

RIGHT
NOW...

IT COULD BE
HAPPENING...

RIGHT
NOW!

...but they won't happen,
because a certain treacherous,
rhyming psycho-glitch has
stolen my date and dragged
him off to hell...

...That makes me feel bad.

So...yeah. I want Sideswipe. Silver mechanoid, looks like a Turian.

He's sleeping under a tree, somewhere near here.

Show me where he is, and I'll feel a lot better.

Refuse to show me...

...AND I'LL GUN YOU DOWN LIKE RALLY VINCENT!

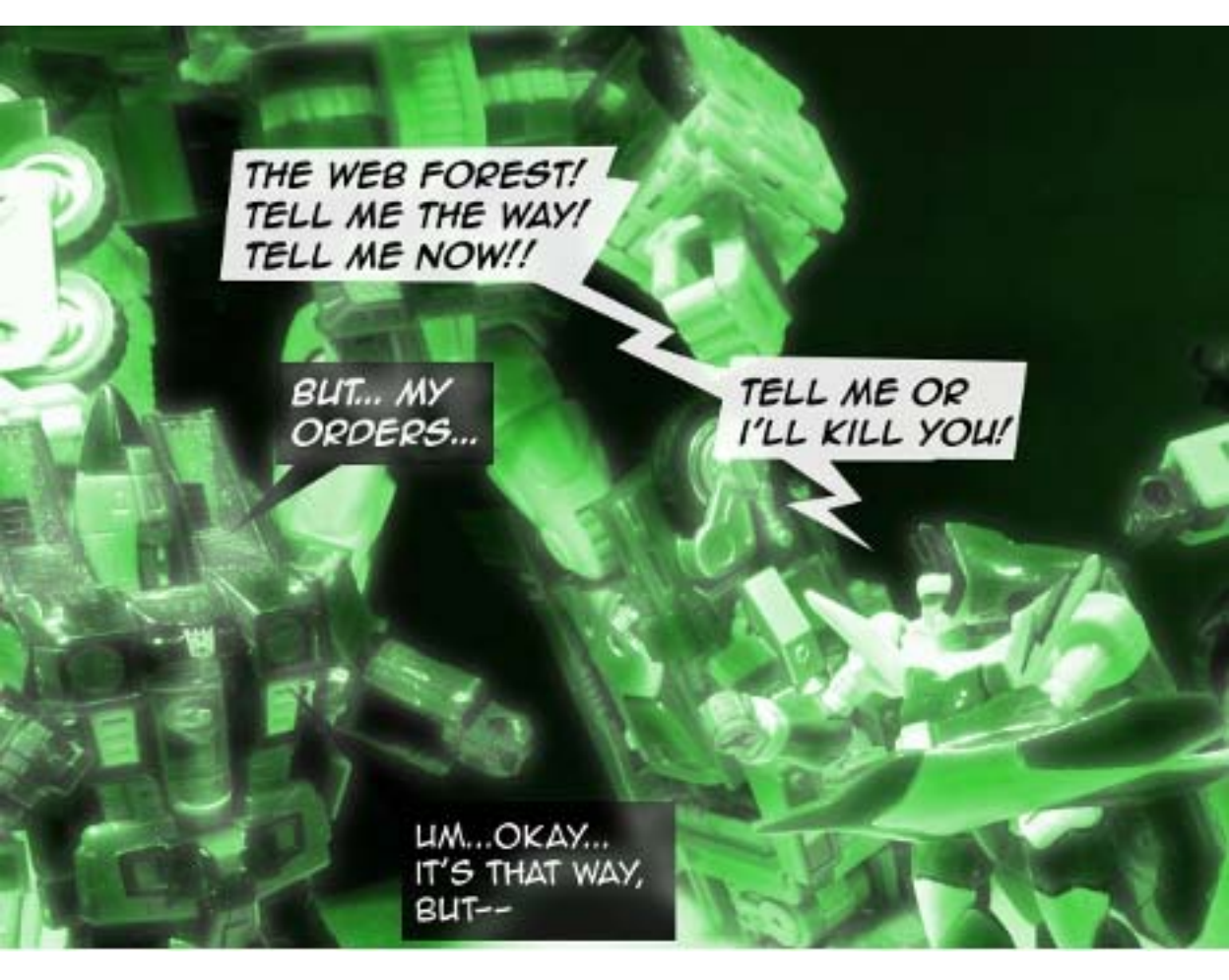


TENTACLED
ABOMINATION

I'll
be
back

he
4...

and
all
the
win




THE WEB FOREST!
TELL ME THE WAY!
TELL ME NOW!!

BUT... MY
ORDERS...

TELL ME OR
I'LL KILL YOU!

UM...OKAY...
IT'S THAT WAY,
BUT--

A green mecha is shown in a dynamic pose, flying upwards and to the right. The mecha has a complex design with multiple joints and a large head. It is surrounded by a bright, glowing light at the bottom, which creates a strong contrast with the dark background. The overall scene is set against a dark, starry background.

*YOU HEARD HIM,
SPIRIT SQUAD!*

*LET'S HIT
THE SKIES!*




*THAT'S
CRAZY!*

*NO, THAT'S
MOONY.*

*THERE GOES MY
HEADACHE AGAIN...*


I'M FLYING, BARRY!



A green-tinted image of a Transformer robot, Barricade, from the Transformers franchise. He is shown in a dynamic pose, with his arms raised and a speech bubble coming from his mouth. The background is a dark, smoky green. The robot's body is primarily grey and black, with some red and blue accents. He has a large, boxy head with a single eye visible. The overall tone is dramatic and action-oriented.

*IF BARRICADE SINGS,
HE'S WALKING!*

*BOO. YOU'RE
NO FUN.*



SLOW DOWN,
MOONSCREAM!

GO TO HELL!

RRRIGHT...

THE WEB FOREST IS CRAWLING
WITH LEGION! REMEMBER?
LET'S THINK BEFORE RUSHING IN!

OKAY, LET'S THINK.

TSUGARU WENT THAT WAY.
SHE FOUGHT THOSE LEGION.
AFTER THAT, SHE SHOWED
UP IN THE ALLSPARK.

SO, RIGHT NOW, TSUGARU IS IN THE FOREST.
AND SO IS THE ALLSPARK PORTAL WE NEED.
AND IF THERE'S A FEW LEGION...

THEN TOO BAD
FOR THEM!



*MORE
THAN
A FEW!*

*BUT TSUGARU
NEVER WENT THERE!*

*OH YES SHE DID!
SCHATTEN COULDN'T
STOP HER!*

*AND THIS SHE REGRETTED,
AND THE SEEKER OF THOUGHTS HEARD!
SHE SENT US TO SCHATTEN, AND TO
SCHATTEN WE SPOKE. SHE TOLD US
OF THE ELF AND HER MAD QUEST--*

BULLSCRAP!


*IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, ASK SCHATTEN!
WE ARE ABOUT TO FLY OVER HER POSITION!*



SCHATTEN!

ZOONNN!!!

DIRRRGE!
YOU IDIOT!



SCHATTEN!

**COME WITH US
TO THE WEB
FOREST!**

**TSUGARU NEEDS YOUR
HELP TO BATTLE THE
LEGION SWARM!**

**DARN IT, HE LANDED
CONE-FIRST...
SOMEONE HELP ME PULL!**

MMGMMMFFF!

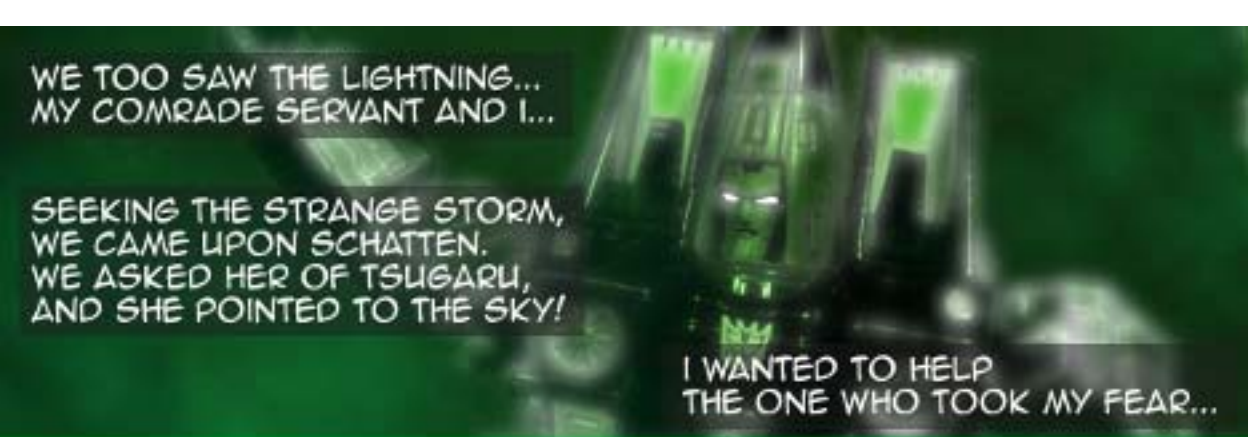


I, help Tsugaru?
I am only a shadow.
Can a shadow bring
light to a flame?

Such a flame she was...
a spark to kindle the
vile forest & itself...

So these ashes had hoped,
when I saw the lightning
in the sky...

...but the hope was false;
the lightning was not her.
She was not in the forest.



WE TOO SAW THE LIGHTNING...
MY COMRADE SERVANT AND I...

SEEKING THE STRANGE STORM,
WE CAME UPON SCHATTEN.
WE ASKED HER OF TSUGARU,
AND SHE POINTED TO THE SKY!

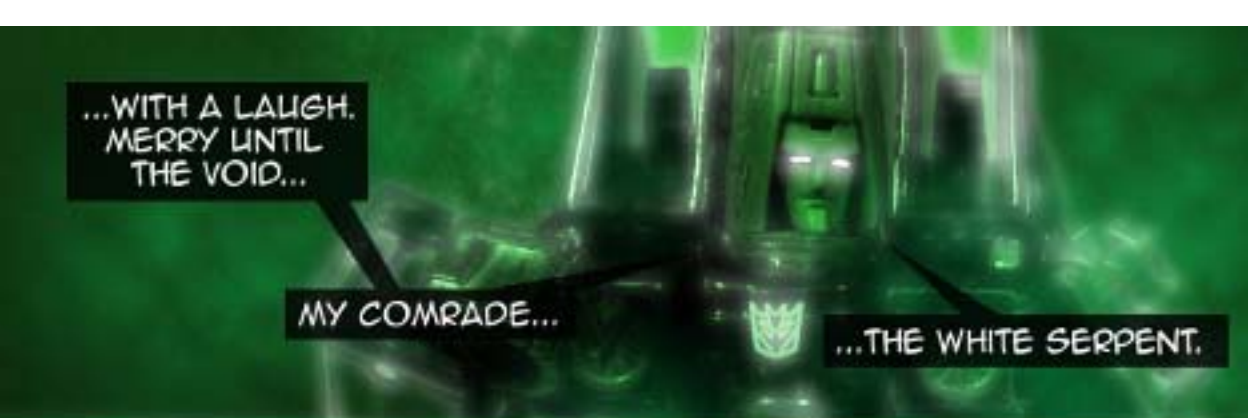
I WANTED TO HELP
THE ONE WHO TOOK MY FEAR...

...BUT MY COMRADE
BID ME STAY WITH SCHATTEN.
HE WAS STRONGER BY FAR,
MIGHTY AGAINST THE LEGION.

YET NOT
MIGHTY
ENOUGH...

HIS FINAL THOUGHTS...
'A TRAP! THE ONE NAMED
TSUGARU IS NOT HERE!'

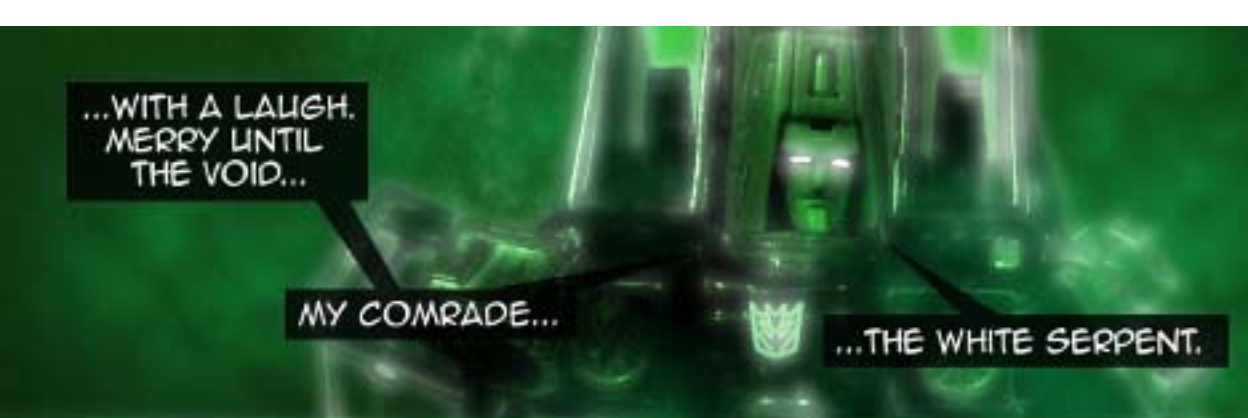
...SO HE
PASSED...



...WITH A LAUGH.
MERRY UNTIL
THE VOID...

MY COMRADE...

...THE WHITE SERPENT.



WHO?!!



THE...WHITE SERPENT...OF ALL THE
SEEKER'S WARRIORS, THE WISEST,
THE STRONGEST, THE MOST LOYAL...



HAVE YOU
HEARD OF HIM?

N-NO...

NEVER...IN MY LIFE.




I!!

*YES, IT WAS I
WHO TOOK THE
NAME OF THE
LADY OF THE
GREEN WOOD!*

*SHE DARED TO
ATTACK ME!*

*SHE DARED TO
CLAIM VICTORY!*



THAT WEAK AND
WEEPING THING
DARED TO OFFER
ME MERCY!

OH, I TOOK IT...
SO SHE THOUGHT.

FOR AN AGE
I SERVED HER...
LAUGHING
ALL THE WHILE!

I WAS
ELIMINATING
MY RIVALS...

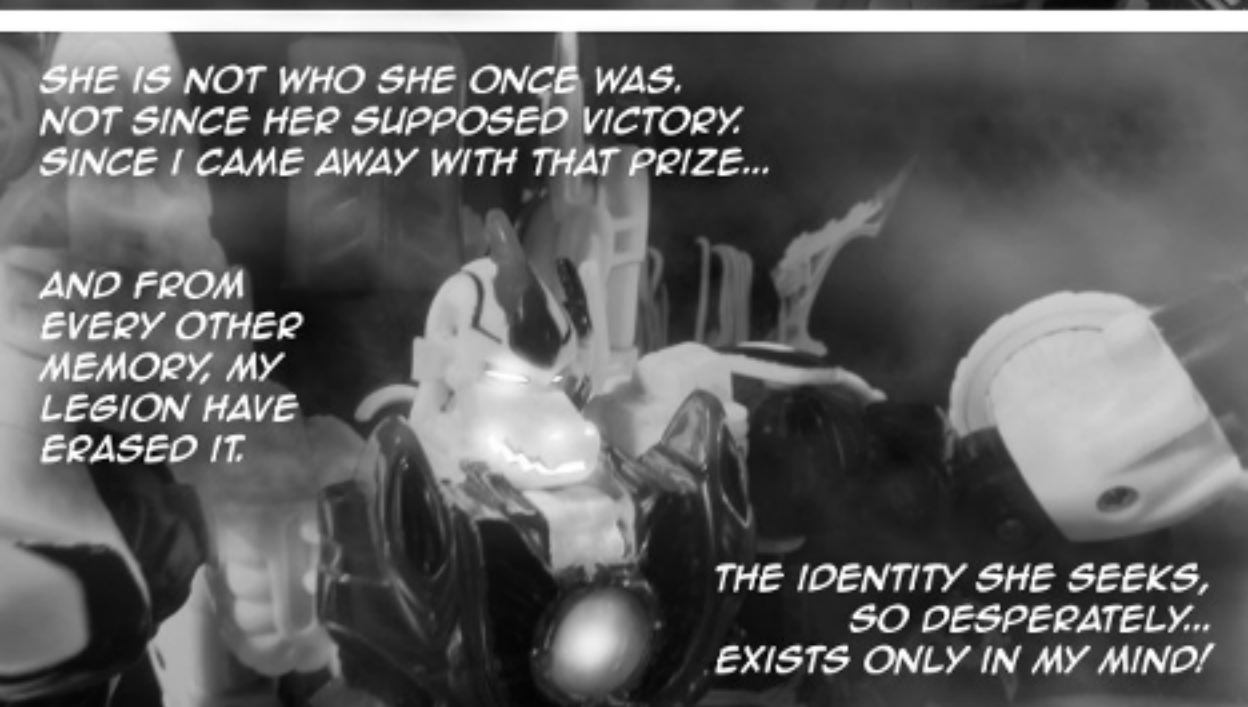
GATHERING MY
LEGION FROM HER
WEBBED FOREST...

WHAT NEED TO FIGHT HER?
I WAS GETTING ALL I WANTED...



BEGINNING WITH HER NAME!


*YES, NON-PLAYER.
I ALONE KNOW HER NAME.*



*SHE IS NOT WHO SHE ONCE WAS.
NOT SINCE HER SUPPOSED VICTORY.
SINCE I CAME AWAY WITH THAT PRIZE...*

*AND FROM
EVERY OTHER
MEMORY, MY
LEGION HAVE
ERASED IT.*

*THE IDENTITY SHE SEEKS,
SO DESPERATELY...
EXISTS ONLY IN MY MIND!*



H-HA! YOU FOOL!
NOW I KNOW
YOUR SECRET-!

≡KERRRUNCH!≡



OH MY,
NON-PLAYER...

ARE YOU
GOING TO...TELL?



I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING.

*'GREEN LADY! GREEN LADY!
YOUR SERPENT IS A TRAITOR!'*

*SHE CAN'T HEAR YOU,
AND ANYWAY,
WHO CARES?*


*TSUGARU GAVE ME THE POWER
TO DEFY HER OPENLY.
SANTA'S LAST GIFT, HA HA!*




A GIFT...IS
SOMETHING
GIVEN...

NOT...A THING...
YOU... STOLE...

YOU THINK...YOU'RE
SO... CLEVER...
YOU DON'T... EVEN
KNOW... THAT...




YOU THINK I
STOLE TSUGARU?
YOU THINK I TOOK
HER MIND? HA!
SHE GAVE IT TO ME!



NO GOOD...SNAKE.

YOU LIED TO
YOUR MASTER
FOR...AN AGE,
YOU SAID...


AND YOU'RE
LYING NOW.




HAHA! HAHAHA!
YOU NONENTITY!

WHO'S LYING AND
WHO'S STANDING?!

BUT LEND ME YOUR
EARS...WHICH I
ALREADY OWN...



...AND I'LL
FINISH THE
STORY...



THAT'S IT, SNAKE...



JUST...
KEEP...
TALKING.

