

Transformers: Game of Thrones or Vosian Flashpoint

Frozen comets filled the skies over Vos as Cybertron passed through the orbit cloud of a small system in one of the bands of a nameless spiral galaxy. Aria Pax looked up from her balcony as she watched the tiny balls of ice batter away at the energy shield that protected their planet, and its three moons. It was a welcome distraction from the affairs of state that occupied all the halls of the towers of their small city-state. It was small, but it extended forever skyward, twisting and turning into itself, a latticework of iron and steel.

Her adopted city was better described as a canopy in some great aviary on one of the organic worlds they passed in their eternal voyage through the universe. The flying denizens only walked when their destination could not be reached by air.

She glanced down the stalks of the nearest building, and shivered to think what could be lurking down in the glowing floor below. It was filled with the masses recently stirred up by the political debates in Iacon and her consort's new ally. They were screaming for something, demanding something, but all Aria Pax wanted was the peace and the comfort of her own position. Her brother, Orion was the new Prime. The people should be content with that much.

Instead, she was forced to listen to the constant commentary on the vids. It was the young, boisterous repair-bot Ratchet that was the loudest that night in the council chambers. She grimaced to think how much Orion listened to his prattle.

"It has become painfully clear," his warbling voice came through the speakers. "That this thug, who has demanded change or else, is nothing more than a mere... Decepticon. His desires will lead us to that 'or else' and war!"

She could hear the sarcasm dripping in his voice, the sneer that would have been on his face as he inwardly chuckled at his own pun.

"I am a Decepticon, you say?" The other orator replied with his own sneering, gravelly voice. "If you think I am just a deceiver, then I will wear it as a badge of honor! If it is a war you want--"

Megatron was ever so dramatic, she shook her head and leaned over the rail.

The sound snapped off, "Aria, you shouldn't be out here by yourself."

She looked back to see Thundercracker standing in the doorway. Cautiously, he walked closer to her.

"If I am not safe in our own tower, I should take the sparklings from Iacon

and go to one of the colonies.”

His blue gauntlet wrapped around her lavender and rose arm, it held the lightest, tenderest of squeezes. “It’ll be safe. You know how these things go.” He shrugged slightly, standing even closer. “He’ll get bored with this game of rebellion soon enough.”

“Game?” She asked, leaning into Thundercracker, her consort’s trinemate. He was bonded to Starscream and Skywarp tightly enough that they were practically her consorts as well, and she loved each of them. She needed his confidence, however. His strength. “Going against the way of things and the will of a Prime is not a game. The Elite Guard will only tolerate so much before they come knocking on our door.”

“The Decepticon’s are just a political party,” he maintained. “We’re just trying to bring reforms.”

“Reforms?” Aria pulled away, aghast. “We?”

Her optics widened when she saw the purple brandings on his wings.

“Oh, Thundercracker,” she wanted to breakdown to forget the sight.

“Like them?” He laughed. “Skywarp came up with them. We’ve all got them now.”

“You were Elite Guard.” She looked down, unable to look at the two empty eyes that were in the symbol. She still touched them before touching her own Autobot symbol that she proudly wore as a member of the dynasty of Paxes that were the current line of Primes. “You were so proud.”

“Why does that gladiator hold so much sway over you three?” She shook her head. She could almost feel a crack developing in her spark casing, even if such a thing wasn’t possible.

“He has good ideas,” Thundercracker shrugged. His hand swept out towards the balcony. “Their voices need to be heard. The people are desperate for more energon, for better upgrades. If you look down, you’ll see there isn’t much space left of this hunk of metal we’re on.”

“So then what?” She folded her arms. “We can seed more colonies.”

“But your brother won’t let us!” Thundercracker frowned.

“My brother...” She shook her head before raising her chin in protest. She was Aria Pax, and even with a lover, she must behave as much. “The Seekers can leave whenever they’re ready.”

"Is that how it is, then?" He asked, stalking away back into the apartment.

"No," She shook her head. "It's not that simple."

"There's a system here with two perfectly good planets we could settle."

"With organic life, Thundercracker," she countered. "You know we must not disrupt that."

He threw up his hands, even as she followed him.

"Please, don't do this." Her smaller gauntlet reached for the back of his. She tried to nestle herself into his arms.

"Certainly, Aria," he held her for a long moment. She wished it could last for a vorn.

"I just don't trust Megatron," she said quietly. Increasingly, she was glad her sparklings were away in Iacon with her family so they would not be polluted by all this filth.

"We'll hold him to his word," He promised.

"You're underestimating him. He left scrap in the ring from fighters who underestimated him, and now everyone else is. He just wants everything for himself, and we'll all be left floating in space when he's through. He's Unicron spawn."

"Unicron spawn?" The same voice from the vid asked as he strode into the room. He chuckled with contempt.

"Yes," she spat out, pulling away from Thundercracker. "Nothing but a thug with a faster processor than everyone else. You belong dealing in faulty upgrades in the pits."

She glared into the glowing red eyes of his helm, close enough to feel the exhaust from his coolant system. "You're a pretender. You'll kill us all before this is over."

"I was going to thank you for your hospitality, Lady Aria," Megatron replied.

He stepped away before leaving the room, laughing.

"What has he gotten us into?" She asked Thundercracker.

"He's just rough around the edges," he replied. Even she could detect the

forced hope. He continued, "Aria, I did only come to tell you that General Soundwave will be joining us for later for our energon repast."

"General Soundwave?" She looked down, having heard some of his reputation. "The Pacifier?"

"And Shockwave will be joining us as well," He added, letting the heartless general go.

"A friendly face, at least." Shockwave was the civil administrator for Tam, and a constant visitor as she matured from a protoform with Orion. Perhaps, he could convince Starscream to boot the interloper?

"Very well, I will endure," she said, at last.

"General, Administrator," Aria greeted their guests, showing to their places before the recharging station. Seven connecting cables snaked their way from device in the center of the room. She gave Administrator Shockwave a warm smile.

"Aria," The great, purple bot embraced her. "I am glad you are looking so well."

"Yes," Her hand touched shoulder. "Please, a nano-cycle, Administrator."

"Certainly," His single optic lit up as it focused on her. Like many of his cast, his mouth seemed underdeveloped. However, Aria had been made to understand from an early age that it was from the vast amounts of time they spent interfacing with computer systems that webbed their way through their world. It was always slightly disconcerting how their evolutionary paths diverged between the models. The Seekers in Vos had flight. The bots from Tam such as Soundwave and Shockwave were still very much rooted to the computer systems that spawned them. They liked to claim that they were Cybertron.

Aria was never so sure.

"Something must be troubling you," Shockwave observed.

"Yes," Her eyes darted towards the doorway as Megatron entered. The others turned to regard him. She looked away before the great, gun metal gray bot could notice her attention.

"Ah, your recent guest," he replied.

"Yes, him." She scowled. "I can not tolerate the affect he has had on our

clan.”

“He does have a certain uncouth, and strangely, magnetic personality.”

“I want him out!” She hissed in near hysteria. “He should be melted down like the defective machine he is.”

“Our Prime does not think so, my dear,” Shockwave replied. “A little subroutine of mine informed me that they have been meeting in secret for some time now, debating the terms of a new Cybertron.”

“Surely not,” Aria’s optics widened. “Behind Ratchet’s back?”

“Naturally,” Shockwave smirked. “If you would take the time to go into the streets, you will see there do need to be some changes.”

“Some changes,” She agreed.

“But what he is calling for is....” She shook her head in amazement. “I think we both know he means for war, and my brother is not safe trusting him. How come no one can see the lust for the Matrix in him?”

“Because, Aria,” Shockwave smirked. “Your vision is filtered by love and duty. However, everyone else on Cybertron lusts for the same thing.”

“Which is?” She wondered.

“The Matrix of Leadership whispering to them inside their own chest,” Shockwave replied slyly. “This Megatron will never possess it for long if he obtains it.”

“Why?” Her eyes were horrified by the thought. What was worse, Orion might simply give it to him: he was always that sort of bot.

“Those who live by the blaster, die by the blaster,” Shockwave reminded her. “A usurper will only prove it is possible to take it, my dear, and that usurper will only find others willing and more adept at taking it for themselves.”

“Like whom?” She stepped away, glancing at General Soundwave.

“No, never him, sparkling,” Shockwave’s optic glistened with amusement.

“Shall we begin?” Starscream’s voice rose over the conversation.

Not the Administrator too. Aria backed away, unsettled as she watched all those assemble. The crack in her spark widened as she could feel the treasonous undercurrents rolling underneath her.

"My love," She smiled meekly to Starscream loud enough for the whole room to hear. She glanced at Thunderscracker, feeling pained at what must be done. She had done her best to love all three of them with her entire spark, but she had greater responsibilities. "I do not feel well, and I worry I might spoil the energon pot."

"Never," Thunderscracker stood from where he had already been sitting and hooked up with the cabling connected to his arm. He reached out for her.

"My apologies," She pulled away carefully and nodded to Soundwave and Shockwave, studiously avoiding Megatron.

She slipped carefully from the room, before anyone else could object. Starscream watched on, his own optics wide.

She headed straight for her rooms, sealing the doors behind her. They were set to open at only her own personal command. She was being irrational, she told herself over and over again. Every bot has their own treasonous thoughts. Thoughts were not a crime. They were just thoughts and desires. None of them had done anything to prove disloyalty to the Prime and the council.

Her processors slowed as she gathered her wits from her overclocked panic. There were still things she could do. She had little doubt that if given half the chance alone with him, the gladiator would rip out her brother's spark chamber for sport. Orion had never been much of a fighter, nor a particularly good one in the sparing ring. She'd seen the mangled remains Megatron has left in the arena up close during her younger days from the vids. She held little doubt that none of them were staged. His cleverness only had made his violence and brutishness all the more horrific. Poor Orion would never stand a chance, even with the elite guard surrounding them. If only Thundercracker would listen to her, or Shockwave, or anyone.

I must warn him! She thought, racing for her comm terminal. She plugged in, feeling the network connections tickle as they raced through all the handshake protocols. Within an optic blink, she was using her own passwords to access her brother's secure link.

"Miss me?" His smiling blue face asked inside her internal displays. She kept watch on the doors and windows in the world around her. "Or are you worried about how we're spoiling your sparklings?"

"Orion--"

"Optimus," He said, nodding to himself as if he was still accepting it on his

own. "I am Optimus now."

"Brother, we don't have time for this," She pleaded. "I have news."

She stopped, realizing she had not decided how to explain it. All she had were vague warnings and suspicions. There was nothing to warrant what she knew must be done. She should have stayed and listened and played the fool.

"Has Lord Starscream discovered a cure for his screechy vocalizer?" Prime asked.

"What?" She blinked. "No, I'm afraid for your life."

"Oh," He smirked. "Is that all? There are threats all the time. Why yesterday, some fool bot tried to storm the citadel on his own, but Ironhide had him handled and turned to scrap before he could get anywhere near us."

"This is different..." She sighed. "You cannot trust Megatron. You should not let him anywhere near you."

"I can handle myself, I am Prime now."

"Yes, but..." She looked around her room as her door alarms were buzzing. "It's Starscream, I have to go."

"Aria?" He asked, concerning starting to sweep in past his facade.

"I have to go," She stood. "I will reach you as soon as I can. I will take ill soon and be forced to see my sparklings. Prepare for a shuttle to meet me."

"Very well," Optimus frowned before the link went dead. She stared for several processor cycles as she was firewalled off. She looked over the coding, realizing that it was of a type from Tam and not one of the internal ones. A shiver went down her spinal shaft. It contained the cool, intelligent malevolence of one of General Soundwave's pet programs that swarmed a world before he invaded it. Had Starscream authorized such a thing? Did it matter anymore?

Carefully, she disentangled herself, certain she had not been invaded by Soundwave herself. She removed the connecting spike from her arm, and set it aside. She ignored the pings of Thundercracker and Skywarp as they requested to be allowed in through the front door. Nothing from her consort, however. It was almost disappointing.

How was she to get out? How was she to get to Iacon safely? She could only hope and wait. Optimus had to understand. She looked at her balcony and sighed. If she could get as far as Praxus, she might be safe. First, she would have to leave her self-imposed prison.

She reached out for Thundercracker. Words failed her, but her desire for him to help her fled out of her communications link. Her optics widened as she realized they were going nowhere. The firewall was total and immense. She had only her own, internal sensory data to rely on. She had never felt so limited, so small.

"Aria," Starscream's voice called out as he stepped over her balcony. She scowled as she realized she had forgotten to lock it. She also wished she had listened to Elita's advice and brought more of their own guards instead of letting love purely guide her. Still, Starscream would never hurt her.

"What is going on?" She asked, going to him, playing the dutiful consort even if her faith had completely fallen away.

"I was about to ask you the same," He said, giving her a worried look.

"What have you allowed them to do?"

"This is for your own good," Starscream placed a hand on her shoulder.

"My own good?" She stepped away, standing straighter with a proud scowl. "I am a Pax, Lord Starscream. I decide my own good."

"Aria," His optics widened. "Aria, no."

"I am going to Iacon, and if you continue this foolishness with that cretin, I am taking our sparklings."

"Aria, no, wait," He held out his arm to reach for her.

"You will not stand in my way, Lord," She glared into him.

Her door slid open finally and Megatron swaggered in.

"Problem?" Megatron asked, watching them.

"Leave us," Starscream commanded. "Wait outside the door. This is a family matter."

"If you say, Lord," he chuckled, even as the other two trinemates nudged Megatron out the door.

"He must go. You must end this!" Aria pushed Starscream away, sending him back. He staggered, his blaster discharging.

She stared back at him before dropping to her knees. She looked down at

the hole in her chest where her Autobot symbol had been.

"Star," She whispered before collapsing.

Starscream watched while the light went out in her optics, stunned. He looked to Megatron, then his own blaster.

"That should never have happened," He whispered.

"What in the All Spark?" Thundercracker said, racing in. He looked at Starscream, then at Aria's lifeless body. He glared at Megatron.

"A little spat, apparently," Megatron laughed. "One that seemed to have worked itself out."

Starscream knelt over her as Thundercracker put a hand on his trinemate's shoulder.

"She wasn't herself," Thundercracker said, hoping it would be enough to justify whatever happened, and whatever was about to happen. He looked at Megatron, his optics narrowing dangerously. He felt coding slip into place to prevent him from taking a potshot at Megatron. His own software fought against it until he was finally lost to it.

He looked to Skywarp's face, seeing the same emotions war it out. The space around him crackled as he began to warp, but it faded quickly.

"Well, if you ninnies aren't going to do anything," Megatron said, picking up her small body into his arms. He sneered. "Someone has to."

He carried her towards the balcony railing, and waited for enough people to see. He dropped her over the side, letting her fall to the fathomless depths below. "Good work, Soundwave," He whispered to the small bot that was hovering in front of him, recording the whole thing for the vids.

"It shouldn't have done that," Starscream whispered himself to Thundercracker. "I should never have been able to fire inside."

"I know," Thundercracker watched Megatron impassively.

"We will have to tread carefully from now on."

"Yes," The other Seeker agreed, letting his rage simmer.

"We will have our revenge," Starscream added.

"You were asking which planet we should seed with nanites," Starscream

said, watching Megatron himself through hatred filled optics. The way was becoming clear before him. "The smaller one, the red, fourth one."

"I'll prepare it. There'll be no one to stop it," Thundercracker agreed reluctantly. They might not have full control over their bodies, but their will seemed to be firmly in place. There were just things that could not be hacked by another's coding. "Hopefully."

"Use that pirate trine," Starscream whispered.

"Very well," Thundercracker stood up finally and folded his arms.

"Well, now we wait for the Elite Guard to arrive," Megatron smiled. "I could not have planned this better myself. I can trust I can count on your aid, Starscream?"

"Of course, Megatron," He stood up, filing his grief away for another time. "We are at your disposal."

"Skywarp, Thundercracker," Starscream stood next to Megatron and grinned. The menace falling into place like a death mask. "Prepare our fliers."

They both bowed, Thundercracker shooting from the balcony, Skywarp disappearing into a cloud of vaporized ions.

"Good, the militias of Tam will be here in hours."

"Of course," Starscream gave him the slightest of bows, secure in the knowledge his own plots were already in motion. He smirked even more broadly when he heard the crack of thunder over Vos as Thundercrack released his rage. The Seekers would survive beyond them all.

And then centuries pass....