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Episode 463 – Meet the OC love interest. It was inevitable.  
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It was a nice apartment, well-lit, spacious and well furnished. A pair of nice, plush leather couches set the scene, arranged in a neat L-shape, with a small coffee table between them. What dominated the room, however, was the massive flat-screen against one wall, so big as to loom over all else around it. By comparison, the broad windows with views out over a strangely futuristic metropolis and the other doorways leading away to gods alone knew where seemed like afterthoughts.

“So I got it into my head to redesign my home office workspace,” Rick commented to Tsuneo as the pair of them entered. “See if I could improve my productivity some.”

“Given your glacial workrate, I can fully understand that idea,” Tsuneo nodded. “So how did it go?”

“Oh it was a huge exercise,” Rick nodded. “Cleaned the place out, threw out a lot of junk that was really just clutter, found some things I thought that I’d lost for good, got a new monitor, made some big changes and everything.”

“How’s the new space looking?” Dan asked as he entered with Rebecca.

“Basically the same as the old one, but my chair’s moved a bit.”

“And your productivity?” Rebecca added.

“About the same,” Rick admitted. “If anything, I fell behind because of all the time I wasted on the rearranging.”

“Figures,” Tsuneo finished.

“Speaking of complete wastes of time, we have been stuck in crossover hell for some time now,” Rebecca noted.

“Just a bit,” Dan agreed. “Really, I’m trying to think when was the last time we did something that wasn’t a crossover.”

“Adventures of Jack?” Rick suggested. “I dunno.”

“I mean it’s Ready Player One fic,” Dan shook his head, “That’s basically crossover anyway.”

“It isn’t and Rebecca gave an overly wordy lecture on narrative theory as to why,” Tsuneo pointed out.

“Which is entirely correct,” she nodded, “But to get back to the point, I’ve noticed that a lot of these crossovers are very samey and can be boiled down to a few basic premises.”

“Your basic ‘fall through a portal into another fictional universe’ crossover,” Dan noted. “And the ‘these two worlds have coexisted all along’ one. But what’s the third?”

“I’d imagine it’s the fusion fic,” Tsuneo suggested. “Which we haven’t covered many of, mostly because they’re very hard to pull off in any even remotely effective manner,”

“And you would be correct,” Rebecca confirmed. “Now I went through all of these fics and boiled them down to a few key consistent points that keep recurring throughout. And then I decided to turn this into a thought exercise.”

“What did you do?” Dan warily asked.

"I came to the conclusion that these fics were all so samey that I could turn them into a madlib generator and churn out premises that were basically identical to what we cover."

"I didn't expect that, and yet it makes perfect sense," Tsuneo admitted.

"It does," Rebecca nodded.

"So I'm game," Dan continued. "So how does this work?"

"I need you to provide me with some things," Rebecca explained. "Two fictional franchises, with the protagonist, hero group, enemy group, one supporting character and one location from each. Oh, and one McGuffin from either as well." She held up a finger. "I can't guarantee that all of these will be used, but I'm covering my bases."

"Well let's go then," Dan beamed.

"And no, you can't just enter 'butt' for all of them," she added.

"Well that ruins that idea."

"So from each of you, I will need two sets of the following; a franchise, the protagonist of that franchise, the hero group of that franchise, the enemy group of that franchise, a supporting character from each franchise, a location from each franchise and finally one random McGuffin from either of them."

"Sounds fun. I'll go first," Dan commented. "I'm going to draw on our B-Team experience and combine Batman with a random Young Adult franchise with a doomed adaptation."

"We literally did that fic!" Tsuneo exclaimed.

"Well, I'm not going to choose Hunger Games then."

"Fine, hit us."

"Okay, so let's go for Shadow and Bone."

Tsuneo blinked twice. "I have no idea what that is," he said, staring blankly at him.

"Oh, that's the one in a steampunk setting with an elaborate magic system that features a young woman who discovers she has world-changing powers and has to choose between the two handsome guys who are completely devoted to her."

"I still have no idea what that is."

"Right!" Dan exclaimed, cracking his knuckles. "Let's see... Obviously our protagonist is Batman, we're using the Bat-Family and the Court of Owls, and our supporting character is Nightwing. On the other side, we've got Alina as our lead, we'll have her army buddies as the hero group, make the Second Army our villain group and Inej as our supporting character. Locations can be the Fold and Arkham Asylum, and our McGuffin is the first amplifier, the stag."

"That's... a lot," Rebecca said. "Okay... I've given you the standard 'swirly portal' crossover, since it was the first on the list," Rebecca said.

"So what did I get?"

"In this fic, the characters from Batman fall through a portal into Shadow and Bone. They are captured by the Second Army but rescued by Alina. Despite this, most of the fic consists of the Bat Family showing up everyone else through abilities and technologies that their opponents are inexplicably unable to counter and walking all over their enemies. However, the true point of the fic is to force the pairing of Nightwing and Alina which the author has decided is their one true ship."

"You didn't use much of the Batman side of things," Dan immediately commented.

"No, I didn't," Rebecca responded offhandedly.

"Although the idea of Batman effortlessly going over an army of magicians is pretty standard for crossover fic," Rick added.

"It's pretty standard for Batman, really," Dan said.

"Also, your knowledge of young adult fiction frightens me," Tsuneo said quietly.

"That was enlightening. Also, extremely accurate," Rebecca said, and nodded to Tsuneo.

"I'm up next then," Tsuneo nodded. "So what do I get?"

"You have the 'They just Coexist' level crossover," Rebecca explained.

"Right. Okay." Tsuneo took a moment to compose himself, then began. "Based on our previous crossover misadventures, I'm going to angle for Transformers and Bubblegum Crisis."

"They're probably our most frequent crossover subjects," Rick added.

"Victims, maybe," came Rebecca's dry commentary.

"Okay, so. Our protagonists are Optimus Prime and Priss, obviously we've got the Autobots and Knight Sabers as our main groups opposing the Decepticons and Genom. Our supporting characters are Bumblebee and Sylia."

"Sylia is a supporting character?" Dan asked, uncertainly.

"In these fics? Yeah." Tsuneo continued, frowning. "So our villains are Megatron and a conveniently resurrected Largo, locations are the Ark and Genom tower, and I guess our McGuffin is the all-purpose Allspark."

"This is going to be a mess," Rick said, chuckling to himself.

"I'm assuming everything is as original version as possible. All G1 transformers and original design Knight Sabers," Dan asked.

"Seriously, do we ever see anything else?" Rebecca replied.

"Okay. Hit us," Tsuneo said.

Rebecca nodded and began. "In this fic, the worlds of Transformers and Bubblegum Crisis have coexisted despite the fact that it would make no sense for them to do such. After Megatron steals the Allspark from the Ark, Optimus Prime and Priss have to form an alliance and hunt down the Decepticons who are now being led by a conveniently resurrected Largo and are now plotting to take over Genom Tower. However, the fic is mostly about introducing the Author's OC who Sylia is immediately attracted to for no discernible reason at all."

There was a brief silence, finally broken by Tsuneo saying "This makes no sense at all."

"And yet, it makes perfect sense," Rick replied.

"You're right, and I hate you," Tsuneo shot back.

Dan scratched his chin for a moment. "So... What does the existence of intelligent alien robots mean for Boomer technology?"

"That's an excellent question that will never be touched upon," Rebecca replied.

"So I guess it's my turn," Rick nodded.

"It is," Rebecca confirmed. "You get the awkward Fusion fic. Might as well get this over and done with."

"My two series are Revenge of Chronos and Challenge of the Gobots," he began. "The protagonists are Rom Stol and Leader-1; the groups are the Chronos Tribe and the Guardians; the enemies are the Guylander and the Renegade Monsters; the supporting characters are Leena Stol and Screw Head; the locations are Chronos Village and Gobotron and the McGuffin is the Hydrabead."

"Well that's a thing," Rebecca sighed.

"What did we get?"

"In this fic, the worlds of Revenge of Cronos and Challenge of the Gobots are unified into one even though they have completely different themes, concepts and settings. Rom Stol is a member of the Guardians, where they meet and team up with Leader-1 who has simply been there all along. However, Chronos Village is attacked by the Renegade Monsters who are basically the Guylander with the name crossed out and a new one written over it. The fic eventually trails off as you realise that it's just Revenge of Chronos with some set dressing, and all the author is doing is occasionally mentioning Screw Head to remind us they exist."

There was a pause. "God damn, I hate you Rick," Rebecca finished.

"What did he do this time?" Dan asked.

"I created Revenge of the Gobots," Rick admitted. "Which was a French dub of the Machine Robo Revenge of Chronos anime using Gobot names even though the two shows had nothing to do with each other."

"Well there you go," Dan finished. "Those were basically indistinguishable from what we've covered so far." He paused. "Except for Rick's one. That was basically the stupidest thing I have heard ever."

"And yet, it aired on French TV," Rick nodded.

"Good morning everyone," the Voice crashed into the conversation.

"And speaking of which, good morning to you, Mechanoid Brain," Rick replied.

"I don't think we were talking about Mechanoids," Tsuneo sighed.

"There's never a bad time for Mechanoids," Rick countered. "As long as you ignore the three decades of development hell that is Mechanoid Space."

"What is he going on about?" The Voice asked.

"Honestly, I have no idea," Tsuneo admitted. "Really, at this stage, your guess is as good as mine."

"Well, uh, okay then," the Voice stumbled before regaining its composition. "Well it's great to see you all here again."

"Feeling's not mutual," Rebecca shot back.

"So Voice, I can assume that you've loaded part three of After Cybertron into the cylinder for today?"

"That is correct," the Voice confirmed. "We'll be looking at the last part of it, and then as always I will ask for your reviews."

"Last part, not conclusion," Tsuneo noted.

"Like you're even surprised," Rebecca shot back.

"Well no," he admitted. "But I felt it needed to be said"

"And what about their threatened OC love interest for Shepard?" She continued. "Think we'll get to him before the fic expires?"

"I sincerely hope not."

"So remind me," Dan asked as he took his seat on the couch. "What happened last time?"

"Um, Optimus Prime smashed stuff while Shepard stood around and said 'wow'," Rick explained as he and the others joined him.

"What do you think will happen in this one?" He added.

"I figure that Optimus Prime will smash stuff while Shepard stands around and says 'wow'," Rick suggested.

"Same here," Dan nodded as the big screen turned on, converting the world over to script format.

> Chapter 5: Reawakening  
> Hello once more my viewers

Tsuneo: All four of us.

> Here we are with the next chapter

> Now we're in ME2

> Woo!

Dan: And out with the inventory.

> So, I've decided to use the G1 remodel for Optimus

Rick: The standard Hasbro design process

> On that note

> High Captain- I am well aware of how badly the Bayformers suck, but I do like the live action models  
> they use. F-ing Grimlock was the most badass thing I saw all summer since Godzilla,

Dan: Now there's a crossover I could get behind.

> even if he was horned, probably going to use that design later, but without the horns.

Tsuneo: Again, the author's notes are not your blog.

> Now, I've also decided to use an OC for the romance with Shepard

Tsuneo [Bored]: Oh wow, that was an utter shock. I never would have seen that coming

> I'm just out of it with all the preset romances, they bore me

Rebecca: Pfft, Shepard/Kaidan is delightfully awkward and dorky

> I want to give her a new one

Rick: Totally original romantic arc, do not steal

> So, now

> Onto the chapter!

Dan: Pathfinder blaster.

Tsuneo: Neutron assault rifle.

Rick: Overshield.

Rebecca: And we're done.

> It was bright

> All of it was bright

Rick: EEEEE

> Her eyes tore up, leaking tears as she stared up at the lights.

Dan: [Shepard] There are four lights!

> Then something blocked them out, a

> black silhouette. It turned bright to, but not bright like the lights. It was a woman, perfect figure

Dan: We're talking golden ratio levels of perfect

> with a

> white body tight suit. She stared down at her, watching her as another silhouette, a man worked at a  
> console.

> "She's reacting to outside stimuli. Showing an awareness of her surroundings."

Rebecca: She is immediately disqualified from running for office.

> She moved her head, trying to look away from the light, but this only endangered her further.

> "Oh my God, Miranda. I think she's waking up!"

Rebecca: Bad news, Shep. You're still in the fic.

> "Damn it, Wilson! She's not ready yet. Give him the sedative!" the woman ordered and looked down  
> at her.

Dan: [Wilson] Sure, just roll up your sleeve.

Rick: [Miranda] Her you idiot, not me!

> "Shepard, don't try to move."

> She moved her arm, but her eyes widened at what she saw. Instead of the normal tanned skin she  
> had gotten from her years of service,

Tsuneo: Despite the fact that default female Shepard is as pale as and spends all her time covered in  
body armour anyway.

> there was a pale arm, cut open to reveal cybernetics inside,  
> but not just any cybernetics. They glowed with Energon.

Rebecca: In the spirit of ensuring that Shepard would be the same woman who saved the Galaxy  
before, Cerberus stuck Transformer parts onto her. Makes perfect sense.

> "Just lie down. Try to stay calm," the woman, Miranda spoke and moved her technorganic arm  
> down as a needle pierced her other arm.

Dan: But just one transformer arm. Don't want to go overboard.

> injecting her with the sedative, but it had little effect.

> "Heart rates still climbing, Brain activity is off the charts,"

Rick: Her body Thetan count is rising.

> the man, Wilson reported with urgency.

Dan: [Wilson] Something's interfering with the dose.

Rick: [Miranda] Could it be the transformer junk you stuck in her?

Dan: [Wilson] Whoops.

> The woman moved away, walking around to her other side as the man reported more about her life  
> signs. "Stats pushing into the re zone. It's not working!"

> She moved her head, watching the woman look away before turning back.

> "Another dose, now!" she ordered and the man pushed another needle into her arm.

Dan: [Wilson] The drugs didn't work. What do we do?

Rick: [Miranda] Uh... More drugs!

Dan: [Wilson] That's why you're in charge.

> She moved her head back, feeling drowsy. Her eyes were better now, she could stare at the lights  
> without crying.

Tsuneo: She could comfortably stare into the blinding lights.

> "Heart rate dropping. Stats falling back into normal range," Wilson stated as Miranda loomed over  
> her. "That was too close. We almost lost him."

Dan: Him?

Rebecca: So they did have to change a couple of things while Shepard was under...

> "I told you your estimates were off. Run the numbers again!"

> Then everything faded into darkness.

> "Wake up, Commander!"

Rick: Cortana? Is that you?

> Jane stirred, hearing the melodic voice from her subconscious.

Tsuneo: [Shepard] Great. My brain has hold music.

> She was on the Ark with the Autobots, laughing as Jazz made up the lyrics to some song of his

Tsuneo: Sony Music immediately claimed ownership of it and sued.

> and Bumblebee turned it into a  
> real one. Optimus looked on with a smile, his mouth plate pulled back into his helmet. Ratchet was  
> shouting at Cliffjumper because her ran into something that he needed.

Dan: Antics!

- > Ironhide was telling war
- > stories to a small group of Spectres, recounting the days of the war on Cybertron.

Rick [Ironhide]: And then there was the time I fought Zod with the Lazer Lance...

- > "Shepard!"

Dan: Wrex?

- > She turned her head, looking up at the golden ceiling where bright lights powered by Energon
- > created from a variety of power sources lay.

Rebecca: The lights were powered by Energon powered by something else

- > "Wake up!"

Rick: -Jeff

- > She looked back to see the Autobots and her organic friends gone.

Dan: Her organic friends were there?

Rebecca: As much as they're in the rest of the fic.

- > She looked around with worry,
- > noticing the screens of every computer, every console, and every terminal showing the face of a
- > woman with long raven black hair instead of the Autobot insignia.

Rick: It was the Baroness. She'd floated into a GI Joe crossover instead.

- > "Shepard, do you hear me? Get out of that bed now!"

Dan: [Shepard] Is this the start of a JRPG? Are you my mother?

Tsuneo: [Miranda] I can't even start with that.

- > She blinked and blinked, getting use to the new lights. She was on a bed, sitting in some lab.

- > "This facility is under attack!"

Rebecca: The Republican health care model in action

- > Those words spurred her into action.

Dan: [Shepard] All confusion aside. Time for violence.

- > She got up quickly, regretting it as blood rushed up into her
- > head. She stumbled off the bed a bit, but caught herself. She grabbed her jaw, feeling pain in them
- > and grimaced.

- > "Shepard, your scars aren't healed,

Tsuneo: Although given what she went through, she's not doing too badly.

- > but I need you to get moving. This facility is under attack," the
- > voice spoke and she noticed an intercom system.

Rick: But might the facility be under attack?

Tsuneo: It could be that the facility is under attack.

Rick: But how would we know if the facility is under attack?



Tsuneo: If only somebody could tell us whether the facility was under attack.

- > She might have mistook the voice for a VI if she hadn't heard it before and seen the voice's owner's
- > face.

Dan: She might have mistook it for a VI except that she already knew it was a human.

- > She attempted to move, but only then did she realize the pain in her side. Everything hurt, her
- > mind was fuzzy, what was going on?

Tsuneo: Crappy fanfic.

Rick: Or the gallons of horse tranquilizer they shot her up with.

Tsuneo: Same thing.

- > She looked over at a window and heard the sounds of gunfire as streaks of red and orange shot
- > past the glass.

Rebecca: [Shepard] Yep, pretty typical Tuesday.

- > She took a look around, noticing the lab equipment and the door nearby.

- > "There's a pistol in the locker on the other side of the room. Hurry!"

Rebecca: Only problem is that there's also a rat man in there who won't let go of it.

- > Holding her stomach,

Dan: She feels like she hasn't eaten in years, because well...

- > she stumbled towards the locker and found some suitable gear. Inside was a
- > white armor with orange highlights, a Predator pistol next to it.

Rick: Wiz, chummer.

- > (A/N- Yes, I know. She/He got their

- > N7 armor here, but didn't Legion use the armor to repair himself? Hm? Major plot hole.)

Tsuneo: Or Cerberus had a new set of armour for Shepard given that the old set was crushed to splinters

Rick: Stop being reasonable

- > She slipped on the armor, admiring her figure in a mirror for a moment

Dan: Brief pose, strut and flex, and vogue...

- > before an explosion took her back to the events unfolding.

Rick: [Shepard] Do you mind, I'm preening here!

- > Moving towards the door, it opened and she saw a Thermal Clip on

- > the ground, one of the newer inventions from before... something.

Dan: Before that moment when every firearm in the galaxy changed how it worked.

- > She held her head, feeling misery and terror as a memory attempted to resurface.

- > "Shepard! Get it together!" the voice shouted and she snapped back to reality.

Dan: [Shepard] Jeez, stop yelling. You're not my mum.

Tsuneo: [Miranda] I'm still not touching that one.

> Picking up the Thermal Clip, she reloaded and waited as a door opened up to see if any enemies  
> were there. None came at her. She moved over a barrier,

Rebecca: Meanwhile, Miranda told her how the cover mechanic works.

> sliding over only to be met with an onlined  
> LOKI Mech on the stairwell. She fired a couple shots, destroying it.

Rick: That was just the doorman. No need to do that.

> It was a couple minutes later when she found herself next to an African American man. He was  
> holding his own against a small force of mechs across the way, firing their weapons at him. She had  
> come and helped, taking cover next to him.

> "What are you doing here? I thought you were a work in progress?" the man asked and she  
> shrugged.

Rebecca: Shepard is the Minimum Deliverable Product

> "I just woke up. You probably know more than I do," she responded and he shrugged back.

> After dealing with the mechs and interrogating the African American,

Dan: Jacob wasn't sure where she got the gallon jug and the rag from, but was impressed  
nonetheless.

> a guy named Jacob Taylor, she was utterly pissed.

Tsuneo: Mostly because she'd just skipped a conversation that was vital to establishing the situation

> This was a Cerberus facility, Cerberus! The wacko, human extremist group  
> that kept trying to kill her and kill others!

Dan: Those darned goofy Cerberus guys. What will they do next?

> She freaking blew up a couple of their bases with Jazz though,

Tsuneo: But only Jazz. It was a strange rule, but she was bound to follow it.

> that was an up and probably a down when she met their leader.

> Soon they collected another guy, that Wilson man from before.

Dan: Collected in the same way as one collects Pokemon.

Tsuneo: So they'll sit around unused while the big name money makers do all the work?

Dan: And by that we mean Autobots, but pretty much, yeah.

> He came with the same results as Jacob,

Rebecca: Even after using the pliers.

> he didn't know anything about the attack. They fought their way through the station,  
> collecting some credits here and there, opening files and vid docs whenever they found some.

Rick: Jacob had to remind her that she really didn't need to go through every item in Miranda's  
expense report.

> Shepard's mind was boggled, everything was getting clearer with every revelation.

Rebecca [Shepard]: It was his sled. Of course.

> The Normandy  
> blowing up, the feeling of losing air, the feeling of fear as she lost hope, and then seeing Optimus...  
> dead. She was dead for two years, but Cerberus brought her back, why? And where was Optimus?

> "What the hell are you doing?" Jacob gasped as the raven haired woman shot Wilson.

Rebecca [Miranda]: Headcount reduction.

> Shepard had her pistol pointed at her in a second, using a new trick Taylor had taught her.

Rick: He'd taught her to fetch

> Incendiary ammunition, apparently some modification built into her Omni-tool, something she could  
> use to augment her weapons.

Tsuneo: Maybe stop trying to justify gameplay elements?

Rebecca: Overshield.

Tsuneo: Never mind.

> "My job. Wilson betrayed us all," she explained and Shepard eyed her suspiciously.

Dan: [Shepard] Wait, when did we get to that?

Tsuneo: [Jacob] When you skipped all the dialogue. Weren't you paying attention?

Dan: [Shepard] Sorry, going through this expense report.

> "Even if you're sure, did he deserve that welcome?" Jane asked, holding her at gun point.

> "He sabotaged the security systems, killed my staff, and he would have killed us."

Rebecca: [Shepard] I mean, if it's you guys sure, I barely know you.

> "You sure about that, Miranda? We've known Wilson for years. What if you're wrong?"

Rick: He used to microwave broccoli in the lunch room

Dan: In that case he deserved to die

> Jacob questioned and Shepard nodded.

> "I'm never wrong.

Rebecca: And that's why she was great at Cerberus pub trivia night

> I thought you'd have learned that by now, Jacob," she gloated and walked  
> towards the shuttle, swaying her hips.

Rick: Odds that this author complained about the reframing of her scenes in the Legendary Edition?

Rebecca: Greater than one hundred percent

> Suddenly, a rocket flew past and blast the shuttle, obliterating it.

Dan: [Jacob] I still had three payments on that!

> They were thrown back as a YMIR  
> Mech stepped up, walking forward with its weapons aimed at the three humans.

Dan: They're suddenly regretting overbuying on killer robots

> "Oh no," Jacob gasped and tackled Shepard behind a crate

Rebecca: Because as we know, Shepard is incapable of saving herself.

> as Miranda pulled another crate over to her as a shield, using her biotics.

> "There goes the escape plan!" Shepard shouted, firing from behind cover.

> "There's another way. A ship docked at another side of the station, but it's crawling with security  
> mechs!"

Rebecca: You park in a disabled spot and that will happen.

> "Then we fight our way to them!" Jane roared as she threw the crate at the mech.

> It stumbled back and they made a mad dash for the exit. The next few minutes was filled with the  
> scent of smoke and blood as they passed bodies and robotic corpses. They gunned down dozens  
> of mechs by the time they were at the ship.

Tsuneo: A totally amazing fight scene happened here. Just take our word for it.

> It was a massive hangar with a large ship in it, the  
> boarding ramp of it filled with an assortment of security mechs.

Rick: LOKIs, B1 battle droids, BATs...

> "I got this," Shepard spoke and pulled out her new grenade launcher.

Rebecca [Shepard]: By the way, I have this

> She fired and the explosive decimated the mech forces, but left the larger ones intact. They looked  
> up and acknowledged the presence of the organics.

Dan: [Robotic] Oh yeah, someone's blowing us up...

> Training their guns, they began firing rockets and bullets, shredding apart the metal cover.

Tsuneo: The explosive rockets were a mild inconvenience

> "Damn! Any better ideas?" Jacob asked and Shepard looked around.

Rebecca: Maybe ask before you aggro everything?

> There were crates everywhere, stacked along with some vehicles, cars, trucks, tanks, jet fighters,  
> etcetera.

Rick: Hybrid SUVs, luxury yachts, big wheels... you know, stuff.

> That's when she saw it. Rust red and faded blue,

Dan: Had they left it out on cinderblocks for a decade?

> Cybertronian in nature. It was Optimus, transformed into his alt mode in stasis mode or worse.

> "Optimus," she mumbled and nudged Miranda, "where did you find that truck?"

> "That? You were in it when we found you, what was left of you at least. It was a brilliant idea to get  
> inside of it,

Dan: I mean, you died on impact anyway, but at least this way you had air conditioning.

> the metal hull of it is some kind of metal we've never seen before,"

Tsuneo: [Miranda] Naturally we left this miraculous discovery untouched and didn't tear it apart for research.

> the Cerberus operative praised, but Jane shook her head.

Tsuneo: We know that Shepard hangs out with a giant alien robot who can turn into a truck and we found her in a truck that is made of unknown metal, but clearly there's no connection between the two

> "I didn't get in it," she stated and got up, running towards the sleeping bot. "Optimus!"

> He heard a voice, it was muffled and seemed to be far off, but that voice, it was soothing, full of  
> worry, but yet confidence and pride.

Rick: He was confident that he was worried

> He stirred, groaning from within his spark core as he slept. He  
> remembered seeing the Commander go limp in reentry.

Rebecca: He remembered thinking just how boned they both were.

> He himself had grabbed her and transformed in an attempt to save her,

Tsuneo: Although the fic had pointed out that he'd already gone into stasis lock by then

Dan: Maybe he woke up for a moment.

> but he knew that his chassis was broken, destroyed. Either  
> way he would go into stasis and most likely go offline.

Rick: Kinda wishing he'd stolen Sideswipe's jetpack again.

> "Optimus! Wake up!" she shouted, banging her fists on his side.

Dan: I always find that punching machinery helps fix it

Rebecca: Coming from you, I can believe that

> "Shepard! What are you doing?"

Rick: Emergency truck repairs. What does it look like?

> Miranda gasped as she saw the first human spectre go mad, shouting at the truck as if it were alive.

Tsuneo: She's just gotten over two years of being dead. Give her a moment

> "Come on, Optimus! I need you!" she cried out, aiming her gun at the oncoming mechs.

Dan: Oh yeah, they're under attack. I forgot.

> She fired a couple rounds, taking down their recharged kinetic barriers to a low level, but the time to  
> reload cost her the battle as they recharged their shields and continued firing. The explosion of a  
> rocket sent her flying back, laying on her back as they approached.

Tsuneo: Miranda and Jacob just, I don't know munched on popcorn.

> "Optimus!"

> The red markings on his alt mode glowed brightly and in an instant, his truck's chassis opened up,  
> expanding and contracting as Cybernetium armored plates moved and shifted along with inner  
> machinery.

Rebecca: Hey, what do you know? They fixed this robot truck which they had no idea what it was, or something.

- > His right arm came down, crushing a YMIR Mech as his other arm swung and sent
- > another flying into a group of LOKI mechs.

Tsuneo: Well good thing Optimus is here to take any hint of tension out of this scene.

- > He pulled out his pathblaster, the process taking a longer
- > while than normal due to his sorry state of repair.

Rick: His paint was peeling, his brakes were soft, his suspension saggy and he took forever to start in the morning

- > He fired his weapon, blasting them apart into pieces of smoldering metal. Miranda and Jacob were
- > staring in shock and awe, never seeing a sight such as this before.

Tsuneo: Miranda had never seen something like this before, despite being there when Shepard first met Optimus

Dan: The fic doesn't seem to care for its own continuity

- > "Shepard?" he called, falling down to one knee as the armor of his left leg broke off and causing him
- > to fall onto his other leg. "Weapons, Systems damaged."

- > He called out his status, revealing that his overshields were inactive, his weapon barely had any
- > ammunition, and his chassis was barely holding together.

Rick: And to top it all off, his wiper fluid was empty

- > The Commander stared in shock as she stared at the Autobot leader,

Tsuneo: She stared as she stared.

- > watching with sympathy as he coughed up- er, vented a cloud of
- > brownish colored air, smoke probably.

Dan: That's his pack-a-day habit coming back to bite him.

- > His blue eyes glowed brightly still, but ever so often they
- > flickered as if he was on the verge of going offline and with his sorry state, he probably was.

Rick: No way is he getting his roadworthiness certification

- > "Optimus, I'm here," she called and walked up to the big bot.

Rebecca: [Miranda] I'm here too.

Tsuneo: [Jacob] Not now, they're having a moment.

- > "Shepard? Where... where are we?" he asked, looking around in confusion.

Dan: The secret base of a human supremacist terrorist organisation

Rick: So MECH then

Dan: Not them.

Rick: Then it's the Macination

Dan: Or them

Rick: So it's Cemetery Wind.

Dan: Or them either

Rick: Hm, must be the Concurrence then

Dan: ...there are a lot of those in Transformers fiction, aren't there?

Rick: Just a few.

> "A Cerberus base, they brought me back from the dead

Rick: [Prime] Humans can do that? I mean, I'm used to that, happens to me all the time.

> and kept you here," she explained and he looked up at the two humans above.

Dan: Not sure why. Maybe they were going to auction him off to a collector.

> "Cerberus," he rumbled with anger, remembering how they had been forced to leave no trace of  
> their existence at every base, forced to destroy every evidence that their kind had aided in  
> destroying the Cerberus bases.

Tsuneo: So they... destroyed the people who destroyed the Cerberus bases?

Rebecca: I've got nothing.

> "What has happened?"

> "We've been dead for two years, Optimus.

Rebecca: [Shepard] First leave I've had in ages.

> You and I," she explained as the Cerberus operatives walked over to him.

Tsuneo: [Shepard] They poured billions into bringing me back. You just got forgotten in a garage.

> "Oh my God, I would have never thought of this," Miranda marveled in awe as she looked over  
> Optimus' broken form. "A synthetic that can transform into a vehicle."

Tsuneo: Again, it was your actions that forced Optimus to reveal himself

Rebecca: Miranda seems to be a tad forgetful

> "That's one big robot," Jacob remarked just the same,

Rick [Jacob]: That's my only line

> but the comment was not taken lightly by the spectre.

> "He's not a robot," she snapped and they were taken back by her defensive retort.

Tsuneo: [Shepard] You don't get to use the R-word. That's our word.

> "He's a Cybertronian, an-"

> "Autonomous robotic organism from the planet Cybertron,"

Dan: Control-V

> Optimus cut in and looked at them. "My name is Optimus Prime, Leader of the Autobots."

Rick: [Prime] You know, the boss, big chief, the roller...

Dan: [Shepard] Nobody calls you that.

> "Miranda Lawson, Cerberus operative," she introduced and smiled warmly, but through the Matrix of  
> Leadership buried deep within him, near his spark he could sense her deceit and lies, but also a  
> spark of kindness.

Tsuneo: Optimus is apparently a mind reader

> "Jacob Taylor, also Cerberus," he greeted with his own smile and Optimus knew this one had done  
> no wrong.

Rebecca: He was a perfectly innocent member of an evil human supremacist terrorist organisation

> "It is an honor to meet you all," he spoke, but quickly vented more smoke. "I am damaged."

> "Is there anything we can do?" Shepard asked and he shook his head somberly.

Dan: [Prime] Do you have any spare alien robot metal lying around?

Rebecca: [Miranda] I don't even know where to start with that.

> "Well, even if you're an alien robot, you're still built like one of our machines? Right?

Rick: [Jacob] Weren't you in Preventative Maintenance Monthly?

> Can't we hook you up to a battery or something?" Jacob asked and the Prime thought.

Tsuneo: Thank you Jacob for being the only person able to state the obvious

> "Perhaps, my Energon levels are low. However, if you have a sufficient power source I may be able  
> to survive."

Rick: How many AA batteries do we have?

> "The ship's power should be able to keep you charged and take us to our destination,"

Rebecca: Of course, that's a European outlet. He's going to need an adaptor.

> Miranda theorized and soon they were on their way, off to see the Illusive Man.

Tsuneo: Well that was an effortless resolution to a tense situation.

> Deep space as a dark place,

Rick: Space is very, very big

> void of any lives from the species that thrived off of the Mass Relays.

> Worlds dominated by metropolises of dark metal and millions of millions of soldiers, each made of  
> organic and synthetic material.

Rick: With a chewy caramel centre

> Massive creatures resembling lobsters of Earth stayed put,

Rebecca: Resembling squid-like lobsters

> recharging their power cells as they prepared for the next harvest.

Rick: You know, being a reaper has got to be pretty dull. Sure, you get to scour the galaxy of all  
intelligent life once in a while, but the wait in between is a killer.

> The entire Reaper fleet residing on worlds they had conquered millennia before the second cycle.

> Their creators had fallen before them and became their eldest sibling.

Tsuneo: Theirs was a complicated family tree

> The strange many, long

> armed creatures with many faces were hunted to extinction after they had attempted to control a

> synthetic race. Those were turned into the Reaper, Augur a hateful Reaper



Rick: But is he Bonecrusher levels of hatred?

Dan: It is a Transformers crossover, so it's a fair question.

- > who sought the

- > dominance of synthetics in order to bring peace to organics, one would control the other to bring

- > perfect order.

Rebecca: No, it doesn't make any sense to me either. Blame the Starchild.

- > Harbinger sat above a Reaper controlled world, contemplating the message Sovereign had sent two

- > years ago.

Rick: [Harbinger] Get milk? The hell?

- > "Cybertronians," he rumbled and his golden eyes glared at the stars ahead, "you seek your own

- > extinction."

Tsuneo: You've had literally millions of years to do something about them. This is entirely on you

- > The first Reaper felt rage and hate through its synthetic body, feeling the metal of its core heat with

- > dark emotions as it rumbled.

- > Done

- > So I hope that was awesome

Tsuneo: It was not

- > I liked writing it

- > So G1 Optimus it is!

Rebecca: Reject innovation, embrace Geewun

- > Might give him the AOE look in ME3 since it's a cool knight chassis for him

Rick: So he's going to be a clapped out wreck hiding in a disused theatre?

Dan: Wrong AoE look.

Rick: The author needs to be more specific.

- > Also, to all you people who think I'm a Bayformers fan

- > I like the movies, I don't like the execution

- > The concept was sound, the execution was just as you'd expect from Michael Bay

Dan: So, explosions

- > Everyone says he's horrible at this, they're right

- > People say to stop berating him because he's not the problem

- > Well he's the one who hires the guys who mess up the film and doesn't do jack s\*\*\* about it

- > He is part of the problem

Rebecca: There's a fine line between film critique and rant, and this author is well past it.

- > Anyways, AOE look on ME3

> G1 for ME2

Rick: And then Fire Convoy for Andromeda.

> So thank you all for the support

> Review, Favorite, and Follow

> Lord Revan Flame, signing off

> -----

> Chapter 6: G1 Remodel

> Hello again

> So here we are guys

Dan: Um, on a couch?

> The beginning of ME2

Dan: Oh yeah, that.

> So this is going to be fun

Rick: Really?

Rebecca: No.

> I'm planning on having Megatron's return in the second game and the Decepticons becoming a real  
> threat

Tsuneo: Since so far Optimus has effortlessly crushed everything in his path

> So expect the Collectors

Rick: But what about the Hunters?

> and Decepticons and the Autobot-Spectre Alliance to be duking it out

Rebecca: Jacob and Miranda settle in with another tub of popcorn.

> Now, onto the chapter!

> "You scrapping piece of slag!"

Tsuneo: Or slagging piece of scrap, its probably interchangeable.

> Swoop shouted as he fired his Neutron Assault Rifle, blasting away  
> at the Con that survived Grimlock.

> "Idiotic Autobot," Starscream spat and fired his own weapon, a Nucleon Charge Rifle.

Rick: Weapon names by madlib generators

> It had only been a small time ago when Shockwave had managed to repair the Dinobot's near  
> deceased teammate, Sludge.

Tsuneo: Remember, that random cutaway scene that had nothing to do with anything?

Dan: Nope.

Tsuneo: Good, me neither.

- > They had been scrounging for materials and Energon ever since the
- > sick Con decided it was logical to help them.

Rick: The big robots looming over him at the time may have skewed his decision.

- > However, the moment they used Energon to bring
- > Sludge online, Starscream who had remained in Grimlock's old prison cell during his stay at
- > Shockwave's labs was alerted to it.

Tsuneo: Offscreen plot developments are the best plot developments

- > This lead to their current firefight in which Starscream was demanding Energon or he would kill
- > them all. The only folly in that plan seemed to be his outnumbered state.

Rebecca: Sure there's one of me and four of them and they're all heavily armed, super strong wrecking machines but I see nothing that could possibly go wrong with this plan

- > Slug ran up and fired his SubSonic Repeater at the Decepticon, aiming for his torso unit.

Rick: His torso-like torso

- > The traitorous Con had his
- > overshields down and in need of recharge as the Dinobots pressed forward to overwhelm him.

- > "You want Energon? Have some!"

Rebecca: [Swoop] Because it really has been selfish of us to hog it all when there are others in need.

- > And with that Swoop transformed into his Dinobot mode, firing a blast of Energon at the Seeker who
- > attempted to flee. He was sent flying into a wall, comically peeling off of it and falling on his back.

Dan: Starscream is now the bad guy in a Bugs Bunny cartoon

Rick: ...that actually fits for Starscream.

Dan: Now that you mention it, yes

- > He stared up in fear at the three Dinobots glaring down at him while the fourth rested in a nearby
- > room. Suddenly, two balls of Energon connected by a single line flew at them and stunned them
- > momentarily. Shockwave stepped out, reloading his Sling Shock as the Autobots fell over,
- > unconscious.

Rick: Marvel issue #4 shock ending it is

Dan: Time for a noggin quest

- > "Oh, Shockwave," the ex-Con gasped in shock as he picked himself up, "I wasn't expecting you."

Dan: Him or the Spanish Inquisition

- > "I was expecting you, Starscream," he spoke,

Rebecca: And shot him.

- > walking past him to grab a crate of Energon. "You
- > broke into my laboratories and took my test subject,

Rick: And even adjusted his office seat, the fiend.

- > resulting in the destruction of the Space Bridge and my lab.

Tsuneo: And the worst part of it is that he could have just asked politely.

> However, I require you."

> "Require me?"

Dan: [Shockwave] Amazing, isn't it? I know you're not used to it.

> "Yes, there is a ship I discovered in the Sea of Rust,

Rebecca: The Sea of Rust, a part of the greater Corrosion Ocean

> an ancient exploration vessel.

Rick: A sail-driven spaceship

> With the Energon gathered here, it will fly."

> "Fly where?"

Tsuneo: To the moon, so he can play among the stars

> "Fly to Lord Megatron," Shockwave firmly stated and the Seeker gulped.

> "Megatron?"

Rebecca: Starscream's nothing but stupid questions here.

Rick: Again, actually fits.

> "Yes, Megatron. I will assure him you have returned to our ranks."

> "And that won't stop him from ripping out my spark?"

Dan: I mean, it's not like he ever does anyway. At worst, Starscream gets shouted at and told not to do it again until the next time

> he questioned with fear and Shockwave ignored him, instead moving more crates of Energon.

Rebecca: [Shockwave] You want to stop gawping and give me a hand here?

> "I care not what happens to you after we leave Cybertron, but if we stay we will be hunted by the  
> test subjects."

Rick: Shockwave's laboratory mice were a mean bunch.

> Starscream's optics moved to stare at the downed forms of the Dinobots and he gulped once more.

Dan: That twitching means they're stomping Decepticons in their dreams.

> "Yes, well let's get a move on then!" he yelled as if he were the leader, again and only succeeded in  
> hearing the sound of some insecticon chirping.

Tsuneo: Fic, please don't ever try to be funny.

> Venting, he began moving crates with Shockwave, all the while eyeing the Dinobots before they  
> finally left the Autobots residence.

Rebecca: I mean, they're all unconscious and clearly could be a threat to your plans in future but...  
no, just going to leave them there, I guess.

> Across space and perhaps time,

Tsuneo: In a slightly more relevant part of the fic.

> Shepard found herself on another shuttle ride

Tsuneo: But only slightly.

> down to the oh so familiar colony of Freedom's Progress.

Rick: It was her regular Saturday night thing

> "Alright, Shepard, since you were too worried about your robot friend on the last trip, I'll be asking you  
> a set of questions."

> "Questions?"

Tsuneo: You know, a statement that is constructed to receive a response... do we need to go over all this again?

> "They'll evaluate your mental status," Jacob explained and she shrugged, leaning against Optimus'  
> alt mode.

Rick: Mighty roomy in this shuttle.

> She remembered meeting the Illusive Man for the first time, a large circle built into the ground of an  
> enormous chamber obviously created for Optimus.

Dan: [Prime] This display of wealth does not impress me.

Rebecca: [Illusive Man] It's not for you, it's for my shareholders.

> How they knew about the Cybertronians, she had no idea, but they did.

Dan: Even though Miranda didn't

Rebecca: They have information flow problems

> "Commander Shepard, it's an honor," the man in the chair spoke, putting out the cigarette he had  
> previously smoked.

> "You're Miranda's and Jacob's boss?"

Rebecca: [Illusive Man] There's several levels of management between –

Tsuneo: [Shepard] So yes, but also you're a show-off.

> "Indeed, you may know me as the Illusive Man."

> "Elusive Man?"

> "No, Illusive. 'Il' not 'E', although I am very elusive,"

Tsuneo: Well, we've done it. We've hit the point where I'd actually prefer blandly regurgitating the existing dialogue

> he smirked and Shepard tilted her head a bit, narrowing her eyes.

Rick: She found it about as funny as we did.

> "Well, Illusive Man, sir. This is-"

> "Optimus Prime, also an honor," he spoke, cutting her off and both heroes were stunned.

Dan: Cutting Shepard off for Optimus has been the fic's standard so far, so I don't know why anyone is even remotely surprised

> "I was not aware you knew of me," Optimus rumbled and he nodded, relighting his cigarette.

Tsuneo: Because you've been so subtle thus far.

> "I have eyes and ears everywhere. Not even the Council can hide all their secrets from me."

Dan: For example, he knows Spartus' secret cookie recipe.

Rick: The slave soldier from beneath the ocean?

Dan: No! We are not going to do this again.

> "But how can you know it and not Miranda?" Jane asked, crossing her arms.

Rebecca: Fic, it's not a good look when you point out your own plot holes.

> "Miranda is one of my best agents, but she is not the best."

Dan: Who is his best then?

Rick: Danger Mouse. It's complicated.

> Their conversation went on like that,

Dan: The conversation ended on this

> The Illusive Man answering both their questions to his extent.

Rebecca: Nine. Six. Aspirin. Mice. Fiberglass.

> Shepard learned her crew had split up in the two years of her absence

Tsuneo: They'd all ended up in unsuccessful spin-offs.

> and the Autobots had

> become leaderless. In Optimus' absence, Bumblebee had somehow taken command and lead fairly

> well.

Rebecca: The Autobots had become leaderless except that they had a leader

> "So what's going on that you brought me back?" Shepard demanded to know and he puffed a cloud

> of smoke.

Dan: Evil ancient aliens trying to wipe out all life in the galaxy

Rebecca [Shepard]: Nope, not ringing any bells

> "Shepard, entire human colonies have been vanishing.

Dan: Everyone went out for a pack of cigarettes at the same time.

> Whole human populations gone in a single

> day and no one knows how," he explained and her eyes widened in shock and horror. "The Council

> doesn't believe the threat of the Reapers,

Rick: Or the rodents of unusual size

> I do. With the Battle of the Citadel two years ago, whole

> colonies being abducted in the night can't be a coincidence."

Dan: I mean, they were completely onboard a few chapters ago, but who cares?

> "You want me to investigate?" she asked and he nodded, looking up at Optimus.

> "Fortunately for you both, the first colony I'm sending you to is Freedom's Progress."

> And that's how they got there,

Tsuneo: Through the miracles of forced flashbacks

> sitting back on the ship as Optimus attempted to repair as much of himself as he could.

Dan: [Prime] You couldn't let me do this on our stopover, could you?

> "When you were 16, your home got attacked by Batarian Slavers. You watched your family and  
> friends get either executed or enslaved."

Rick: And that's how she became Batman

> Shepard flinched, she flinched at that.

Tsuneo: She flinched and she flinched.

> The memory poured back into her mind, crying from underneath the floorboards

Rebecca: Would their prefab colony buildings even have floorboards?

> as the Batarians shot her dad, put her mom and sister in shackles,  
> dragged off a couple of her guy friends for neural implants,

Dan: Evil slavers and brain surgeons

> and enslaved more people. She cried  
> silently for two days before an Alliance patrol found the colony, found her. A little red head girl  
> underneath a house, red eyes and tear stained face.

> "It was... it was bad," she answered, silently.

> Both agents of Cerberus did hear, but they knew better than to press the subject.

Rebecca: [Miranda] Not sure why we brought it up to start with.

> Optimus silently  
> rumbled within his alt mode, within his spark. He had witnessed such atrocities before,  
> enslavement, execution, massacre, etcetera.

Tsuneo: General purpose atrocities

> He had heard of the Autobot colony, Antilla, an entire  
> population of peaceful Cybertronians exterminated by the disease known as Cosmic Rust.

Rebecca: And yet, there were still anti-vaxxers and Cosmic Rust deniers.

> The  
> drafting of soldiers into the Decepticon army, innocent bots reformatted to serve Megatron and  
> Megatron alone. Such heinous crimes that are committed should be brought to light and the  
> conspirators trialed.

Rebecca: I mean, this is Shepard's trauma, but no. Make it all about Optimus instead.

> "Well, um..." Jacob stammered before remembering the next question. "You were only starting up in  
> your military career when you about single handily stopped an entire batarian slaver force attacking  
> Elysium."

> "Yeah, the Skyllian Blitz. I remember that," she smirked, looking back at her rookie days.

Tsuneo: [Shepard] I killed so many of the four-eyed bastards. Wait, did that come out wrong?

> She remembered mounting a turret when the defensive line got breached, squeezing the trigger so  
> much her digits were aching afterwards.

Dan: While 'Fortunate Son' was blaring on the speakers.

> She single handily used an anti-aircraft turret to stop the  
> breach and reseal it, gaining a Star of Terra award afterwards.

> "Squeezed the trigger on the turret and took out most of the pirates."

Rick: They all stood in the one spot. Isn't that nice of them?

> "Lucky for you, that saved the day,"

Tsuneo: Butt enough of your trauma. Let's joke about killing people instead.

> the African American man laughed

Rebecca: ...fic, is there any reason why you keep pointing out Jacob and Anderson's races, and  
nobody else's? Because it's kind of not a good look.

> as Optimus contemplated on her actions.

> She was a war hero, one of great courage and valor. He had heard of her days as a recruit, single  
> handily defending Elysium before reinforcements arrived, much like Optimus had done at Iacon  
> when he rallied the Autobots to retake the skies and the Decagon Plaza.

Dan: Dammit Optimus, not everything is about Iacon!

> "Now, the next question is, well you chose to save another soldier instead of a new soldier under  
> your command, Ashley Williams instead of Kaiden Alenko. Why?"

Rebecca: [Shepard] Ashley pitted out the hoodie I loaned her.

> She bowed her head in shame and pain as she remembered that moment. It seemed so easy to  
> just run to Ashley and grab her before meeting Kaiden back at the bomb.

Tsuneo: By which time they would have been overrun. The end.

> It hurt hearing Ashley for the last time over the com, it was terrible, horrible.

> Optimus listened to the sound of her tears splashing on the floor

Rick: Those are some mighty loud tears.

> and looked back at his own career, when he first became a Prime.

Dan: A lot of it involved filling out paperwork.

> Carrying Zeta's body into the High Council's chamber and laying him  
> on a table, calling out to them for help. A fallen hero whose title became his, a new hero by the  
> same name.



Tsuneo: The fic's really trying to force this comparison, isn't it?

> Soon they had landed on Freedom's Progress and Optimus moved to find the exit out of the colony.

Tsuneo: It's a planet, you don't just... You know what, never mind.

> "I must go, my Autobots need me,"

Dan: Them and his home planet

> he rumbled and the humans crossed the arms save for Shepard.

> "Alright big bot, let's move," she responded and her new companions looked at her as if she were  
> insane.

Tsuneo: There's grounds for that.

> "You're going with it? Our mission is to investigate the colony!" Miranda stated and Jane shrugged  
> her off.

> "Look, I care about my race, my people and all that, but Optimus' people could be at the Ark.

Rick: [Miranda] We could settle this with a phone call.

> If this place got hit, then we need to know what happened there."

Rebecca: So we should not investigate the known issue of the missing colony and instead run off to chase up something completely different.

Tsuneo: Brilliant leadership there

> They looked at her before sighing, nodding with her.

> "We are under your command now, so I suppose," the raven haired agent sighed in frustration.

Rebecca: Miranda has just realised that she's entirely superfluous to the story.

> Optimus nodded and transformed, going into his Cybertronian truck form, now repaired enough to  
> move.

> "So how much are you repaired?"

Rick: Enough to move. Didn't you read the last sentence?

> Shepard asked as they began to move, driving off to the crashed  
> ship in the mountainous region of Freedom's Progress.

> "Enough that my auto-repair systems will fully repair my chassis if I am to take on a new form."

Dan: How does that even...

Rebecca: Best not to question it.

> "Ooh," she said and the Cerberus operatives behind her eyed her confusingly.

Tsuneo: Don't look at me. I've got nothing either.

> The drive was fairly long, mostly because of the Prime's state of repair.

Dan: I mean, they could have flown there in the shuttle...

> They sat in silence most of the ride,

Tsuneo: Shepard and Jacob are fighting over the radio.

> just staring out the monitors that acted as windows for the human occupants. Eventually,  
> they came across some old houses, abandoned and the only remains were old trucks and cars.

Rick: The bastards blew up Jay Leno's garage

> A beam of blue shot out from Optimus and scanned a cab over engine truck, moving across it as he  
> drove by.

Tsuneo: Isn't it convenient that a two century-old truck just happened to be at the colony they were going to?

> Suddenly, the upper section of his alt mode lifted up, sparks flying everywhere as  
> Shepard and her new team were lifted up with it.

Rebecca: [Shepard] Should we get out for this?

> "Whoa!" they shouted in surprise as the cab changed, metallic seats with leather

Rick: So this is Optimus' Cybertronian form, right?

Dan: Yes.

Rick: The form he used on a world that was entirely artificial and populated entirely by mechanical life forms.

Dan: Uh, yes.

Rick: So then... where did the leather for his seats come from?

> turning into full leather seats.

Tsuneo: The leather seats turned into leather seats

> The dashboard becoming more like the ones built into modern vehicles instead of Cybertronian.

Rebecca: Since it's a truck, I can only assume that dashboard included a pile of used soda cups and a stash of methamphetamines

> The  
> Prime's chassis rebuilt itself, flattening out into a large box with two exhaust pipes on the back,  
> spewing smoke as he honked a horn.

Tsuneo: Ironically, Optimus Prime is not a fan of EVs.

> The rust peeled right off his crimson metal revealing newer, lighter colored as if it were scarlet.

Tsuneo: It was lighter as if it were a darker colour.

> The windows became transparent,

Dan: Transparent windows? What will they think of next!

> turning into actual glass as the exhaust pipes in back built themselves.

> Shepard, Miranda, and Jacob looked around in awe

Rick: [Jacob] Great. We get to join you in gawping at everything the robot does.

> as the entirety of Optimus' alt mode transformed into a cab over engine truck from Earth's old days,

Rebecca: They were in awe of this obsolete mode of transport

> but built in with Cybertronian tech.

Dan: He had funky alien mudflaps.

> "That was insane," Jacob marveled in awe as they stared out the cab's front windows at the road.

> "Awesome, but insane."

> "My apologies, was it painful or discomforting?" Optimus apologized and Shepard laughed.

Rick: [Jacob] Yeah, I think you reshaped my butt while you were at it.

> "No, no it's fine, Optimus. Just warn us next time, alright?"

Rebecca: Warn us next time you plan to completely reshape your structure with us inside of it.

> "Understood, Commander," he replied

Tsuneo: Is it something he's likely to have to do again?

Rebecca: Probably annually, when a new toy comes out.

> and they continued forward until they came upon the Ark, still

> sticking out of the mountain side like a sore thumb.

Dan: It's the little things you miss, like the gigantic crashed alien spaceship

> The humans jumped out, turning back quickly to watch the Prime's new transformation.

Rebecca: Miranda said she'd seen it and looked up cat pictures on her omni-tool instead.

> The door closed itself and suddenly the entire cab over engine truck went rigid.

Rick: Especially the grill structure

> The lower parts of the cab on the sides came out, two hands springing out from them.

Dan: If you haven't lost them.

> They grasped the ground and he pushed

> himself up as the back section transformed into his legs.

Rick: He's getting in some push-ups while he's at it.

> The armor shifted, Cybertanium armor plates colored indigo blue coming apart and together to form

> legs with two wheels on either one. The metal bumper came backwards, wrapping around his waist

> like a belt

Dan: He's got to hang his hot sauce of that.

> until the pelvic unit

Rebecca: Can we not focus on Prime's pelvic unit, please?

> became visible, yellow lights on them. The torso unit spun, the two

> windows moving diagonally up revealing inner machinery

Tsuneo: Slight wardrobe malfunction there...

> while his indigo helmet revealed itself, slowly forming.

Rebecca: Just so you know, more time is being spent on describing this transformation than introducing the Illusive Man

> Finally, he made a full revolution and threw out his arms,

Dan: His back went with them.

> the torso unit coming together to make the

> upper section of the truck's cab without the arms and bumper creating a slim sort of look.

Rick: It was slim in as far as it looked like a rectangular brick

> "Wow," Jane gasped in awe as all three organic beings marveled.

Dan: Shepard's seen this dozens of times before, but she's somehow still surprised by this.

> The interior was broken, covered in vines and new plant life along with fauna.

Tsuneo: Are we still talking about Prime's transformation here?

> The entire ship was abandoned, no sign of organic or Cybertronian life anywhere.

Rick: Save for the plants and animals that were covering it, apparently

> "Nothing," Shepard said when they came to the bridge, "no one's home."

> "They abandoned the Ark," Optimus spoke as he tapped at a console, hoping to find any message

> left behind. "Wait, there is a message here."

Dan: I hope they left us a message

Rick: They left us a message

Dan: Well isn't that nice?

> The holographic projector sparked to life and Ratchet's head appeared.

> "Calling all Autobots. If you are receiving this, then I must apologize.

Tsuneo [Ratchet]: But I cannot come to the phone right now. However, if you'd like to leave your name and number after the tone, I will get back to you.

> The Ark has been abandoned

Rick: And now it's full of hobos, scrappers and people taking photos of ruins porn for Instagram

> and we have transferred to a facility given to us by these organic species' government, the Council

> on the Citadel, a massive space station at these coordinates."

> They watched a set of star coordinates appear and they nodded, understanding.

Tsuneo: Second star to the left, and straight on until dawn.

> "Please contact us before coming to the Citadel.

Dan: And how are they going to do that?

> The public does not yet know of our involvement in their civilization

Tsuneo: Gigantic city-destroying robot rampages aside

> and in revealing yourselves may cause chaos. Till all are one."

> The message cut and Optimus looked down, clenching a fist.

> "They are alive, but not here."

Dan: Admit it, they ghosted you.

> "Well what're you waiting for?" Jane asked, crossing her arms. "Call them up, they got to be  
> worrying like hell for you."

Rebecca: They all assumed he was dead and moved on with their lives.

> "I will send a message, but only after we complete your mission."

Dan: Just shoot off a quick text while you're here.

> "He's right," Miranda spoke up and they turned to look at her. "The mission comes first. There could  
> be survivors back at the colony."

Tsuneo: Something you should have thought of before you ran off like that.

> "Allow me to scan for any life signs," Optimus asked and they nodded.

> After several minutes of typing and rewiring, Optimus had routed enough power to the scanners.

Tsuneo: So did they head back to the colony, or...

Rebecca: Nah, Prime figure's he's going to work from home today.

> He activated the device and the results came back quickly

> "Several life signs detected, only a few I fear,"

Tsuneo: There's several of them and only a few of them

> he somberly reported, moving out of their line of sight

> so they may gaze upon the results. "They are identified as Quarian life signs."

> "Quarians? Oh boy," Jacob sighed in frustration and Shepard raised an eyebrow.

Rebecca: Jacob is quick to insist that some of his best friends are Quarians.

> "Something wrong?"

Rick: He's worried that they're making faces at him behind their masks

> The Cerberus operatives stared at each other and had a small discussion before deciding on telling  
> her.

Dan [Muttered]: Don't look at me. She's your friend, you bought her.

Rebecca [Muttered]: Oh no, you bought this up. It's entirely on you

Tsuneo: When terrorists have awkward conversations

> "It was a while ago, but Cerberus chased down a biotic onto the Quarian Migrant Fleet. They nearly  
> destroyed an entire vessel of theirs," Miranda explained and Jane grit her teeth.

Rebecca [Shepard]: Remind me why I hang out with you guys?

Dan [Jacob]: Because we bought you back to life and we're trying to stop ancient alien robots from  
wiping out all life in the galaxy.

Rebecca [Shepard]: Besides that, I mean

> "You what!"

> "It wasn't our fault, Shepard. We weren't a part of that,"

Dan: Sure, Miranda set up, funded and signed off on the operation, but they had nothing to do with it.

> Jacob reassured and she glared at both of them.

Rick: Jacob's a big believer in the myth of the clean Cerberus guy

> Clenching her fists, she turned and walked out off the bridge, not caring for their pleas. She crossed

> her arms and stared out the window of Optimus' new alt mode the whole trip back to the colony.

> She may have acted like an angered child, but she had the right too.

Dan: She's having an N7 sulk.

> Eventually, when they came across the QUarians,

Dan: One effortless transition later

> Shepard was in for one big surprise.

> "Tali?"

> "Shepard?"

Rick: Cerebro?

Dan: Magneto.

> The Shadow Broker sat behind his desk, a Yahg with his hands placed together.

Tsuneo: As opposed to being a Yahg with his hands apart, I suppose

> He stared at the individual monitors that was his network,

Rick: Several of them were running ads for Nostalgia.

> eyeing everything on his newest... 'project'.

Rebecca: His latest move to run Twitter into the ground

> Several years ago a massive ship had crashed into the storming world of Hagalaz, landing in the

> oceans.

Rick: It landed in all the oceans at once

> They had detected its appearance and moved to study the wreckage, only after the Battle

> of the Citadel had they discover it was Cybertronian in nature.

Rebecca: Up until then, they thought it was a fancy rock.

> They had studied everything from the weapons to the computers within this ship.

Rick: And their advanced interior decoration technology.

> Bodies had been collected, dissected and put together in new forms.

Dan: The Shadow Broker was a kitbasher

> "Sir! NBE-2 is activ- Ah!"

> The Shadow Broker moved his attention to the monitor that watched over the most intact body. He  
> had found it within a large piece of golden wreckage, taking it and repairing what he could to see  
> how it functioned.

Dan: And how he could market it

> The connection had been cut, the screen a mix of white and black pixels. He  
> looked to the other screen that showcased the exterior of the lab, it to was offline.

Tsuneo: Gee, maybe messing with the dangerous, unknown alien robot was not a good idea after all.

> Every screen went off, one by one, bit by bit as the mechanized being moved. He stared at the  
> monitors, his back turned to the door. He didn't need to hear the door open to know it was here,  
> there was a camera to watch the other side of his office's door. He spun in the chair, looking at the  
> massive robotic organism.

Rebecca: Despite the ship being full of tight corridors, the giant robot has no problem with getting around

> A single, glowing red, slit like visor moving across a mouth plate.

Rick: He's found an ancient Cylon.

> It was colored a purplish blue, a  
> golden outline around a glowing purple window like piece on its torso.

Rick: And was likely packed with a two-dimensional cat.

> It stared at him, both beings sizing each other up.

> "He chelok senktro phendetz," it spoke,

Rick: Flobadob blib blob blib.

> the words garbled and alien to the Yahg.

> The organic being did not flinch or raise an eyebrow, if he had one.

Dan: The author's not sure on this point

> He simply watched as the  
> glowing red visor blinked several times before it took in its surroundings once more.

> "Extranet analyzed, commencing conversation," it spoke, the voice cold and mechanical.

Tsuneo: All the warmth of an automated phone service.

> "Who are you?" the Shadow Broker questioned

Rick: [Soundwave] Uh... Soundblaster! Yeah, that'll fox him...

> and it did not answer his question, merely responded with an order.

> "Cannot comply, will not give away strategic advantage."

> "Why are you here?"

Dan: He's looking for his backup dancers.

> "Analyzing records of... 'Shadow Broker'," it spoke and he tensed,

Rebecca: [Soundwave] Classification: DLC.

> how did it get into his files?

> "Analyzing complete, ships out of commission, designations Ark and Nemesis. Status of crews,

> Decepticons still repairable, Autobots... extermination suggested."

Rick: Just a friendly suggestion, mind you. Something to take under advisement.

> The Shadow Broker eyed him before standing up, stepping into the light.

> "You are on my ship, surrounded by my army. You cannot win, return to your laboratory or we will

> use your own weapons against you."

> It stood there, its red visor blinking before responding.

> "Race: Yahg, Name: Not available,

Rick: But all his friends call him Bob

> Designation: Shadow Broker, Status: Inferior."

Rebecca: Soundwave is a stone-cold racist

> "Inferior? I can be healed, you will only be torn apart and melted down into more Cybertanium."

> It stared again before answering once more, irritating the Yahg.

> "History: Unknown,

Rebecca: Read the damn codex.

> Theory: Yahgs, pre-spaceflight species quarantined to homeworld after

> slaughtering first contact team sent by galactic government, Designation: Council. Base is

> confirmed to be older than Yahg homeworld discovery,

Dan: Clearly the spaceship was built by ancient astronauts. Only logical answer.

> theory insists you are not original Shadow Broker, only replacement.

Rebecca: And no matter how well he does, people keep insisting the original Shadow Broker was better.

> Original recruited- correction, took you for experiments, dissection, study... perhaps pet."

Rick: Isn't it always the way? Your kid wants a Yahg when they're small and cute, but won't do a thing to look after it and then the next thing you know it's too big to keep in the house.

> The Yahg felt anger boil within him before he slammed his arm on the desk, breaking it in half. He

> grabbed one end of the desk and threw it at the machine. It slapped it away with its left arm, then

> did the same when he threw the other side of the table.

> "Rumble, eject. Commence Operation: Extermination."

Tsuneo: Soundwave can't be bothered getting himself involved in this fic, and frankly who can blame him?

> His torso unit opened up, letting a large cassette like metal plate shoot out to transform into a



> smaller robotic being with two large hammer like arms on it.

Rick: Was it red or blue?

Tsuneo: No. We're not going there.

> "Prepare to crumble, before Rumble!" he shouted and smashed its hammers into the ground,  
> shaking it and throwing the Shadow Broker off balance.

Rebecca: I'm sure that's a perfectly safe thing to do on board a spaceship

> "Laserbeak, eject. Commence Operation: Skyfire."

Dan: Or Jetfire, depending on what retelling it is.

> A mechanical bird flew out of its torso unit and began firing a barrage of Energon powered lasers,

Rick: Didn't even give Rumble a chance.

Rebecca: I mean, would you?

Rick: Well, no.

> decimating the Yahg's barriers easily and cutting a fine singing line across its chest. The organic  
> roared in pain and rage before charging head first, tackling the machine.

Tsuneo: It was only lightly bothered by being shot in the chest.

> It fell backwards, but it  
> opened its torso unit, smacking the Yahg in the face. Grabbing it, the Cybertronian threw the alien  
> off of it, standing back up.

> "Shadow Broker inferior, Soundwave superior," the Decepticon triumphantly stated and its right arm  
> transformed into a gun like appendage, the tip of a pyramid like head crackling with lightning.

> Soundwave fired the E.D.K Techvolt,

Tsuneo: E.D.K Techvolt sounds like a brand of cassette from the 80s.

Rick: Weirdly appropriate.

> electrocuting the Yahg to death.

Rebecca: Probably should have opened with that.

Dan: Well, it's good to let the tapes out to play now and then. Keeps them engaged.

> The smell of burnt flesh filled  
> the room along with the stench of smoke. The Cybertronian cared not for the burnt corpse,

Rebecca: He had janitorial staff to look after that for him.

> only for  
> the safety of its leader. Passing through the files of the Shadow Broker, he identified the reason he  
> was named NBE-2.

Rick: Yep, he's Nargun Badminton Eggplant number two. It should be obvious why.

> "Megatron Status: Stasis Lock, action required," he spoke and began moving through the terminal.

Dan: And so he began setting up the "welcome back" party.

> "Message to all Shadow Broker agent, systems will be operational. NBE-2 has been contained."

> The agents listened to the voice of their leader, synthesized thanks to Soundwave's unique chassis.

Rebecca: He did it because he's a giant alien robot. That's how Liara was able to fool everyone into thinking she was the Shadow Broker too.

> He transformed,

Dan: So now there's a huge SUV thing sitting in the room.

Rebecca: I just assume the whole fic's as G1 as possible, so he's a tape deck for no reason.

> hooking himself up to cables and wires as he began ordering his new organization

Rick: He's dynamically reengineering their corporate structure to maximize horizontal integration and introduce synergy across emergent markets and disruptive technologies.

Dan: Translation?

Rick: Mass lay-offs.

> of spies and operatives to rebuild the Decepticons and destroy the Autobots.

> Done

> I hope you loved that

Rebecca: We did not.

> I got the best idea for Soundwave becoming the Shadow Broker a while back so I couldn't resist

Tsuneo: On one side, Soundwave as the Shadow Broker actually works. On the other hand, it's yet another case of the Transformers characters effortlessly squishing the Mass Effect ones.

> He fits perfectly!

Dan: There's a little slot on the desk and everything.

> Anyways, thanks for the feedback and all

> Review, Favorite, and Follow

> Lord Revan Flame, signing off

> ----

> Chapter 7: Return of the Leaders

> Hello again crossover fans!

Dan: Hey, don't look at us.

> So here is our ever so popular story

Rebecca: For generous definitions of popular

> Now it's been a while so I'm kinda just out of all this

> Meaning Writer's Block

> The worst kinda Block

Rick: Worse than a... um... yeah, can't come up with anything. That bad.

> A disease not even Ratchet nor Dr. Chakwas can fix

> Anyways, let's get going shall we?

Tsuneo: Do we have to?

> "You can't just take him!" Tali yelled in anger at the raven haired Cerberus operative.

> It was only about an hour or two ago that they had met Tali for the second time,

Dan: Plenty of time for tea and biscuits

> now a member of

> the Migrant Fleet and a soldier. That was a real surprise to Jane, the energetic Quarian she always

> thought of as a teenager was now a woman, a soldier woman.

Rebecca: Jane Shepard found the idea of a woman soldier to be a strange one

> The meeting was mostly well, Tali had become bigger friends with the Autobots apparently,

Tsuneo: She was following them on Facebook

> but the rest of her team, they got really pissed with the Cerberus part,

Dan: Cerberus gets that wherever they go, and Jacob's never figured out why.

> so did Tali, but they got even more pissed when they saw the boxy,

> red and blue mechanical alien outside the building.

Rick: I can't imagine why Quarians would have a problem with killer robots.

> "He belongs in a hospital!"

Dan: Who are we talking about here?

Tsuneo: Some nonspecific entity

> "He knows too much, Cerberus could use that data!" Miranda retorted and Shepard found herself in  
> the crossfire.

> She already knew her decision,

Rick: Supreme pizza, no anchovies and a side of garlic bread

> what she didn't know was what the outcome would be.

> "Miranda," she spoke and the operative looked at her, "Veetor's going back to the Migrant Fleet, no  
> argument."

> She wanted to argue,

Dan: But, y'know, they said no argument.

> but bit her tongue before the words came out.

> Jacob watched from behind,

> eyeing the three ladies with a bit of fear. Angry women were always scary to a man, no matter what  
> the subject was.

Rebecca: That statement reveals more about the author than I actually wanted to know.

> Outside, Optimus stood guard, fists clenching his Energon Axe.

Rick: He hadn't sliced anyone's face off in ages.

> With his new transformation, he could not use any of his old weaponry,

Dan: In retrospect this may not have been the best plan

> all to broken or out of ammunition.

Tsuneo: Maybe he should have spent his efforts on repairing them rather than some forced eighties nostalgia

> Only his close combat weapon remained, an Energon Axe fueled by his own life blood.

Rebecca: Although in all fairness, this is the start of Mass Effect 2. Shepard's forgotten how to use an assault rifle too.

> It made quick work of the many mechs they encountered throughout the empty colony,

Dan: Just assume that there was a fight here and move on.

> turning the robotic drones into melted pieces of scrap.

Rick: Axes cause robots to melt. Got it.

> He could feel his Energon reserves slowly burning, but it was as he had thought of, going slowly.

Tsuneo: Which was why he was standing there with his axe activated.

> Eventually, the organics left the small building,

Rebecca: Don't worry, nothing important was going on inside.

> a Quarian being helped out, limping while leaning against Tali'Zorah nar Rayya.

> His blue optics scanned the new Quarian's life signs, finding them slowly fading away. He was  
> mostly healthy, but his weakened immune system was quickly allowing a disease to infiltrate his  
> organic body.

Rebecca: He was healthy except for the fact that he was dying.

> The Prime lowered his head in respect, having a silent moment of prayer to Primus,

Tsuneo: I'm sure the member of a species that was pushed to the brink of extinction in a war against artificial intelligence would appreciate a prayer to the robot space god.

> asking for the Quarian's survival.

Rick [Heavy]: Sorry, I only deal in robots. He's on his own.

> After some time, Shepard had a farewell with her former teammate  
> and left with the Cybertronian and her new Cerberus allies.

Dan: Optimus and those two, idk who they are.

> When they arrived back at the station they had come from, the Illusive Man greeted them warmly  
> with an underlying tone of frustration.

Rebecca: He's been looking at the projected returns from Project Lazarus and he's not happy.

> It was obvious to Shepard and Prime that the leader of the

> pro-human terrorist group was very frustrated with their heroic actions,

Dan: How dare you save people's lives.

> but was also pleased with the new information they had gathered.

Rebecca: A lot less happy about their side-trip, though.

> The Reapers were behind these attacks, the Collectors were now their newest weapons.

Tsuneo: There were some vital plot developments, but since they're not Optimus' inner monologue, they're not important.

> "Now, I believe you have some acquaintances to meet,"

Dan: And by that, he means Chad, a guy she dated in high school.

> their new ally spoke and the holographic emitter turned off.

> The door opened and both leaders were met with a surprise. Joker smiled at both of them while two  
> robotic beings stood behind him.

Rick: Precisely what Ultron and K-9 were doing there is another matter.

> "Joker?"

> "Hey Shepard, how's being alive?" the pilot asked, limping over

Dan: [Joker] Seriously, I wouldn't know.

> as the two Bots moved to stand before Optimus.

Rebecca: And that's enough of Shepard's tender reunion.

> "Perceptor? Wheeljack?"

Rick: For want of anything else, I'm going to assume this is Armada Perceptor and Malboro Wheeljack.

> Both Cybertronians wore the Autobot insignia, one was colored mostly red while the other was white  
> with lines colored red and green.

Dan: Their insignias were, that is. No idea what they looked like otherwise

> "Optimus, it's good to see you!" Perceptor piped up, saluting with Wheeljack.

> "Good to see you, Optimus," Wheeljack greeted and the Prime smiled from underneath his mask  
> shield.

> "It is good to see you both as well, my old friends," he rumbled and turned to the Commander.

Rick: It's good to see you.

Rebecca: It's good to see you too.

Dan: It's good to see you as well.

Tsuneo: It's good to see you all.

Rick: And so on and so forth.

> "Commander, these are my top scientists, Perceptor and Wheeljack."

Rebecca: Their main job is to devise McGuffins

> She put her hands on her hips, eyeing both of the science bots as they looked down at her.

Dan [Joker]: Um, I'm here too

> "Nice to meet you," she greeted with a grin and both Autobots nodded.

> "What are you doing here?" Optimus questioned after a moment as they walked down the hall.

Rick: Have they been reintroduced yet? I can't tell.

> "Well, sir. After we entered the portal, I suppose many of us were shot out in different places  
> throughout the universe.

Dan: Jazz landed in the Bahamas and took a holiday for two years.

> Fortunately, both Wheeljack and I were jettisoned onto a nearby world  
> Cerberus was using as a base of operations.

Rebecca: In an astoundingly convenient turn of events.

> We were rescued and given sanctuary here," the red Bot explained as the other just listened.

Tsuneo: We were given sanctuary by the evil human supremacist terrorist group. They seemed nice.

> "Yeah, they gave us all this tech and asked us for some inventions.

Rick: And that's why Miranda had no idea what Prime was.

Rebecca: Compartmentalisation is its own worst enemy.

> Of course we stuck with the rules of First Contact, the small stuff first,"

Rebecca: The wheel, fire, agriculture, nuclear weapons. That sort of thing.

> Wheeljack added and their leader nodded.

> "You have done me proud, my Autobots."

Dan: [Prime] By selling our secrets to terrorists.

> "No they haven't, not yet," Joker said and gestured for them to look out a window.

> There was a massive room beyond it, but it was pitch black. That was, until the lights shot on,  
> revealing a sleek white surface. Slowly, the lights flashed on and stayed that way as the dark room  
> began to become visible.

Dan: If they've got Tidal Wave in there, this whole thing will have been worth it.

> Within was the ship that they thought destroyed, the Normandy in all its  
> glory hung in the hangar, floating. It was slightly different, the black and orange markings showing it  
> was Cerberus,

Tsuneo: Also it was twice as large

Rebecca: It's the small details you miss

> but the Autobots insignia on the airlock door also proved it was not just something  
> made by the pro-human group.

Rick: Making it the spaceship equivalent of somebody putting a Decepticon transfer on their rusty Corolla

> "She's beautiful, ain't she?" Joker asked as Jane gazed on with a gaping mouth.

Tsuneo: Shepard's reaction to, well, pretty much anything in this fic.

> "We're arriving at the Citadel, Commander," the ship's all new AI, a programmed entity known as  
> EDI.

Rick: Wait, their ship's being run by the little Enclave eyebot?

Dan: Wrong stupid evil human supremacist organisation, although the confusion is understandable

> "Thanks, EDI," Shepard spoke, not so awkwardly since she had spoken with machines practically  
> her whole career as a Spectre and... well after being a Spectre.

Rebecca: [EDI] Shepard, I feel that our close alliance with a civilization of seemingly self-created mechanical intelligences raises a wide number of questions about my existence and position on this mission.

Rick: [Shepard] Not now, EDI.

> They walked out onto the Citadel, well she did while Optimus drove out. Seeing as the populous did  
> not know of the Cybertronian presence among them, they decided against doing such a thing.

Rebecca: In order to not draw attention, he's going to drive around as a two hundred year old obsolete mode of transport. It's a lateral move at best.

> Perceptor had taken on the form of a highly advanced microscope

Tsuneo: Because carrying a microscope with you everywhere is not suspicious at all.

> while Wheeljack decided on a nice looking car.

Rick: Preceptor really missed out here

> They drove to the last known location of the Spectre-Autobot headquarters

Tsuneo: Having apparently not made any effort to contact their allies until now

> and were not disappointed when they arrived.

Dan: They'd kept the place clean and neat, and had recently redecorated.

> The moment the Energon signatures popped up on the display, Ratchet sounded the alarm.  
> Ironhide, Warpath, Sideswipe, Jazz, Bumblebee,

Rick: Rotorstorm, Leadfoot, Masterdominus, Lift-Ticket and DK-2 Guard.

> basically all of the on duty Autobots and Spectres ran to the front gate of the base.

Dan: Yes, the many spectres we just named.

> The base in particular was a massive building in a secluded area of  
> the Citadel, mostly used by military folk to store weapons and vehicles.

Rebecca: It was a discrete and low-key fortified armoury.

> When the doors opened on  
> their own, they were more than surprised, and when a red and blue cab-over-engine truck drove in,  
> they were completely confused.

Tsuneo: The idea that a Transformer might transform into something was a surprise to them

> "Optimus?" Ironhide gasped in shock and the next thing was a complete shock.

> Wheeljack transformed, getting up on his legs as he crossed his arms. Commander Jane Shepard  
> jumped out of the truck, carrying a large microscope that transformed, hopping out of her arms to  
> become Perceptor.

Rick: This alt-mode is really inconvenient, isn't it?

> Finally, the truck went rigid as it transformed, Optimus taking his full height over all of the Autobots.

> Everyone was silent, they thought they were seeing ghosts,

Rick: Optimus Prime returns from the dead all the time. They have no right to be surprised.

> at least until Shepard started laughing.

Dan: [Shepard] Told you we should have texted.

> "Sorry, sorry," she said and brought up her Omni-tool, taking a 'Kodak Moment' as her people called  
> it.

Rebecca: Nobody calls it that.

> "My Autobots, I have returned," Optimus spoke and immediately they began cheering.

Tsuneo: [Shepard] Well now we've got this army of seemingly-unstoppable robots with us, we don't  
really need to work with Cerberus anymore. [Pause] Say, where's Miranda?

> "He's back!" Warpath shouted in joy as Bumblebee ran up to the Prime.

> "Is it really you?" he spoke and Optimus was taken back.

> "Your voice-"

> "Was repaired, Prime," Ratchet said as he moved forward. "We got the necessary materials and  
> Energon to make him a new vocal processor."

Rick: Everything must be as Geewun as possible.

> "Wonderful news, Ratchet!" Perceptor stated and Ratchet went to greet his old friend.

> The rest of the hour was spent catching up,

Dan: [Shepard] Yeah, that's great. Does anyone have a beer around here?

> learning what had happened to both sides of the now  
> reunited Autobots. After the 'death' of both leaders, the Autobots had become leaderless,

Tsuneo: They were leaderless in as far as they had a leader

> commanded then by Counselor Anderson.

Rick: [Anderson] Yep. Giant transforming robots. Not even the weirdest thing I've seen in my career.

> The crew of the Normandy, as Tali had already stated,  
> had separated, going their separate ways after the destruction of the human-turian project.

Rebecca [Tali]: Yes, I already said that.



> "That new frame's looking... robust," Ironhide commented

Rick: Trying to be polite about it.

> and Optimus nodded, moving his box like arms to look at them.

> "It is newer, seemingly just as resilient as my previous chassis," Optimus observed,

Rebecca: That's the die-cast construction.

> moving his arms, staring at his hands and digits.

Dan: [Prime] Whoah, when did these get here?

> "However, I lack a long range weapon. My old weaponry has

> been either destroyed or emptied of its ammunition."

> "Really?" Wheeljack asked and his leader nodded. "That's great! I mean, not that you lost your

> guns, but I've been working on some new designs for an Ion Blaster."

Tsuneo: Well isn't that convenient?

> "That sounds cool," Shepard remarked and the masked scientist nodded rapidly.

Rick: [Shepard] Woo, hey, I got a line.

> "I have the blueprints, I just need the materials to make it though," he spoke, his 'ears' lighting up

> with every word.

Dan: You know what that means?

Rebecca: No.

Dan: Time for the scanning minigame!

Rebecca: No!

> "The base should have more than enough resources for your newest invention,"

Rick: It's got all the crafting workstations you could need.

> Ratchet assured

> and lead the scientists further into the large warehouse like base while Optimus and Shepard

> decided to stay near the entrance.

> "So Shepard, I guess you'll want to meet Anderson again?" Ironhide inquired and the Commander

> nodded, crossing her arms with a smirk.

Dan: [Shepard] Yeah, no offence but I'm straining my neck looking up at y'all.

> "He's over at the Human Embassy. We could drive you over there if ya want."

Tsuneo: Say, isn't the Citadel separated into multiple 'arms' with extensive use of verticality in its architecture to the point where flying vehicles are the only practical way to get around?

> "Nah, I think Optimus has that covered," she smirked and immediately the Prime transformed,

> turning into his cab over engine alt mode. "Come on, Boss Bot. I got an old friend to meet."

Rebecca [Shepard]: Chad, a guy I dated back in high school.

> The engines revved and all the Bots cheered before transforming, wishing to travel with their leader.

Dan: These guys really have nothing going on in their lives, do they?

Rick: Not a thing.

> "Constructicons, how goes the repairs?" Shockwave questioned as he strode into the room.

Tsuneo: [Scrapper] Excellent. We cut out the dry rot, reinforced the foundations and replaced the old linoleum flooring with a nice hardwood.

Rick: [Shockwave] It was meant to be a spaceship.

> The Cybertronian builders of the Decepticon faction noticed his entrance and their leader,  
> Mixmaster moved forward to report.

Dan: I thought Scrapper was the leader

Rick: I guess they take it in turns. You know, put your best foot forward.

> "Your old rust bucket ship is almost ready, Shockwave.

Tsuneo: They're going to completely gouge him on the parts.

> With that Energon you stole we got enough  
> fuel to open a small portal for the ship and enough fuel to get the ship through

Rebecca: You'd hope so. I'd hate for them to have to push.

> and to where ever Lord Megatron popped out."

Rick: And so they found him under a rock in Canada.

> "Very good, Mixmaster," Starscream praised while holding his arms behind him in a leader-like  
> manner.

> The Constructicons simply looked away from their work at the Decepticon traitor and scoffed before  
> going back to repairing the ship. The ship in question was a giant circular shape, five prongs on all  
> sides save for where the sixth prong would be.

Rick: It was a giant space donut

> Instead of the sixth prong, there was a bulbous  
> head, the bridge of the ship that had two large prongs going forwards on either side while the others  
> were facing vertically. (A/N- Basically the Knights Temenos from TF4)

Tsuneo: This spaceship is the first thing that has been adequately described, and I'm not sure how I feel about that

> The group of Cons were at work within a massive underground chamber, a large cavernous place  
> discovered underneath the Rust Spot, a dangerous and deadly area on Cybertron.

Rebecca: This doesn't sound like a safe working environment.

Rick: Their OSHA claims are a nightmare

> Meanwhile, across the planet, the Dinobots stumbled into the remains of Iacon.

Tsuneo: They accidentally found the ruins of a massive city

> With Swoop leading  
> the way, Slug and Snarl helped their resuscitated teammate, Sludge traverse the broken landscape  
> that was once the streets of the great Autobot capital.

Rebecca: It's great that they're swapping between scenes with only Transformers. The author doesn't have to pretend to care about the human characters.

> "This is slugging great!" Swoop shouted as his foot sent a shell casing fly off into the distance. "We got double-crossed and robbed!"

Dan: But enough about his Crypto investments.

> "Hey, least they didn't take our sparks,"

Rick: Or your pants

Dan: They're robots. They don't wear pants

Rick: Outsmarted him already

> Slug responded and Swoop gave him a glare from his visor, the light blue darkening.

> As the two held their stares, the two other members of the Dinobots looked up as they noticed a shadow slowly casting over them.

> "Uh, guys," Snarl spoke up and the two Bots looked at him before noticing where he was looking at.

> Before them was a massive Bot, a gargantuan sized warrior. It was on it's knees, grey optics staring at the ground as it remained offline. Massive hands had lost their grips on destroyed skyscrapers, now laying at the metrotitan's side.

Dan: Metrotitan sounds like a giant robot who's taken to the stylish big city lifestyle and has his own favourite barista and bagel topping.

> "What is that?"

Rebecca: It's just your average, everyday colossal dead robot. I don't see what you're getting so worked up about.

> Swoop's question went unanswered as they slowly approached the giant.

Dan: Snarl thinks he could take the guy in a fight, while slug just wants to go through its pockets.

> "Hey you!"

> The group of four turned to find a speeding Cybertronian headed towards them. It transformed, revealing itself to be a femme,

Rebecca: Is it bad that I want to find whoever it was that wedged that word into Transformers fandom and hurt them?

> colored light red close to a pinkish tint.

> "Who're you?" Sludge questioned as he shook himself out of his teammate's grasps.

> "Name's Firestar,

Rick: Function: Girl. Specialty: being a recolour of the same already overused mould.

> who're you?" she questioned back and the four dinobots looked at each other.

> "We're the Dinobots."

Tsuneo: And scene, I guess.

> "That did not go as well as expected," Shepard spoke, crossing her arms as she took a drive with Anderson.

> They were inside Optimus' cab as he drove them to the coordinates the councilor had given him. It

> was only moment ago that Shepard was arguing with the Council about saving human colonies in  
> the Traverse, but they refused to take action against the threat of the Collectors.

Rebecca: It's an election year and they don't want the bad press.

> Oh, and they still did not believe in the Reapers,

Rick: They were considered to be an urban myth

> how surprising that was to the Commander.

Tsuneo: Given how completely onboard they were a few chapters ago?

> "May I ask, Councilor? Where will these coordinates take us?" Optimus rumbled and the African  
> American male smiled.

> "You'll see, big bot. You'll see," he assured as they continued driving.

Dan: They're for Anderson's favourite sports bar. The London Jets are playing tonight and he never misses a game.

> It was a strange sight to see a wheeled vehicle driving on the Citadel, but thankfully the Council had  
> invested in creating special roads for such kinds of ground transports as many species still saw the  
> wheel as an appropriate mode of transportation.

Rebecca: And in an age of easily available anti-gravity technology, those species were considered to be very stupid.

> The cab-over-engine vehicle was truly a strange  
> sight, most humans had switched to the hover cars, but nonetheless, no one asked questions or  
> stared for too long.

Tsuneo: Fic, drawing attention to how bad an idea this is does not help.

> Eventually, the trio had arrived at a large building, windows covering the front, a large lobby visible  
> through the glass, and a sort of scientific personality to it.

Rick: Huh, Extensive Enterprises. Well how about that?

> "Welcome to the new base of operations for the Spectre-Autobot Alliance,"

Tsuneo: So where were they before?

Dan: That was just their parking garage

> Anderson explained as he used his omni-tool to activate a garage.

Rick: The galaxy's most advanced garage door remote.

> The door lifted and Optimus drove in, parking in the cube-like room. The door moved back down  
> and once it sealed magnetically, the ground jolted. Suddenly, the floor started moving down,  
> revealing the room to be an elevator.

> "New base?"

> Anderson smiled at the Commander's confused expression, finding it amusing.

Tsuneo: Demonstrating the years of trust built between the pair of them.

> "Well you arrived just before the big move, Shepard. The Council decided it would be better if the  
> Bots and Spectres got an up to date base near the Council Tower. We funded the construction of

> this place, The Department of Biologically Organic Treatment."

Rebecca: Not ominous in the slightest

Tsuneo: Gods no.

> "BOT," Optimus spoke, realizing the acronym for the name.

Rick: They named it for one of the worst Transformers cartoon episodes

> "Yes, your medical officer, Ratchet came up with that one."

Dan: Ratchet was laughing about it too, wanting to see if the humans would go with it

> Finally, after some time, the walls lit with glowing blue lights was replaced with glass showcasing a

> massive underground operation.

Tsuneo: How do you build something underground in a space station?

Rebecca: Very carefully

> The room was enormous, most likely able to fit an Alliance

> Dreadnought in it. The Autobots moved about, having arrived after breaking off from their leader on

> the way to the Human Embassy.

Rick: And nobody thought to tell them about it back at the old place?

Rebecca: They would have, but the author hadn't thought of it at the time.

Rick: That was just a few pages ago.

Rebecca: Yes, and?

> Bumblebee gave a wave to the trio from below before he went

> back to helping Jazz and Cliffjumper move a large crate. Ratchet was taking stock while Ironhide

> carried a massive piece of machinery. Several other Bots were moving things around or checking if

> they had gotten everything.

Dan: Background extras performed background extra actions

> When they finally hit the ground floor, Optimus drove them forward onto a large circle imprinted on

> the ground with the Autobot insignia on it.

Tsuneo: That's the waypoint for their intro quest.

> The moment after the humans had exited his alt mode, he transformed, taking on his full height.

> "Hey Optimus, how do you like the new base?" Sideswipe asked

Rick [Sideswipe]: Also I am here

> as he appeared on top of a crate.

> "It is most certainly spacious," the Prime remarked

Dan: Prime hates it, but he's trying to be nice.

> as he scanned the large area with his optics, moving his head around.

> The entire lay out of the room was one massive circular shape. The center was a large drop down

> into what Optimus assumed was the Energon storage where the fuel was used to power the facility.

Tsuneo: Everything else on the Citadel is powered by Element Zero, but sure, make this needlessly complicated for the sake of it.

- > Tubes made of metal and shielding shot up from the hole and connected to a main hub like
- > database where Perceptor and Ratchet floated around it on hovering platforms, holographic
- > displays in front of them. Machinery was set around the circular drop, the hole that lead downwards.

Rebecca: This whole place feels like a railing kill waiting to happen.

- > The floor was mostly metal plating and the same went for the walls, but there seemed to be places
- > made of Cybertanium, most likely in case of a battle.

Dan: If a battle broke out, this room would be fine. The rest of the Citadel would be screwed, however.

- > "Councilor!" a voice called and the two humans along with their Cybertronian friend turned to see a
- > man, a human soldier

Dan: Generic Multiplayer Human Soldier it is

Rick: I was hoping for a Volus Adept myself.

- > walk up to them. "We weren't expecting you so soon."

Rebecca: [Anderson] Sorry, short holdup. My friend just came back from the dead and all.

- > "It's alright, Colonel," he spoke and gestured over to Shepard. "Just thought I'd show Commander
- > Shepard and Optimus Prime the new base."

Tsuneo: Fortunately, the pair of them showed up just as we were setting all this up. Isn't that nice?

- > He stumbled back, shocked at seeing the tall, red and blue Cybertronian along with the fiery,
- > redhead woman.

Dan: Somehow he hadn't noticed Prime up until now.

- > "C-commander Shepard?" he gasped and said human spectre smirked, crossing her arms.

- > "Yeah?" she asked and he shook his head, getting the shock off his mind.

- > "S-sorry, just... wow."

- > "Shepard, meet Colonel William Lennox," Anderson introduced and the human colonel saluted.

- > "Also, the third human spectre."

Tsuneo: And also another forced Transformers reference.

- > "Wait, third?" Jane gasped in shock and the councilor nodded.

Rick: She always figured that the third one would be Dick Dastardly.

[Pause]

Dan: What about the second?

Rick: Best not to ask.

- > "After your... well, KIA, the Council wanted to strengthen ties with both humanity and the
- > 'Transformers'.

Tsuneo: What that has to do with this chump is anyone's guess.

- > They ended up inducting two more humans into the Spectres and issued a new project."

Rebecca: Making a scale model of the Eiffel Tower out of pasta.

> "New project?" Optimus questioned and the sound of a car revving could be heard.

> They turned to see Bumblebee headed for them, his new alt mode being an old beetle VW Beetle  
> with a paint job of yellow and black.

Tsuneo: In the name of keeping this operation secret, everyone chose to take deliberately anachronistic vehicle modes

> Transforming, he gave the two a grin.

> "Yeah, second human spectre got the honor of being Ratchet's test subject."

Rebecca: He qualified for being a Spectre by running through a maze, ringing a bell and getting a piece of cheese

> "Bumblebee," Ratchet groaned and placed a hand on his face plate, "he wasn't a test subject, he  
> was an..."

> "Experiment? Lab Rat? Guinea Pig?" Jazz suggested and the medic glared at the smaller bot.

Dan: [Ratchet] Unfortunate but unavoidable sacrifice in the name of progress?

> "The point is, he's now our bridge between humans and Autobots alike," Ratchet explained and  
> opened up the plating of his right arm, revealing what seemed to be a metal form of an omni-tool, a  
> computer built into the limb.

Tsuneo: Wow, a computer built into a robot. [Pause] I can't actually come up with anything sarcastic enough for that, it just blows me away.

> "In fact, it appears he should be arriving now."

Tsuneo: Any minute now.

[Pause]

Tsuneo: Any time. At all.

> As if on cue, the elevator Shepard, Optimus, and Anderson had used to enter the facility began  
> lowering again. A hover car sat on the platform while a man was also standing next to it. From the  
> distance they were at, which was not very far, both leaders could make out white armor with a  
> black, skin tight combat suit underneath.

Rick: Wait, that's just a Stormtrooper cosplayer. Never mind.

> When the man stepped forward, Optimus and Shepard immediately looked him over.

Rebecca: Shepard meanwhile was checking her nails.

> He was clad in a suit of armor, colored pearl white and made of Cybertanium, evident since  
> Cybertronian symbols were carved into some parts of it.

Rick: It's the equivalent of getting some random Japanese characters tattooed onto you because you think they mean something

> Recesses in the armor showed a pattern of glowing red conduits that held Energon.

Rick: Actually that's his emergency raspberry jam reserve.

> The armor teetered on the edge of bulky and streamline,

Dan: It was chunky and sleek at the same time

> a sort of cross between N7 armor and a Cybertronian chassis.

Rebecca: So it was angular, had bits of random machinery hanging off it and honking big moulded boobs

> He wore a helmet that retracted, the  
> sides collapsing and putting themselves onto the back of his shoulders

Dan: Yeah, it looks neat, but it really gives you a crick in the neck.

> while the cranial piece of the helmet moved down to sit at the bottom of his neck.

Tsuneo: Well, his armour is better described than anything else in the fic, so I'll just assume he's the author's pet OC and move on.

> He was a tall, lean man with a neatly combed head of raven black hair. His eyes were colored bright  
> red, no wait... they glowed red. His eyeballs, both visionary parts of the human body

Dan: I think I know what eyeballs are.

Tsuneo: Given that description, I'm not sure the authour does.

> were Cybertronian technology. A shallow scar ran across his right cheek, white and jagged.

Rebecca [Bored]: Oh wow. This is the most amazingly unique and distinctive character I have ever seen. I am thrilled.

> He moved forward and eventually stopped his march in front of the Councilor, saluting to him.

Rick: Since his description in no way mentioned pants, I'm going to assume he isn't wearing any.

Dan: I am 100% with you on this.

> Shepard noted the Autobot insignia on the center of his chest, bright red as usual, but then she  
> noted the N7 insignia on his right arm, right above the red and white markings she remembered so  
> dearly.

Rebecca: [Shepard] Yeah, they used to \*mean\* something.

> "Councilor Anderson, the mission was a success," he reported and lowered his arm before looking  
> over at Shepard.

Dan: I've picked out my favourite store on the Citadel.

> His eyes quickly scanned over her before holding a gaze on the Cerberus insignia on her clothes.

Rebecca: And that's why my Shepard always wore the N7 hoodie

Rick: That and it's so cozy looking

Rebecca: Of course

> "Councilor, who is this?"

> "Well Constantine, this is Commander Jane Shepard, the first human spectre and humanity's  
> returned from hell champion,"

Dan: [Constantine] That famous war hero and champion of humanity that I've never heard of?

Rick: [Anderson] That's the one.

> Anderson introduced and Shepard smirked once more, but was  
> disappointed when the man gave a frown.



Tsuneo: I suspect grim brooding will be his default expression

> "Commander Shepard died two years ago," spoke the man,

Rebecca: [Shepard] Yeah, I got over it.

> his voice stoic as he stared at her. "and

> the Cerberus insignia on her clothes signifies her as part of the terrorists."

Tsuneo: And the fact that she's here with the leader of the Autobots and Anderson doesn't seem to have registered

> The armor of his right arm transformed, the gauntlet opened up and revealed inner parts that shot

> out. An Energon sword was revealed, burning bright orange as everyone eyed it.

Rick: Wow, that would be an amazingly unique weapon if everyone's Omni-tool couldn't already do the same thing

> "Hold on there, sir." Anderson held up his hand, a gesture for the soldier to stop. He retracted the

> blade into his armor, the man, Constantine moving his gaze to his superior.

Tsuneo: [Constantine] Can't I murder her just a little, sir?

> "This is, without a doubt, the Commander Shepard,"

Dan: She has a certificate of authenticity and everything

> he spoke and the stoic expression on the second human

> spectre's face turned into a surprised one.

> "Really?" he asked, the stiff personality he had now gone. "That's impossible."

Tsuneo: Anderson says so, so he immediately backs off.

Dan: Then again, he was going to attack her for wearing a Cerberus logo despite clearly being invited into their secret base.

Rebecca: The only conclusion I can reach is that Constantine is incapable of critical thought.

> "I've done the impossible," Shepard interrupted and he gave her a glance.

Tsuneo: In fact, she's done six impossible things before breakfast

> It was quick, but instead of the scanning gaze he used on her, this one was more on checking out

> her physical state

Rebecca [Shepard]: My eyes are up here

> rather than checking for weapons.

> "How?" he asked and she tilted her head.

> "What?"

> "How did you survive?"

Rick: Technically she didn't

> "That would be my doing," Optimus rumbled and all the occupants of the massive room turned to

> look at the Prime.

Dan: Oh yeah, that guy. Forgot he was there.

> "I am Optimus Prime and you are?"

> "N7 Commando and Spectre Constantine Flaemren,"

Rick [Constantine]: Please don't laugh at my name

Dan: Too late.

> the spectre introduced, bowing slightly. "I have heard of you Optimus Prime."

Tsuneo: You work with the Autobots, so I'd hope as much.

> The Cybertronian nodded back and looked at the noticeable armor and implants on his organic  
> body.

Dan: Okay, so first thing we've got to do is smooth and style that thing. You're clashing everywhere.

> "Councilor Anderson and my friend, Ratchet mentioned a project and you, I suppose they are one in  
> the same?"

Tsuneo: Said some AI chatbot with minimal exposure to the English language.

> "That's correct, Optimus,"

Tsuneo: You know, he's right there. Might want to be a little more sensitive.

> Ratchet spoke up and pointed the side of his forearm at the man.

Rebecca: It was kind of an awkward pose. Maybe he wants to put it in his hand next time.

> A blue  
> scanning system shot out and the spectre was immediately checked for damages or illnesses.  
> "Healthy as always, Constantine."

Dan: Although your life fluids are a quart low.

> "So, the project?" Shepard squeaked and Perceptor flew down on his hover platform.

Dan: Look mate, just get an alt mode that moves on its own already.

> "Oh yes, one moment please," he said and pressed several buttons on the holographic display.  
> Holographic windows colored bright blue appeared on the display and he moved them about,  
> making a full display of different pictures and reports. "I've pulled Constantine's files from the  
> database."

Rebecca: He's an air force pilot, expert hacker, winner of the brutal killer martial arts tournament,  
plays lead guitar in a metal band and is heir to the throne of Essex.

> "Thank you, Perceptor," Optimus thanked and the scientist Bot nodded with a smile.

Dan: Thank you for that, Bob Exposition

> They began looking at the different files, seeing pictures of him before his implants.

Rebecca: With his many regrettable tattoos.

> "What happened to you?" Jane questioned as she looked at an image of him in a hospital bed,  
> bandages wrapped around his eyes and... well he was covered in white cloth, nearly in a full body  
> cast.

Rick: He slipped on some soap in the shower.

> "A mission went wrong," he explained

Rebecca: Given that he was horribly maimed I'd assume so.

> and Perceptor touched one of the windows, enlarging it for them.

Dan: [Shepard] Oh boy, here we go... You know what? Forget I asked.

> A video in full color displayed the N7 Commando fighting a group of pirates, alone. Around his feet  
> lay bodies, all dressed in the standard Alliance uniform/armor.

Rebecca: [Constantine] Yeah, uh, all that? That was my bad.

> He wore the armor of an officer, firing an Avenger assault rifle at the pirates.

> "My entire squad got wiped out," he explained as they watched him get shot several times. "It was  
> supposed to be a routine fight, but our info was far from the actual truth."

> A shot went into the past Constantine's leg causing him to fall his other one.

Tsuneo: Hey everyone, let's watch his grisly and traumatic dismemberment

Dan: I'll get the popcorn

> A pirate came up, brandishing a knife and tried to stab the soldier.

Tsuneo: While he was under heavy fire.

Rebecca: They were not the brightest pirates.

> Constantine used his gun to divert the stab, but another shot caught his arm and he let the gun go.

Dan: [Constantine] Man, you ever had one of those days?

> The knife went into his shoulder and he yelled in pain, but the video had no sound.

Tsuneo: Have you checked the speaker setup?

Rick: Pretty sure it's right

Dan: Maybe you're outputting to headphones, not the screen

Rick: Damn, give me a moment to check my sound settings

Tsuneo: This happens every time

> "I lost my legs in the fight," he explained as a canister nearby exploded as a stray bullet went into it,

Rick: In retrospect, taking cover behind the stack of propane tanks was a bad idea.

> "and my sight."

> Perceptor opened another video to view showing the human in a hospital bed, his body in the casts.

> Of his lower body, all he had was a pelvis and parts of his thighs.

Rebecca: He lost his Hello Kitty keyring too.

> His right arm was in a cast, a lot of blood had seeped through the white cloth wrapping.

Tsuneo: Whoever had dressed his injuries was terrible at their job

> "What about your arm?" Shepard asked and he, himself pulled up another window.

Rick: He stuck it out a bus window.

> "Tendons were severed, severe burns, and another multitude of injuries to it,"

Dan: [Constantine] And I smooshed my pinky in a door.

> he explained and that's when Ratchet pulled up a window of him in a surgery room.

> "Half a year after your deaths," Ratchet began and stopped when they saw Constantine being  
> lowered onto the surgery bed. "Half a year after your deaths,

Tsuneo: As previously stated

> the Council gave us the option of building a better connection with the Spectres."

> "We initiated Project: Technorganic,"

Tsuneo: Tampering in God's domain it is

> Anderson continued and gestured at Constantine. "Our lucky  
> N7 Commando here got the option of undergoing the procedure."

Rebecca: He lost three limbs and his sight. Lucky.

> Optimus and Shepard turned back to Constantine, looking over him again.

Dan: [Shepard] I came back from the dead.

Rebecca: [Constantine] Nobody cares!

> It was then that they  
> noticed where the combat skin underneath the heavy armor he wore ended around mechanical  
> limbs.

Rick: Aha, I was right! He isn't wearing any pants!

Tsuneo: Take the small victories.

> "My legs, Cybertronian," the N7 Commando spoke and pointed at his lower limbs, then at his right  
> arm. "My right arm, to injured, had to cut off. Now, Cybertronian." His pointer finger went up and  
> shot an invisible line at his eyes. "My eyes, now optics."

Dan [Constantine]: There were... other things they had to replace too.

> "A technorganic," Optimus spoke and everyone, but Jane nodded.

> "Uh... I don't know what a technorganic is, but I'm going to say it's like a cyborg,"

Rick: Yes, but it sounds more science fiction-y.

> she guessed

Tsuneo: This is the closest thing Shepard's had to a thought all fic. Treasure it.

> and  
> Perceptor nodded as he showed a window that held an image of Constantine's body, showing off  
> his organic and now Cybertronian parts.

Rebecca: They're really making a freakshow out of him, aren't they?

> "You are correct, Commander. Our Cybertronian term for a cyborg is Technorganic, the symbiotic  
> relationship between Cybertronian technology and any organic species."

Rick: It's not really something they've had to use much until now.

- > Perceptor's intellectual answer confirmed the Commander's thoughts. She turned to look at
- > Constantine, eyeing him for anything more he may have.

- > "So, do you run on Energon or batteries?"

Dan: Actually he has a solar panel on the back of his armour. He's a fully greentech transhuman killing machine

- > "Both," Ratchet spoke, pulling up yet another holographic screen,

Rick: [Ratchet] He uses Energon batteries.

Tsuneo: [Shepard] Thanks, that really helps.

- > "the human brain uses electrical
- > impulses as signals to the body. We utilized that power to generate energy that would power his
- > Cybertronian implants, allowing him to use them as if they were regular limbs.

Rebecca: I know it's a sci-fi fic with magic antigravity and living robots, but that's where I draw the line.

- > Energon is only used
- > for his limbs if he uses them beyond normal human capabilities such as empowered strikes, hidden
- > weaponry inside, etcetera."

Rick: Yes, but how much does he know about one school in Iowa?

- > "So lot's of science?" Shepard asked and Anderson started chuckling.

- > "Same old Shepard," he laughed and grasped her shoulder as he stood beside her.

Dan: That whacky Shepard

- > "Constantine here was inducted into the Spectres after the procedure.

Rebecca: For his services in getting blown up.

- > As far as the public knows, his injuries
- > were not as severe as they were and he's gotten standard mechanical prostheses."

Tsuneo: Which is why we were sure to make him look as conspicuous as possible

- > Shepard nodded along with Optimus, both of them understanding what the project was.

- > "Sir, is there a reason I am being explained to the Commander?" the Commando spoke.

Rebecca: Because the author wanted to show off their stupid OC

- > "Why yes there is, Flaemren," he spoke and made a gesture with his arm, pointing at Shepard with
- > an open hand. "You've been transferred to under Spectre Shepard's command."

- > "What?" both N7 soldiers gasped in shock

Tsuneo: Military discipline be damned.

- > and the African American man put on an amused smile.

- > "Must I repeat?"

Tsuneo: Maybe use smaller words.

> "N-no sir, but he's going to be my guy?" Jane questioned and he nodded.

Rebecca: This is your OC love interest. Better accept it.

> "When we heard the rumors about you being alive, the Council decided to give the second human  
> Spectre to you for training."

> "I'm a peace offering,"

Dan: Can you just peace off?

> said N7 Commando spoke and Anderson looked down.

> "We prefer to say you need training,

Rebecca: As per evidenced by the number of limbs you lost

> but this is as much of pro as it is a con. You'll be training with  
> Commander Shepard here and at the same time, Shepard get's to have the first Technorganic in  
> this galaxy's history

Tsuneo: Because nobody has ever been a cyborg before

Dan: Wasn't she just talking to the Illusive Man?

Tsuneo: Nobody

Dan: And she fought Saren earlier...

Tsuneo: \*Nobody\*

> as a part of her new team."

Rebecca: [Shepard] So what do you bring to the team that Bumblebee can't do?

Rick: [Constantine] I can fit through small doors?

Rebecca: [Shepard] Not convinced.

> Jane crossed her arms and narrowed her eyes, but nodded nonetheless. Suddenly, her omni-tool  
> went off signalling a call from someone. Answering it, she listened to Miranda's question.

> "Shepard, it's Miranda, are you ready to leave yet?"

Dan: [Miranda] The Normandy's double-parked, and we're going to get a ticket.

> "Yeah, on my way," she replied and cut the call. "So, I guess you're coming with us."

> "Us?" Ironhide asked and Optimus nodded.

> "Human colonies have been disappearing across the Traverse. I will not rest until all the innocent  
> lives taken are returned."

Dan: [Prime] Which is why we're spending so long arseing around here.

> Optimus' noble speech, as always, inspired his Autobots to nod and grin.

Tsuneo: His noble two-sentence summary

> "Alright then Optimus," Wheeljack spoke, his ears glowing with each word. "I'll send you the Ion  
> Blaster when it's finished."

Rick: You'll need to do a few missions and have a Squadmate conversation to unlock it

> "And we'll be standing by if you need us, Prahm," Ironhide firmly stated, putting his hands on his hips.

> The Autobots nodded, all of them holding smiles

Dan: Except for the ones without mouths

> and brandishing faceplates filled with joy and  
> confidence. Optimus took a look around, eyeing every one of his soldiers, his brothers and sisters in  
> arms.

Rebecca: What about Acid Storm?

Rick: Stop making this complicated!

> "My Autobots," he solemnly began as he looked around at them all, "for many cycles you have  
> served me faithfully, for many years you have stood by me through the darkest of hours. I had  
> hoped our world would be saved, but now that hope is for that our people will be saved."

Tsuneo: He says, before heading off to settle a human affair.

> The Autobots lowered their heads in honor for their fallen

Rick: The evil ancient Transformer who's permanently on fire?

Tsuneo: I don't think that's what they meant.

> before looking up at their leader. The humans in the room, three spectres and a councilor

Dan: As well as Ted from accounts

> looked on with with inspired pride. Clenching his hands, Optimus continued.

> "If not for us, our world would be in the clutches of Megatron,

Rick: [Prime] Or I dunno, maybe Straxus.

> if not for us, the war would have been  
> lost, if not for us, these people, our allies, our friends may not have defeated Sovereign,

Rebecca: I mean, clearly Shepard couldn't have done any of that without you.

> and if not for us, the threat of Megatron would not be gone."

Rebecca [Shepard]: Also I am here

> "...the threat of Megatron would not be gone- the threat of Megatron would not be gone- the threat  
> of Megatron would not be gone- the threat of Megatron- Megatron- Megatron-

Tsuneo: I think the fic is skipping

> He watched the video over and over again, playing the recording. The Prime thought he was dead,  
> how foolish of him.

Dan: I mean, just because he got repeatedly stepped on by a city, why would you think that?

> The Con inwardly growled at the organics working on opening his chassis or his  
> cranium, they would not be able too.

Tsuneo: Say, I had a random thought.

Rick: Hit me.

Tsuneo: So the council's now allied with the Autobots, right? Built them a secret underground base and everything?

Rick: Two bases.

Tsuneo: And they're also aware that they've got this giant robot they found in space under observation in their labs.

Rick: Aware is a strong word, but yes.

Tsuneo: This giant robot that is not dissimilar to the giant robots that they've recently allied with.

Rick: Basically, yes.

Rebecca: Point being, why don't they tell the Autobots about Megatron?

Rick: Well, I actually have two theories about this.

Tsuneo: Somehow I figured you would.

Rick: The first is that he's insurance. As much the Autobots seem to want to help, they figure they can't truly trust such alien intelligences. So if they can decode technology from this other one in secret, they'll be ready in case Prime turns out not to be so benevolent after all.

Tsuneo: Makes sense, but it also feels beyond what the council's been capable of in this fic so far.

Rebecca: Rick, does your second theory have anything to do with the fic being dumb?

Rick: Funnily enough, yes.

Tsuneo: Then I think we're all in agreement.

- > He had, had both Shockwave and Soundwave create a more
- > resilient chassis for him in case of his demise which had come about.

Dan: If he died, he'd be ready for it

- > It was specifically built to withstand great attacks.

Rick: Yeah, but they've got crowbars and tire irons.

- > As the scientists and workers attempted to drill or melt their way to the sparkcore of the
- > Cybertronian, they were met with failure with every try. The pyramid-like chest

Rick: In as far as there was a dead Pharaoh underneath it

- > was resilient to
- > nearly everything they had, even the Cybernetanium drill they had used was unable to penetrate the
- > torso unit, or at least they believed so.

Tsuneo: Only way to find out is more drilling.

- > Whenever they tried, he would put up an overshield, thin, but
- > strong enough to stop the drill before it could do any true damage.

Rebecca: So he's awake enough to actively protect himself but not enough to escape.

- > During the time that the fleshlings called 'lunch break',

Dan: A practice Megatron had outlawed long ago.

- > they would activate the drones in the room. It
- > was very poor judgement of them to hook him up to their computer in order to download his data,
- > the action had backfired on them discreetly.

Dan: He ran down the drones' batteries.

- > He would provide small data pieces, snippets of
- > Cybertronian history books, a tiny piece of a weapon blueprint, or memories of the war.

Rick: Megatron has Vietnam flashbacks

- > As the organics refueled, the drones would repair whatever they had done to the body, but unknown



> to them, the drones were not only repairing the robotic corpse, but upgrading it.

Tsuneo: You'd think that somebody would have noticed by now

> He needed a new

> alt mode, something powerful. His current alt mode was perfect, yet it could be better.

Rebecca: So it wasn't perfect, was it?

> With the element the organics knew as Element Zero, he could do so much more.

Rick: So they turned him into a bright green and purple tank

> The spiked chassis he once had was being slowly rebuilt into a newer, more sharper version.

Dan: One that was even spiker

> His

> armor was more like metal plating upon metal plating while still retaining a full armor piece image.

Tsuneo: His armour was armour on armour while being armour.

Dan: At this point he looks more like a ball of metal plates.

> He was becoming stronger, he could feel it. More and more Energon was being fed to him, pumped

> into him, giving him more life. His revival would soon come to pass and when it did, Optimus Prime

> would feel his wrath.

Rebecca: But in the meantime he was just going to chill here and watch daytime TV.

> Done

> I hope you all like that

> Made it pretty long just for you guys

Rick: Aww, you shouldn't have

> So anyways

> This'll get more fun as it goes on

Tsuneo: Given that this is the last chapter, I somehow doubt that

> So I'm adding Constantine Flaemren in because, why not

Rebecca: Because his name alone is incredibly stupid

> A technorganic

> Couldn't resist

Dan: Gotta make your OC as special as possible

> Anyway, Megatron's comeback will be in ME2

> The reasons of the whole time frame thing where the Protoheans came to Cybertron way before the

> Great War and the Cybertronians coming to the galaxy years later

Rick: I'm not sure quite what he said there, but I think it has to do with Protoheans being dicks.

> Now

> I'll see ya later

All: Bye!

> Review, Favorite, and Follow

> Lord Revan Flame, signing off

On that final comment, the big screen turned off, reverting the world back to prose format. "And that was the series of deranged scrawlings that comprised the last part of After Cybertron," Tsuneo spoke up. "A fic that had a terrible idea and then did all it could to make it worse."

"The first thing that strikes me is that the fic has completely derailed the plot of Mass Effect 2 while still being in its opening," Dan considered.

"Agreed there," Rebecca nodded. "The whole idea that Cerberus are the only people who are willing to take the Reaper threat seriously loses a lot if Shepard also has a secret base full of giant robots and Anderson's full backing."

"Being a lone operative with a small, dedicated crew loses a lot of its oomph when you can basically go back to your giant secret base and hang around with your army of robot buddies," Rick added.

"More to the point, Shepard now has no reason to work with Cerberus and play along with the Illusive Man's agenda," Tsuneo considered. "She can now go 'whatever', cut him off and simply go back to hanging out with the Autobots. After all, she's got Prime, their leader and messiah figure, on her side."

"Do you think this was why the fic was abandoned?" Rick asked. "The author suddenly realised they'd written themselves into a corner?"

"Given that we've probably put more thought into the matter than they did, I'll say no," Rebecca said.

"Also fair." He paused. "We do that a lot."

"Speaking of putting no thought into it, how about our OC love interest?" Dan smirked. "Boy was he a real piece or what. I almost wish he'd been in more of the fic with how stupidly overwrought he was."

"It almost felt like he was an effort to tick as many boxes as possible," Rebecca considered. "Tragic backstory, unique powers, ominous red eyes, jagged scar, unique position that makes him the most super-special person around, yep. Its like one of my madlib generators played straight."

"Never mind that Shepard also apparently had a Cybertronian arm, a point that the fic seemed to immediately forget," Tsuneo noted. "Then again, this is the start of ME2, so her face should be falling off, again a point that the fic skipped."

"Also, what the hell kind of a way was that to introduce him?" Dan asked. "Hey everyone, wanna see footage of his grisly, traumatic dismemberment?"

"Related to that, I have to wonder what was the point of introducing Lennox," Rick considered. "I can't see what he'd be adding to the fic, especially given that it was already overstuffed with characters mugging each other for space."

"It ties into something that got me," Dan nodded. "We had all these nonsense side plots going on; Grimlock saving people from pirates, the Dinobots and Shockwave and the like, and none of them actually did anything or added anything to the plot."

"As near as I can tell, they were there so that the author could stuff more Transformers into an already Transformers-heavy fic," Rebecca said. "Which really was taking its existing problems and making them even worse."

"I can tell you've already put a lot of thought into your reviews," the Voice once again crashed into the conversation.

"For a fic that had so little going for it, there was a lot of bad in it," Dan offered.

"Fantastic," The Voice beamed. "In which case, I'd be eager to hear your reviews."

"This is not a crossover," Tsuneo boldly stated. "Really. A crossover integrates elements from different franchises to create something unique. At its best, it compares and contrasts the two sources, examining how they differ and interact, and provide a unique result that neither could come to alone. Even at its most basic, a crossover has new and interesting interactions from its disparate casts.

"And I say this isn't a crossover because it's about none of those things. This fic is about Optimus Prime smashing stuff. It's about lining up encounters based around the Mass Effect setting and letting him wreck them. It doesn't use the setting at all, beyond following the loose events of the game. There's no interaction of technologies; Transformers don't take on alternate forms based on Mass Effect vehicles; they don't try to incorporate element zero into their frame to generate biotic effects; they don't explore the locations of the setting beyond going to established places where Transformers are conveniently already waiting for them. None of those things are Optimus Prime smashing stuff, so they're not used."

"Expanding on that," Rebecca continued, "it's not just that the fic is about Optimus Prime smashing stuff, but that is being used to squeeze out all the Mass Effect characters, and Shepard in particular. There's no attempt to balance the characters at all; rather, the fic spends the majority of its time on what Prime and the other Autobots are doing, with the Mass Effect characters reduced to little more than set dressing or entirely absent."

"Shepard is the biggest victim of this problem, and not just because she's supposed to be the protagonist," she explained. "Instead, the fic has stripped away just about every element of her character and given it to Prime instead. He's the inspiring leader that the whole galaxy looks up to. He's the one who everyone rallies behind. He's the one who will save us from the Reapers. He even goes so far as to hijack her exposition of her traumatic backstory to make it all about him."

"For her part, Shepard is reduced to a triggerhappy moron who throws couches out windows and has no ability to make any sort of decision for herself," Rebecca noted. "And yet, she's still doing better than the rest of the Mass Effect cast, who have become little more than set dressing. Jacob and Miranda are great examples, as the pair of them do nothing but stand around and gawp at Prime, and yet they're also somehow doing better than the rest of the Normandy crew."

"This is one of those fics where the author makes choices in the story and narrative, and then has to go out of his way to justify them," Rick considered. "So as the best example, the Mass Effect Universe is one with cheap, well understood, relatively available anti-gravity technology. Every man and his dog has a flying car, and the architecture of the setting reflects that. However, at the same time, the author has decided that all the Autobots need to have their 1980s car modes for whatever reason."

"So what do they do to reconcile this disconnect?" he asked. "The answer is to go out of their way to justify the decision at every step. There just happens to be a pile of two hundred-year old cars around for the Autobots to scan. And every city just happens to have old-timey roads for them to travel on. And so on. Having created these plot holes, the author then needs to explain in detail why they are not plot holes, when the whole thing could have easily been avoided in the first place."

"However, they also fail to address the other plot holes they created," he noted. "Early in the fic, Miranda is clearly aware that Optimus Prime, an alien robot who turns into a truck exists. She also is aware that Shepard hangs out with Optimus Prime. And yet, she is also surprised that the truck full of alien technology that they found Shepard inside is, in fact, Optimus Prime. This hole is never explained, with the author just leaving it hanging there while going out of its way to explain why there are roads all across the Citadel."

"See, this should be a great chance for an action fic," Dan started. "And yeah, there's lots of potential for it. You've got two action-centric franchise, filled to the brim with funky sci-fi ways of blowing things up. And each brings their own variety to the table; Transformers has giant robots smashing things and Mass Effect has funky tech and powers to add to the explosions. So it should be easy to make it an exciting, thrill a minute ride, right?"

"Except... It's dull. Like really, seriously dull. From the moment he's introduced, Optimus Prime easily smashes through everything. There's a bunch of mechs with enhanced shields for no reason other than to prevent Shepard from doing anything, and he just walks through them. Show up at Ilos and what do you know, there's a bunch of Geth Colossi. These are solid vehicle-scale enemies that count as boss monsters when you're on foot. But not only does Prime smash through them, some other Autobots show up to also smash through them. And on it goes.

"The fic quickly falls into a simple pattern that makes it incredibly predictable. The Autobots wreck everything easily. This removes any tension, any sense of danger and any interest in the fic's main focus. When the action is predictable and one-sided, there's no way to get invested in it. Worst part is that the writing often goes out of its way to nobble Shepard just so Prime can take over. It's unbalanced on purpose, and that just makes it even more predictable."

"So there you have it, Voice," Tsuneo finished. "The fic was bad, didn't use its crossover, made everything incredibly boring and one-sided and sidelined what should have been the main character. About the only good thing we can say about it is that it wasn't taken over by the Author's OC simply because he didn't get the chance before it was abandoned."

"And thank you all very much for that," the Voice beamed. "Once again, your reviews have been incredibly insightful and will aid in future selections."

"Does the Voice actually think we believe that?" Rick asked.

"Who can say," Rebecca shrugged. "For all we know, it might form some sort of inverse dataset based on all the worst things we pick up on, like training an AI chatbot on My Little Pony porn."

"Well we're done here, right?" Dan asked. "There's no more of this fic waiting to leap out and mug us?"

"We are done, correct," the Voice confirmed. "I will see you all next time."

"Well that's massively unexciting," Tsuneo sighed.

"Tell you what, Rebecca," Dan nodded. "Your madlib generator fit that fic perfectly, even down to the forced OC love interest."

She shrugged. "I predicted that it would happen based as much on the author's notes as previous fics we've done. Sooner or later, all of these crossovers seem to end up being about the author's pet OC anyway."

"Hm," Tsuneo paused. "I'm now trying to think of one that didn't, and I'm coming up blank. Closest I can think of is Death's Fixer, but that also had a player-defined protagonist and Possession Sue Harry anyway."

"Makes you think, doesn't it?" Dan asked.

"It does," Rick nodded. "And I've reached one conclusion."

"Which is?" Dan asked.

"The last non-crossover fic we did was Pack Rat."

"Huh," Dan tapped his chin in thought. "No wonder I forgot it."

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Author's notes:

What makes a good OC in a fanfic is a very contentious issue. There are matters of how they fit with the setting, how they interact with the other characters, if they have any unique abilities and so on. All of this is to say that in the brief time he was in the fic, Constantine Flaemran saw that line and simply vaulted over it to be one of the most genuinely ridiculous OCs we've seen so far. Every part of him is so over-wrought that you'd think it's parody. But it's not.

Was Lennox meant to be a setup for something to come? I really can't say either way, but the same could be said for all the fic's other side-plots, and boy were there a lot of those. I personally don't think the idea of a Mass Effect version of the character is a terrible idea in and of itself, but it's also one that's a bit pointless given that there are existing characters who do the same thing anyway.

Next time: possibly the stupidest crossover premise I've seen yet.

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After Cybertron written by Lord Revan Flame

Rebecca Bartley and Rick R. Mortis created by Rick R. (natch)  
Tsuneo Tateo and Dan created by Zogster

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> The wacko, human extremist group