

X

X fought the enemy AI. They attacked with viruses, tried to delete him, flood his systems. He worked diligently, defending himself against their assaults. But even as he did, his physical body was moving.

He stomped through the forest at high speed. A Hydra tank shot at him. X twisted out of the way of the blue plasma shot, then twisted to move in the direction. He side-stepped another shot, then slammed bodily into the tank. With a single heave, he sent the tank flipping through the air, then kept on running, ignoring the sound of the tank crashing into a platoon of Hydra soldiers. A missile came from the ships above. He analyzed how it would land, adjusted his gait so that he would avoid the explosion, and ran through the cloud of dirt and tree matter that followed the explosion.

His target was ahead of him. The third helicarrier. Of the ships, The Enterprise had survived the attack the best, the shields Tony and Jury Rigg had added to the ship allowing it to be more durable than normal. The Behemoth, with it's more primitive armor, managed to survive simply by being tough and covered in metal.

But the last helicarrier was an old model. A good ship, built with advanced technology for the time of it's making. It was not made to survive the missiles the alien ships above had brought. It was slowly crashing to the ground, spitting out smoke. Quinjets and jets were lifting away from it, while jeeps and other vehicles were exiting hangers on the sides. The guns on the carrier were firing into the sky, fighting back. A group of fighters were harassing the helicarrier, like a group of flies attacking a slowly dying animal. The outdated vessel was trying to save it's passengers, expending every resource it had. A blast from one of the destroyer ships exploded against the bridge of the ship, blowing the tower in half.

X was still approaching when he suddenly stumbled. A particularly vicious virus had attacked the functions allowing him to control finer motor functions. He deleted the virus, sacrificing the programs he used to control things like blinking, small features only added to make his platform more approachable. All his focus would be on fighting.

As he approached the ship, two people flew overhead. "Hey, you X?"

He glanced up for a moment to see his allies. Deathlok, the man once known as Mike Peterson, flew on jets next to Songbird, aka Melissa Gold, who fluttered pink wings of sound. "Yes, I am. You are my reinforcements?"

"Yeah," Deathlok winced. "Don't know how useful I'll be though. Jarvis is trying to fight off the AI flooding my systems, but-

X linked up with Deathlok through the link in his cybernetics to aid him. Deathlok breathed a bit easier, then gave X a confused look. "Thank you."

"So what's the plan?" Songbird asked.

"I will be headed to a weapon's cache I left on the helicarrier."

"You have a weapons cache there?" Deathlok asked.

"Not just there. I left 16 across all three ships. This one was closest to me at the time of the assault," X explained helpfully as he parkoured over a log, then simply smashed a rock outcropping that was in his way. "If you can-\*\*\*\*\*\_" X spoke for a moment before realizing his speaker had been sabotaged. Working fast, he stole back control of the speaker, and deleted the

virus that had tried to hijack them. "Apologies. I had a cough," X said, attempting for humor. "If you both could cover my back, I believe I can deal with the fighters."

"A cough... You got jokes, huh?" Deathlok said with a smile.

"I like him," Songbird said.

Then they entered the clearing around the helicarrier. A pair of tanks were sitting in front of the massive vessel, defending those running from the downed ship. Someone shouted as a fighter ship roared past, firing on those below. Songbird let out a harmony, and a pink chain flew forth from her to wrap around one of the ship's wings, pulling the wing off and sending it tumbling down to the ground.

X ran forward, crouched, and jumped upwards, landing on the deck of the helicarrier. His robotic feet bounced off the tarmac with a clunking sound, explosions surrounding him.

Enemy Hydra soldiers and alien enemies were on the tarmac. They spun to fire upon the trio of heroes as they approached. X grabbed a hand cannon off his waist and began firing, killing one soldier with a headshot. Songbird and Deathlok hovered over him and began firing back as well, pink constructs of sound and micro-missiles firing from above.

X was intercepted by a strange man in robes who attacked from the shadows with a single claw from his knuckles. X grabbed his wrist, crushed it, then kicked him between the legs, sending the man screeching over the edge of the helicarrier.

Songbird came to a halt when a rocket launcher was aimed at her by a Hydra soldier. Singing a bar from an unknown song, a pink wall snapped into place in front of the rocket launcher just as it fired, the ensuing explosion killing the wielder of the rocket launcher.

Running and gunning, they made their way to a section of the helicarrier where the tarmac had a metal door embedded into the floor. X kneeled down.

"So, do you need to put in a password or-" Songbird said.

X slammed his hands into the door, forcing it to part with a sound of screeching metal.

"Oh. That's efficient."

"I would think so," X reached into the box that the door had been protecting. After some rummaging, he rose to his feet.

"...Holy shit," Deathlok said, gaping at him.

"Those are big," Songbird gulped.

"Yes. But I must admit," X lifted the two guns in each hand high. "I worry female robots will think I'm overcompensating."

The guns in his hands were based on other anti-aircraft weapons and several anime X had watched recently. They weighed around 907kg, with two long auto-cannons belt-fed from two large ammunition boxes X placed on his back with some iron straps.

He looked like quite the sight. A large and stocky robot, carrying two square steel boxes half his size on his back, with giant guns in his hands fitted with ammo belts carrying bullets as large as coke bottles.

"If you could prevent the enemy soldiers from interfering?" X adjusted his grip on his guns. With

his programming under fire from the various ai and viruses attacking him, he was forced to do this manually.

Very well.

X pointed his guns in the sky and pulled the triggers.

A sound like the roar of an ancient god came forth. And red flashes of light crossed the sky. X took the recoil of the cannons, and took down a fighter ship up above with a storm of bullets. Light flashed across his metal face, blue eyes glowing grimly.

Up above, balls of flame colored green, red, and blue began to fill the sky. Deathlok and Songbird unleashed hell around them, but X ignored them. As bullets fell around his feet, and he brought down every alien vessel he could, the battle was just picking up.

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### **Mahmoud Schahed/Dial**

I fired my laser eye at an enemy ship, forced the ship I was attached to stop firing at the Behemoth, and deleted another enemy AI.

God. I wanted to scream. I was fighting a war on three fronts, mental and physical. I needed a different method of attack. Taking over this ship was possible, but it was going to take time. I had to... I had to go inside.

As I came to that realization, I sent out a call. "This is Dial to all points! I'm going to invade the lead ship, are there any Avengers who can come to my position and help!"

*"All you had to do was ask, bud,"* the familiar voice brought me a sense of relief.

"Creel!"

*"Dial, I'm opening a portal under you!"*

Fantasma.

A portal below me. I let go of the ship, dropping down into it. Creel caught me as I fell, holding me up as I landed on the forest floor.

"Whoa," Creel stared at me. I was much goopier than I usually was in Upgrade form, feeling exhausted. "You okay?"

"I will be," I said tiredly. I looked between them. Creel was in his vibranium form, looking scuffed. His clothes had evaporated at some point, leaving him in just a pair of barely there pants. Fantasma was looking tired as well, her face muddy with ash. "Okay. That ship up there," I pointed at the one in particular. "It's got the best weapons in that fleet, and I got the sense when I was attached to it that whoever was in charge of it is a big boss. Some guy named Qovas. We take him down, we strike a massive blow against these assholes."

"Can't you just Upgrade and take it over?" Creel asked me.

"I tried! The damn thing is filled with junkie AI. Like they gave their computer meth and told it to fight to the death," I scowled. "But if we go in--"

"I understand," Fantasma said. She turned and raised her blasting rod, the metal wand she'd created as a magical focus. With a wave, a round portal came into existence. She smiled at us.

"So, my friends. Shall we?"

"Yeah," Creel smashed his fists together and grinned. "I could use some revenge."

I felt the same way. A lot of people had died in this battle. We needed to stop them. If I lost one of my friends-I pushed the thought away. We had to save them. That was it.

And once the ships were done... Laura. Trip. Sharon. The hostages who were also brainwashed to kill us. They waited in that base. But we couldn't get to the base until the ships were done.

I tapped the omnitrix. In a flash of green, I changed into my Jury Rigg form. "Let's disassemble them! For our friends!"

"Oh no," Creel said when he realized who I had turned into.

I cackled as I entered the portal, falling down several feet to land on top of Qovas' ship (Whoever that was. As the chill air surrounded me, I dug my fingers into the alien metal, and began ripping my way into it. "Disassemble, disassemble!")

"How can you do that?" Fantasma asked as I tore my way through, Creel landing beside her. "I thought you don't have super-strength in this form."

"I don't," I pulled out some kinda gooey wires and contemplated them. After chewing them and getting a taste for the odd flavor, I decided they would work. "I'm just stubborn!"

"Should you be *eating* that shit?" Creel asked, kneeling down to help me rip into the ship.

"I'm making a dish, I need to taste my ingredients! Okay," by now, the hole I'd been digging was about as tall as I was. I scrambled out of it, putting together something from the components I was borrowing. "Fantasma! Can you blow a hole in there?"

"It offends me when you doubt my abilities," she quirked ruby red lips and lifted a hand. Eldritch power flowed across her fingers, violet fire under her command before she pointed at the hole Creel and I had dug into the ship. The beam of fire smashed through the final layer of metal, creating a hole in the top of the ship.

"I'm going in first," Creel dropped into the ship, landing hard. Fantasma and I followed.

There, in a dim hallway right out of a sci-fi movie, Creel was stood tall in front of us. In front of him was the army.

About a dozen guys, all big. All wearing dark robes. And all with steel blades sticking out of their claws. The Omnitrix glowed yellow for a moment, scanning them, but I was focused on what I was making. I jumped onto Creel's shoulder as I finished making it. He and I shared a look.

"Think you can get me some of those claws?" I asked. "Could use some ammo."

He blinked. Then he smirked evilly, looking over at the aliens.

"Oh my," Fantasma's eyes glimmered, magic in the air. "You are in trouble."

I raised my gun high, cackling. "Oh... yeah."

"RAAAGH!" the alien soldiers rushed us, and Creel and Fantasma crouched and got ready.

The first guy to reach us stabbed at Creel. Creel did a quick block, gave the guy a sweet one-two combo that knocked him out, then grabbed the claws in his hands and pulled. Poor guy woke up

as the claws were ripped out of him in a spray of blood.

“Gaaaah!” the guy screamed before Creel kicked him in the face, then passed the claws to me.

“Thanks!” as I adjusted the magazine in my gun to match my new ammo while Fantasma stepped forward and raised a mandala shield to block a claw, then raised her other hand to blast her opponent away, ducking under another soldier's attack to let Creel punch that guy away.

When another soldier flipped through the air to land in front of us, he froze before a gun barrel pointed at his face. My razor-sharp teeth flashed as I pumped it like a shotgun.

“Bang.”

With a pull of the trigger, a twisted claw blade shot from my gun and shot through the skull of the alien. He staggered back as the claw continued its path, headed for his companions behind him. One guy dodged the unorthodox bullet, moving to come toward us. He didn't see the claw he dodged slow down in midair, then fly back the way it came.

He probably felt it when the claw went through the back of his neck though. He fell to the ground as the claw completed its journey through the air to enter the bottom port on my gun.

“Magnets,” I said evilly. “How do they even work!?”

Then I fired twice more, each claw flying into the crowd, before dropping to one of the bodies on the ground to get more ammo. Creel and Fantasma pushed forward. The aliens, seeing what was happening, took out vials of black liquid and started downing them. Once they did, their speed and strength seemed to increase.

Creel parried a claw slash on his elbow, pounded his arm down on the guy's shoulder so he fell to the floor, then grabbed him by his belt and tossed him up to hit the ceiling. Fantasma spun around Creel and created a violet flame sword from her blasting rod, wielding it like a lightsaber in her right hand. A mandala snapped to life in her left hand as another screaming lunatic ran at her. She blocked a stab with her left hand, wincing at the strength behind it, then blocked the guy's other hand with her magic lightsaber.

With how Fantasma usually acted, a confident but sweet woman with a love of magic, it was easy to forget how disturbing her magic could be. When the lightsaber touched the hand of the soldier trying to attack her, it didn't slice through. Instead the fire began digging into him. He stared at his hand, horrified, as what seemed like dozens of tiny violet bugs made of flame began to eat at his flesh.

“**GRAAAA-**” I cut him off with a single shot, the round piercing through him, before another shot, and another. Creel bulldozed forward while Fantasma shot magic around him. Meanwhile, I grabbed another claw from one of the bodies on the floor, then ripped out a section of console from the wall.

I then ran up to Creel, jumped on his metal back, then up into the air, firing down into the crowd while falling. I landed on a crazed soldier's face and fired a bolt into his head. As he fell, I rolled on the floor and came up crouching, firing at the waists of those in front of me. One alien dodged a shot to kick me in the side. I smacked into the wall, pain radiating from my side, but raised my gun to shot him in the shoulder, Fantasma pushing him back with a magical blast.

Creel stepped forward again, parrying and blocking blows on his vibranium arms before smashing a guy with tight well practiced blows. There was something almost poetic about it. The sweet science, the boxing techniques he'd learned in a dusty old gym in the middle of Hell's Kitchen, being used to fight on an alien ship for the fate of Earth. Uppercuts, crosses, and knockout punches flew fast and furious.

Fantasma and I followed in his wake. I leaped from wall to floor, to wall, using my tiny body and quick agility to fire bolts and insane angles. My mind worked over time, planning out the best positions to be, not just for the bolts I was firing, but also for the bolts that were returning. The soldiers we fought often dodged a blade from one direction only for my quick tactics to put them in line for another or returning bolt.

And even as the three of us fought, I was still thinking up the next thing to make.

“FIX!” I slapped the console piece wires against the claws I was stealing and began winding them together. “Fix, fix, fix.”

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