
Episode 462 – Who is this Shepard person anyway?

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 how did the cook-out go?” Rick asked as he and Dan entered the apartment.

“Oh, it was great stuff,” Dan beamed. “We all came together, bought our own stuff to cook, contributed to the group meal and all of that stuff. And there were a lot of people that I hadn’t seen in forever.”

“Well then, who got shot?” Rebecca butted in as she and Tsuneo followed.

Dan turned to glare at her. “Oh, right,” he shook his head. “You just assume that everything I get into will result in gunplay or violence or my family being awful or the like.”

She nodded. “I admit that my past experiences may have been colouring my perceptions,” Rebecca said. “I shouldn’t take such leaps based on those experiences without taking the full situation under consideration.”

“Thank you,” Dan nodded.

There was a pause. “It was my Uncle Jethro,” Dan commented. “He got shot in the leg”

“I knew it.”

“In order to prevent this from spiralling,” Tsuneo said, desperate to interrupt. “I noticed we’re doing yet another Transformers crossover”

“We get that a lot, don’t we?” Dan noted.

“We do,” Tsuneo nodded. “But what interests me here is that it’s a Mass Effect crossover.”

“Why is that interesting?”

“Because it’s something we’ve never done as a standalone fic,” he explained. “Only as a part of a crossover, which puts it in the same category.”

“Excuse me,” Rebecca interjected. “We have read three Transformers fics as B-Team reviews.”

“I’m not sure that they count as fics,” Tsuneo countered. “In fact, I’m not sure how I would describe them.”

“Three Bodies Evolution is a masterpiece of outsider art and I will not have you admonish it,” Rick defensively replied.

Tsuneo sighed. “As I was saying, both are franchises where we’ve only done crossover fic so far, three short and arguably insane examples aside. And that’s something that I find somewhat odd.”

“How so?” Dan asked.

“I mean, both of these are massive fandoms,” Tsuneo explained. “And both have sprouted massive quantities of fanfic. On top of that, Transformers has been around for four decades now, and has remained pretty popular throughout.”

"Transformers was one of the first big internet fandoms," Rebecca noted. "It came at just the right time so that all the kids who grew up with it were in college and had access to USEnet just as the franchise was going through a big revival."

"Which then makes me wonder why we haven't seen more fic from both," Tsuneo considered. "So far we've had just these crossovers."

"Well I can see that there are good reasons for that," Rebecca explained. "And as amazingly, the two fandoms have a remarkable amount in common when it comes to their fanfic output."

"Really?" Rick asked.

"Oh yes," she nodded. "Let's start with those common elements. Both are franchises where the fic has massive accessibility issues."

"Let me guess, cinderblock sized epics that are intimidating to approach?" Dan asked.

"Correct," she nodded. "Although they are very different in the content of those cinderblocks."

"I'm going to guess that 'fix fic' constitutes a lot of those Mass Effect cinderblocks," Tsuneo consider.

"And you would be correct," she agreed. "Although in this case, it usually amounts to a complete rewrite and retelling of the entire Mass Effect trilogy. The stereotypical fic features a character who I can only summarise as 'Testosterone McLargeShep-'"

"-and I can see it too," Rick nodded.

"-who is basically the Redditor wet dream," she continued. "Imagine a gun-toting space libertarian STEMlord who is absolutely right about absolutely everything and nobody ever questions him. Usually this involves him curing the Genophage himself, convincing the council to unquestionably support him, 'reforming' Cerberus from within and ensuring that the character never is challenged or ever suffers any sort of setback or the like."

"Well that sounds thrilling," Dan sighed.

"I can see how that would be challenging to accessibility," Tsuneo agreed.

"On top of that, there's a not insubstantial amount of HFY-themed Mass Effect fic," Rebecca continued, "With the inevitable writer politics that come with it."

"Oh, even more fun," Rick nodded.

"Some of that is blatant and obvious, but a lot of it is hidden," Rebecca noted. "It's a trend within Mass Effect fic where it will start off as your usual self-insertion wankery, but suddenly veer hard-right into full-on facisim without warning."

"I fee like I should be thankful that we haven't had something like that," Tsuneo considered.

"At least Rifts is up front about the Illinois Robot Skull Nazis," Rick noted.

"So what about Andromeda fic?" Tsuneo asked, "Does it suffer the same sort of problems? Because I can imagine that it'd very easily veer into full on pro-colonialisim."

"No," she countered, "But that's simply because nobody writes Andromeda fic."

"That also makes sense," he admitted.

"So does Transformers fic have the same sort of issues?" Dan asked.

"Yes, and in many ways, more so," Rebecca explained. "As you can imagine, due to the age of the franchise, its many, many iterations and the like, the sheer volume alone is staggering. But beyond that, the cinderblock sized mass becomes another recurring feature, but usually its less given towards being the same sort of 'fix fic' rewrite."

"What does it give you then?" Tsuneo asked.

"Transformers is one of those cases where authors go deep into creating their own personal fictive universes," she explained. "What might start as a one-shot or a short series will inevitably sprawl and take on a life of its own that covers hundreds of pages across countless pieces. When combined with the, shall we say, devious archival tools used by both ff.net and Ao3, this means that actually hunting down an entire fic or even just the entry point becomes difficult."

"And the fact that it's a franchise with more iterations than god probably doesn't help either," Dan noted.

"Hey, my 'what iteration of the franchise is this' question is a vital framing device," Rick noted.

"Is it? Is it really?" Tsuneo shot back.

"One of these days we'll get a Sargent Savage fanfic and then you'll be thanking me," Rick simply replied.

"As loathe as I am to admit it, Rick does have a point here," Rebecca continued. "Transformers fic is very prone to mixing up elements of different franchise iterations. Characters, stories, locations and whatever else may get thrown into the mix, be it out of some fanwanking desire to 'explain' things, author preference or simply not being bothered to check what goes where. Often this will be a continuity creep thing too; you might start out reading, say, a Prime fanfic, but suddenly there are Beast Wars characters in it."

"So in short," Tsuneo considered, "You're saying that we don't read Mass Effect or Transformers fanfic because the Voice can't be bothered trying to find material suitable for our reviews."

"Exactly," she finished.

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

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

"I'll give that one obscurity bonus," Dan nodded.

"Didn't want to go for the low-hanging fruit," Rick replied with a nod.

"So I can only assume that we're going to be suffering through more of After Cybertron today," Tsuneo noted.

"That is correct," the Voice confirmed. "Today we will be reviewing the next two chapters of the fic."

"And that's not the entire fic, is it?" Tsuneo asked, somewhat hopefully.

"It is not," the Voice confirmed. "We will be covering the third part next time."

"One can but hope," Tsuneo sighed.

"Hey Voice," Dan asked. "I have a question for you."

"What is it?"

"Why do we never do Mass Effect or Transformers fics apart from crossovers?" He asked.

"Every fic that is selected for the review program is subject to a rigours screening process," the Voice explained. "I analyse the feedback from the previous fics and then use that to determine what would work best for the next review. As a result, so far I have not found any fics from either series that would be suitable for our reviews."

"Right," Dan nodded. "So you're too lazy to sift through poorly-sorted cinderblock-sized fics."

"I didn't say that at all," The Voice protested.

"Didn't need to," Dan smirked.

"After all we covered last time, do you think that Shepard will get to actually do anything in these chapters?" Rick asked as he took his place on the couch.

"Given that she's been a complete moron so far, I'm not sure if that'd be a good thing or not," Rebecca simply replied as she and the others joined him.

"Okay, well, there is that," Rick admitted as the big screen turned on, converting the world over to script format.

> Chapter 3: Battle for the Citadel

> Welcome back loyal fans

> You guys actually like this!

Tsuneo: I refute this claim.

> That's awesome!

Rebecca: He seems genuinely surprised at this development

> So lets start moving along

Tsuneo: Just gotta restate the premise a few more times...

> The Citadel battle awaits!

> Optimus, Bumblebee, and Hound are on the job along with Shepard, Liara, and Wrex

Dan: The biotic-heavy team implies that this Shepard is more on the tech side of things.

Rick: I don't know, what have we seen her do so far?

Rebecca: Exposit and shoot things.

Rick: Hmm, not helpful.

> So without further ado

> Autobots! N7!

Dan: And some aliens!

> Roll out!

> The conversation was swift and the goodbye was swifter.

Rebecca: [Shepard] Whatevs. Got a galaxy to save.

> Shepard knew she had to stop the Reapers, no matter the cost.

Tsuneo: Catalyst it is then.

Rick: Stupid Starchild

> The moment they got outside, their ears were filled with the sound of
> engines revving as Optimus and his Autobots arrived.

Dan: Bumblebee's going to eternally be 'and his Autobots' around here.
Rebecca: I'm worried that Shepard is too.

> Transforming as he preformed a power slide, twirling in his robot mode before facing the
> Commander,

Tsuneo: [Shepard] Show-off.

> he bent down to face her.

> "Commander."

> "Hi Optimus," she greeted

Rick: It's a very casual battle to save the galaxy

> as she climbed into the Mako. "We got new info, the Reapers are coming.

Rick: I mean, we knew *that,* but...

> The Citadel, the heart of the galactic power is actually a portal for them to come through."

Rebecca: Hey there. Vital plot developments occurred off-screen. How are you?

> "They will simultaneously kill millions and slaughter your leaders,"

Dan: They'll kill people and they'll kill some other people too

> he growled in anger and she nodded before jumping in.

> "We need your help, the Conduit's just ahead, it'll take us to the Citadel!"

Tsuneo: It's an awful long way to go to hide your back door key.

Rick: Why not just put it under the rug like everyone else?

> "Then let us make haste," he rumbled before turning to his brothers. "Autobots! Transform and roll
> out!"

> In seconds they were a convoy

Rick: What sort of convoy were they? Big? Powered? Lio? Nitro?

> moving forward with great speed and power. Any Geth in their path
> were either mowed down by a variety of weaponized projectiles or crushed under their tires.

Rick: I can only assume they drove through at least one Geth fruit stand along the way

> Soon

> they made it to a steep ramp down towards what appeared to be a miniature Mass Relay.

Rebecca: It's a Euro-chic compact model

> "There it is!" Shepard shouted and all eyes and optics were on it.

Tsuneo: And a lot of headlights.

> "That's one big light bulb," Hound spoke as he eyed it and the walking Geth Colossi around it.
> "Hang on, that's some heavy weaponry."

Rick: Would you say it's a heavy metal war?
Rebecca: I most definitely would not.

> "Don't got time for that!" Bumblebee shouted as the green bot aimed his rocket launcher.

> "You're right," he spoke as his holographic projector activated.

Rick: Which means that he's G1 Hound that's also Movie Hound at the same time
Dan: Good to see we're keeping it nice and simple

> The synthetic tanks aimed at a massive hologram of Metroplex as it reared its red eyes down on
> them.

Tsuneo: Or you could do that, I suppose

> "What the-"

> "No time for questions, drive!" Optimus roared,

Tsuneo: No need to keep our allies informed.

> disregarding their concern over his for the innocent lives on the Citadel as he sped forward.

> Everyone followed and in seconds they had passed through, disappearing through the Conduit.

Rick: They arrived in the Pacific Northwest in the eighties. Turns out this was one of those UK comics time-travel stories all along

> "Stop them!" a Turian crewmate shouted as they fired all their ship's weaponry at the oncoming
> Geth ships.

Rebecca: I'm going to generously assume this is not on Ilos.

> A large force of dreadnoughts accompanied by a massive ship colored a dark grey with a multitude
> of tentacle like legs lurched forward,

Rick: Aaaah! It's the Shadows

Tsuneo: I don't think that's what the fic meant

Rick: Well I can't think of anything else it could be

> an invasion force which size had not been seen for hundreds of years.

Tsuneo: Not since that whole 'misunderstanding' with the Krogan.

> Glowing golden eyes burned into its hull stared at the Citadel Defense Fleet, neither faltering
> or changing course. A Turian frigate rammed into it,

Dan: Whoops! Couldn't find the brakes.

> but was reduced to floating pieces of melting
> scrap metal as the ship continued on its course, not damaged in a the slightest.

Rebecca: In retrospect that was a bit of a stupid move.

> The Council watched in horror, eyes wide and mouths dropped as the massive ship entered the
> closing Citadel.

Tsuneo: Not just are they slaughtering your men, but they're also parking in a reserved space.

> "Activate the defenses! Seal the station!"

Dan: Cancel the three ring circus! Close all shops in the mall! Secure all animals in the zoo!

> the captain of the Destiny Ascension ordered, but her orders were in vain.

> "The arms aren't moving, systems not responding," a crewmember reported quickly.

Rick: Have you tried turning it off and then turning it back on?

> "Abandon the Citadel! Evacuate the Council!"

Dan: Even the Salarian?

Rebecca: Yes, even the Salarian!

> "Citadel Control! Citadel Control! Do you copy?"

> The bodies of Citadel Command were piled either piled on top of each other or were left in the
> chairs they were shot in.

Rebecca: Don't you just hate alien invaders who don't clean up after themselves?

> In the light flowing from the door, the silhouette of Saren disappeared into it.

Tsuneo: I feel like that's less a sentence than it is a word puzzle.

> Meanwhile, as chaos overtook the station as Geth forces decimated the guard force and
> slaughtered every organic being in their path, a being watched.

Dan: Don't bother helping there

> It laid in its metal scaffolding, watching the chaos.

Tsuneo: All it needed was some popcorn.

> Disgust filled its processor as it watched the organics flee.

Rick: I mean, it's obviously Megatron. Fleeing is what he does best

> Such weak fleshlings, fragile and insufferable, but then there were those synthetics, pathetic
> excuses of autonomous robotic organisms.

Rebecca: He is such a snob

> It watched with glee only for the razing of the space station, its prison, but also its repair bay.

Rick: I'd be getting mixed feelings about this myself

> Two Geth Colossi were on patrol across a walkway when a cry was heard. They turned, looking to
> see an Asari hiding with her child.

> "No! Please!" she cried out in despair, holding her sobbing child.

Tsuneo: Who, in turn, was holding a battered teddy bear. It's the rules.

> Suddenly, before either could open fire, the statue within the lake lit up a glowing, soft blue.

Rick: Is it meant to do that?

> They turned to investigate and in turn received a face full of Cybertanium colored crimson red.

Dan: Prime goes out of his way to make his road kills unique.

> Optimus

> transformed and roared with exhilaration as he swung his Energon Axe, slicing the head off of a

> third Colossi attracted by the activation of the Conduit's exit point.

Dan: What, no axe pun quip? I am sorely disappointed, fic

> The Mako appeared and crushed a small group of Geth

Tsuneo: But not as big as Prime wrecked, am I right?

> also investigating while Hound and Bumblebee came afterwards.

Rick: [Bumblebee] I am also here.

> Unfortunately for Shepard, the tank had crashed into the wall and been rendered incapacitated.

Rebecca: Shepard had never mastered parallel parking

> "Damn," Shepard cursed as she got out, rubbing the back of her head in pain while climbing out,

> "could've used this."

> "Would've been nice," Wrex grumbled as he climbed out afterwards.

> "Would have been most useful," Liara added as she followed.

Dan: Yeah, we get it.

> "Behind you!" the Asari cried out, clutching her child as she pointed at the Autobots.

Dan: [Asari] It's G2 Sureshot!

Rick: Uh, not quite.

> "What? Oh, them, they're... um, they're on our side," Jane responded and she stared at her in

> confusion.

Rick: See how these giant killer robots killed the other giant killer robots?

Tsuneo: Yeah, not helping.

> "We mean no harm," Optimus spoke and stared down at the young sparkling in the alien's arms.

Dan: I don't know how Transformer reproduction works, but I'm pretty sure it's not like that.

> "Your sparkling is frightened I would advise you find somewhere safe to hide."

Tsuneo: Well thank you for that, Captain Obvious

> "There's nowhere safe," she sobbed and looked around, "the Citadel is destroyed!"

Tsuneo: Please ignore that we are standing in the Citadel at this very moment.

> "There is always hope, no matter what," the Prime solemnly stated with certainty that uplifted even

> the blue female's spirit.

Rebecca: Thank you, giant killer space robot. You have filled my life with hope and joy

> "Autobots! We must stop Saren and protect the Citadel! Spread out and search for him!"

> "No need," Liara spoke as she pointed at a tower in the distance, "the terminal to activate the
> Citadel is within the Council Tower. That's where we need to go."

Rick: Well okay then.

> "Then let us depart!" Optimus spoke as he began to move, but a massive bolt of plasma passed him
> and obliterated a wall close by.

> "We're under fire!" Hound shouted and fired his own rocket launcher, blasting the Geth Colossi into
> pieces.

Dan: [Colossus] Engage the huge robots with unknown capabilities, I said. What could go wrong, I said.

> "Defend the organics!" the Prime roared and fired his Pathblaster as Bumblebee moved to become
> a shield for the Asari and her child.

Tsuneo: And Bumblebee's wishing he was overlooked again.

> Shepard pulled out her pistol and began firing radioactive rounds into the synthetic forces

Rebecca [Shepard]: I'm helping!

> while a multitude of Energon shots colored bright orange and yellow shredded them to pieces.

Tsuneo: It's a bright and colourful massacre.

> The
> exchange of firepower was a quick one as the advanced weaponry of the Cybertronian made short
> work of the aggressing Geth, decimating them in moments.

Tsuneo [Bored]: This is thrilling

Rick [Bored]: I'm excited

> "We will clear a path, you find a safe shelter for the Asari and her sparkling,"

Rick: Take them to somewhere safe, like Saint Puppy's Hospital for Adorable Cancer Orphans

> Optimus ordered and
> began sprinting with his Autobots down the walkway towards the elevator which would take
> Shepard to Saren.

Dan: Sorry, I don't think it's rated for giant robots.

> Beyond the Mass Relay within the Serpent Nebula, there was the entirety of the Arcturus Fleet
> waited.

Rebecca: The Arcturus fleet is under starters' orders, waiting for the green light...

> The Normandy had arrived at Arcturus Station with news of the impending attack on the
> Citadel and already they had mobilized, but found the route to the Citadel was cut off.

Dan: There was a truck broken down on the exit ramp.

> "Any communication with the Commander yet?" Admiral Hackett asked as he stood on the bridge of
> his ship,

Dan: Visibly grizzling with every moment

> awaiting an answer from the pilot of the Normandy.

> "No sir, but I faith in her," Joker responded as they floated near the Mass Relay.

Rick: If it was Ryder instead of Shepard, would that mean he puts his faith in Blast Hardcheese?

> Not to far from the Citadel itself, a small force of strange ships floated about, slowly flying towards
> the station.

Rick: Oh wow! It's the Cobra Stellar Stiletto!

Tsuneo: Rick, I don't think...

Rick: Of course, it makes sense since Transformers and GI Joe crossover all the time.

Tsuneo: I'm pretty sure that...

Rick: Just imagine it, Cobra surviving for centuries and spreading out across the stars.

Tsuneo: Rick?

Rick: I wonder what the current Destro is like?

Tsuneo: You know what? Never mind.

> Each different from the other, but all having glowing red markings.

Rebecca: The one with the glowing red love hearts kinda ruined the effect.

> "We're going out!" Shepard shouted as she clasped on her helmet, feeling anxiety and exhilaration
> at what she was about to do.

Rebecca: She had mixed feelings about saving the galaxy

> Her companions did the same as she shot out the lift's windows and jumped out, magnetically
> holding onto the exhaust plains of the Citadel. They had been forced to leave the Autobots behind

Rick: [Shepard] Hell yeah, time for me to take back this fic.

> to find another way out towards the Council Chambers for they were to large to fit within the lift
> themselves.

Dan: It's so inconsiderate of them not to leave room for the giant alien war robots

> The trek was long and full of dangerous foes consisting of a multitude and variety of Geth soldiers
> and Cloned Krogan warriors.

Rick: They had robots, clones and, just to be sure, clone robots

> Meanwhile, within the Citadel,

Tsuneo: But that's enough about the main character.

> Optimus and his men charged forward with vigor.

> "Come on!" Hound roared as he fired his Neutron Assault Rifle,

Tsuneo: What does that do?

Rick: It assaults neutrons.

[Pause]

Tsuneo: Well, I asked, didn't I?

> mowing down any synthetic in his path as he charged.

> "Bumblebee! Take them out!" Optimus ordered as he gestured at several Geth Colossi.

Dan: You want Bumblebee to take out the heavily armoured artillery platforms all on his own?

Rebecca: The ones that they've been tearing through like tissue paper?

Dan: Exactly! He's going to get so bored.

> He nodded and aimed a Nucleon Charge Rifle,

Rick: This is Budansky levels of calling out weapon names

> the targeting lasers on it giving off a faint hum as

> they came together into a single line that pierced a Colossus' one eye. Several shots came off and

> each head was blown into smithereens. The yellow bot cheered

Dan: Killing is awesome!

> until a Geth gunship blasted through the roof of the area they were in.

> "Find cover!" Hound yelled as the Citadel began an emergency lockdown to prevent the air from

> escaping.

Tsuneo: Shepard's like, throwing stuff into space or something right now. I don't know.

> Unfortunately, the gunship fired off a barrage of heavy fire that obliterated a tiny section of the

> station, utilizing the flammable and explosive objects nearby.

Rebecca: They just happened to be in the Citadel's oily rag, fireworks and propane tank storeroom

> The hole was small, but large enough to eject the Autobots into space.

> Bumblebee gave a cry of surprise as he and Hound were tossed down into the docks, blown out

> into space as the shielding was damaged and air began to be sucked out.

> "Hang on!" the green bot cried out as he grabbed the scout and shot a grappling hook at a incoming

> Geth fighter.

> "Hound! Bumblebee!" Optimus roared as he fired a Glass Gas Cannon,

Rebecca: Firing a gas gun in space. Makes sense to me.

> obliterating the Geth Gunship.

Tsuneo: Yes, that's just how it works, don't ask any questions.

> "We're fine Optimus, hitched a ride on one of those synthetics' ships."

> He vented in relief before contacting them once more.

> "If you can control that ship,

Dan: Fortunately they had the owner's manual on hand

> help the organics defend the Citadel."

Tsuneo: Well, there are some convenient Transformer-sized reins on the back...

> "Understood Prime, come on Bee, time to make some trouble!"

> The line cut and Optimus began making his way towards the Council Tower, now in sight.

> Meanwhile, Shepard had made her way back into the station. Finally arriving at the Council Tower.
> She fired off a couple rounds, taking out a small portion of the Geth forces.

Rebecca: Which really feels kind of redundant given the mass slaughter above
Tsuneo: I suppose she should feel lucky to get this much

> Wrex released a
> Carnage and demolished a larger portion while Liara fired her own biotic attack and sent the rest off
> the edge of the platform.

Rick: Playing Mass Effect taught me that the natural state of a Geth is floating helplessly in space

> Suddenly, a Gunship flew overhead and released a Geth Colossus.

> "Incoming!" Wrex roared as they jumped behind cover.

> Both the gunship and the Colossus fired at the three heroes. Desperately, Shepard tossed a
> grenade and managed to knock the walking tank off balance, making I stumble. Wrex unleashed
> another Carnage and blew off a chunk of its chassis and Liara blasted it with a biotic attack.

Dan: They did the things they did before, but they did them to a different thing

> Before anything else could happen, however, the Gunship exploded from behind, the back section
> imploding. They stared in confusion

Rebecca: [Shepard] Didn't hit it that hard. Must have had a self-destruct.

> until a red and blue Cybertronian truck blasted out of the front
> onto the Colossus, transforming in the process. Optimus stomped on the Geth like it was a bug,
> crushing its chassis underfoot.

Tsuneo: Well enough of Shepard doing anything. Back to Optimus, I guess.

> He roared and fired his Pathblaster, blasting apart whatever remained of the crashed gunship to
> permanently disable it.

> "Optimus?" Shepard called

Rick: Actually it's Road Ranger. The confusion is understandable

> and he turned to look at her, disabling his mouthshield to reveal his full face.

> "Shepard, it is good to see you."

> "Where are the others?"

> "Ejected into space by the Geth,

Rebecca: [Shepard] Harsh.

Dan: [Prime] It happens.

> but they have joined in the space battle against the synthetics' invasion force."

Dan: He seems remarkably casual about the whole 'blasted into space' thing

> "That sounds good,"

Rick: Does it really?

Tsuneo: Not at all.

> she replied and her gaze moved to the Council Tower. "This is it, Saren's inside."

Rebecca: Saren had booked a table and had been waiting for them

> "Then let us make haste," the Prime responded and transformed before ramming straight through
> the doors.

Tsuneo: [Shepard] I mean, I was going to hack them, but that's good too.

> It was complete chaos after that,

Rick: Up until this point, it had been a calm and controlled space robot war

> energy pulses flew around and struck the Cybertronian's
> overshields, but they barely did damage to it.

Tsuneo: [Prime] More annoying than anything else.

> Optimus preformed a power slide turning himself into cover for Shepard and her team.

Dan: There had been a chronic shortage of crates and waist-high barricades

> They took the advantage and fired over the Cybertanium cover, decimating the synthetics.

Rick: [Shepard] Wow, truck guy really comes in handy.

> "Saren!" Shepard shouted as she ran up the stairs towards where she once stood before the
> Council.

Rebecca: Shepard has had so many boring meetings here.

> The Turian's silhouette was briefly visible before it disappeared, having jumped over the ledge. The
> human female stopped, eyes wide, but then it clicked in her head.

> "Look out!" she shouted just before Saren appeared on his hover platform.

Rick: Saren is a big fan of personal mobility platforms. Guy even had an early Segway

> He sent a grenade flying from his hand, the trio of aliens barely finding cover before it exploded. He
> sent several more explosives out,

Dan: Mostly to check his mail and water his plants.

> all of them heading for the filthy human that had nearly thwarted him.

Tsuneo: It's worth mentioning that all of Shepard's accomplishments so far came before the fic started

> The beeping noises of the approaching ordnance were caught in Shepard's ears and she knew
> this was it.

Rick: Nothing for it but to reload from the last save, I guess

> She was mistaken, however, as a shadow was cast over her. Optimus stepped in and became a
> massive shield for her.

Rebecca: Because it's important that she can't handle himself.

> The explosives did take more off from his shields than the Geth pulse rifles,
> but he was still standing.

> "Ah, the synthetic guardian of yours," Saren remarked as he marveled at Optimus' sudden
> appearance.

Tsuneo: I mean, it's fair and all. He does have his own giant killer space robot.

> "I assume you are the one known as Saren?" Optimus inquired and he nodded

Dan: Surprisingly casual chat for their end-of-the-galaxy showdown.

> as Shepard peered out from behind the mechanical warrior.

> "It's over Saren! Give up!"

Rick: In fact, I'd go so far as to say that it's over, finished

Rebecca: You would.

Rick: It's a Transformers crossover. It was inevitable.

> she shouted at him and he scowled at her.

> "Over? No, it's just begun, Shepard! This is the dawn of a new age!"

Rick: This is the dawning of the age of Aquarius.

> "You're insane!" she yelled in fury, simply making him laugh.

> Then, all the sudden, he bent over in pain, clutching his head.

Dan: Aaah, ice cream headache!

> "Sovereign! No! What are you-"

> He didn't finish as he was violently lifted up into the air, hovering above his hover platform as arcs of
> crimson lightning shot from the walls at him, covering him in a cocoon of the same energy.

Rebecca: [Shepard] Should we do something?

Tsuneo: [Prime] I find it's best not to interfere with these things.

> Then, he

> just fell back down, landing on his feet. His head was bent down, staring at the platform he stood
> on.

Rick [Saren]: What was I doing again? Oh right, conquering the Galaxy.

> "You," he growled, his voice a rasp and mechanical as a finger pointed at the red and blue bot,
> "Prime."

> "You know of who I am?" Optimus questioned as the Turian reared his head.

Rick: [Saren] You're Battle Convoy, right?

Tsuneo: [Prime] Not quite.

> His eyes glowed a crimson red, burning with power and dominance.

> "Saren?" Shepard asked and the red suns that were his eyes gazed upon her.

Rebecca: [Shepard] You need to get some Visine or something.

> "I am Sovereign," it stated and looked back at the Prime, "and you are Cybertronian, the apex of
> synthetic life."

> "You know of my people's existence?"

> "We allowed you to live. You could not create organics, therefore you could not create chaos."

Rick: Genocidal civil war that spread across the galaxy notwithstanding

> "You were greatly misinformed," Optimus stated, activating his Energon axe and slamming the hilt
> down onto the ground. "My people have waged war against ourselves for 50 million of the Human's
> Earth years."

Dan: Minor details, you know

> "And now you have spread your chaos to the rest of the galaxy," it snarled and pointed a pistol at
> the Prime.

Tsuneo: So he's not okay with them after all

Rebecca: Hey, the Reapers had their chance to do something about it. This is entirely on them.

> "Already I hear news of your brethren ejecting out of your portals, contaminating worlds
> with discord. Beings falling like stars down onto inhabited worlds, one Cybertronian against the
> other, leveling civilizations."

> The Autobot felt pain at the revelation, knowing full well its words were correct. Shepard, however,
> did not feel the same way.

Rebecca: Honestly, she was getting pretty bored of the whole thing.

> "Shut it, Sovereign! Saren! I know you're in there! Fight it!"

> "Your pleas for the Turian fall on deaf ears, Human," he spoke,

Tsuneo: Saren's not here anymore.

> but a hand reached his head as if he was feeling pain within his mind.

> "Come on, Saren! You were a Spectre! Your duty was to protect people, not kill them!"

Rebecca: I suspect Saren was a real 'destroy the village in order to save it' type

> "As I have said once before, Saren is not... he is not- Argh!"

Dan: And Saren freezes up and starts making old dial-up modem noises.

> He bent forward, growling in pain before rearing his head up in desperation.

> "Shepard, you were right- Ah! He- I let him implant me, let him use me- Ah!"

Rick [Saren]: In retrospect, maybe this was a bad idea

> He cried out repeatedly as the cybernetic implants shocked his nerves and sent pain searing
> through his body.

Dan [Saren]: Why did I even get those to begin with?

> "Fight it Saren! You're still one of us, no matter what!" Shepard spoke and stood up boldly, leaving
> herself open to attack. "You're organic like me and that thing is just metal!"

Rick [Optimus]: Ahem

Rebecca [Shepard]: Whoops. Sorry about that.

> "I, I'm sorry, Shepard. It's too late for me," he apologized as he placed the barrel of his pistol
> underneath his chin.

> A loud bang resounded throughout the Council Chambers as Saren fired. Optimus reached a hand
> out, a vain attempt to stop the Turian. Shepard's eyes went wide as did Liara's and Wrex's.

Tsuneo: [Liara] Oh, I guess we are still meant to be here.

Dan: [Wrex] I went out for a smoothie like five minutes ago.

> Glass

> shattered as the Turian broke through the glass pane ceiling of the small room below, impaling
> himself on a glass shard after landing on a large stone.

Dan: And then he caught fire, just to prove the point

> "Is he-" Liara didn't finish as the Prime answered her question.

> "Yes," Optimus rumbled, scanning the body, "Saren is gone."

Rick: He also got some Milky Way research data.

> Quickly acting, Shepard opened up her Omni-Tool, inputting the data Virgil gifted her.

Tsuneo: During that vital scene which we skipped for some reason

> "It's working," she said as the Citadel controls were handed over to her.

> "Open up some channels, maybe we can call your human friends," Wrex suggested and she
> obliged.

Dan: [Wrex] Or even Joker.

Rebecca: [Shepard] Joker's human.

Dan: [Wrex] Wait, you're calling him a friend?

> However, they received a different message.

Rick: Warning them about their car's extended warranty

> "...Destiny Ascension. Main drives offline. Kinetic barriers down 40%.

Dan: And they're all out of coffee for the break room. All they have left is instant.

> The Council is on board, I repeat, the Council is on board."

> "Normandy to the Citadel, Normandy to the Citadel. Please tell me that's you, Commander?"

Dan: Actually it's Female Old Republic Trooper

Tsuneo: Eh, close enough

> Joker's voice spoke up and Jane smiled.

> "Joker, it's me. I made it."

Tsuneo: [Shepard] I had this really amazing fight on the hull of the Citadel, with a Geth dropship and
these huge gun turrets. Man, you should have seen it.

> "Thank God, Shepard. We caught that distress call, Commander. I'm sitting here in the Andura
> sector with the entire Arcturus fleet.

Rick: Turns out they were there all along

> If you open the relay we could save the Destiny Ascension."

> "You'd sacrifice human lives to save the Council? What have they ever done for your kind?"

Dan: Look at it this way. If they die, then nobody can reimburse her expenses claim

> "This is bigger than Humanity, than the Council! Sovereign's a threat to every organic species in the
> galaxy!"

> "That's why you can't throw away reinforcements trying to save the Council. HOLD them back until
> the Citadel arms open up and the human fleet can go after Sovereign!"

Tsuneo: Who exactly is arguing here?

Dan: I figure it's the little Paragon and Renegade angels on her shoulders.

Tsuneo: Sure, makes sense.

> Shepard stared at the two, knowing what repercussions would come from her decision.

Rebecca: As long as Udina doesn't get the job, she's happy.

> Either the
> galaxy would blame her for the death of the Council or Humanity would blame her for the death of
> entire Alliance crews.

> "Optimus? What's your input?" Shepard asked, emerald eyes locking onto blue optics.

Tsuneo: Shepard decided to pass the buck instead

> "I do not know my friend, but I do know that the lives of the many outweigh the lives of the few.

Rick: Spoken like Sentinel Prime

> Without the Council your people would be leaderless and thus cause harm to themselves. We must
> defend them, no matter the cost."

Dan: You're not just saying this as an appointed leader, are you?

> She nodded and gave her order.

Rebecca: Secure in the knowledge that, regardless of the outcome, she could blame Optimus for whatever happened

> The Destiny Ascension desperately headed for the Mass Relay, but were dismayed to find it
> inactive.

Rick: Somebody forgot to pay their bill

> They turned to flee from the Geth dreadnaughts, but were cut off.

Rebecca: They're backed up against space, I guess.

> A sea of dark grey metal
> hulls surrounded them, blasting energy pulses at the might of the Asari fleet.

Tsuneo: The Geth armada playing the part of the Bolivian army.

> "We're doomed," people murmured and cried out in anguish.

> That was until the relay reactivated, the rings at the core of the two prongs beginning to rotate as

> the soft blue energy flared.

Dan: The Citadel was, in fact, a gigantic bug zapper

> "Alliance ships, move in. Save the Destiny Ascension!" Hackett ordered as the Fifth Fleet rushed to
> the aid of the Council.

> "Commander, we're picking up reinforcements!" a navigator spoke up and the commander walked
> up.

> "It's the Alliance, thank the goddess!" she cried out in joy.

Rebecca: Thank you for that, sudden unannounced scene shift

> With the Normandy at the lead, the Alliance shot up, then dived down onto the Geth forces, taking
> them by surprise. Bolts of red and blue flying through space and at other ships.

> "Incoming!" an Alliance vessel cried out before being obliterated by a barrage of energy pulses.

Dan: Well, we really contributed.

> "Look out!" another shouted, but they were not to be destroyed as a Geth fighter suddenly came
> into view and blasted apart the other fighters headed for them.

> "Oh yeah!" Hound roared with laughter as he pulled some more wires.

Tsuneo: He has no clue what he's doing, but he's going to keep on doing it anyway

> "What the?" many humans gasped as they watched a large camo green robot riding a Geth fighter.

Dan: Ensign, what's happening out there?

Rick: Only the stupidest thing I have ever seen, sir.

> "Our kinetic barriers are down! Dreadnought coming in for a ramming attack!" an Asari stated with
> worry as she mapped out the damaged Geth ship's course.

Rebecca: I think it's just trying to parallel park really badly.

> Joker could only watch as the near destroyed ship began to collide with the Asari one,

Dan: [Geth] Whoops, sorry there. Unforced error. Totally my bad.

> but was amazed when streaks of red flew past him, faster than any other ship he'd seen.

> "Woohoo!" a voice laughed as a white ship, about the size of an Alliance fighter flew over and
> transformed. "Aerialbots! Take 'em out!"

Tsuneo [Bored]: Oh look, it's more Autobots here to save everyone. I am thrilled at this unexpected plot twist

> "I thought I was leader?" Silverbolt questioned as they pulled out Thermo Rocket Launchers, firing a
> barrage of Energon explosives at the Geth Dreadnought.

Dan: Say, where did the Aerialbots come from?

Rebecca: A plot convenience.

> It was shredded to pieces as the new Autobot reinforcements flew past, most simply fliers while
> others were more known heroes such as Air Raid, Silverbolt, or Jetfire.

Rick: But it was actually the God of Flame VF-1S

> "Ha ha! Jetfire!" Hound cried out in relief as the Autobot flew over next to him. "Think I can get a ride?"

Dan: [Hound] We've been flying this thing a bit too hard, if you know what I mean.

> "I dunno, might weigh me down," the Cybertronian joked and Hound grit his teeth in anger.

> "You calling me fat? Come here!"

Rick: So in short, he's Movie Hound except when he's G1 Hound

Tsuneo: Consistency!

> He jumped onto the Aerialbot as Bumblebee boarded the Normandy, climbing onto and hanging onto its wing.

Tsuneo: Completely throwing off the ship's balance, but who cares?

> "This is one hell of a cavalry," Joker laughed as they shot towards the opening Citadel.

> "You damn right!" Bumblebee responded, speaking over a public channel.

> The multiple races of the Citadel could only watch in awe as newer, more advanced alien ships flew by and decimated the Geth along with the Alliance, lessening Human deaths.

Rick: Yay! Shepard suffers no consequences of her difficult moral decision!

> Their minds were

> boggled as they witnessed some transform and fire rockets or bullets made of energy at the

> synthetic race.

Tsuneo: The mere idea of energy weapons is inconceivable to them!

> "All ships move in, concentrate on Sovereign!" Hackett ordered and everyone heeded the command, even the Autobots.

> "Sovereign?" Air Raid asked as he flew next to the Normandy.

> "Big squid thing," Bumblebee responded, tuning into some media channel.

Rebecca: Are you guys aware of the Reapers or not?

Rick: Yes

Rebecca: I thought so

> "On it!" Jetfire shouted and fired several rockets that took off a good percentage of the Reaper's shields.

Dan: But what about Marauder Shields?

Rick: You leave Marauder Shields out of this. He deserves better.

> "Make sure he's dead," Shepard spoke, staring down at the body of the ex-Spectre.

Tsuneo: Rule one: double tap.

> She felt wrong asking for them to defile his body, but it needed to be done.

Rebecca: Don't want him popping up again for a second stage boss fight.

> With something as

> powerful as an ancient machine the Geths praised as a god, then she had to be careful.

Dan: I don't want to touch the body.

Tsuneo: But he was working for a robot space god!

Dan: Well, when you put it like that...

> Optimus

> stood on the more stable platform, watching from a distance as Liara and Wrex approached the

> Turian's corpse.

Rick: So they poked it with a stick

> Firing a single shot from his shotgun, Wrex grinned as he heard the satisfying sound of the shot

> going through Saren's skull.

Tsuneo: [Wrex] Not the first dead Turian I've shotgunned through the head, and it won't be the last.

> "He's dead," he chuckled before turning to walk back up to Shepard.

Rebecca: His head is now fully exploded

> Suddenly, more arcs of crimson lightning jumped across the walls. The Krogan and the Asari gaped

> as the lightning jumped onto Saren's prone form, making it violently twitch and shake.

Dan: [Wrex] Wait, did I do that?

> A strong

> shockwave blasted off from the body and caused the bridge Shepard stood on to collapse.

> She fell, but rolled the impact off, landing in a kneeling position. She looked up at the floating form

> of Saren, his eyes glowing a bright red as his skin began to melt and incinerate.

Tsuneo: Anyone got an old priest and a young priest?

> Outside in the coldness of space, Alliance ships desperately fired at the 'Geth' ship that hovered

> atop the Council Tower. A tentacle arm moved and at the tip a sphere of crackling crimson energy

> formed. It aimed at an Alliance Dreadnought before the sound of something heating was clear in

> everyone's ears.

Rebecca: Through space, somehow.

> A red laser faded into existence before flashing and a blast of crimson obliterated the Human ship.

Dan: Sovereign says 'up yours' to this one ship in particular.

> "Autobots! Stay clear of those lasers!" Silverbolt ordered

Rick: Don't get hit by the bad guys? Genius thinking there!

> as he and the Aerialbots came down in a diving V formation, firing off a haze of bullets at it.

Dan: Keep shooting the thing we were shooting.

> The Energon ammunition shredded a section of its armor, but the Reaper was massive and seemed

> to be made of armor.

Rebecca: Its armour was made of armour

> "That thing's taking a lot of hits!" Air Raid shouted after firing a small barrage of missiles, blasting a

> tentacle off.

- > "But it isn't invincible! Keep up the attack!" Jetfire remarked and they went around for another run.
- > Sovereign fired another laser, missing the swift Cybertronians, but obliterating another Alliance ship.

Rick: Gee, thanks for that.

- > Hackett grit his teeth as he watched, he didn't know what to make of the situation besides calling it
- > chaotic. The new transforming robots were helping,

Rebecca: Blaster set up a soup kitchen while Strongarm is building water breaks for flood relief.

- > but he couldn't tell if they were genuinely generous at defending them or if this was all a setup.

Dan: Little did he know they were all about to spring the most involved surprise party ever

- > Returning to the Council Chambers,

Tsuneo: Back from the cut scene.

- > Jane watched as another shockwave blasted off the now
- > mechanical Turian skeleton. An expanding and contracting sphere of glowing crimson energy
- > crackled within his ribcage, his eyes similar to the glowing heart.

Rick: Turian anatomy is weird

- > "Saren?" she gasped, but it only stared at her before speeding off, jumping across a wall with
- > lightning fast reflexes. He bounced around, until he was gone from her sight.

- > "What the hell was that?"

Tsuneo: Whatever it was, I think it's safe to say we should be shooting it.

- > Wrex growled as he aimed his shotgun, searching for the walking dead.

Rick: I figure that by 2283 it's still going

Dan: Literal zombie show

- > "I have no idea," Liara responded as she pointed a pistol around.
- > "Keep your eyes open," Shepard stated and they searched, three pairs of eyes looking for Saren.
- > "Shepard! Behind you!" Optimus yelled as he saw a grey figure jumping down towards her.
- > She turned in time to fire her shotgun, catching it in the chest. The force of the shot changed its
- > trajectory and it landed in front of her. She fired again and blasted a limb off,

Rebecca: Any old limb. Pick one.

- > but it quickly jumped
- > forward, right onto her. She struggled as a metal hand gripped her throat, trying to choke her out.

- > Wrex gave a war cry and charged, ramming the Reaper controlled puppet into a wall. However, it
- > grabbed the Krogan and threw him off with some sort of super strength,

Tsuneo: Just any old kind of super strength, really.

- > giving a shrill screech as it
- > did. Liara threw a biotic attack, sending it back into the wall, but it quickly recovered and headed for
- > Shepard.

Tsuneo: Really doing a lot there.

> She aimed her shotgun, the shot pinned directly at its skull.

Rebecca: Presumably the parts of it that Wrex didn't previously explode

> She pulled the trigger, but it ducked and

> swung its clawed hand up. Jane gasped in pain as it pierced her side, the metal limb impaling her

> through her right abdomen. Blood leaked out and dripped onto the grass below her

Rick: And the worst part of it is that their ornamental garden is completely ruined.

> as it pulled her up.

> Suddenly, a large metal foot came out of nowhere and stomped on the ground next to the two. The

> undead Saren turned to stare at it before looking up at the other leg above him.

Tsuneo: The last thing to go through his head was 'duuuhhh...'

Rick: Before Prime's foot.

Tsuneo: Well, naturally.

> The blue colored Cybernetium foot crushed it into the ground.

Rebecca: Well that was... sadly expected

Tsuneo: Thrilling

> Shepard fell back to the ground, holding her bleeding side and coughing up her life fluids.

Tsuneo: Her life fluids.

Rick: Yep, ol' life fluids are a quart low there. Better get your oil changed too.

> Optimus raised his foot again to see if it had survived.

Dan: Then had to find something to scrape it off with.

> Energy crackled and metal limbs twitched underneath his foot

Rick: [Saren] Still here...

> so he stomped down again,

Rick: [Saren] Ow.

> repeating the process

Rick: [Saren] Ow.

> just as Metroplex had done to Megatron in Autobot City.

Rick: [Saren] Ow.

> Finally, he pulled out his Glass Gas Cannon and fired, but it rolled. What remained of its broken

> form jumped at the Prime, headed for his torso unit as to tear out its spark.

Dan: Sure. Bound to be as effective as everything else they've thrown at him.

> However, before it could,

> more tendrils of energy shot from the wall. Except this time, they were purple.

> The arcs of purple colored energy struck the metallic skeleton and it shrieked in pain as it was

> incinerated into ash.

Rick: Evil purple space lighting it is

Dan: I didn't see that coming, mostly because it's really, really stupid

> Optimus stared in confusion, feeling the Matrix of Leadership within him stir,

Rick: Just the essence of our living machine god. No big deal.

> knowing that whatever had happened was not accidental nor did it come from good will.

> Shaking off his thoughts, the Prime's gaze went to the human female clutching her bleeding side

Tsuneo: Oh yeah, her.

> "Commander, are you alright?" Optimus asked and Shepard shook her head, her vision getting

> blurry.

Rick: How are the life fluids holding up there?

> "No, losing... to much blood- huh," she gasped as more pain seared through her body.

> "You need medi-gel," Liara stated as she used some on her superior, healing her.

Rick: Well that was an effortlessly resolved situation

> Relief flooded the human's body,

Tsuneo: Wrex meanwhile found the desiccated pile of ash that was Saren's body and unloaded his shotgun into it.

> but she looked out the window of the Council Tower as a shadow

> cast itself over the chamber. A massive chunk of the Reaper was flying towards them.

Rebecca: [Shepard] You know, some days you just can't catch a break.

> Unbeknownst to the group of four,

Rebecca: The unsuccessful predecessor to the Gang of Five

> Sovereign's shields had completely vanished and it had been

> stunned to the point that it could not regenerate its shields.

> "It's shields are down! Now's are chance!"

Dan: Yeah, Gary. We just read the narration. We've got this.

> "Hit it with everything we've got," the admiral ordered and the entire Arcturus Fleet opened fire

Tsuneo: Up until that point they'd been entirely casual about this battle.

> as Joker straight up.

> "Hard on my flank! We're going in!" Joker ordered as he flew up.

> The Autobots followed him, all of them going with Alliance Fighters and several larger vessels.

Dan: You're flying a carrier, Gary. You can't just make a strafing run like that.

Rick: Oh yeah? Watch me.

> They dived, a swarm of humans and Cybertronians, firing a haze of bullets, missiles, and Energon
> down at the Reaper below.

Rebecca: For its part, Sovereign seemed to be entirely fine with this

> It had detached and lurched forward to float within the Citadel arms, but
> it jerked forward as the many projectiles pierced its body, penetrating its systems, and obliterating it
> inner workings.

Rick: Well that's just going to be a pain to fix. Do you know how much it'll cost to get genuine Reaper parts?

Dan: I bet you can't even find a licenced Reaper dealer these days

> It jerked several times before letting loose an explosion of fire and smoke, followed by a shockwave
> of crimson energy that dissipated in moments. Pieces of it floated around, crashing into the Citadel,

Dan: Whoops.

Rebecca: Maybe not blow up the evil robot space squid right on top of the vital systems next time?

> one heading for Shepard, Optimus, and their companions.

Tsuneo: Meanwhile, back where we were a moment ago

> "Look out!" Jane shouted and they moved, but with her still injured side she winced and fell over in
> pain.

> "Shepard!" everyone cried out, but Optimus was the only to act, running towards her just as the
> Reaper part made contact with the Council Tower.

Rebecca: [Bored] Oh look. Optimus saved her again.

Tsuneo: [Bored] I did not see that coming at all.

> David Anderson looked at the carnage,

Tsuneo [Anderson]: I am also in this fic

> the fires and the debris. The dark steel looking metal limb
> lay upon the Council Chamber as debris littered around it or atop it.

Dan: Maybe we can turn it into a talking point.

> His eyes were drawn to a group
> of Alliance men, pulling a large piece of metal off of a hole created by the destruction.

> Within was a Krogan and an Asari, two of the many aliens that followed Shepard to Ilos.

Rebecca: Where 'many' is 'four'.

> They helped them up, giving them medi-gel and whatever they needed.

Dan: [Wrex] Great, 'cause I've got this rash under my tail that's been bothering me for decades.

> Anderson looked both of them
> straight in the eye, his own relaying the question without need of his vocal cords.

Rick: Sorry, you missed two-for-one margarita night

> They shook their heads, Liara on the verge of tears while Wrex looked away, not wanting to cry,

Dan [Wrex]: Do I even have tear ducts?

> but still wanting to honor the courageous human.

Rick: [Wrex] She lived a warrior and died to a hero.

> Anderson clenched his hands before helping the two
> back towards a medical team. He turned, thinking he heard a noise.

> He thought he heard running, but it was all silent. He grit his teeth, blinking away several tears
> before following the survivors.

Tsuneo: I mean, we could investigate the debris, but that sounds too much like effort.

> That was until the Reaper limb moved. They all turned at the noise of
> groaning metal and crashing debris. A red arm had moved the Reaper's remains off of it as an
> enormous mechanical being that nearly touched the roof with its head stood up.

Tsuneo: Somehow they'd failed to notice the giant red robot

> The Alliance troops pointed their weapons at it, about to fire until the captain had ordered them to
> lower their arms.

Dan: Sorry, they get nervous around killer robots for some reason.

> He had spotted fiery orange hair in the bot's other hand, metal fingers curled
> around a kneeling body.

Rebecca: Apparently Shepard is the only redhead in the universe.

> Shepard stood up, still clutching her side until she let go,

Tsuneo: Gotta keep her life fluids from leaking out.

> moving both arms to her sides as she smiled with joy and relief.

Rick: Yay for not being crushed to death!

> She stared down at everyone who gaped in awe at her standing there in the Prime's hand. She
> looked back, a bit up at the Autobot's face. His mouthpiece slid back to reveal his mouth, his blue
> optics shining with joy at surviving.

Dan: Yay also for not being crushed to death!

> "Captain Anderson, meet Optimus Prime," Commander Jane Shepard, Savior of the Citadel spoke
> with a smile.

> "And you are called?" Tevus asked as she stared at the leader of the Autobots.

Rebecca: Never mind that, when did you get here?

> "We are Cybertronians, autonomous robotic organisms from the planet Cybertron,

Rebecca: The universal greeting known as 'control – V'

> a world far from these known spaces,"

Rick: It may be in Proxima Centauri, it may be on the other side of the galaxy.

> Optimus explained and Shepard nodded, standing next to the big bot.

Tsuneo: [Shepard] Yeah, I'm with him.

> "And you came to our galaxy after escaping your war torn home world?" Sparatus questioned

Rick: Sparatus. That's the Hover Tank, right?

Dan: No.

Rick: Then it's the hero of a weird French cartoon?

Dan: No – wait, what?

Rick: You know, escaped gladiator, has to find the sun beneath the sea and save a lost civilisation?

Dan: I have literally no clue what you are talking about.

> and he nodded, a somber nod.

> "For millions of years we have waged war against each other, brother against brother, Autobot

> against Decepticon,"

Dan: Godzilla versus Megalon, Ecsk versus Sever, Kramer versus Kramer

> he narrated with his solemn, baritone voice. "Now, I fear that we have brought

> our war to your worlds.

Tsuneo: That's nice, but what about the army of giant robot space squids?

> I have yet to discover any Decepticons, but when I do, I vow to defeat them

> before harm comes to your people."

> "You are a generous and courageous leader, Optimus Prime,"

Rebecca: We say this without even knowing who you are and having never spoken before

> Valern stated with a waving of his arm,

Dan: Also I am here now.

> "but you must understand, our people are weary of synthetics

Rebecca: What with the robot war we just had and all.

> and with this sudden invasion of the Geth, I fear they may not accept you or your own people."

Tsuneo: It turns out that people are wary of giant warrior space robots.

> "Such a variable was thought of," he stated and gestured at his Autobots who stood in a line. The

> Aerialbots, Hound, and Bumblebee all nodding at the Prime and the Council.

Dan: We are all here now too.

Tsuneo: You get the feeling they've moved the scene along.

Dan: Nuh-uh. I'm assuming they're in the wrecked council chambers crammed among the rubble until the fic says otherwise.

> "In order to defend this galaxy, we shall adopt alternate forms, hiding in plain sight,

Rebecca: So instead of the fear that there's a race of giant war robots, we have the paranoia of knowing that they could be anywhere or anything. That's so much better.

> robots in disguise."

Rick: And catchphrase

> The Council murmured amongst themselves, speaking of his words before nodding to each other.

Dan: Scrap 'em and find out what makes 'em tick?

Rick: Oh, definitely.

> "We shall sanction this and with your permission, we request to have our Spectre force work
> alongside you."

> "Wait, that means I get to go along for the ride, right?" Shepard asked

Tsuneo: 'I get to go along for the ride' is her contribution to this fic in a nutshell.

> and the Council nodded at

> her question. She grinned and looked up at the big bot that towered over her,

Dan: [Shepard] Wonder if they're auditioning for Headmasters.

> blue optics staring at her with a smile on his metal mouth. "Alright big guy, looks like we're a team."

> "Indeed we are Commander, I accept your terms and with great honor I shall continue to defend all
> that we stand for."

Rick: Mostly selling toys and merchandise.

> "Very well, now onto a more pressing topic.

Rebecca: The damage bill.

> Commander Shepard, step forward," Tevus ordered and the female human obliged.

> Udina and Anderson also followed, standing at the Human Spectre's sides.

Dan: Udina never saw a PR opportunity that he didn't immediately leap at.

> "Ambassador, Captain, Commander Shepard,"

Rick: Those are their ranks. Ambassador Udina, Captain Anderson and Commander Shepard
Shepard.

> the Asari acknowledged before continuing, "we have

> gathered here to recognize the enormous contribution of the Alliance in the war against Sovereign
> and the Geth."

Tsuneo: The many lives that were lost to ensure that we would never be subjugated by killer robots-
oh wait.

> "Many humans lost their lives in the battle to save the Citadel. Brave and courageous soldiers who
> willingly gave their lives so we, the Council might live," Valern solemnly spoke.

Dan: But just us. Everyone else can go to hell.

> "There is no greater sacrifice and we share your grief over the tragic loss of so many noble men and
> women," Sparatus stated with pride for humanity.

Dan: [Anderson] So you'll give us a position on the council?

Rick: [Sparatus] What? Hell no. You get a gift basket and a pat on the head.

> "The Council also owes a great personal debt, Commander. One we can never repay," the Asari

> Councilor added and Shepard smiled at that. "You saved not just our lives, but the lives of billions
> from Sovereign and the Reapers."

Rebecca: And there is no way that we will squander that sacrifice by denying that the problem exists because it's inconvenient to us

> "Commander Shepard, your heroic and selfless actions

Tsuneo: Those that we will admit to.

> serve as a symbol of everything humanity

> and the Alliance stand for," the Salarian Councilor remarked and Shepard's cheeks turned red at
> the praise.

Rebecca [Shepard]: Aww geez you guys.

> "And though we cannot bring back those valiant soldiers who gave their lives to save ours, we can
> honor their memories through our actions," the Turian Councilor said and Tevus continued or him.

Tsuneo: Everyone in this scene sounds like they're reading from a campaign speech.

> "Humanity has shown it is ready to stand as a defender and protector of the galaxy. You have
> proved you are worthy to join our ranks and serve beside us on the Citadel Council,"

Rick: Meanwhile the Volus ambassador just sighs and goes back to work.

> she proudly remarked and Udina stepped forward.

Rebecca: [Shepard] Get back in line, grandpa.

> "Councilor, on behalf of humanity and the Alliance, we thank you for this prestigious honor and
> humbly accept," he stated and Shepard felt a bit of disgust as he spoke for them all. The man was a
> filthy, dirty weasel,

Dan: With the utmost respect, of course.

> but he did know how to move through politics.

Rebecca: At this point, Shepard's basically coin-tossing the renegade/paragon choices

> "We will need a list of potential candidates to fill humanity's seat on the Council, the same shall go
> for the Cybertronians, of course they will operate on the Council secretly," Valern explained and
> Optimus nodded along with Udina.

Rick: We'd put you on the council, but we don't have any seats big enough.

> "Given all that has happened, I am sure your recommendation will carry a great deal of weight,
> Commander. Do you support any particular candidate?"

Rebecca: Shepard was wondering if she could just vote for Batman instead.

> Tevus questioned and Shepard thoroughly thought through the question.

Dan: [Shepard] Whazzat? Sorry, dozed off a little.

> Optimus looked down at the young female human as she stood there in thought.

Rick: And the player alt-tabbed to check a strategy guide

> Udina was a powerful political leader and would serve humanity well, but he'd only do what would
> be best for humans and no one else,

Rebecca: Mostly his one campaign contributor, evil space Martin Sheen.

> but then there was her father figure, Anderson. A strong leader who knew right from wrong.

Dan: Who had proudly fought aliens to save the earth and been drop-kicked by Roddy Piper.

> "We need someone with the courage to stand up for what he believes in.

Rick: Udina stands up for his beliefs. Mostly his belief that he's always right.

> Someone like Captain

> Anderson," Jane proudly stated and both men on her left and right were taken back.

> "You trying to make blush, Shepard?" the Africa American asked with a smile.

> "Are you sure about this, Commander? The captain is a soldier, not a politician," Udina stated, not

> on with the idea of Anderson taking the seat as the human councilor.

Rick [Udina]: Fine then. We'll see who gets stuck on Earth in Mass Effect 3.

> "We already got too many politicians on the Citadel.

Rebecca: [Shepard] Almost had a few less, if you catch my drift.

> The captain would be perfect for this job," Shepard stated and Anderson stepped up to the Council.

> All eyes and optics were on him as the Council began their evaluation.

Dan: Very well, Anderson. We have but one question that will determine your suitability for this role.

Tsuneo [Anderson]: Whatever it is, I am ready for it.

Dan: How are your parfaits?

> "I think it's an inspired choice. The Council would welcome him with open arms, should he accept,"

> Tevus admitted and the humans beamed with pride, save for the ambassador.

> "I'm honored, Councilor. As humanity's representative, I'll do everything in my power to help the

> Council rebuild," the captain, now turned councilor spoke and all eyes turned on Optimus Prime.

Rebecca: There's only so long you can pretend there isn't a giant killer robot in the room with you

> "And what of you, Optimus Prime? Who would you have to represent your people here?"

> "With all do respect councilors, my people have no political leaders, but I.

Tsuneo: What are his qualifications for leadership anyway?

Rick: He has a glowy thing in his chest.

Tsuneo: Well that seems entirely reasonable to me

> However, I will not leave

> my brothers on the battlefield. Never shall I abandon them nor shall I forget the trials we have gone

> through to find a new home to inhabit,"

Tsuneo: I mean, that's not actually an answer...

> he humbly stated and the Council smiled at his words.

Dan: Just assume this all happened and move on, okay?

> "Then we shall call upon you when needed," Sparatus suggested and the Prime nodded at the

> arrangement.

Rebecca: Could you start with some of the rubble around here?

> "Sovereign's defeat marks the beginning of a new era for both humanity, the
> Autobots, and the Council."

Rick [Sparatus]: Both... all three... look, can we just start that one again?

> Jane looked around, staring at the ruined chamber they stood in before looking back at the Council,
> shaking her head.

> "No, Sovereign was only a vanguard. The Reaper fleet is still coming. Hundreds of ships, maybe
> thousands. And I'm going to find some way to stop them!"

Rebecca: [Shepard] I've just got to do some side quests first.

> she claimed and turned to leave.

> Optimus followed and the Autobots did the same,

Dan: [Silverbolt] Is there like, room for us in here?

Rick: [Hound] I dunno, the corridors seem awfully small.

> all of the heroes moving to return to Freedom's Progress to return to the Ark and to their brothers.

Rebecca: [Prime] Yeah, any chance we could get help towing this thing?

> As they left, Anderson stepped forward and
> began a speech, one which inspired the Council to no end.

Dan: [Councillor] Oh god, more speeches.

Rick: [Councillor] It's enough we had a life-and-death battle already today.

Rebecca: [Councillor] Can't I just skip it and take a bath already?

> "Shepard's right. Humanity is ready to do its part. United with the rest of the Council, we have the
> strength to overcome any challenge,"

Rick: Alien invasion or hot-dog eating contest. Any challenge.

> he reassured, every word filled with confidence. "When the
> Reapers come, we must stand side by side.

Rebecca: Or just keep badly pasting them into game events.

> We must fight against them as one. And together, with
> the Autobots backing us up, we will drive them back into the dark space!"

Tsuneo: With our allies the giant space robots we will defeat these other giant space robots

> Deep within the Citadel, the excavation teams eventually cleared the rubble to the entrance of the
> laboratory.

Tsuneo: Dee-Dee's been here again.

> "Check it," the leader ordered and a member of the group unlocked the door.

Dan: Just spend a minute fumbling with the keys...

> It slid open to reveal the metal corpse still standing in its scaffolding, body not even damaged in the
> slightest from the battle above.

> "Good, report it to the Council. NBE-1 is still in repairable state," he ordered and another member
> went off to compose the message.

Tsuneo: Intense email writing action!

> As they began to clear rubble and get back to work, they did not notice blood red optics staring at
> them until it was too late.

Rick: Hey Bob, is the giant killer robot staring at us with ominous blood-red optics?

Dan: It's just your imagination, Gary

> They shut off and the being retreated back into its broken form, hiding within its mind.

Rebecca: You guys are boring anyway.

> He had dreaded saving his nemesis, the last Prime. Those purple tendrils of
> lightning made of Dark Energon that had lingered within his body.

Tsuneo: So he'd sent tendrils of Dark Energon all the way through the Citadel's systems to target that
one exact point at that one exact time despite being comatose, immobile and having no way to know
what was going on

Rebecca: Exactly

Tsuneo: It's that rare plot twist that not only makes no sense but actively makes things worse

> His reasons for helping the
> fleshlings and the Autobot were so they could defeat the Reaper and so the other organics could
> return to repair him.

Tsuneo: Or he could have let Saren kill Prime and relied on Shepard to finish the job. Two birds with
one stone, and all that.

Dan: What, you mean have this fic's Shepard do something on her own?

Tsuneo: You're right, silly me.

> "Weak fleshlings," he snarled as they began to bring in pieces of the Reaper's hull, preparing to
> repair his chassis,

Rebecca: I'm sure that nailing parts of one enigmatic alien artefact onto another enigmatic alien
artefact is a great plan that can't possibly go wrong in any way

> "once my new form is repaired, I shall kill you all!"

Dan: We can hear you, mate.

Rick: [Megatron] Just the wind!

Dan: We're on a space station.

Rick: [Megatron] Just the air conditioning!

> It ranted on within its subconscious as they took it apart and put it back together, careful to not
> break anything. They had yet to reach his spark core, the heart of the Cybertronian protected by an
> extra layering of armor.

Dan: It's his gooey molten center.

> After sometime, trade with the Autobots was established and resources to
> create Energon began to flow towards the Council's Cybertronians allies. At the same time, they
> began to experiment in ways to create their own Energon, feeding it to the stasis locked
> Cybertronian in captivity.

Rick: His plan relies entirely on free trade treaties.

> "Soon, very soon my Decepticons. The universe shall shudder and tremble as they hear the masses

> chant my name. All shall bend their knees to I, Megatron!"

Tsuneo [Bored]: Oh look, it's Megatron. That was a total shock that came out of nowhere.

> Done

> So that's the end of Mass Effect 1

Rebecca: Really? I hadn't noticed

> I'll probably make some filler chapters before moving in on Mass Effect 2

Dan: I feel concerned

> So I've got a skeleton for the upcoming events worked out and I hope you all like it

Rebecca: If it doesn't involve evil space Martin Sheen petting ravage while drinking whiskey I will riot.

> Remember to Review, Favorite, and Follow

> Spread the word about this story if you want

> Lord Revan Flame, signing off

> -----

> Chapter 4: One Month in Between

> Hello again crossover fanbase!

> So

Tsuneo: So!

> Here's a chapter to fill in the gap between ME1 and ME2

> Going to be a bit fast paced so I can get to the second game

Dan: Just skip your way through the recap comic.

> Also, need to ask

Tsuneo: Button then zip

> If I were to change Optimus' appearance, what should I change it to?

Rick: Laser Optimus, complete with totally sweet trailer decal

> G1 remastered Optimus?

> Or

> Age of Extinction Optimus?

Rebecca: Why not keep it how it was?

Rick: It's the rules. Optimus needs to get a new design to sell more toys

Rebecca: Silly me

> Just a quick thought I had

> So, onto the chapter!

- > It was a peaceful night on the human colony of Shanxi, the first world where contact was made
- > between humans and other extra terrestrial beings.

Tsuneo: And that worked out fantastically for everyone

- > It could also be known as the second first contact situation,

Rick: But it wasn't, because that sounded silly

- > the first being the first contact at Freedom's Progress with the Cybertronian faction
- > known as the Autobots.

Tsuneo: So... the Autobots had been there for decades without anybody noticing it?

Dan: They just figured it was a naturally occurring massive alien spaceship in the side of the mountain.

Tsuneo: Seems fair.

- > Few knew of these autonomous robotic organisms, only those high up and
- > those who held connections in the shadows could know such information.

Rebecca: And so the Transformers became subjects of paranoid conspiracy theories

- > However, as every day passed, the secret of the "Transformers" as the Spectre force had come to
- > call them as was slowly being revealed.

Rick: Thanks to teaser trailers

- > Decepticon forces across the galaxy had gone online,
- > razing small towns and villages, leaving little survivors or none at all.

Rick: They were determined to wipe out every beloved peasant village in the galaxy

- > The larger cities were by far the hardest to conceal,

Rebecca: Hiding a city is generally pretty hard.

- > especially when hundreds of people driving across roads or in the air
- > witness massive robotic beings duking it out.

Dan: Whenever giant robot battles broke out in the middle of a big city, a Citadel agent would shout 'look over there' to keep the population in the dark

- > The Shanxi city of Taiyuan was bustling with activity, people going about their daily lives as the sun
- > set. The sky was painted various shades of warm colors as a Mako pulled up in a construction yard.

Rick: They used it to build a power plant and a Tiberium refinery.

- > Out stepped a trio of passengers, one a human man who glowed with biotic power as he searched
- > around quickly, holding up an Avenger assault rifle, another being a Turian with a sniper rifle, also
- > searching, and then stepped out another human, this one a woman donned in special armor marked
- > by a scarlet letter and number, N7.

Rick: That would be Marissa Faireborn, right?

- > "Alright boys, let's hunt some Cons," Jane Shepard, Savior of the Citadel and First Human Spectre
- > laughed as she expanded her shotgun.

- > "Sometimes I wonder if you're a Spectre or a stripper," Garrus joked and she shot him a glare.

Rebecca: Was that meant to be a joke?

Tsuneo: I can't tell, and I'm not sure how I feel about that

> "Hey, I can be fun when I want to be," she retorted as they moved forward,

Dan: Cackling once more at the thought of impending violence.

> slowly inching towards an area surrounded by Human Systems Alliance soldiers.

Dan: They very gradually approached them

> "Commander Shepard! Ma'am!" the leading trooper acknowledged as he saluted.

> "At ease soldier, what's the status?" she asked, placing the shotgun on her shoulder casually.

Rebecca: Well, a trio of maniacs with guns just showed up...

> He motioned for her to follow and the trio of aliens were sent towards a strange red truck.

Dan: Strange in that the cab wasn't littered with burger wrappers and stray curly fries.

> It was

> bulky and in a more simple term, a lot more advanced than anything this galaxy had yet to create.

Rick: It was the most advanced red truck in the galaxy

> Next to it sat a variety of equipment, all designed to detect nearly anything especially one specific
> substance.

Tsuneo: It was designed to detect nearly anything and detect one specific thing

> "We were testing the new scanning equipment when we got the Code E Alert, contacted command
> immediately, ma'am," he explained and Shepard nodded, understanding the term for Code E. E, for
> Energon.

Rick: As opposed to Code M for Monkey

> "That's all for now soldier, take your men and return to base, we can handle it from here," she
> ordered and he nodded, pulling his men back.

> It was about an hour later when they had left and the area was secure.

Dan: They could have been out of there sooner if they hadn't gone for that fourth round of toast.

> Shepard smirked and patted the red truck's side, calling out to it.

> "Alright Ironhide, safe to come out."

Dan: Mother's gone home. You can leave your pillow fort.

> In an instant, the armored hull expanded, plates shifting and large chunks rearranging until

Rick: You get stuck on step seven and have no idea how the torso is meant to fold out.

> a tall

> mechanical warrior stood in its place. The armor of its right arm opened up before turning into a
> stubby looking gun with two 'arms'.

Rebecca: His arm turned into two arms

> He cocked it and walked forward, moving towards a clear area,
> filled with construction vehicles of all kinds.

Rick: Including a chain trencher, a rock wheel, a continuous miner and a spider excavator

> "Those Cons 'er here, I can smell 'em," Ironhide stated, sniffing the air, letting his filters take in the
> smell of Energon. "Must've made fresh Energon earlier."

Dan: Ironhide suddenly needs spurs and a spittoon.

> "Then let's get a move on," Shepard replied and pulled her shotgun in front of her. "Garrus, find a
> good position to snipe from, Kaiden you're with me. Ironhide, you do what you do best."

Rick: So look nothing at all like his toy. Got it.

> "Alright, Shepard," they all spoke in unison and divided up, moving to locate the Decepticons.

> The effect of their plan was instantaneous, the moment Ironhide set foot in the area, five different
> advanced vehicles transformed.

Dan: And so much for the 'in disguise' part.

> The leader of the Decepticon team began to shout orders.

Rick: Three burgers, one no pickles, one Rueben, two baskets of fries and a milkshake special.

> Thanks
> to Ratchet, Shepard and her team along with the Spectres had been given special translators to
> understand the Cybertronian language.

Dan: They switched their subtitles on

> "Combaticons! Destroy the Autobot and its pets!" a green and blue con, Onslaught shouted.

Rick: Pfft, if he's not bright yellow with lurid purple camo, then I don't care

Rebecca: Rick, you must be the world's only G2 snob

> They began firing, blasting away at them, but the old bot and the organics were more than a match
> for them. In the time after the famed 'Battle of the Citadel',

Rebecca: Shepard had been on a book signing tour of the terminus systems.

> the Autobots had given their allies the
> means to defending themselves from the Decepticons, giving them specially designed Energon
> ammunition

Dan: Their guns now all fired magic space bullets

> while restricting their gain of Cybertronian tech.

Tsuneo: We'll assist them, but we won't assist them too much

> Garrus fired several rounds, the advanced ammunition easily bringing down their overshields.

> "Onslaught! Those fleshlings got Energon rounds!" a violet red

Tsuneo: Violet red, as opposed to crimson purple

> and tan colored con, Vortex spoke as he fired his own Neutron Assault Rifle at the sniper.

Rebecca: Does everyone around here have a Neutron Assault Rifle?

Dan: Oh yeah. I picked up one at the mall with a bag of jerky yesterday.

> Shepard began firing her shotgun at a large burly, green plated tank con,

Tsuneo: Pausing briefly to ask 'what the hell am I doing?'

> Brawl as Ironhide

> engaged Swindle and Blastoff alone. Being the old, tough bot he was, the battle was a fair fight

> between the elite Decepticon team and the Autobot commando.

Rebecca: It was a fair fight in that he was outnumbered five to one.

> "We ain't winnin' this fight!" Blastoff shouted as he rubbed his head, trying to ease the pain caused

> by Ironhide's fist striking it.

Rick: Being punched in the head was a mild inconvenience.

> Onslaught took note as he combated the human biotic who continually shot construction equipment

> at him.

Tsuneo: You mean hurled construction equipment at him.

Dan: Nope. Kaiden's got a specially designed artillery cannon loaded up with cement mixers and bulldozers for just such an occasion.

Tsuneo: Huh. He mustn't get much use out of it.

Dan: Honestly, he was hoping it would come to this.

> He took a quick survey of the battle and came to a conclusion, they needed a bigger gun.

> Luckily, they had one.

> "Combaticons! Combine into Bruticus!"

Rick: Or that could happen, I suppose.

> They immediately complied, Brawl and Swindle retreating towards the center of the area to shift into

> their third form,

Tsuneo: The past participle

> the legs of the titan. Onslaught followed and became its torso unit, the menacing

> head appearing as Vortex and Blastoff became the giant's arms.

Dan: Limbs sold separately.

> "Bruticus online! Ready for action!" it bellowed and stomped the ground, sending everyone falling on

> their afts.

> "Doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo,"

Rick: Baby Sharkticon

> Joker sang as he flew above the Shanxi city,

Tsuneo: Joker's either unaware of the giant robot rampaging below, or he just doesn't care.

> "From Omega to Mars. From the Council to the seediest bars-"

Rick: Ganymede and Titan, yes, sir I've been around...

> "Joker!" the Commander's voice screeched over the com and he shook the ship a bit in shock.

> "Whoa, Commander. No need to scream at me."

Rebecca: Fic, stop trying to be funny. In fact, just stop all together.

> "Shut up and look down!" she shouted and he raised an eyebrow before turning on the external
> cams,

Dan: Situational awareness is overrated.

> all of which were focused on a massive robot marching through Taiyuan, demolishing hover
> car lanes and ripping through buildings like they were made of paper.

Tsuneo: I can only assume that a fight with Ultraman is inevitable

> "Whoa, what happened?"

> "Five Decepticons! They turn into one big Con

Rebecca: They're selling Cryptocurrencies with claims of a guaranteed return

> so we're going to need the big gun!"

Rick: So hurry up and have that Ship Upgrades conversation with Garrus already

> "On it, Commander!" he shouted and flew down to barely scratch the skyscrapers, the stealth drive
> active.

> The bay doors opened slowly and several crew members paved a way for a Cybertronian truck,

Dan: They had built a road inside the cargo bay

> colored crimson and indigo. The red markings on it glowed brightly as it drove forward.

Tsuneo: Optimus has gone full Dekotora

> It dropped,
> quickly with its wait and near midway down it transformed. Optimus' head appeared from the
> chassis and his optics quickly aimed a spot to land on. Right as he passed the midway point, he
> activated his boosters and slowed his descent to the point he was able to roll off the rest of the
> impact, quickly transforming into his alt mode as he did.

Tsuneo: At this point, more effort has been put into describing Optimus' landing than any of the Mass Effect characters. Make of this what you will.

> "Commander! I'm in pursuit!" he roared as he charged through the ground roads, barely used by the
> modern day humans.

Rebecca: In a universe full of flying cars and spaceships, building roads seems a bit redundant.

> Few cars drove on the ground as most were in the air, but there were still those cars from the times
> before hover technology was created.

Rick: Infrastructure projects were dictated by the needs of vintage car collectors

> The Autobot made his way towards a bridge just as Bruticus
> was preparing to smash through it. Quickly braking, Optimus acted quickly and

Dan: Set up a lemonade stand.

> transformed.

Dan: That too.

> The moment the Decepticon Gestalt obliterated the bridge, Optimus jumped onto its chassis,
> catching the collar of its torso unit.

Dan: The sticking out part of the body bit.

> "Autobot!" it roared and attempted to grab Optimus, but only succeeded in allowing him to jump onto
> on arm and climbing onto a shoulder.

Tsuneo: Bruticus appears to be a tad useless, doesn't it?

> "Pull over!" Optimus shouted as the giant spun and rolled as he tried in vain to grab the Prime.

Dan: [Prime] This is the police! You're under arrest!

> He unloaded his Path Blaster into the combiner's head and sent it stumbling forward in pain. As if
> on cue, a Mako drove out an alley and slammed directly into its foot.

Rebecca: Shepard didn't mean to do that. It's just how she always drives the Mako.

> The combined efforts of the
> Autobots and humans sent the Decepticon falling off the main road and into a rather large
> warehouse.

Tsuneo: And their goes the year's toilet paper supply

> Shepard and her team walked out of the tank as Optimus and Ironhide approached the Con.

Rebecca: Of course, he can just stand up again and... No? Guess not.

> Both had their weapons out, aiming them at the Decepticon as it reformed into the Combaticons.

Dan: Well that achieved a lot.

> "Vortex! Blastoff! Go!" Onslaught shouted and the two aerial superior Cybertronians transformed
> and flew off.

> The rest of the Cons preformed a similar action, but instead drove off towards an unknown location.

> "They're getting away!" Ironhide yelled in anger as he fired his Scatter Blaster.

> "Easy, old friend," Optimus called solemnly as he lowered the bot's weapon.

> "Easy? The Cons are getting away!"

> "Let them, this city need no more destruction and chaos.

Rebecca: And there's no way that letting five heavily armed killer robots who can combine to form a bigger killer robot escape could cause problems in future.

> The Decepticons have already sown
> enough discord and in turn caused much casualties," he rumbled and they all turned to eye the
> destruction caused by Bruticus alone.

Tsuneo: Remind me, what was the objective here?

Rebecca: Stop the Decepticons from destroying the city.

Tsuneo: Right. Good job everyone.

- > Many skyscrapers were barely holding themselves together, other buildings were completely
- > demolished. Entire complexes reduced to rubble and fires.

Tsuneo: Well good thing you stopped them from ever doing that again.

- > People were screaming and crying as
- > Shepard and her team moved to an extraction point, awaiting the Normandy's rendezvous.

Dan: And strung up a banner saying "Mission Accomplished."

- > "Shepard! This is an outrage!"

Rick: Is Shepard about to be chewed out by an angry police chief?

- > She flinched at the ambassador's harsh words, gritting her teeth in anger at his loud voice. After the
- > Battle of the Citadel, Udina had attempted to mend his relationship with the Commander in an
- > attempt to gain favor with the first Human Spectre,

Rebecca: With a fifty credit cineplex gift voucher and a basket of artisan cheeses.

- > but he failed when he insulted the Autobots after
- > a failed mission to defeat a group of Decepticons on a Batarian colony.

Dan: Although to be fair, they were Batarians. Nobody cared.

- > "I know, I know-" she attempted to argue, but was cut off for the hundredth time in the argument.
- > "No! You don't know! If you did we would have saved lives, not take them!"
- > "Ambassador, you're overreacting," Councilor Anderson spoke, his eyes glaring at his assistant. "If
- > she and Optimus hadn't stopped the Decepticons there, then there would be no telling how many
- > more lives would have been lost if they had been allowed to roam freely."

Rebecca: As opposed to the lives that could be lost by allowing them to escape, that is.

Rick: I am seeing some flaws in this plan.

- > Udina tried in vain to argue, but could not find any counter towards the Councilor's argument.

Tsuneo: Or in other words, the author wasn't even going to try

- > "Very well," he huffed in anger all the while, Shepard was hiding a smirk.

Dan: How dare she try to do her job. The nerve of her.

- > After the failed mission at Shanxi,

Tsuneo: It wasn't a failure, they just wrecked the city and let the Decepticons get away.

- > the Normandy had docked at the Autobot base on Freedom's
- > Progress. The Spectres had been introduced to their new alien allies and helped in adding more
- > adequate sized equipment for beings their height.

Dan: This needs a fancy "picking out armour suits" montage.

- > Shepard stood on a raised platform that was
- > leveled to the hologram emitter and Optimus' head.

- > "My deepest condolences Councilor and Ambassador, but many will pay the costs in this galaxy as
- > they have on our home world."

Dan: The homeworld that you guys rendered uninhabitable through your own actions.
Tsuneo: Well, when you put it like that...

> "Hopefully, less," Anderson responded with a benign smile and Optimus returned it.

> Many Autobots had rejoined their ranks after the Council-Autobot alliance was formed. Sideswipe,
> Arcee, Warpath,

Rick: Delta Seeker, X-Brawn, Pipo, Moonradar and Machtackle

> and even more of their brothers and sisters from across the stars.

Rebecca: Individual Autobots sold separately. Collect them all.

> "Back to the situation at hand," Udina interrupted, angering everyone in the meeting or listening in
> on,

Tsuneo: Wrex and Liara are hiding behind the Mako, eavesdropping.

> "Shepard, you're needed in the Traverse, we need you to scan for any Geth activities."

Dan: Planet Scanning minigame it is

> "Geth activities?"

Rick: Like Geth picnics, Geth board game nights, Geth junior sports events... you know, Geth activities.

> There are giant, killer, alien robots on the loose and you want me to-

> "Find smaller, killer, alien robots, yes,"

Tsuneo: When you put it like that it does sound a little silly.

> Anderson spoke and she immediately regret her words.

> "Sorry sir, I didn't mean to-"

> "It's alright, Shepard. Also, on that note, I would like to enlist the Autobot's aid in this matter in case
> the Geth have brought any heavy armor with them and kept them there."

Rick: Heck, why don't we just send the Autobots to do it solo?

Tsuneo: Because we have to set up the next game, and we need Shepard for it.

Rick: We do?

Tsuneo; You know, I'm starting to wonder.

> "We will be willing to extend our aid to you," Optimus responded and Shepard smiled.

> "Part of the team, part of the family," she laughed and lightly punched the bot's shoulder.

Rebecca [Shepard]: Ow, ow. What was I thinking?

> The two had bonded over their time working together,

Tsuneo: Informed character development is the best character development

> a sibling relationship close to, or perhaps

> even stronger than the brother relationship he shared with Megatron in the Golden Age, when they

> fought side by side through the political wars and skirmishes.

Dan: And like all siblings, they tried to kill each other a lot

> "Indeed, my friend," he said and closed his mouthpiece. "We shall depart soon to the Traverse."

All: Road trip!

> "Good, meeting adjourned," Udina stated and the last three occupants of the com sighed or the
> Cybertronian's case, vented in annoyance before cutting themselves out.

> "Shepard did everything right.

Rick: Paragon choices all the way

> More than we could've hoped for," Miranda Lawson spoke as she
> stared at the massive sun that lay before Cronos Station.

Rebecca: If you're going to be obviously evil, you might as well go the whole hog and give yourself a nice view from your lair

> It was a swirling mass of hot gas, burning bright orange red or serene blue.

Rick: It depended on what the weather was like on the sun

> In the chamber she
> stood in there sat another being, another human who puffed a cloud of smoke.

Tsuneo: God, he's smoking clove cigarettes, isn't he?

> He lay in his chair,
> sitting as he stared at her. A multitude of orange holographic screens surrounded him, feeding him
> the information his organization gathered 24/7.

Dan: Right now he was plotting to blow up New York with a giant squid monster

> "Saving the Citadel; Even saving the Council. Humanity has the trust of the entire galaxy..." she
> trailed off, thinking of what was transpiring. "and still it's not enough."

Tsuneo: Something to do with her being a couch-flinging ragemonster, I guess.

> The man tapped his hand on the arm of his chair, the cigarette poking out from in between his
> fingers also tapping against them as the tip burned orange.

Rick: Remember the days when you could still smoke inside a supervillain lair?

> "Our sacrifices have earned the Council's gratitude, but Shepard remains our best hope," the
> Illusive Man spoke and Miranda nodded, not bothering to look back at him.

Tsuneo: And trying not to gag on second-hand smoke.

> The burning ash on his cigarette fell down onto the metal floor, having been tapped off.

Dan: His janitor must hate him

Rebecca: That's how you can tell he's evil

> "But they're sending her to fight Geth, Geth! We both know they're not the real threat."

Tsuneo: So do the council, who not only seem to have wholeheartedly embraced the reaper threat but also allied with powerful robot combatants. Honestly, this seems a little redundant.

> She turned and walked over to him, passing through the holographic screens, her hips doing a little
> sway as they her genetic code dictated.

Rebecca: Her DNA forces her to sexy walk

> "The Reapers are still out there."

> "And it's up to us to stop them."

> "The Council will never trust Cerberus."

Tsuneo: Something about you being an evil Human supremacist terrorist organisation

Rick: It's the little things that get you

> They'll never accept our help. Even after everything

> humanity has accomplished," she firmly stated, but her frowning lips curved into a small smile, "but

> Shepard... they'll follow her. She's a hero, a bloody icon."

Rebecca [Miranda]: She's got bloody Funko pops and everything

> She looked back at the sun, but the thoughts in her head demanded to be let out.

> "But he's just one woman. If we lose Shepard, humanity might well follow."

> The Illusive Man stuck his hand down, putting out the cigarette in a small container filled with ashes.

Dan: [Illusive Man] Seriously, nobody's changed this thing? What do I even pay the staff for?

> "Then see to it that we don't lose her."

> Optimus didn't know how it happened,

Rick: Somebody decided to write a Transformers-Mass Effect crossover

> but it all began in an instant. A yellow beam of energy tore

> through the Normandy's hull and incinerated a small group of crew members instantly.

Rick: Their last words were 'aaah boom'

> He

> transformed, in shock as he watched them disappear along with several others who were sucked

> into the vacuum of space.

Dan: Told ya, Bernie, I told ya this would happen. One day you're just minding your own business, crewing one of the most advanced starships known to man, then suddenly pow! Sucked out into space. Didn't I say this would happen?

Rick: I hate you so much, Earl.

> "No!" he cried out, vainly reaching his hand out in an attempt to grab them even though he was to
> far away.

> Above, Shepard had finished speaking to Liara, having sent a distress beacon to the Alliance for
> help.

Tsuneo: While wondering why none of the other squad members were present

> "Goddammit, Joker!"

Dan: Something you'll hear a lot in Gotham City

> she screamed as her legs moved her quickly through the wrecked husk of a ship.

Tsuneo: In a radical move, she used her legs to run.

> Air and steam were spewing out of broken pipes while entire pieces of the metal walls were
> crumbled up, tossed onto the ground by explosions. She stumbled and was pushed against walls,
> but Commander Jane Shepard continued to make her way to the cockpit.

Rebecca: She wanted to get her junior pilot wings

> She opened the door to
> the CIC and immediately was pushed forward by the suction of space, having all the air in the rest
> of the Normandy being sucked out.

Dan: I suppose on the upside, there's no crew left to suffocate.

> Her boots managed to magnetize to the ground, allowing her to walk through the void that was outer
> space. An entire section of the CIC was gone,

Rebecca: Probably should have waited for the refit to finish before you took off.

> the ceiling blown off revealing the stars and a nearby planet.

Rick: Look at the upside; you've now got a convertible

> The galaxy map was having its own seizure, glitching and flashing with different colored
> lights as it malfunctioned before going off.

Tsuneo: That's not damage, it's just trying to update its graphics.

> She grabbed the headrest of a chair, throwing it away before moving towards the cockpit. Suddenly,
> she felt something strike her in the back and found herself face first on the ground. She looked
> above to see a piece of rubble floating away

Rick: This is a ship, so it's wreckage; not rubble.

Rebecca: Thanks for that

> as a rather large one headed straight for her. Her eyes
> widened in fear as she began to get up, but her action was needless as a large crimson arm
> grabbed the piece of the ship, throwing it away.

Rick: Yeah, somehow I don't think we'll need that anymore.

> "Optimus," she sighed in relief as she pushed herself back onto her feet, rubbing the armored pads
> on her pained legs in an attempt to relieve them. "Thanks."

Rebecca [Shepard]: Thank you for being here. I wouldn't want to accomplish anything on my own.

> "No need for thanks, but what is going on?"

Tsuneo: We appear to be exploding

> "The ship's under attack, some unknown enemy."

> "Geth?"

> "Don't think so," she replied seconds before walking into the cockpit.

Dan: Only to find a pro-wrestler fighting the gigantic copilot

> Joker was furiously typing away commands, pressing buttons on the holographic display as the ship
> continued to fall apart.

> "Joker, we need to go! Now!"

> "No, I can save her, Commander! I know I can!"

Rebecca: Half the ship fell off already and the rest is on fire.

Rick: Details!

> She weighed her options, let him try and save the ship or take him by force.

Tsuneo: And punched him.

> Then she remembered one of Optimus' teachings she had decided to listen to,

Dan: She occasionally realises that people are talking to her.

> there was always a third option.

Tsuneo: It made light switches needlessly confusing

> "Joker, the Normandy's gone. There's nothing we can do," she quietly said and he slowly bowed his
> head, fingers slipping from the ship's controls.

> "Alright," he replied after a while

Dan: Just let the ship explode around him. We're fine.

> and began to get up, delicately doing so as to not break his brittle
> legs. Suddenly, the display beeped and blinked in alarm, causing Joker to gasp. "Shit! It's coming
> for another attack run!"

Tsuneo: There's a few parts of the ship it hasn't torched yet.

> Outside, a large ship, covered in asteroids with a metal ring and poles sticking out of it

Rick: It looked like nothing as much as a free-floating garbage heap

> charged its
> main cannon, a large circular barrel that had a yellow sphere of crackling energy. It fired and the
> laser seared straight through the hull of the Normandy, right into Optimus Prime.

Tsuneo: Thinking about it, the big red robot sticking out of the hull would make a nice target.

> "Optimus!" Shepard cried out in worry and fear as he took the full blunt of the attack.

> He used his hands to cover his face as the yellow energy blast burned the energy of his overshields
> out. They dropped and pain immediately overloaded his nerve receptors, causing him to roar in
> agony.

> "Raaaaaaaah!" he bellowed

Rebecca: As the narration had already indicated

> as he pushed himself forward in order to make himself a shield for his human allies.

> "Come on, let's go!" Joker shouted, snapping her out of the stupor she fell into.

Rebecca: [Shepard] Duuuuh, space lasers are pretty.

> She grabbed his arm, roughly pulling him up, much to his displeasure before pushing him into the
> escape pod.

Rick: You saved my life, but I'm not happy about it

> She began to climb in, but before her foot could touch the rim of her last hope, the floor
> gave way. Optimus fell, the blast propelling him out into the dark void as he began to lose
> consciousness, falling into a stasis lock.

Dan: [Prime] I'm glad I was in this scene, I really felt like I contributed.

Rebecca: [Shepard] How do you like it, teapot?

> "No!" Shepard cried, but suddenly she too was shot up, the magnetic lock her boots had on the
> ground giving way to the raw force of the explosion.

> Quickly acting, she slammed her fist on the holographic activation button, sealing the pod. Joker
> screamed and banged on the door, trying to open it for her, but he could only watch through a small
> slit as she gave her life to save his.

Dan: It's a real hero who would give their life to save Seth Green.

> It was so fast that her mind didn't register the explosion or the
> forces pulling her into space before she finally realized it.

Rebecca: [Shepard] Oh yeah, the ship's blowing up. Somehow I didn't notice.

> She floated around, watching the escape pods flee.

Tsuneo: The nameless extras are safe. That's what really matters.

> She smiled, knowing that she had saved them all. The reserve air tanks in her armor should feed
> her enough oxygen before the Alliance arrived to rescue-

> "What? No!" she screamed as she grabbed the leaking tube that fed her air, trying to keep it from
> letting oxygen seep out, but it was in vain.

Rick: And now she's floating in a most peculiar way

Rebecca [Shepard]: Now I'm going to die with that stupid song stuck in my head.

[Pause]

Rebecca [Shepard]: Ground control to Major Tom...

> She vaguely glimpsed Optimus' broken, burnt form falling down towards the planet, far more
> damaged than it was when he crashed onto Freedom's Progress.

Tsuneo: Being fair, he was in a ship at the time.

> This time, it was their end.

> "Help!"

Tsuneo: Nuh-uh. You're writing this on your own.

> A small family ran, they kept running from the lights.

Dan: Generally you try not to go towards the light.

> It was only several hours ago when the ships

> appeared, large and bulky carrying pirates and slavers.

Dan: They had to make sure to keep themselves separated and not to get mixed up.

Rick: You'd feel so stupid slaving while everyone around you was engaged in piracy

> They had come right before dawn, striking when everyone was waking up.

Tsuneo: They like to get their pillaging done first thing in the morning

> The small family managed to get in a vehicle and drive out of the

> colony, but they had been shot at. With their only means of escape incapacitated, the father took his

> wife and daughter and ran for the nearby tree line.

Rick: Only to find that it was full of Ents

> The pirates followed in their gunships, flashing lights across their prey and the forest as well as the

> mountainous region beyond.

Dan: We should really look into a cost-benefit analysis for rounding up this small family.

> A single pirate shot, managing to make the husband trip in surprise.

> Soon the wife and daughter were struggling against the slaver's grips as the father was being

> prepared for execution.

Rebecca: I am deeply invested in the fate of father, wife and daughter

> "No!" they screamed as they aimed their gun, but before a single shot could be fired, something

> happened.

Tsuneo: A woman screamed, a shot rang out, a pirate ship appeared on the horizon.

> A loud cracking was heard, the cracking of wood. Everyone turned to stare at the forest as

> something moved through it. The forest was not known for its animals, only small woodland

> creatures ventured through it.

Rebecca: The chipmunks are attacking!

> This particular tree line was dense, very dense and so nothing much

> could be seen, but brush and tree trunks.

Rick: Well what do you know, it was Ents after all.

Dan: I did not see that coming

> "What is that noise?" a pirate questioned as they stared in confusion.

> The gunships aimed their lights on the forest, but saw nothing. They returned their spotlights to the

> group of men and women on the ground as they themselves pointed the flashlights of their weapons

> at the trees.

Dan: Wait, your captives are still armed?

Rebecca: They are not very good slavers.

> "Wait, what's that?" another asked as their lights gleamed off a metal plate.

> It was colored grey, not clear like steel,

Tsuneo Steel, well known for being clear

> but darker.

Rick: It was darker than dark steel, but not as dark as burnt iron

- > They searched around the metal plate, but saw nothing as the brush surrounded it.
- > "Hey! Over here!" another shouted as they eyed another metal plate.
- > They continued to find more until one of them gasped, shaking in fear as they saw something above
- > the tree line.

Dan: This is suddenly much more interesting than their captives.

Rick: I mean come on, you get to raid and pillage every day, but this is a random metal plate! That's awesome, right?

- > Their lights slowly moved up a long metal... something. It was lined with what seemed
- > like wires and large circular devices that seemed to be gears because they slowly rotated.

Tsuneo: Gears, the only thing that rotates

- > Eventually, the lights arrived at a single burning red sun that was an eye.
- > Every single pirate and slaver slowly backed up as the creature reared its head, two ruby red eyes
- > burning with primal and savage rage.

Rebecca: Primal and savage rage? That's a lot of rage

- > Releasing a roar, it charged forward at them.

Rick: And that's how Miranda got a hold of Shepard's body.

- > The gunships opened fire as did the pirates, but their weapons had little effect against the creature.

Tsuneo: Now he just needs to say "overshield" and it will be any fight in this fic at all.

- > It tore them apart, grabbing one in its mouth, another crushed under a three toed foot, and yet
- > another pirate burned alive as it breathed a condensed stream of fire that plumed into a cloud of
- > searing flames and hot smoke.

Dan: Another victim of Trogdor the Burninator!

- > "Dinosaur!" the little girl of the small family cried out in joy as it tore apart the mean men.

Rebecca [Girl]: Yay, slaughter is fun!

- > She recognized the prehistoric saurian of her people's home world in its ancient age.

Tsuneo: And could think of no logical reason why an alien robot who had never been to Earth would assume that shape.

- > The age when giant creatures roamed the land, hunting for meat or vegetation.

Tsuneo: During the Mesozoic period there were some very crafty and cunning cabbages

- > The family could only watch in fear
- > and awe as the mechanized saurian decimated the pirate forces.

Dan: We're saved? I guess?

- > The gunships' weapons were more effective than the simple guns carried by the pirates and
- > slavers. However, to the Cybertronian brute, it did little to effect him as he pounced up and gripped

> a gunship with his mouth.

Rick: Hunting helicopter gunships, much like the Tyrannosaurus did millions of years ago

> The dagger like teeth easily sliced through the metal hull and with a mighty chomp,

Tsuneo: If something's biting your gunship in half, you're probably as much to blame as anyone.

> he tore out a chunk of the ship. He breathed another plume of fire and effectively

> decimated the pirates

Tsuneo: He efficiently killed a tenth of them

> before turning his attention to the small family.

Rick: Where's Jeff Golblum with a road flare when you need him?

> They cowered under his hungry glare, but the daughter was curious. She got out of her parent's

> loose grasp and walked up to the robotic dinosaur's head, much to the fear of her parents. They

> screamed at her, but were too afraid to get her, however, they didn't need to.

> Even in this state of pure savage nature, Grimlock could tell the little sparkling was no threat to him

> nor was she an adequate kill.

Rebecca: He can't be bothered killing the small child is not a heroic trait

> He vented, letting a small cloud of smoke and a lot of hot air spew out

> of his mouth before turning at the sound of gunfire. He could hear the colony under attack, but he

> wasn't going to save it, he was going to raze it.

Tsuneo: So the good news is that you escaped the pirates and slavers. The bad news is that a robot dinosaur destroyed your home anyway.

> It's been a long time since he had crashed onto this world. He had been able to repair his wounds,

> but in time he had come to call this world his domain, his kingdom

Dan: Dinosaur with a kingdom, huh? Well as long as there's no pointless clone girls...

Rick: Well, there is Clone Shepard.

Dan: God damn it.

> and no one would invade it.

> Here we go

> The start of ME2

Rebecca: Time to import your character code

> So Optimus is going to get a new body

> I'm not sure if I should go with the G1 remodel or the AOE version

Rick: How about Combat Hero Optimus instead? He's got an air pump missile launcher.

> I'm leaning towards the G1, but AOE had a pretty awesome look to it

Dan: I could go for the elaborate, highly detailed modern design with a vague knightly aesthetic, or I could go for the rectangular block. Hard call.

> Anyways

Rick: That's the main priority in this fic. Also, there's someone called Shepard or something...

> I'd love some feedback

> So, I'll see you later

> Review, Favorite, and Follow

> Lord Revan Flame, signing out

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On that final comment, the big screen turned off, reverting the world back to prose format. "And that was the series of explosions that constituted the third and fourth chapters of After Cybertron," Tsuneo considered. "A fic that considered being a crossover but didn't quite commit to it."

"Gotta agree with you there," Dan nodded. "I mean, I know we joked about Shepard doing nothing in the previous part, but this really did drive it home this time round."

"No arguments at all," Rebecca agreed. "The fic went out of its way to put Optimus Prime at the front and centre of the scene at all times. Every scene is about him; Shepard is just there for set dressing and to make the occasional, largely irrelevant decision."

"Having Prime effortlessly stomp Sarren pretty much summarises the fic," Rick added.

"And it's not just Shepard's role in the fic that Prime's usurped," Tsuneo offered. "Every single inspiring leader trait and moment that she's supposed to have has been stripped from her and handed off to him."

"It doesn't help at all that the fic constantly gushes about how amazing and inspirational and heroic Prime is," Dan shrugged. "All the while having Shepard basically just stand there and go 'I'm with him'."

"In some ways, this is a problem of the fic's own making," Rebecca considered. "Optimus Prime and Shepard, at least Paragon Shep, are in many way similar characters. Heroic, inspirational, charismatic war leaders who are served as much by their skills and experience as they are force of personality."

"So it's in effect doubling up on them," Dan nodded.

"Right," she agreed. "The problem here is that the fic doesn't even try to balance the two. It instead gives all those traits to Prime alone, while reducing Shepard to a wacky sidekick."

"Not that the fic's doing well with this otherwise," Tsuneo noted. "Case in point, the whole Citadel battle sequence. This is supposed to be a desperate, hold the line moment with Shepard being forced to make a hard decision and weighing lives."

"But it's not," Rick nodded.

"Exactly. Instead a bunch of Autobots show up and effortlessly trash the Geth fleet," he explained, "Taking any hint of tension from the situation while ensuring that the impact of that hard decision is minimised."

"And I suspect this will continue to be a thing going forward," Dan finished. "Especially as that last chapter basically ensured that Optimus will be there in the middle of the story for Mass Effect 2."

"Well I can tell that you're all super invested in the fic," the Voice cut in to the conversation.

"I'd say we're less invested as we are annoyed," Rebecca replied.

"Fantastic," the Voice continued without missing a beat. "So I'm sure you'll all be excited for the third part next time."

"In as far as it will be over, sure," Tsuneo finished.

"In that case, I'll see you all later," the Voice beamed as it finished.

"Well that was a thing that happened," Dan sighed. "We're really never going to get an actual Mass Effect fic, are we?"

"Consider the fics we get anyway," Rebecca replied. "Would you really want a Mass Effect fic that wasn't a stupid crossover?"

He paused a moment. "Probably not, no."

Author's notes:

I won't say that a Transformers/Mass Effect crossover is a bad idea in and of itself. I will say that there are far better way that this could have been done than this fic.

With that being said, I have spent a lot of time hunting for actual Mass Effect fic, but my results have so far been very much limited due to the factors described earlier. The dream is to find something that hits that sweet spot of goofy and a functional length while not being too painful for words. And if it has either a goofy OC or an over the top 'author pet' Shepard, it'd be just perfect. None the less, I continue to hunt for them. You never know what we might find.

Next time, meet the OC love interest. You knew this was going to happen.

Transformers is copyright Hasbro

Mass Effect copyright Electronic Arts/BioWare

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

Questions? Comments? Complaints? Some person called Shepard? Email us at elmerstudios00 (at) gmail.com and register your Jeff.

The Elmer Studios Blog
<http://elmerstudios.blogspot.com.au>
Elmer Studios MSTings, commentary, random thoughts and other stuff

Elmer Studios!
<http://www.heavens-feel.com/elmer/>
All of Elmer Studios' Classic MSTings, random DELTA Invasion Episode Generator and other stuff in one spot

> "Dinosaur!" the little girl of the small family cried out in joy as it tore apart the mean men.