

Preface

So I decided as I began this next batch of stories to stop copying the original prefaces as they had very little to do with my thoughts at this stage.

However, I feel this one may be important.

PREFACE

I regret having to write this story, but I guess there comes a time for everything. You will understand this later on in the story.
Why do people die? Why do people forget? I don't know, but I must say that even my best friends forget me now and then. They also can be there when you need them or don't need them. But a true friend is someone that doesn't care what you are, or what you do, and will try to be there when you need them.
In the next few stories the Zapbots will take some unexpected turns in life. I'm sorry that one of my friends will have to die permanently (that means I won't bring him back). But I also must introduce other friends to my story in order to keep the tradition going.
I would like to thank all my friends, past, present and future for keeping my dream alive. I pray that someday the world will know my Zapbots, and you....
And so we transform once again...

This story was originally written when after about a year of attempting to get someone to recognize me completely failed. We had stopped talking to each other and my feelings were immensely hurt. This combined with tremendous stress from my family, my idiotic religion and dealing with my suppressed feelings, I had to find a way to let this pain go and move on. As such this story was probably the one thing that helped me with that grieving process.

If you've been reading these revamped stories in order, the death of Matt happened back in the Reality story. I had to do this because too many of the stories were centered around someone I did not care for anymore and I did not want to constantly revisit his memory. At the time I wanted to provide that outlet for someone else to fill the role and decided a fictional person would work for whomever would become 'the one.' In hindsight that might have been a mistake, but that was the course I started and we are sticking to it. I will say that is one of those situations where you write yourself into a corner and then you have to find a way out which I don't mind because it allows you to find new avenues of writing.

Thus this story provides a different route to take than original conceived. I will say I am quite pleased with the way this revision turned out.

Anthony S. Anselmo

Back in Time

Part 2

By Anthony S. Anselmo

Chapter 1

"Master's Personal Log - Stardate, 2004.123 After receiving a distress call we are heading back to Gearatron space to investigate. It has been a crazy last few days as my world... no Universe seems to be changing every minute. A few days ago we successfully stopped an attack on Earth from the Nonocon known as Secretish. He had put together an elaborate plot to destroy me or use me; in some way to combine the two Matrixes. Thankfully we thwarted his plan. We have been unable to locate his presence anywhere near Earth or space since.

"After some time to recover from my wounds we are making the trip back to Gearatron to investigate a distress call from the entrance to the sector. My... companion Mike has agreed to come along as well as my various other friends who are also on board. Through much effort and unneeded worry we've come to the conclusion to allow him to remain with me as it has become evident that we have feelings for each other.

"It has been a strange journey I will say, as we've pulled away our efforts from Earth. It seems the situation there is not going well, but at this point there is nothing we can do. We started with some basic technology to help them build ships to explore the galaxy and such. When we found out the corruption behind the world governments it left me no choice but to pull away. As such everything space wise has turned into a complete mess.

"Regardless I have decided to keep an eye on my home world just in case something does happen that improves the situation. In the meantime life goes on, on Misslemax."

"Approaching the sector," replied Boaty as I sat in my once again rebuilt Shortstop form on the Fortress Misslemax bridge. I lost count how many times my Shortstop body was rebuilt or reformatted, repaired.

It was a standard traveling day on Fortress Misslemax. The crew was all performing their regular duties. On the bridge, Botimus Prime, Boaty, Flier, Flash, Scan, Hightone and Speedy were all with me as usual, helping me trying to figure out what was going on at the far end of the Universe.

Fortress Misslemax sped along at warp speed through the confines of space. The stars from distant galaxies and worlds sped past us as we headed back towards our home sector, as we received a distress call from an Earth ship.

"Begin scanning.. Scan." I said smiling at the chief science officer. Scan made a face as he hated when I did that with his name.

"Master, it appears to be an Earth cargo ship," replied Flash pointing at the view screen while pressing buttons on his panel.

"On screen," I said.

Up on the view-screen came one of the newly created Earth transport ship. A long boxy ship, the shape of two square sides, with a middle part that was just a bit smaller. It

looked like three rectangular boxes held together with several engines on the back and a circular bridge on the top. With a green glow from the ceramic hull combined with multiple windows for viewing it was a display of modern Earth engineering.

As we slowed down to warp and got closer to the ship we instantly saw the situations. It was being held in space by a beam of some sort coming from a planet surface below.

"I'm picking up a faint signal from the ship Master," replied Hightone.

"On screen," I replied.

"HELP!" cried the ship's Captain. A tall African-American male with grey hair yelled with a frustrated voice. I could barely make out the communication through the static that was being sent from the damaged ship. "If you attempt to remove us it will destroy us!" replied the Captain.

"Captain this is Ambassador Shortstop of the Fortress Misslemax. Can you explain what happened?" I asked.

"They tricked us to lower our shields and now we are caught in their tractor beam!" replied the Captain.

"Who tricked you?" I asked.

"The Gongos!"

The Gongos were a race of reptile like creatures combined with technology to replace their body parts. A bi-pedal form, you could equate them to giant lizards that matched a normal Zapbot size of things. A running jokes with us because they never posed any real match for Zapbot technology, still they were a nuisance we had to deal with from time to time.

"Master I am receiving a faint message from the base on this planet," stated Hightone from his communications stations behind my chair. Up on the view-screen came the scaly monstrosity.

"You have invaded our territory. Leave or we will capture you just as we did this ship!" replied the scaly face with two large kermit the frog like eyes.

"You have no designation in this sector!" I replied. "Surrender or face destruction!"

The transmission stopped and the screen returned back to the ship being held in the tractor beam.

"Speedy, fire some warning shots at the planet below and see if they take heed," I replied.

"Yes sir," Speedy said punching some items on his screen. An array of lights fired down to the planet's outer atmosphere. We waited patiently but received no answer.

"Boaty can you located the Gongos' base?" I asked.

"I believe I have the general region from where the tractor beam is coming from. We should be able to safely disengage it from there," Boaty replied.

I nodded to Botimus on my left and he began to put immediately put together a ground team. Iron, Carry-On, Pick-Up, Terrain, Alert and my Headmaster Friends Twirl (Jeremy), Windshield (David) were all called for deployment from his com-station.

Carry-On was sitting with his brother Pick-Up in their decorated brownish quarters. On the wall were various pictures of the numerous planets they had visited over the past few years.

The two Zapbots had become somewhat known for their musical interests, as they had learned the ancient human skills of playing instruments. Pick-Up the keyboard and Carry-On

the guitar, they had traveled to various other planets in the universe entertaining beings of all alike. So on the wall of their quarters hung the photos of the various places they had traveled.

However at this particular moment Carry-On the cantankerous of the two was bored. He sat at his desk looking and the monitor display trying to figure out why his computer program wasn't compiling. He checked all the variables and ran over it three times. He knew he hadn't typed it in wrong because general Zapbots don't make mistakes on computers, unless... that is they let their emotions get in the way of their thinking. The computer checked and scanned the code and indicated no spelling errors. Carry-On wondered how much of his frustration was getting in the way of his logic.

He let out a sigh and sank into his chair. His brother Pick-Up seemed to notice his discomfort.

"Relax bro, you look like you got run over by a female Nonocon." said Pick-Up.

"I know, I know, there is just nothing to do here!" Carry-On replied. Which was true to him at least. He had programmed all the hollow suite programs he could think of and was bored of it. At least Misslemax wasn't as small and cramped as it was before the retrofit. Still he wished for a larger part in the grand scheme of the Universe.

"May you need a new hobby," replied Pick-Up.

"I don't need to be any more like you!" replied Carry-On smirking. Pick-Up smiled at his brother's joke as he continued another of his hobby's... knitting. This was a human trait he had learned at the Programming Station on Gearatron. Although Zapbots had no real need for clothing or materials, he found knitting an enjoyable relaxation.

Yet Carry-On always complained and it seemed like nothing could satisfy the Zapbot. Pick-Up would fight with his brother from time to time, trying to get him to get out of the depression that he was constantly in. At one point he just gave up and went on with his life, regardless of what his brother thought.

At that time the red alert signal went off on the ship and the communication went to their console.

"Carry-On, Pick-Up please report to docking bay 1," said the speaker. The both got up and started for the door. Pick-Up put down his rug and followed his brother.

"Well it's about time we had some action," replied Carry-On.

"So *that's* all he needed, action?" thought Pick-Up.

We arrived to the planet's surface in our aerial vehicle mode and transformed into robot mode about a mile away from the Gongo base. The planet was very similar to Earth containing much foliage and greenery. As we approached the base there was no resistance as what we would normally expect.

"Master, according to my scanners there are only four Gongos in this complex," replied Flash.

"Only four?" asked Terrain.

This was an oddity and not our usual dealings with the reptile creatures. We entered the base walking carefully down the plain yellow hallways. We stopped at a corner and Iron looked around to find two guards near the entrance door. I gave him a signal and we came around the corner and struck the guards directly with stun rays. They crashed to the floor unaware at what happened.

Carry-On ran up to them and after checking to make sure they were disabled proceeded to try and move main door.

Or at least he attempted to. The door wouldn't budge.

"Hold on," Iron said as he went back down the hallway and disappeared. We heard of the sound of a transformation and then the sound of Iron in vehicle mode. We then saw him come down the hallway, run right into the door, splitting it wide open.

We proceeded to enter the dark room. The lack of illumination made us unaware of the breath or depth of the room. We switched our scanners to night vision. My Headmaster buddies strolled up to my side.

"What's going on here?" asked Twirl.

Suddenly the room shook, and the floor wavered with uncertainty. A loud sound of something big was walking and thusly coming out of the shadows. We turned our optic sensors to look and out of nowhere appeared a gigantic Gongo, larger than we had ever seen came out of the shadows.

"Shortstop, this doesn't make any sense, Gongo's are not this large!" replied Windshield.

Indeed this was odd, I fired my laser at the beast. It went right through the beast as if it wasn't there. We soon realized that it was a holographic image attempting to frighten us.

"A hologram? Really?" replied Pick-Up.

"Flash do you know..." I asked but was interrupted.

"Got it!" said Flash as he fired his weapon at the back wall. Suddenly the image disappeared and the lights came onto the room, as we could see it was some sort of generator that was now sparking from damage from Flash's gun.

"This is pathetic even for the Gongos," I remarked.

At the far side of the room was another door, which Iron proceeded to smash through as well. When we entered the destroyed metal, the Gongo I had seen previously on the view-screen was sitting behind a huge computer table. Behind him seemed to be a female version of a Gongo sitting on a bean bag of some type. The room looked like a combination of living quarters with a scientific lab. There was a sleeping area with a bed, something that resembled a bar and something that resembled a bathroom. The oddly brightly chromatic color scheme of the room with odd circular and triangular shapes made it very odd, like a kid's romper room.

"Please don't hurt us!" the male Gongo cried holding up his hands.

My Zapbots came up to the would-be prisoners as they relinquished themselves. Boaty and Flash went up to the computer console and began examining the information. I walked up to the computer screen and proceeded to reach out to the captain of the Earth ship

"Captain Willams this is Shortstop, I am going to overload the tractor beam generator to release you, but you will have to jump to warp within three seconds for safety!" I replied.

"Um okay!?" said the Captain over the scrambled feed.

"Just get ready to jump to warp on my mark..."

I pressed the screen and inputted a few commands to short circuit the tractor beam. In the background I could hear a hum starting to get louder outside.

"We're ready Master," replied Boaty.

"Captain... get ready NOW" I said.

The device outside of the station started to overload but set out a large power beam through its last connection. As it disconnected from the ship in space, a large ray came out

from below it on the same path. The device exploded with the human freighter jumping out of the way within seconds, putting them safely away from the dissipating beam.

As Terrain and Iron escorted the Gongs to their prison cell on Misslemax we started to review the data of what the station's purpose was.

"This was too easy," replied Twirl.

"Don't worry, not all of our missions will be this much fun," I replied.

"This doesn't make any sense, what were they doing here?" asked Botimus.

"It appears to be some sort of science station," replied Boaty. "I'm not sure what they were working on, but I'll have more information in a few hours after I un-encrypt these logs."

"Master, over here!" cried Pick-Up.

I walked over to what seemed to be a cage like area. Inside the cage was a human, a human boy chained to the wall. His body was severely dirty and his clothes barely hung on his apparently undernourished bones. He sat in a corner of his own feces hiding behind his arms.

My Headmaster friends and myself reverted to our X-O suit modes. The boy had blond hair, blue eyes, cuts in his face and bruises over his body. As we came up to the bars I ripped them off with my X-O suit and walked carefully into the cage. As we approached he sank more into the corner of the cage, obviously frightened.

"What's your name," David (Windshield) said.

The young boy said nothing.

"Are you all right?" I asked.

He kept covering his face and huddled more into the corner. I came closer to him and held out my hand.

"No one's going to hurt you!" I said. Shaking he grabbed my hand. David helped me cut the chains with a laser saw and we slowly led him out of the disgusting filth that was his prison. Jeremy transformed his Headmaster body into his jet mode and we carefully put him inside to be taken back to Misslemax.

Chapter 2

When both ships were safely in orbit I with Jeremy and David boarded the human ship in X-O suit form to greet Captain Williams. The Captain greeted us warmly as we proceeded to land into the human docking bay. The human ship looked exactly what you think a human ship would look like. A combination of modern design with human ingenuity. This meant that there were a lot of cables and storage containers lying around. A bit haphazardly to say the least. We flew to the loading dock in our X-O suit forms and landed gently on the new painted floor.

"Welcome aboard sir!" said Captain Williams.

"Permission to come aboard?" I asked.

"Permission always granted sir, I don't care what those stupid news stations say, you guys are the best! It's been rough for a while but we're still doing our best to create the next Space Force!" he replied.

"Is anyone hurt?" I asked.

"No one except my blood pressure," Captain Williams said laughing loudly. "Thank you for your assistance,"

"Not a problem at all." I replied.

"Let me show you around, say I heard you found a human on the planet below!"

"He's safely at sickbay as we speak. I'm having my team do a record search to find out who he is. He still hasn't said a word to us yet."

"It he okay?"

"Two broken ribs, and a couple of cuts, but otherwise seems intact. We are guessing he might have been abused. I can't figure out what a Gongo would want with a human. I shouldn't say kid, he's really a young adult around 20 some years in age. "

"Oh my!"

I received a sudden communication from Misslemax on my screen. Botimus came up on my optic sensors in a window.

"Master, we are ready to leave but Boaty would like to perform some additional analysis on the laboratory below," said Botimus.

"That's fine, just let me know when you are ready," I responded.

"Can I offer you a tour?" asked the Captain. I nodded to my friends who also recognized we had some extra time on our hands.

"Sure thing," I said.

The Captain took us to his turbo-lift which lead straight to the main bridge. With a whoosh of the doors we entered the bridge of the human spacecraft. Tan-ish walls met with fine fabrics lined the interior of the bridge, as it was created for all the creature comforts of home for a human crew.

The bridge crew stood notice for me as I entered the bridge, but a soft 'at ease' let everyone relax as they went back to their regular duties. The bridge was a standard design, three chairs for command, two chairs up front and numerous stations on the side for tactical and engineering.

"Well I must say you have a mighty fine ship here, Captain," I replied.

"Thank you sir. We are having a small get together with the crew in the cafe in about two hours if you are interested in joining us? A lot of the crew are recent graduates from the Academy!"

"I think I'd like that very much!" I replied

"Anthony, I think Mike might enjoy some human socialization," replied David.

"Not a bad idea, let's hang out with the humans in a bit," I replied.

"So when can I get a Headmaster unit?" asked Mike Quartz as we continued to socialize at the party. The clatter of the background served as white noise as I conversed with my close friends.

We had joined the collection of humans on the freighter for a small celebration. It had been a while since we had mingled with our own kind in a space type of arena. Even though relations with Earth were strained it felt good to be back with our fellow humans. As three X-O suited humans stood in the room, slightly elevated in size due to our armor, we engaged the crew as they continued to ask us numerous questions.

I explained as best I could the situation with the Earth government without giving away too many details. Each cadet realized how lucky they were to make this assignment as they were the first of many starships being built by the human Space Force.

Mike however was feeling neglected not having an X-O suit of his own. He felt like the fourth wheel to a party. I was trying to explain to him the procedure to become a Headmaster.

"Look it's a long process Mike. Jeremy and David took two years off school to get here, and then another four years of Air Force Academy on Earth. I'm not sure how we're going to do it now with everything a mess right now with Earth." I replied.

"Trust me man, it's a lot of hard work," replied Jeremy.

"Well, he's got us, we can probably help him out." replied David. I stopped him just before he began to go into a 'you can do everything with God,' speech.

As I was watching the conversations go on throughout the party, I received a hail from Roberta, Hightone's backup.

"Master, the child is coming around now," she said over the com.

"What do you mean coming around?" I asked.

"He's starting to talk according to Click," I said.

"Okay, we'll be there shortly." I responded.

"What's going on?" asked Mike.

"They kid's talking let's go," I replied. We sadly bid farewell to our gracious host and left the party to determine what was going on.

In the strange Gongo lab Boaty and Scan were running through the computer software. Up on the digital screens came the strange characters of the Gongo languages as they proceeded to convert it to digital bits and bytes. They had spent a good day trying to examine the strange Gongo base and the details behind its existence.

It was obvious that this place had no intention of ever being discovered due to the lack of security and armament. The fact that the humans came upon it was an extremely rare change due to the location of the sector and the planet. It really was out of the way of things. A lone class M planet rotations a single star. It really was out in the boonies.

Botimus walked into the room and up to Boaty. His orange body really fit the strange color scheme of the place.

"What do you make of it?" Botimus asked looking over Scan's shoulder.

"This stations appears to produce high energy outputs...." started Scan.

The bright vertical waves danced across the computer screen. Botimus was very puzzled has never seen anything like this before. He could tell Scan was enjoying the mystery and figuring out the puzzle.

"Does this wave match any known wave form we know of?" asked Botimus.

"Unfortunately not," replied Scan. "This is something we've never seen before. I've attempted to run this through our entire database of wave form cases."

Scan transformed into computer mode and engaged with the computer view wi-fi. He displayed several different results to Botimus to show me that the form wasn't even close to prior examples they had discovered.

"Okay let's try to this of this logically, simple logic Scan?" Botimus said.

"Well waves can produce several different types of results. Transmissions, frequencies, carrier waves, time ruptures..."

"What was that?" asked Boaty suddenly perking up on the other side of the room.

"Time ruptures?" asked Botimus. "Scan can you possibly compare this to any example of our data from our adventures with time travel?"

"One sec," said Scan computing the data on his screen. Botimus waited patiently for Scan to calculate with his multi-threaded super computer. Boaty came over to his science friend and watched as well.

"Scan, try to correlate spacial time distortion data with the output from the wave," said Boaty.

Scan reverted his programming with the new information. Scan determined to find the answer to the problem reverted all his concentrating to the issue. He was the most eager scientist in the Zapbot league and determined to prove it. He would only get flustered when the Tech Team was around. They would usually cause him some aggravation as he felt like he was always competing with them.

After a few minutes, Scan produced the wave on the screen and a small box indicated a 'match,' to some data.

"I think I've figured this out!" said Scan transforming back into robot mode.

Chapter 3

As we walked to the sickbay on Misslemax Mike was pestering me on information. He was especially annoying today but I understood he wanted to have more of a role with our team so I cut him some slack.

As we walked through the doors of human sickbay, David came up to me.

"I know this kid," said David.

"You do?" I asked.

"Yes, his name is John Melby. He disappeared several years ago from our school. The rumor was he was kidnapped, his family's been searching for him ever since."

"Okay... go on."

"Typical shy quiet type nerd. He's not talking to anyone but Click right now."

"Have Tiny notify his family, tell them we'll be home as soon as we're done with the investigation here."

David nodded and left the room. We walked over the table to see Click running some scans on John. He came up to us and carefully pulled us aside.

"We've repaired the broken ribs so he should be fine. Nothing else major but we'll keep an eye on him. ^{click}" responded Click.

"What did we know currently?" I inquired.

"All I know is he said 'big ship took me away.' that's it. I think he may have some physiological damage. ^{click}"

"So he's been abused," I replied.

"Probably, he required glasses so we replicated some for him. You can approach him but just be cautious. ^{click}"

I walked up to the medical bed, John laid on the bed, somewhat crumpling the sheets up to himself to use as a shield, covering most of his body except his head. I walked in slowly and switched off my X-O suit and sat down gently on the bed. The new glasses expanded his extremely blue eyes. He was cleaned up and bandaged since I last saw him. When I sat down on the edge of the bed he moved a bit away as if he was a scared lost puppy.

"Hi..." I said, not knowing what to say. I put on my best smile and tried to seem friendly. "John right? I'm Anthony, and this is my friend Jeremy. You are safe now, no one is going to hurt you."

He stared at me with puzzlement as if his brain was trying to figure out what to say. His changed his direction of his eyes to Jeremy, then back to me every few seconds.

"In about a week we'll take your home. Your parents are really worried and I'm sure they'll be glad to see you again." I replied.

He still said nothing, but was flicking his eyes between the two of us. I turned my head and motioned to Jeremy to leave. He gave me the typical 'why' eye and I just lip mouthed back to him 'please.' He shrugged and walked out of the room.

I turned back to John.

"You can talk to me. I want to help you anyway I can."

"Anthony..." he said softly.

"Yes?"

"I've...heard of you..." he replied.

"Oh?"

"Yeah everyone in our school knew of you and your adventures."

"Ah really" I said smiling as if I had broken through the barrier.

"When..." he started to talk and ended up putting his face into his hands and starting crying. I gently put my hand on this shoulder to try and provide some comfort. I gently took his two hands and put them in mine.

"John.... I'm here to help, it's okay!" I said.

He looked up from the tears and then reached out to hug me holding me extremely tightly.

"Thank you for saving me," he replied as he cried it out in my arms.

In my quarters I reviewed the medical records and situation for John. I saw that the Gongsos at some point during their infatuation of Earth had captured numerous human children, taking them to various science stations for research. As I read the report I felt an immense sadness for my failure to protect the Earth's children. It seemed no matter how much I tried to save the Universe things would always inheritantly go wrong.

I sipped my tea as I continued to scroll past the information on my pad. As Misslemax continued to float high about the planet with the stars gliding out past the window. I would pause every now and then to ponder my life and where it had arrived.

A sudden ring on the doorbell and I ushered the 'come in' command to unlock the door. Jeremy came walking in with John as he was helping him readjust to normal life.

"So how goes it?" I said putting down my tablet and standing up.

"He's got the whole tour of what I can provide. Superrobot set up a room for his to stay in until we get back to Earth." said Jeremy.

"You're welcome to the room or you can stay here," I replied. "I have a guest room down the hall." I responded.

John looked at me and gently nodded his head.

"Have you taken him to the holoreams yet?" I asked.

"Not yet figured you might want to show him that," Jeremy responded.

John stood there quietly shy, but looking much better in appearance. His face had returned color and his body looked more nourished. I pointed to the door and we exited my quarters, walking out of the garage and heading for the turbo-lift.

"So the holoreams are recreational areas where you can create holographic images that interact with you," I said to John as we rode the lift down.

"This place is so amazing," said John. "Way beyond anything I could ever of imagined."

"If you've seen it on a TV, it probably exists now," said Jeremy.

Suddenly the computer beeped and on the call speaker came Botimus.

"Master, Boaty and Scan have completed their investigation and are ready to report," he replied over the Com.

"Is it urgent Botimus?" I asked.

"No, it can wait. Just letting you know."

"I'll stop by in a bit. Anthony out." I replied.

The turbo-lift stopped midway to our destination. The doors opened and Mike was waiting there. He jumped on the lift with a bit of a strut to his walk. I could immediately tell something was bothering him.

"Hey Mike," I said. He nodded in my general direction somewhat looking at John.

We reached the end of the ride and exited to the human floor which contained all the holorooms. The human floor of Misslemax use to contain various human passengers, but with the advent of Misslemax becoming more of a battle-station and of course our withdrawal from Earth, we ended up assigning everyone to normal Earth ships. As such the human levels were barely used at this point.

We walked up to the large double doors and I tapped some information on the control panel. The holorooms could be programmed for anything, and sometimes even used to help provide relief to humans in times of special needs. I wasn't sure where John stood so I put in a simple forest program with a slight adventure in it to give him some encouragement.

The doors open and Mike sort of bumped his shoulder against mine. I looked at his eyes and could sense there was something he wanted to talk about.

"Jeremy go ahead and take John into the program. I'll be right with you." John and Jeremy walked into the program as I turned to Mike.

"Whats up?" I asked.

"You are!" He replied.

"I beg your pardon."

"You're spending a little too much time with this kid."

I was a bit taken aback at Mike. He if anyone was always willing to lend a hand to someone.

"Mike, I'm just trying to help the kid get back to normal." I responded

"You're forgetting who your real friends are!" Mike said starting to get a bit hot under the collar. I kept my cool.

"Mike, this kid has been through a traumatic experience. He needs our help! Besides you have homework to do if you want to become a Headmaster!" I replied.

"I haven't seen you all day!"

"Mike I've been busy. You know how these things go and how things are."

"You could have least stopped by and said 'hi' now and then."

I paused for a moment to realize the situation.

"Mike, you're jealous."

"I am not!" He snapped back.

"It's okay dear, you can let your defenses down I said." I pulled him closer to me and gently patted his forehead. "There is only one person I want to share my travels in the Universe with," I replied.

Mike calmed down a bit and then proceeded to turn around and walk back to his room. I could tell he was feeling a bit jealous over John. I had to admit I was surrounded by a cavalcade of good looking individuals. Not one was someone who I would kick out of my bed for eating crackers.

It had been a long journey with Mike, as we had been through a lot. After the first time I had rescued him from his hometown I was unaware of the journey we both would take, both psychically, mentally and emotionally.

Now many years later as the universe was strangely unhinged I found myself trying to balance the responsibilities of leading a planet of robots and having time to myself to give myself a much needed mental break. There were days when I just wanted to throw it all away. But I did that once and realized that no matter what happens, the universe always seemed to have a way of driving me in a specific direction.

I entered the program and proceeded to join Jeremy and John on the programmed adventure. As we progressed through John was continuing to come out of his shell, speaking a little and getting along with the three of us. What was once was a destroyed individual began to transform into an enlightened young adult.

As we walked upon the engulfed glades of the complete computerized landscape I felt like something was missing. I pressed a button on my com panel.

"Mike, come join us will ya," I said.

In a few minutes Mike came strolling into the program with a smile on his face. The program had a runtime that lead the journeyman through several puzzles to get to the finish line. As we ran like young men through the playful gardens Mike kept hot on my heels giving me a hard time. When we were alone he tackled me in the grass and soon passions started to flare again in the extremely blue sky on the perfectly created scenario.

Chapter 4

"It seemed so real," said John as we came out of the program.

"Believe me it wasn't," Mike replied.

"How does it work?" John asked.

"A computer reorganizes the atoms in the surrounding chamber and reconstructs the ions that..." I stated.

"Anthony," Mike interrupted "Don't confuse the kid, you're starting to sound like Boaty!"

"No really go on, I'm finding it interesting..." replied John.

I was big surprised at John's curiosity. Still I knew that I was probably boring the rest of my companions with my logical dissection.

"Well, if I went on I'd probably confuse you," I said yawning. My friends knew it was time to quit for the night.

"Well I'm heading to bed," replied Jeremy heading in the opposite direction.

"Alright I will see you tomorrow," I responded. As the three of us walked down the hallway I was checking with Mike.

"So have you given any thoughts to your Headmaster name?" I asked.

"Wirecutters!" Mike responded.

"Wire-cutters?"

"Wirecutters...."

I gave it a few and then agreed with his decision.

"Okay Wirecutters it is," I said. "Congratulations Headmaster Wirecutters!" I said.

As we walked to my garage I pressed the button to open the door. As Mike and John made themselves comfortable I went the closet to generate John some pajamas. Pressing another button the windows dimmed the outside light of the planet. The space-dock just outside my apartment gave a glow on the space, an eerily illusions of spooky purple.

"Can you leave one window open?" asked John. I left one of the windows in full view of the planet below. John continued to stare at the window. "I can't believe I'm here."

I tapped Mike on the shoulder to give him the 'get ready for bed' look as I was going to have to provide some explanation to John. But at the same time I had some questions. After he changed into his pajamas I sat down on the couch next to him.

"John I need to talk with you for a few," I said. I very delicately placed my words as I did not want to cause him any uneasiness.

"Sure about what?" he asked.

"What happened, how did you get kidnapped in the first place?"

He slowly sat down on the couch next to me in his pajamas and hung his head as if he was going to say the worst thing in the world. Finally after a couple of seconds he spoke.

"I can't explain it, but one night I was fooling around with my transistor radio and made contact supposedly with some aliens. The next night when I was outside the house waiting for the dog to do it's business a bright light flew right above me. Then...."

He paused and I slowly put my arm around him for comfort.

"It happened so fast, next thing I know I'm blinded by a white light and couldn't see. I see a giant hand grab me and start yelling me at a voice I couldn't understand, they were talking in tongues. The next thing I know I'm in some sort of container and that we're I've been for a long time."

He gently held my arms as he was starting to cry a bit. I had a feeling he needed to vent and this was something he needed to say to someone for a long time. I gently turned him towards me and proceeded to look him in the eyes.

"I can promise you, no one will ever hurt you again." I replied.

"I know... it just happened for so long, I never thought I got out. I was treated like someone's pet. I never thought I would get out and now that you are here I couldn't be happier!"

What happened next was unexpected and came out of nowhere, John reached out and suddenly his lips met mine. It completely knocked me out of my mind and what I'm sure what just a few seconds seems to literally stop time. When he retracted I was frozen in befuddlement.

"Ummm.... okay..." I said shocked.

Reverting back to my basic knowledge of psychology I was thinking this was a standard case of transference. When someone experiences a traumatic experience and then proceeds to develop emotions for someone that helps them.

At that point Mike walked in the room with his pajamas and I quickly recovered to hide anything that would cause an argument.

"Well I'm glad I could help John, so let's get to bed and we can figure out how to get you home tomorrow to see your family." I said tapping my knees and standing up.

John had a glow around his face, and got up to go to the guest bedroom smiling. Mike proceeded to wait for me to follow him in my... well our sleeping quarters.

"Is he alright?" he asked.

"Yeah..." I said somewhat confused but hiding my emotions.

As I got up to walk down the hallway a beep came in from the crew. And of course I realized at that point I forgot to go meet with them.

"Master..." said Scan.

"Shit... sorry Scan, I'll be right there." I said.

I looked at Mike in his pajamas and longing for the confines of my bed, I sadly had to reverse my course and walk back towards my door.

"I'll be back in a few, this shouldn't take more than a few minutes." I said lying knowing Scan's dissertations were always long and winded.

Mike gave me a somewhat disappointed look but he understood. I gave him some instructions to keep an eye on John and walked out the door, back into my docking bay garage, and then proceeded to the turbo-lift to join my Shortstop body and meet the team on the bridge. I stopped at the turbo-lift door and rang Scan.

"Scan anyway this can wait till tomorrow?" I asked.

"Yes Master, not a priority. Have a good night."

I turned around and headed back to my quarters and thankfully to bed.

"Well that's rug number 125!" replied Pick-Up finishing his latest rug. He neatly folded and placed it on the shelf with the 124 other rugs. Carry-On came into their quarters and Pick-Up could tell instantly he was aggravated about something. He did not look at his brother when he walked into the room.

"Hey bro, what do you know?" asked Pick-Up.

"Don't ask!" snapped Carry-On.

"What's wrong?" replied Pick-Up

"I said don't ask!" snapped Carry-On again.

Pick-Up backed off, as he had learned many times pushing him did not help the situation. However, he saw Carry-On twitching with his one arm. Pick-Up did quick scan of his brother.

"You've broken your crankshaft!" he cried.

"No I didn't, it's just a minor sensor glitch!"

"Yes you did do an internal body scan!"

"Marbles I did! I'll go see Pliers in the morning."

"No go see him now!" yelled Pick-Up.

"No! Later!"

"Do I have to call him or will you go yourself!" Pick-Up concerned about his brother disregarded his brother's personal preferences at that point. He wanted to make sure his brother was going to be okay and he wasn't going to take no for an answer. As Carry-On had a problem of putting things off to the last minute. Carry-On pouting left to go to the medical bay. Pick-Up knew it was something more than a broken crankshaft bothering him.

Chapter 5

A slowly lit tunnel, cold wind blew all around me. The feeling of despair hung around me. I tried to figure out where I was and suddenly I heard cries. The cries of children, so loud and so horrible that it pierced my eardrums. I started running in the tunnel but the more I ran the slower my body moved. It was like I was in slow motion. I struggled harder and harder, but the cries grew and grew. Till suddenly I saw a shadow figure in the distance. And then suddenly a large streak of lightning hit me and I cried out in pain.

"AHHHHHHH" I screamed. I awoke from a dream with sweat pouring down my face. I hit the button on the table and the lights came on. I looked around and heard the fading cries of a child. I shook my head and they were gone.

Mike jumped up from bed awoken by my yelling.

"What's wrong!"

I could not speak... I just looked at him until I was able to regain my senses.

"It was so weird, like a message from someone, or..." I replied to my four human friends who had been gracious enough to join me.

"Or what?" said Mike.

"Or a rescue call of some sort," I said as Jeremy brought me some hot tea. I shook my head, still weary with the terrible dream.

"Could the Matrix be trying to tell you something?" said David.

"No, the Matrix can't contact me in R.E.M. sleep. At least it hasn't before." I replied.

"Talk to you?" asked John.

I explained to John the whole situations with the Matrix. Even lost I still felt parts of it calling out to me. I explained how it was a like a giant ball all knowing technical information that helped me create the Zapbots and also provided me information during troubled times.

"It's like a giant DVD of ancient knowledge," I replied. "It helped us during some of our darkest hours?" I replied.

"Oh?" said John.

As I sat with my friends sitting on my couch I realized that they truly were my family. They had come up here in the late hours of the night just to comfort me. Even though I did not have the matrix, I had them and it truly was a blessing.

"What about that thing Scan wanted to talk to you about?" asked Jeremy.

"Yeah, I forgot about that." I said. I pressed the call button on my table.

"Anthony to Scan, you there?"

"Master, this is Hightone. Scan is in recharge now, can I help you dude?" Hightone replied over the speaker.

"Yeah what did he want to talk about?" I asked over the com speaker.

"Oh it's just some space disturbance."

"Well, that's a bit disturbing. Is it an emergency?"

"He did not seem to have any concerns," Hightone replied.

"Okay, well tell him to beep me first thing tomorrow," I replied.

"The line went out and I was worried about going back to sleep. I didn't feel like having the dream again and making me lose my hair before I turned forty. Then I didn't want all my friends to leave my company either. Mike knowing me too well spoke up.

"I know, let's have a camp out!" he replied.

"A camp out?" asked David.

"On the holeroom. That way we can support Anthony if he needs it!" responded Mike.

"Well I appreciate it but you guys don't have to do this for my sake!" I replied.

"Nah I think it's a great idea, I know just the program," replied Jeremy.

"Guys..." I said.

"Come on Anthony.. I always wanted to have a camp out," said John.

"Oh I'll grab some stuff and meet you all down there!" I replied.

The crew all started to exit with mighty men chants in excitement. I grabbed Mike by the arm and gave him a 'thanks' look. He smiled.

We setup camp on the holeroom and after a few rounds of ghost stories and toasting marshmallows we attempted to go to sleep in the computerized generated tents.

I lay there unable to sleep though, as Mike was out like a lightbulb snoring per usual. I was afraid of having the dream again. When I was young I always had a dream of a school bus running me over. I would wake up crying and my mom would come in and comfort me.

My parents what an interesting set they were. Still married over all these years. My mom who was generally a good person but was completely narcissistic. When I was young she would take our her frustrations with my sisters out on me. One day I could recall I just came in to ask her a question as she was attempting to hang some wallpaper. She yelled harshly at me for disturbing her and I ran away crying. She immediately came into my room and apologized and I think we both learned something that day.

My dad, a retired police officer was someone who did not take crap from anybody. He was stern with his discipline as he worked hard for the money to support us.

I was an adult now and my parents were retired on Tockmak 3. I sat in the tent listening to the computer generated wilderness, listening to the snores of my friends. John seemed a lot better when I first met him but his actions definitely threw me for a loop. I saw the flicker of the fire going out and thought of the first camp-out I had, it was with my friend Matt and that night we must of covered our whole entire life in stories. I felt so human back then, it was the one time in my life I felt like a human and not an outcast. I owed Matt for the experience.

I watched the fire dance endlessly in the wind. Tiny sparks flew from the giant bending flame every second or two. Suddenly I heard a shuffle and Mike turned around and looked at me.

"Can't sleep?" he asked.

"Nope," I responded.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing."

"Yeah right, after these many years you don't think I can't tell when something wrong with you?"

He was looking at me but I was still watching the fire. My concentration heavily on the issue.

"Something is wrong.... I can't explain it... but I have a feeling I need to go do something immediately," I said.

"What could be wrong, we're safe on Misslemax, our ship is safe, we're safe," replied Mike.

"I don't understand it either, but.. " I turned towards him finally. "I feel something in the Universe is out of balance, and it's my fault."

"Oh Anthony you're being..."

"Mike... I'm being serious..."

He looked at me for a minute, as if trying to comprehend the message on my face.

"If something is broken, let's fix it!" he said.

"Well what I have to do, but how?" I said.

A pause, and then I slowly yawned. I knew I would have to confront my dream again sooner or later. I rolled back into the sleeping bag.

"I might as well get some sleep," I said. "If I dream gain hopefully it will be pleasant."

Mike put his hand on my shoulder.

"I'm here for you." he said.

"I know, you'll always be there for me, as I am for you." I replied.

Chapter 6

"Okay Scan, what did you find?" I asked walking into the conference room. Boaty, Flier, Botimus, Scan, Hightone, Roberta, Overload, Speedy and Timetravel were all in attendance already looking over some data. I walked into my usual chair and sat down to observe the situation.

Scan stood up and walked towards the large view screen. He pressed a button to present his presentation.

"Master, your energy levels seem to be a bit low this morning!" Boaty noticed.

"Yeah, I had some terrible dreams last night." I replied.

"Dreams Master?" asked Scan.

"Yeah dreams.... why?"

"It makes sense then!" replied Scan.

"What makes sense?" I asked. Scan always could figure stuff out and if he had just come to some sort of enlightenment, I knew we were in for a treat.

Scan pulled up the image of the scanned audio waves. He pressed a few buttons and inverted the chromakey to show a series of colors. He quickly walked to my Shortstop head, did a quick wave with his hand, and proceeded back to the main display.

"The Gongos were working on a project at this lab. It was something that they started and unfortunately did not finish because they did not know how to correct it. We've been picking up these waves now for a few days since our arrival. They are time disruption waves." explained Scan.

"So what does that mean Scan?" asked Flier.

"It means that the Gongos attempted to jump through time but failed, however they caused a problem with the space time continuum." Scan replied.

"So if what you're telling me is right, and I'm following you," I started "There is a disruption to the timeline of the universe?"

"Correct Master, this specific Universe. It would be feasible that the Gongos maybe were attempting to alter human history to thus destroy you before your birth so they could take over the Universe. " replied Scan.

"So what's the damage?" asked Botimus.

"Supposedly the Gongos experiments had an effect on the past causing a change in our timeline."

"How do you know my dreams are related to the time waves?" I asked.

"I decoded them. They're exact to the messages you got last night and match the signature of the time wave distortion. We need to resolve this issue or we could face a total collapse of the entire universe!"

There was a quietness from the room.

Scan pressed a few more buttons and pulled up a portrait. It was a picture I had taken only a year ago, but my DAD was missing.

"My dad? Where is he?" I asked.

"Uncertain, but from my calculations one of your ancient relatives has been removed from the timeline by the disruption. " replied Scan.

"So someone has changed time by going back and killing my father?" I cried.

"To be correct Master I am not sure. All I can tell you the place the rupture is focused on. By decoding the time disruption caused by the Gongos, you have to go back to 1782."

"So we're dealing with a Type 2 type of scenario. History can be changed?" asked Boaty.

"That is my current presumption." replied Scan.

I turned to my expert in timetravel, Timetravel and looked at him.

"Sound legit to me Master," Timetravel said.

Carry-On now spoke up.

"So you're saying Shortstop has to go back to 1782, and do something to allow his great-great-great-great grandfather from dying or something so he can exist, and if he doesn't exist what will happen to us?"

"We would all cease to exist!" replied Scan.

The gravity of the situation was definitely hanging in the conference room. Existence itself was in danger.

"How come these effects are not immediate?" Flier asked. Timetravel leaned over to him.

"Time physics never make any sense, believe me." he said to Flier with his hand near his mouth.

"Okay so what's the plan?" I inquired.

"We have identified the position in space where the time rupture is located. It is just over the north pole of this planet. The size of it prevents a single Zapbot to enter it. We identified the best possible candidate," Scan replied.

And at that moment everyone in the room turned their heads to Timetravel.

"Yeah I knew that was coming," Timetravel said with a look on his face.

"Botimus have my Headmaster friends report to docking bay immediately." I said.

A short while later we were all gathered in our docking bay. My Zapbots and my Headmaster friends in their X-O suit forms. I was up on the human balcony catching up with John.

"So stick with Click and Super. They will take care of you while I'm gone." I said to my new friend John holding his arms.

"I'm not sure I understand." John replied.

"Neither am I but regardless, Click can fill you in on the details. I have to go soon as pretty much reality is at stake." I replied.

"Promise me you will return."

I paused for a moment. I continued to start walking down the human walkway to the turbo-lift. I came back to John and gave him a warm hug.

"Look I don't make promises I'm not sure I can keep. All I know is if I don't go, none of this will continue to exist and who knows what will happen to you." I said pointing at the interior of the docking bay. "And if I don't exist who's going to save you from the monsters?"

I walked towards the turbo-lift again. I could see he was starting to get emotional but I had no time at this point.

"Please take care," he said.

"I promise I will try," I replied.

I looked at him one more time before I headed into the turbo-lift to the lower floor. I walked into the docking bay, with my various Zapbots standing around and my X-O Suit buddies ready to go. David, Jeremy and now Mike in his first X-O suit outing were all waiting near Timetravel.

"You ready?" I said looking at the three humans and yellow Zaptops.

"Ready as ever," said Timetravel as he began his transformation into a Lamborghini Countach. The side panels swapped out, and his height descended and a yellow car stood before us with space jets instead of wheels.

We turned off our X-O suits and climbed aboard our host. My decision to bring my friends along was complex. One they were the only other trained warriors that I could fit inside Timetravel, and two if things didn't work out I wanted to be with my extended family. This was Mike's first time with his X-O suit as well on a mission.

With a two finger salute I said goodbye to my Zaptops as Timetravel flew out of space-dock towards the designated coordinates in Space. Scan was providing the location of the rupture, it was completely hidden to the naked eye, but with Timetravel's sensors he could change alter the color scheme of his console showing the small rift in time and space.

"Alright, so this is going to feel a bit weird, but just breathe." I said giving my friends some warning on what was about to happen.

"You're approaching the rift," said Scan over the com.

"Heading in, hold tight bros," said Timetravel.

The stars disappeared from view as Timetravel engaged his sensors to protect his structural integrity and passengers. I turned to look around as all of my friends faces were inverted with colors, it was as if we where look-

"Woah... what's going on."

I'm looking around find myself back in a dreamlike state, a series of clouds seems to be surrounding me. I found myself floating in a heaven like area. I saw no end, just constant ever flowing clouds around a dark purple sky.

"Wait a minute.. this was like that dream again.. but I'm not dreaming."

Out of the clouds a familiar face appeared floating into view.

"MATT!"

"Hello Anthony!"

Standing in front of me was the vision of a friend I had lost so long ago. Once again a bit older but I could still tell it was him. My body was filled with thousands of emotions at once.

"So what is then? This can't be a dream..."

"No once again you're between time and space, call this a nexus of some sorts."

"I don't understand."

"Although you don't have the Matrix, you still have a connection to it. This allows you some special *shall we say* powers that are granted to the holder. At times like these the Matrix is providing you a connection to a plane of existence that is higher than what you are."

"So like heaven?"

"No, not really, let's just say this is the fourth dimension for a temporary explanation."

"Matt. I wanted to tell you." I said reaching out.

"Anthony... I know..." Matt said smiling his cheekish grin.

"Then what is the purpose of this?" I asked.

"To give you information on what you must do. You have to save your ancient relative Salvatore Anselmo. He is located in a little town in Sicily. Saving him will safe your existence."

"And then..."

"The path for this journey has not been set in stone yet. Only you have the ability to choose what happens after this."

-ing at ourselves through an inverted computer screen. Bright lights shined all around us.

I stopped suddenly realizing something weird had just happened. It was like for a split second my mind was elsewhere. I turned back around to see us coming out of the timetravel tunnel and saw Timetravel was floating in blue sky. Looking down I could tell we were back on Earth.

Chapter 7

We landed in a nearby forest in the northern part of Sicily. A quick scan of the area found no one in the vicinity except woodland creatures. As we landed on the ground below we slowly exited the vehicle and Timetravel transformed into robot mode. The sky had become darker as night was approaching, the air breathed of late fall with just enough crispiness to hit your face. If it wasn't for our X-O suits we'd be pretty cold.

"We have to find my ancient ancestor named Salvatore Anselmo." I replied as we jumped out of Timetravel.

"How do you know that?" asked Jeremy.

"It's a long story, too hard to tell." I replied.

My friends gave me a weird look but I held up my hand to give the sign of 'just trust me.'

Using our research we modified our holographic clothes to appear similar to the people of the time period. Dressed in old fashion rags that the Italians use to wear for this time and a few sacks for the illusions that were travelers.

"I measure that there is a town about a mile away," replied David hitting the panels on his arm, scanning the area ahead.

"Okay, now remember and listen carefully. This is ancient times, we need to be very aware of what's going on and try to blend in." I said.

"So no breakdancing," replied Mike trying to be funny. I gave him my 'I'm serious' look and he just smiled.

"Our X-O suits will automatically translate for us Italian to English etc.. "

"We got this Anthony, not the first time we've been to the rodeo," said Jeremy laughing.

"Timetravel..." I started.

"I'll wait here till you need me," he said sitting down on a large rock getting ready to relax.

My friends and I began a long walk to the forth coming town. As we set off on our journey we discussed the possible situation and options. I indicated to them that I had some weird experience during the time jump. That was all I was willing to disclose at the time. David and Jeremy walked in front of Mike and myself as they continued to converse about planes and such. Occasionally David would get on the religious band wagon but Jeremy who was a mild believer would just change the topic.

Mike and I continued to discuss the gravity of the situation. He really did not want to wake up and find himself still stuck under Nazi rule in an old German town. I also provided him a brief explanation of what was going with John. At first he started to get upset but when I explained to him the transference possibility he sort of understood. I also reassured him of my feelings for him.

We walked into the quaint old town, made out of old huts and wooden roofs. We saw various individuals walking around and laughing. It appeared that all the men in the town were completely drunk. As we approached what appeared to be a tavern, a strange portly fella walked up to us.

"Ah we seem to have some visitors!" he cried rather loudly.

"We're visitors from a nearby village, I've come to visit my cousin." I replied.

"Oh ya, what for?"

"He's a relative of mine, and we were told he lived around here. His last name is Anselmo."

"Anselmo, Salvatore Anselmo?" the man asked.

"Yes, that's him." I replied.

"Oh, the little squirt was caught stealing money this morning. He's at the jailhouse now."

"Little? I asked?"

"Yeah, he's only a kid." said the drunken man as he belched.

"Can you point us to the direction of the jailhouse?" I asked.

"Yeah it's just down at the end of the street there. You can't miss it. But don't try anything the sheriff real picky and he's being dealing with family problems all week!"

"Thank you sir, I wish you a good evening!"

My friends and myself started to walk down the street in the direction of the jailhouse. I sighed as it seemed it was yet again another rescue of someone.

"You know for once I wouldn't mind just rescuing a female for a change of pace," I said.

"So he's a kid, he could be anywhere from 10 to 18 years old!" said Mike.

"How do we know when he's going to die?" asked Jeremy.

"I don't know, but we'll have to find some way of watching over him," I replied.

We made it to what could barely be considered a jailhouse, it was more like a barn with extra doors. The wood itself was dilapidated and starting to rot. I could see trash lying all around the building and sure enough rat feces were everywhere.

I knocked on the door and waited. I received no answer.

"Looks like no one's home," David said.

"I'm scanning... two people, one guard, and one small kid," I replied.

I carefully opened the wooden door and peered in. Inside the shack was a man sleeping at a desk. Behind him was a jail cell with a small kid inside of it. I slowly walked in.

"Hey who are you!" cried the kid.

"Shhh!" I said.

"Hey I didn't mean to steal the bread, I had to feed my brothers something!" he whispered.

The guard at the table continued to be asleep and snored loudly. The juxtaposition of the situation made me chuckle just a bit. I walked slowly up to the bars and got a better look at the kid. I was taken aback for a second. He looked just like me from a few years ago. A younger version of myself.

"Are you Salvatore?" I whispered.

"Yeah who are you?" I said.

"No time to explain I said." My hands covered in a fake hologram of a glove pulled the lock off the bars in split second timing to produce no sound. I pointed to the kid to follow me and slowly opened the bars as to not make a single sound.

Salvatore didn't ask questions, he just followed me out of the jail. With quick movements my friends surrounded him, hiding the smaller Anselmo from the rest of us. Carefully and thoughtfully we walked out of the town back to Timetravel's location.

Timetravel carved a tree with his laser, as he sat quietly waiting for instructions. He hated being the only Zapbot with a Timetravel ability but then again most Zapbots praised

him for that and he enjoyed attention. He quickly glanced and saw that his rear bumper had a scratch on it. He would have to polish that when he got back. He continued to practice his technique of carving, something he picked up on a place called Florida on Earth. He made a couple of mistakes and frustrated he threw the tree into the woods, scaring a plethora of woodland creatures who fled.

He picked up another tree and began to try again. He was anxious for this situation to be over with. He had a hot date back on Gearatron in a few days. He was also pondering what was Carry-On's issue lately. He was usually grumpy but lately he was especially cankerous at meetings. Pick-Up seemed especially worried during conversations back at the cafeteria.

Anyhow as soon as he got back he would meet up with this female Zapbot called Nobertis. He had the whole evening planned out, a nice drive near the Gearatron ocean. Right now he just would sit back and enjoy his little vacation from reality.

I radioed Timetravel to obscure himself as we walked towards his general direction to landing area. It was at the point I think we needed a plan with Salvatore.

"Where am I? Who are you guys" he asked. I stopped for a second and sat down on a nearby log.

"We're here to protect you." I replied.

"Hrmphh, it's not me who needs protecting," Salvatore said.

"Oh?"

"What's your name?"

"Antonio, this is Jeremani, David and Michaelango." I replied pointing towards my friends.

"Do you know the situation with the town?" Salvatore asked.

"No but feel free to fill us in," replied David.

"The Corzeni's have taken over the town. And how do I know I can trust you guys?"

"Would someone break you out of jail if it wasn't in your best interest?" I replied.

"Good point, can't argue that," said the Italian boy.

"We're here to protect you from getting killed." said Mike.

Salvatore suddenly got quiet and I could tell was getting a bit emotional. He reminded me of John. Trying to hold back tears I saw him compose himself.

"So you're really here to protect me? Who sent you?"

"A friend," I lied. I wish I could have made this simple and showed him Timetravel and our X-O suits. I wish I could have provided some more clarification. But any wrong move we made could really effect the time continuum. My goal was simple - resolve his situation and determine what we need to do to get back home.

I nodded my head yes. I would not give any more explanation on the matter. We were here to help, he could take it or leave it.

"Where are you from?"

"I'm a captain of a ship, I come from a wor... land far beyond here."

"Yes it's obvious you are not from around here." Salvatore responded.

"Look time's getting short, are we going to do something?" asked Mike.

"Calm down. So what's your story Salvatore?" I asked.

He sat down and told me his story. He and most of his friends were involved in a local gang. But it wasn't to do accomplish anything devious, in fact, it was to help their families as

he said the local militia was taking over the town. As he continued to tell his story, Mike immediately changed his attitude as he felt compassion for being in a similar situation.

After Salvatore proceeded to give his backstory, I went over and stood separately with my friends.

"How long does this last? Like what are we supposed to do?" Mike asked.

"I don't know. This could take, days, weeks, months." I replied.

"I don't think we want to stay here a year!" replied Jeremy.

"If we don't save this kid from whatever danger he is in, we won't exist for a day!" I replied.

I walked back to Salvatore and sat down with him on the log.

"Look we can get you and your friends to safety, but you have to trust us." I said.

"Well you saved me from the jail, I think I can trust you. I swear you look familiar."

"Yeah I get that a lot. Look take us to your gang's hideout. We can help."

"Alright follow me," he said getting up and starting to walk in a northern direction. I checked with Timetravel who of course heard the conversation and told him to sit tight. Wasn't sure what we needed to do, but I felt we were making progress.

Chapter 8

We walked the starry streets of the old Italian town. the dust from the unpaved horse tracks on the ground blew all around us. After a while we came to an old storage house. Salvatore led us in around the back to a broken window. He pushed away some boards and we climbed in.

The murky smell of the basement made us turn our nose sensors off. We followed Salvatore. up a line of stairs and came to a second floor which had a giant hole in it, exposing the basement underneath. Across the opening was a board. Salvatore coached us onto the board so we could get across. I reminded my friends secretly to play the part and not fly over it as we would normally do. Carefully we walked over the board.

We climbed over hundreds of wooden crates in the large warehouse. Salvatore finally climbed up a large series of boxes and tapped a panel in the ceiling. The panel slid away and we all climbed up. We reached the top of the building which was the attic. In the confined space sat around twenty boys. Some sitting at a table playing cards, other sitting in some poorly made beds. The place was a mess and I could tell why the kids were up here. Turning to Mike he knew the situation all too well.

One of the boys came up to Salvatore. He looked as typical stereotypical Italian as your could get. Black hair, black eyes

"Who are these jamokes." he said.

"This is Captain Antonio," Salvatore replied. "They've come to take us to the new land!"

"Great I'm ready to go!"

"What exactly has this crime family done to your town?" I asked.

"Taxes, beating, killing people. They run everything and if you don't follow their orders, they take care of ya in a certain way. Get my drift?" said the kid.

"I say we go kick their butts!" said Jeremy. I motioned him to calm down.

"Since you are our guests, we'll let you sleep in the beds," replied Salvatore.

"Thanks but where will you sleep?" I asked.

"The floor, some of the kids go back home for the evening, some stay here."

My friends and I made ourselves as comfortable as we could on the makeshift beds. I gave instructions for shifts for everyone take a watch. Granted these kids seemed nice, but we didn't need anyone poking or prodding us.

In the morning I would have to decide how to save these kids.

Back in the present, Botimus was sitting in the Captain room on Misslemax. While I was gone he was in charge. He rather enjoyed sitting in the big chair but not so much for my taste of art on the walls.

The door to the room beeped and Botimus pressed the button to unlock it and Pick-Up came walking in sitting down at the chair across from Botimus.

"Hey Pick-Up how may I help you?" he asked.

"Carry-On; something's up with him. Something's wrong," Pick-Up said.

"Like what?"

"Don't know, he's been very overclocked off lately."

"Being his brother you should know he is normally like that."

"No, he's not being his normal crabby mood. Something is really bothering him."

"Did you talk to him about this?"

"I've tried he will not listen."

Botimus leaned back in his chair and pondered the situation. Pick-Up was coming to him for advice and this did seem out of the ordinary.

"I'll talk to him," Botimus replied.

"Thanks, just be-careful what you say," Pick-Up said, getting up to leave the room. Unfortunately Botimus wasn't sure what he could say.

I woke to the sound of snoring. I looked around the dark room to find everyone sound asleep. I got up and started noting my mental log for the day. Suddenly I heard a body move and saw Salvatore get up from his bed and walk towards me.

"What up Salvatore," I whispered.

He sat down next to me puzzled, I felt like Salvatore was me in some way and it was very odd knowing that this person would be an older man in a couple of years.

"Why are you here Captain?" he asked.

"To help you?"

"How did a person from the new land get information on us? And why would he bother coming all the way to protect a bunch of kids?"

"I can't explain that."

"And how did you know my name?"

"Because my last name is your last name."

"What!"

"I'm Antonio Anselmo."

"Your shitting me?" he continued to whisper not to disturb the others.

"Nope, it's true."

"Is that how you found me?" he said.

"Well the guys at the bar told me about you, but yes."

"Ah yes, that smuck."

"Come on, get some sleep."

"I can't."

"Just try counting sheep,"

"Huh,"

"Here I'll show you."

Carry-On walked into the Zapbot Cafeteria frustrated. Taking with Botimus was no help. All he did was babble on about responsibilities. His arm itched from his fixed crankshaft. He sat down at the bar. He knew Zapbots were looking at him, they didn't understand him, and no-one did.

"What'll it be?" asked Bop the bartender.

"My usual," Carry-On replied.

"Haven't seen you in a while. Something up buddy?" Bop asked.

"Just pour the energy," replied Carry-On.

Bop was a very patient Zapbot. He had a way of getting information out of everyone when they were having a problem. He did his famous stare at Carry-On.

"Stop looking at me," replied Carry-On.

Maybe not.

"Okay, I'll tell you what's up. This is the most boring life I could have. There is nothing for a Zapbot to do!" replied Carry-On.

"What do you want to do?" Bop inquired.

"I don't know, I just feel like..."

"You've got to do something?"

"I just wish I would do something big! Something that would make me known throughout the whole universe. "

"You're already written down in several Zapbot historical records for your heroic actions. You also one of the best Guitar players in the Universe."

"No I mean BIG BIG!"

"You want to be even more famous."

"Exactly! Right now I feel like I'm short footnote of someone's story somewhere."

Suddenly the Red Alert siren went off. Everyone scrambled from their seats and headed to their assigned stations. Carry-On finished his drink and was about to leave when he turned back towards Bop waiting for his typical advice.

"You'll find a way, it's closer than you think." Bop replied picking up the empty cans.

Carry-On mustered somewhat of a smile and walked out the door to the bridge. He waved on the way out feeling somewhat better about his lot in life.

Chapter 9

The next day Salvatore and I got up early to look around the town. I had Mike follow me in invisible mode for protection. We climbed out of the warehouse building and headed into the busy Italian streets.

The dust swirled around the road and I tried to look as casual as possible. Salvatore pointed to the various locations for military hangouts. We came to his house where his parents lived. I instructed him to not tell them we were related.

As soon as Salvatore opened the wooden door to the hut I heard a woman scream.

"There you are you little brat! I figured they would have hanged you by now!" yelled the lady. She was a portly Italian woman dressed in a completely deteriorated dress and I could tell she had been busy making food all day. I could tell this was Salvatore's mother. He stepped back in fear. She had no teeth and her face was distorted beyond complexion. An old man walked into the room and had a whip in his hand. He was just plain ugly. I checked my radio to make sure Mike was still nearby.

"Who have you with you this time!" yelled Salvatore's dad.

"This is Captain Anthonio dad." Salvatore replied. I looked carefully at these two people and couldn't believe these horrible people were my ancient ancestors.

"No he's not, he's an officer and you've been caught stealing again!" Salvatore's dad yelled.

"I assure you sir, I am who he says I am," I replied. But that didn't stop him, he grabbed Salvatore and was about to beat him when I yelled "STOP there is no reason to hurt the boy."

"Mind your own business stranger. Now I suggest you leave my house before I do the same to you!"

The shock of my ancestors violence was appalling. I reached forward ripping Salvatore from his father's lock and pushed him behind me.

"Salvatore has done nothing wrong. You have no reason to hurt him!" I yelled back at the old man.

"He's been the devil since the day he was born! Do not interfere with my family! Who are you God?"

"No I'm not God but you're the most arrogant primitive violent and stupid people I've ever met! You don't need to hit a child to parent him." I replied.

Salvatore hid behind me and I could tell he was frightened as one could be of his parents. The whole situation was becoming clearer by the minute.

"Leave us stranger or I will show you violence," yelled the old man raising his fist.

"Where I come from, we don't use violence as a way to control people." I yelled.

Salvatore's dad launched his first in my general direction, but halfway through the air he was met with some invisible force and a mighty 'clunk' was heard. I knew Mike was sitting there in invisible mode just waiting to act. The sound of a hand reverting on metal hung in the air of the small hut.

"YOWWW!" yelled his dad falling back completely confused and his hand all red. I grabbed Salvatore and walked him out of the house back into the street.

"Thank you for saving me," he said and suddenly I was taken back to the situation with John. I just looked down and smiled at him.

"I'm sorry," I replied.

"For what."

"For you having such bad parents."

I put my arm around my great grandfather and walked him slowly out of the horrific town, knowing what actions needed to take place.

"Botimus, two Gongo ships approaching us!" replied Boaty.

"On screen" said Botimus sitting down in the main command chair.

"They're hailing us!" replied Hightone.

"Okay well put them on screen," replied Botimus familiar to this routine.

Up on the view-screen came Aster, leader of the Gongo's. Another familiar enemy we fought time and time ago.

"Ahh Botimus, long time no see!" said Aster. His half robotic, half monster body stood across the view screen. Botimus was not in the mood for conflict. He stood up from the chair hoping to convince him that in a fight they would be destroyed.

"Leave this sector now Aster. You have no claim here." Botimus replied.

"Any why would we do that? We've done nothing wrong. We can see you invaded on military outpost."

"Your outpost was performing illegal experiments!"

"Ah you Zapbots, you think you are so strong just because you are fully robotic. Too bad you can't enjoy the pleasures of the flesh!" said Aster. He could hear the laughter of the crew in the background of the enemy ship.

Botimus was not in the mood to deal with Aster, plus he was still awaiting the our return.

"Boaty do they know about the rupture?" asked Botimus over the secret com.

"Unknown at this time," replied Boaty.

"Aster, you are located in our territory, we will open fire!" Botimus boasted.

"Two to one, I think you better reconsider your actions!" Aster responded.

"We will see!"

The view-screen went off and returned the image of the two ships. Now it became a waiting game to see who would opened fire first.

We made it to the top of the cliff, overlooking the town. We sat down on the rock. I checked with Timetravel and he was doing fine, just bored as per usual. The vast mountains of the Sicilian landscape shone brightly with glow of the natural morning. The fresh air of the land went into my lungs as I saw the natural beauty of Earth. For a few seconds I wish I could have stayed here forever.

I checked with my internal database of the data we had at this time. It appeared that the French Revolution had a major impact to Italy around this era. As such towns started to rebel against governments and changes started to happen across the nation. The lack of Salvatore's freedom weighed heavily on my mind as I appreciated even more the freedom I had been blessed with as a child, living in the United States. The ability of freedom of movement without restrictions, the ability to choose your own destiny. These were all things that I always took for granted. That and of course the technology I had at the time, even before the Zapbots, running water, electricity were all something that these people did not have.

"I can tell what you are planning Anthony," replied Mike walking up to me.

"I have a feeling this adventure might take a bit longer than I anticipated," I replied. Salvatore walked up to me as we were talking.

"What's wrong Captain?" He asked.

"Nothing Salvatore, it just you're a survivor and we have some sympathy for what you're going through." I answered.

"So I want to know, how are we related?" He asked. I paused for a moment choosing my words carefully.

"I'm your cousin," I answered. That seemed to satisfy his curiosity for now.

"Well I have a feeling we have a long way to go yet," Salvatore replied.

"Believe me Salvatore, I'm aware."

"Fire all weapons!" cried Botimus.

"Weapons are not responding!" replied Flier interfacing directly with the weapons console.

Hazy smoke filled the bridge of Misslemax as they continued to retaliate against the Gongos' onslaught. What was anticipated as a minor nuisance actually became a full fight for survival as the Gongos were actually causing some damage to Misslemax.

"Shields at twenty percent," replied Boaty. Computers started to blow up from the impact and everyone was thrown from their seats and standing positions. Sparks flew out the walls at the mighty Fortress Misslemax was being thrown around with an array of missiles and torpedoes.

Carry-On just walked onto the bridge and saw in horror his fellow crew-mates all lying on the floor trying to recover from the impact. He looked around and ran to the nearest console. The weapons core was down and shields were almost destroyed.

With a slight moment of hesitation as he looked out at the window, Carry-On did something he never thought he would do. He quickly inputted some commands into the console that he was at, then he ran to the navigation console just next to Flier. He jumped in the chair and inputted some commands.

Slowly Misslemax began to turn in space as the Gongos ships began to circle around for another attack, then with a split second Misslemax jumped to warp. But this wasn't any warp, this warp rammed right through the Gongos ship, with the shields holding on Misslemax cut the one Gongo ship in half. Then Misslemax warped out of the area heading away from the remaining ship.

As Carry-On went around to help his fellow robots recover the ship came to a halt some sectors away from the situation. Botimus got up from the floor and looked around.

"Status?" he asked.

"Main computers are down, I don't have any readings yet!" replied Scan.

Up on the view-screen came the static image of Pliers down in engineering.

"We took one hell of a whopping there, it's going to take me a few hours to repair the weapons array!" responded Pliers.

Carry-On came up to Botimus with a sad look on his face.

"I'm sorry I had to make a retreat Botimus. I was thinking of your safety first." Carry-On pleaded.

"Carry-On you did well! You saved us all and disabled the one Gongo ship!"

"But we don't usually retreat from a battle."

"A good leader knows when to fight and when to retreat. You just bought us some time to repair."

Pick-Up walked up to his brother and gave him a huge slap on the back.

"Great job Bro! You saved the day!" Pick-Up cried.

"Yeah I guess I did," Carry-On said smiling.

"Save the congratulations for later," replied Botimus. "We have some repairs we need to do and we need to get back to that sector as soon as possible. Who knows when the away team will return." said Botimus.

With the electronic welding torches in hands my Zapbots went to work starting repairs on anything they could fix immediately. Time was of the essence and they were determined to not let the Gongos defeat them in this battle.

We sat back at the warehouse as I worked on some plans of mine, drawing on old fashion paper to preserve the illusion of the situation. The clear starry skies show brightly through the one window in the building. I peered around the room of young Italian men and noticed I seemed to have a knack of saving people a lot. It seem like yesterday I was saving people from a Russian army, German terrorists or mechanic organic monsters of some sort.

I watched Mike stroll around the room pondering tactical thoughts as well. He too had come through a long journey and had changed a lot since the first days I had known him. I would say that the Zapbot world did him well; as it gave him the direction he needed in his life. He was also a good influence on me providing the necessary balance I needed some days to make it through the craziness that was my life.

Coming back through time again was a strange adventure. I recalled the story of one of my uncles name Ron who had died through a bizarre circumstances of a random gun shot. There was also my one uncle who supposedly died in Vietnam. People I never met but only heard of through stories from my Dad. Now here I was meeting someone again who had a profound influence on my past, hoping that the right actions would save reality as we knew it.

"Your deep in thought again," said Mike walking up to me. I just looked up from my papers and smiled at him.

Suddenly I picked up voices outside and I got up to walk to the lone window in the attic. A group of men were approaching the building. They carried guns of the time and started pounding on the locked door to the building. I turned and motioned to David and Jeremy and said 'get to the roof!' They ran to the ladder in the back of the attic that lead out to the top of the complex. Mike and I ran to the path that lead back downstairs to hopefully defend the boys.

Salvatore and his crew were startled and unsure of what was going on.

"Stay down and stay put," I ordered. I replicated a fake gun and ran downstairs to the door.

I waited behind a corner till my friends were in position. With my X-O suit sensors I saw them, even though others couldn't see them. The men bursted through the front door. As they started to walk down the hallway I jumped out from behind a wooden crate. The men opened fire but as the projectiles left their various rifles the bullets disappeared in thin air. Suddenly five of the men were floating in mid air and then hurled back outside and landed with a thud on the thick mud. My friends in their X-O suits in invisible mode picked up the men and threw them back outside.

"Jesus Christ the kid know black magic!" yelled the one man.

"Run!" cried another as they began to retreat from the building. Once the streets were quiet I returned back upstairs.

"We have to leave now, your location has been compromised." I responded.

"But where?" asked Salvatore.

"No time to explain, we need to take you somewhere safe."

Asking no other questions and following my orders the boys gathered what they could and prepared to leave. We left through the back entrance and headed directly into the forest.

Running through the confines of my plan it seemed obvious based upon the history of this time. We had to get the boys to France and there they could gain the support of the overturning of the government, which according to history would hit Italy and cause dramatic change at the time. As such it was a more indirect route to helping my ancestor through the situation. A rough calculation put us out at around 13 days to accomplish this task. We would need to go via boat from the island to the mainland and then follow up a long walk all the way to France. However I was determined as best I could to help save my ancient grandfather. For without him nothing would exist.

Chapter 10

We marched on with the group of young adults as we wandered through the vast wilderness of Italy. Sticking to the side roads as best we could we guided the group through the vast terrain after taking two ferries to reach the mainland.

Timetravel would tag just enough behind to keep an eye on things, or fly again, high enough into the sky so we barely heard his engines behind us. He was being extremely patient with me which I greatly appreciated. He realized that time had no meaning for him and when we left, he would arrive with plenty of time to prepare for his date.

The journey itself was tiring, even for us as we could not use much of our X-O suits to compensate. We had the ability to generate water when needed so we carefully misguided the boys whenever they needed water from our flasks. They were amazed on how well we were rationing the water, but what they didn't know is the flasks would automatically generate water from the air when needed. A few of us would wander into nearby towns, and using our X-O suits replicate the money at the time to use to buy supplies and food. My friends really showed me their leadership by helping me take care of the boys. The boys themselves were a variety of emotions. Some were excited for the adventure, some were tired and others were scared. Salvatore was mostly worried about getting caught. We did our best to assure them of their safety. I maintained a constant radio link with Timetravel to watch for danger.

"Weather's get a big rough," said David. "We need to find some shelter." I nodded as I walking with him. Mike and Jeremy were up front leading the pack. I suddenly received a message from Timetravel.

"Master, my scans show that the time rupture seems to be closing!" he said.

"Good, that means that we're doing something right." I replied.

"Wait, how are we getting back?" asked David.

"Timetravel can take us back manually." I replied.

As the clouds began to get darker I proceeded to scan the forest area.

"There are some mountains not far from him, we can possibly find some shelter with some caves over there," I said.

"Good idea," David said as he went up to give instructions to everyone where to move.

As I walked with my old friend he had a worried look on his face now.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

"This reminds me of stories my father use to tell me about Germans migrating from their homeland. Reminds me of stories about Hilter and the Jews. It seems so..."

"Unbelievable?" I replied.

"Yeah. We never really know what our race can do. We were sheltered in our little spot in Ohio."

"Traveling the universe has really opened our eyes hasn't it?"

David was not the sentimental type. He did posses a good heart though. While we continued to disagree with the constructs of the universe I could at least trust him to always do the right thing.

"Master, a mega storm is coming together towards our direction." radioed Timetravel from above secretly.

"Shoot, let's get the boys moving," I replied.

We made the kids start running, the rain began to pour and thunder was heard in the background of the cloudy night. I made my friends established an invisible shield over the kids to protect them until we got to the mountains. I scanned ahead and sure enough there were some caves.

"Hey where did the rain go?" said the one kid.

We reached the caves and focused the kids to just lay down and rest until the storm passed. We lit our lanterns to give us some lights as the boys tried to find either a rock or a drop spot on the dirt to rest.

The storm blew on into the night. The wind would sometime blow the rain into the cave and the boys huddled together for warmth with what little coverings they had. We kept a constant watch on everyone and Mike kept counting to make sure we had everyone.

As my friends and I stuck together to fake the need to keep warm to keep appearances up. Mike on my left side, David on my right and Jeremy on his right. It all appeared extremely ridiculous at times, but we didn't care at the moment what we looked like.

"I think I might let you go back to Timetravel for some warmth," I replied.

"No I don't think so," said Mike.

"We're fine, just keep everyone together and we'll be okay," replied Jeremy.

"How about we sing a song?" I asked.

To attempt to take our minds off the weather and raise spirits I started the crew into a hearty song. Attempts of 'row row your boat' were shouted down by my friends.

"How about you are my sunshine?" Jeremy said.

"Really?" asked David.

"Hey it will keep us awake," Mike responded.

"We need something similar to the folks at this time place," I responded. Checking with my database I found an old Italian traditional song that would work. Our translators would help us translate this into Italian.

Addio, Lugano bella,
o dolce terra pia,
scacciati senza colpa
gli anarchici van via
e partono cantando
con la speranza in cuor.
e partono cantando
con la speranza in cuor.

As the boys joined us in song, we sang into the night. As the boys sang into the night, one by one they fell asleep. I kept awake as I could not sleep and I kept an eye out for their protection.

Dawn rose with the clouds still over the sky, but the rain had stopped. As we woke the boys and ourselves started back on roads, stomping through the muddy marshes. We came to small town and with the fake money I generated I bought us two covered wagons with two horses.

Jeremy and I took one wagon and Mike and David drove the other, as the boys piled in. I wished I could use my X-O suit or Timetravel to travel at this point but I knew that would totally destroy the timeline. We remained as primitive as could be and continued our journey towards France. I had some ideas where we could possibly get my friends some help.

The sky slowly turned to sunlight. The wagons rocked and bumped on the roads as we moved slowly across the terrain. The danger from the local mafia was gone now, but now we had to deal with the strain of the elements.

Jeremy and I controlled the horse as best we could. Providing it plenty of water and feed that we bought from the local store. Salvatore came up to the front of the wagon now and then to check on us.

"Where exactly are we going?" he asked.

"To a country called France. It's the only safe place for you at this point." I responded.

"I'm glad. If we had stayed in Italy we might have died."

Jeremy had fallen a bit asleep and stirred away suddenly.

"I had a dream we were on Miss--"

"Shhhh!" I snapped. He recovered quickly from the slip-up.

"We will be home soon, just as soon as we got these boys to safety." I replied.

We rode onwards into night fall. The most tiring, long and somewhat boring trip of my life. The sky had become a blazing sun in the morning and now we were in the middle of it. The boys in the back of the wagon we somewhat shaded. We reached the French border and came to a somewhat modernized town. We checked the boys into a hotel and for the first time in a long time everyone got a shower and a good nights sleep.

I woke up in a very crowded hotel room with numerous individuals sleeping on the floor. The walls were made out of solid oak and old fashion lanterns hung on the side. I got up from the lumpy bed and opened the curtains. As I dealt with Mike snoring most of the night I was happy I got at least some sleep. As the sunlight viewed through the window the boys started to arise from their makeshift beds on the floor.

"Whats the bright idea?" said Mike.

"Sorry," I said - I put the drapes back to cover the light. My friends and boys started to rise.

"So now what?" asked Mike.

"Well," I said sitting down rubbing my unshaved chin. "I don't know. Any suggestions?"

"What, we brought the kids all the way here and--"

"Just relax there bro, I'm sure there is a purpose here. The main concern is that they are safe. We technically have all the time in the universe." I replied.

"I'm about ready to go home," replied Mike.

"I know, just a little longer. That reminds me," I said. I reached out to Timetravel via the secret com.

"It's about time you woke up. I checked with my scans and it looks like the time rupture has closed!" replied Timetravel over the secret com.

"Thats great!"

"Master, how do we know this isn't a Type 1 scenario?" asked Timetravel.

"Good question, you are thinking that this situation was planned all along."

"That's what I'm pondering. Maybe you were designed to do this all along."

"At this point Timetravel I'm just glad we've solved the problem. Now we need to find a safe place for these boys and then we can go home."

"I'm going to shut down for a bit and recharge, I'll contact you when I wake up."

"10-4 we'll talk soon."

We grabbed our belongs and slowly poured out of the hotel into the streets heading for the border.

Salvatore had found an orphanage located in the local town. While the headmaster was nervous of taking in around twenty extra boys after I provided them him the back story to help him understand the need. I also generated a huge sum of French money which I provided to him to help with the emergency. His eyes grew extremely wide when I dumped this on the table for him.

The beautiful church near the orphanage was recently built and expertly designed. I realized that combined with the bustling town I really couldn't have asked for a safer place for the boys to land.

As the boys poured into the halls of what would be their new home, there was a gleeful joy as they had reached the end of their long journey. We helped carry in all the supplies we gathered on the trip. We gave the wagon and horses to the orphanage as they badly needed them for transportation. As Salvatore was the last to enter, he stopped at the steps and turned towards Mike and myself.

"I can't thank you enough for what you have done Captain Antonio," said Salvatore.

"I had to, it was my duty. I wish you luck with your new life Pisan," I said.

"Will I see you guys again?" he asked.

Mike turned and looked at me. I gave him a quick wink.

"Doubtful young sir, but you never know how the Univ....um....world works." I replied.

"God bless you Antonio Anselmo!" Salvatore replied.

With a hearty goodbye I held my ancestor with a hug. It had been a long thirteen days and through a lot of toil and effort, we had managed to move twenty some Italian young men to safety. The rupture was closed and it was time to go home. With some bittersweet tears I waved goodbye to Salvatore as my friends and as we walking down the newly created French streets.

As we reached the end of the town we finally turned off our holograms and returned to our standard X-O suit form. I radioed Timetravel to give him a heads up we were returning home and gave him a place to meet at in the nearby forest. As we walked through the French country side I double checked all my numbers, my scans and my data. The rupture was closed, we had completed the mission, it was time to return home.

"This has been quite an adventure my friends," I said to my three musketeers.

"Yeah I'm ready for a good rest!" replied Jeremy.

"Hell I'll take some time on the holeroom." replied Mike. I gave him the evil eye.

"Sonic showers here I come!" replied David.

Timetravel flew down from above and landed in vehicle mode on the ground. He opened his doors waiting for our arrival.

"Time to go home boys!" he said.

With much anticipation we entered our vehicle friend and strapped in for the journey home.

Chapter 11

The bright lights of Timetravel's special ability mode lit the windows around us, the timetravel experience was a combination of rotating lights that swirled around him as all our senses were extremely heightened. Unlike the warping around the sun method, this method produced a very strange sensation that felt like your body had electricity running through it. My friends and myself held onto the our seats as Timetravel had punched in the coordinates to head back to our time, after finishing our mission.

I turned around and looked at my friends, watching there faces in the back seat of the modified car to allow room for four passengers. The whole experi-

"What the hell?"

I looked around again and found myself once again in the cloud setting. As this happened a few times before I was a bit more adjusted this time.

"Hello again Anthony."

I turned around to find Matt standing in the purple fog again. But this time he was only partially smiling.

"Matt? Why am I here again?"

"Something has gone awry with the space time continuum."

"Look if you're going to keep doing this give me some time to get some answers otherwise stop with this shit."

"You will have all the time you wish this time," he replied. I laughed a bit at the weird word juxtaposition.

"So why are you doing this? Are you really the Matt I knew... and loved."

"More or less, as I said before and to best explain it to you, I am the essence of the person you knew before. The Matrix has allowed me to reach out to you to give you guidance for this situation."

"Well, we seemed to solve the problem created by the Gongos. The rupture is closed and my ancestor is safe. So whats the deal?"

"True, but what you don't realize is that this was intended to happen all along, and it happened before."

"Before...?"

"You are well aware of the theory of multiple universe? There are several for this situation. But two are important for you. This series of events actually happened before in another timeline, another 'saga' you would say. Except in this timeline, I continued to live and did not die. Until now..."

"Wait you're telling me that this happened before? Explain."

"This whole adventure you are on, from the beginning of the Zapbots spacecraft landing in your backyard, to your second death..."

"Second death?"

"Yes, it all happened before. But something happened when you went and swapped realities..."

"Your referring to when I went into that alternative reality where the Zapbots existed but I didn't create them?"

"Correct, when that happened you created a branch in the story line. Thus a separate timeline was created and while the events are somewhat similar, the events played out a bit differently. In the original saga, I did not die till this adventure. When you came out of the time-warp the Gongos will attack Timetravel and that is when I died."

"But... you are already dead... so that means..."

"Wait... before you put the pieces together you have to know one important piece of information. If you run from destiny, you will destroy the universe."

"I will destroy the Universe?"

"Yes... If you choose to fight the way this plays out, it will cause you much pain, suffering and total destruction of mankind."

"What the fuck! Why do I have to continually suffer!" I yelled back.

Matt stood silently.

"Why is it that I am the one that constantly has to have the bad luck?! When do I get a break? Why does this fucking universe constantly feel the need to throw pain and suffering my way! No I will not bow to these and I will not suffer anymore to this logic! YOU LEFT ME MATT! AND I LOVED YOU! Why am I not allowed to find Love?! You left me alone and heartbroken and now you're telling me I'm unable to prevent it again with...wait... Mike... Mike has filled that void."

Matt smiled a bit.

The logic of my mind filled in the gaps. I suddenly realized I had to act and pulled myself out of the--

ence took about a minute but it was a true marvel of technology.

It happened again.

Timetravel came out of time-warp and was floating in space, a few hours past our leaving our original location.

"TIMETRAVEL EVAISVE MANUEVERS!" I screamed.

"WHAT?" asked Timetravel suddenly disturbed.

"NOW!" I yelled.

Timetravel took an immediate turn and navigated to the right. I looked up through his window at space and saw a laser blast just miss our shuttlecraft companion and pass through the space dissipating into the space below.

"X-O suits on!" I ordered. My friends turned their X-O suits.

"Master! It's a Gongo ship!" Timetravel replied.

"Eject us and everyone scatter!" I replied.

We ejected from Timetravel and entered the cold vastness of space in our X-O suits. Timetravel transformed into robot mode and we started to fly in opposing directions. I looked around and Misslemax was nowhere to be found.

"Where did that come from?" asked David.

"Misslemax where are you?" I radioed.

Roberta the backup communications officer came over the com.

"Master approaching the sector!" replied Roberta.

Suddenly in the background Misslemax came out of warp speed and stopped with precision, floated above us, putting the might Zapbot vessel directly in front of the Gongo ship.

I looked up and saw the ship had received major damage to the hull. Myself, David and Jeremy called for our larger Headmaster bodies to fly out of the space dock. We merged with our bodies and became Shortstop, Twirl, and Windshield.

Timetravel grabbed Mike as he was yet to be trained in flying through space in his suit.

"Botimus status?" I radioed.

"FIRE EVERYTHING!" he yelled over the com. "Master we have just repaired our weapons systems and taking aim. Stand by!"

Out from Misslemax came an arrangement of lasers and torpedos, rockets towards the Gongo ship. It hit the circular ship head-on and proceeded to punch holes within the hull. Within seconds the weapons penetrated the warp core, and the Gongo ship exploded in a vast array of debris and metallic dust.

We flew to the back space-dock and landed in our robotic bodies. Timetravel, Twirl and Windshield and myself headed towards the bridge. Mike ran to the human turbo-lift to join from the observation deck.

As we walked upon the bridge we saw in horror the damage called by Gongos. The bridge was in shatters but was happy to see everyone was functional.

"Botimus! What did I tell you about having parties when I'm gone?" I said jokingly.

"Believe me Master, this was no party!"

"Looks like you saved the day though."

"Actually Master, we have to give a special recognition to Carry-On. His actions saved the entire crew."

Carry-On walked up having a smile on his face. Pick-Up was patting him on the back showing his brother his approval.

"Well Scan, are we good time-wise?" I asked.

"According to our scans, the rupture is closed." Scan replied with a thumbs up from his red hand.

Timetravel came up to me and tapped me gently on my Shortstop shoulder.

"How did you know?" he asked.

"Know what?"

"To move? You knew I was going to get hit."

"I can't explain it Timetravel. I wish I could." trying to change the subject. "Botimus, damage report?"

"We are damaged but we can warp home Master."

"Flier set course for Earth," I said pointing to my green friend. As the Misslemax turned around and warped for Sector 01, I quickly reviewed the damage report to Misslemax. I could tell that Botimus could handle the situation and I told him I had to attend to some personal matters. I walked out of the Misslemax bridge filled with broken glass, metal, wires and conduits on the floor and entered the turbo-lift to return to my Shortstop garage, dis-engaged with my larger body and returned to my study to check on John.

"We should be in Earth space within a few hours. I'll take you home tomorrow morning." I told John sitting across from him. Mike was in the kitchen working on some food

for dinner with the processor. My eyes carefully bounced back and forth from John to Mike as I was trying to calm my mind down. It had been racing since we came out of the time-warp and I felt a strange uneasiness.

"So everything was repaired?" John asked.

"As far as we can tell." I said feeling the nervousness with my voice.

"Anthony, are you okay?" asked John.

I wanted to pour out my feelings to the new founded friend. Yet. I knew better.

"It's been a long day...." I said.

Mike walked over with our plates of food and we moved off the couches and sat down at the main table in my study. We proceeded to consume the collection of food and relayed the events of the adventure to John to bring him up to speed on the adventure. I explained to him the events of meeting my ancient relative and proceeding to rescue him from the problematic town.

I had Scan check the records and sure enough the events played out as we had recorded. So either the adventure truly was a Type 1 scenario in that I was meant to go back in time to save my ancestor, or stuff changed in this timeline and we were unaware.

As the evening went on I would occasionally get distracted by my thoughts. What was Matt's purpose of visiting me? What did he mean by fighting how this plays out? Destiny? Why would he visit me and give me a warning then tell me now to fight it?

"Anthony..." asked Mike noticing I was distracted.

"Sorry just tired," I replied. "I'm going to turn in guys, make yourself as home as you usually do."

"Get some rest buddy," said Mike touching my arm. "I'm going to finish this food."

"Sounds good." I got up and headed back towards my bedroom. I knew Mike would join me shortly and John would head to the guest bedroom. I was mentally drained by the events of the last week and a half and I needed some time to just rest.

I woke up in the middle of the night wanting to use the restroom and I realized Mike had not crawled into bed with me. Not out of the ordinary as he had a habit of staying up late I got up to walk to the bathroom. He probably fell asleep on the couch.

I passed by the guest room and saw John safety asleep with the lights of the space shining on his bed. As I passed his room I came to the door of the bathroom and stopped.

On the floor.. was Mike. His body slumped on the floor. I lunged for him as I moved as quickly as my robotic feet could carry me. However, as fast as I could move, it still felt like slow motion.

But regardless how fast I moved I was too late. A quick check of his pulse I could tell he was dead. His body had already shifted into rigamortus. I turned him over and proceeded to check what happened.

He had choked on the food, a left over piece of chicken bone. As I punched on his chest tears of frustrations started to pour down my cheeks. I attempted CPR, I scanned his brainwaves and nothing appeared. A flatline.

"No...."

I collapsed onto the floor crying. I looked over the man I loved, the person that had become my lover, my best friend and I could not believe he could be taken from something so stupid! First Matt, and now Mike! I was able to save Boaty but I could not him!

"GODDAMMIT NOT HIM." I yelled.

I cried, and as tears ran down my face I opened my mouth and let out the loudest yell and scream I could ever do with my voice. The noise was so loud it echoed throughout Misslemax. John came running from his bedroom.

"What happened!"

I could not speak. I could not breathe. Someone I had loved had been lost and it was not fair. This was not fair to me after all I had done and I wasn't going to stand for this injustice in the universe.

I got up from my knees and, I looked at John.

"Stay here!" I said pointing at him walking out of room, heading for the turbo-lift. As I exited my living quarters and entered my docking bay garage running for the turbo-lift.

"Timetravel meet me in Docking bay 1 immediately." I said into the com.

When I reached the Docking bay my immediate crew and Timetravel were all there. Boaty, Flier, Botimus, Hightone and Scan were all standing around as they two had heard the scream.

"Master what's wrong...?" asked Botimus. As I walked into the docking bay in my X-O suit smaller form I pointed at Timetravel.

"Timetravel transform." I yelled.

"Master?" Timetravel replied.

"NOW!" I yelled with fury. Timetravel immediately went into vehicle mode.

"Master?" asked Boaty.

"Wait here and do not react!" I said. I opened the door to Timetravel and jumped inside. I pressed the buttons for manual control.

"Master what are you doing?" asked Timetravel.

"Timetravel you will let me pilot you or I will use your prefix code. Do you understand?" I said. I still had all the prefix codes in my human brain.

"But Master..." Timetravel's display lit up when he talked.

"I'm not asking you, I'm ordering you!" I replied.

"Yes sir!" he responded. I could tell he was completely nervous of what was going on but years of trust was hard to build with robots. Now I was withdrawing from the emotional bank of friendship because I would not let the Universe do this to me.

I used the manual controls of Timetravel's screen and flew the vehicle out of the space-dock, my Zapbots standing in the docking bay extremely confused. We had parked the ship behind Earth's moon again. As we left I looked back in the mirror and saw them nod their heads I could tell a message came down to them.

I inputted the time and coordinates into Timetravel and engaged his special ability.

"Anthony..." said Matt.

"NO!" I yelled back at him staring at him in the clouds.

"You can not do this..." he replied.

I ran up to the figure standing in the clouds and I shouted at him.

"YOU WILL NOT TAKE HIM AWAY FROM ME!" I screamed.

"If you do this... you will regret it. The Universe..." replied Matt.

"The Universe be damned then!" I replied.

I returned to the docking bay with Timetravel. Only seconds had passed in time for my Zapbots. They looked at me dumbfounded as I got out of Timetravel and ran for the turbo-lift. Timetravel transformed back into robot mode and gave everyone the 'don't ask me' look.

"Master... what happened?" asked Botimus looking at me as I wandered out.

I said nothing dashing for the door, entering the human turbo-lift and heading back up to my quarters.

I ran up to my doors with my heart pounding. If my logic was correct then everything would be alright. Everything would be fine. I just had to make it to the door of my apartment.

As I walked into the door of my apartment. There stood Mike sitting on the couch with a confused look on his face.

"Anthony?" he said looking up at me.

I ran up to him and immediately planted a gigantic kiss on his face. Holding his head so tight I thought it was going to squeeze off

"Woah!" he said completely taken off guard. I was crying with tears of joy and my tears were reflected on his face as he wiped them off. "What's wrong?" Mike asked?

"You're alive!" I said.

"Why wouldn't I be?" Mike asked.

"What do you remember?"

"I was cleaning the dishes and you suddenly came running into the room and grabbed the left over bones and threw the rest away. Then you ran out as quickly as you ran in."

I just smiled as I held my partner closely. I could not stop kissing him.

"What gives!"

I put my fingers to his mouth and dragged him back to my bedroom. That evening the very top portion of the Misslemax apartments shook heavy for the love and passion that was bestowed upon two humans.

The End

Epilogue

As I finished my explanation of my experience for these three individuals they were extremely shocked. We were sitting in one of the modified conference rooms that had Zapbot space and human levels for conversation. We used these when we had delegations with species of different sizes. The room was completely sealed as to provide no possibility that we knew of for reception. No sounds came in or went out.

Here my two closest confidants and my time travel companion were listening to me as I proceeded to indicate to them my experience with the Matrix. Boaty sat very patiently in the main room looking at me with the typical logical emotion that he would display. Click would be sitting up on the human level balcony listening as well, a bit disturbed by what I was telling them. Timetravel just sat there quietly knowing to listen.

"So if what you're telling me is correct Master-" started Boaty.

"I don't know what the results of our... MY actions will be." I responded.

"So you're thinking by saving Mike in a time-jump you may have set some things in motion?" asked Click.

"Unsure.. but I want you two to work on a Plan B." I said.

"Plan B?" asked Boaty.

"Yes. If this all goes bad, I want to have a backup plan to make it right. This will take you some time to figure out, but I want you two to work on this and DO NOT disclose this with anyone, is that understood? This is the highest level of Top Secret, this is the highest level of encryption."

"Yes, completely Master." replied Boaty.

"Yes of course." replied Click.

"Timetravel I need you to keep this a secret. I'm sorry I had to use you that way, but I would not....will not let Mike die." I replied.

"Master I totally get it. I would have done the same for any in our family. I understand."

I got up with my Shortstop body and proceeded to walk towards the door. I patted Boaty and Timetravel on the shoulder, pointed at Click as I started to leave the conference room.

"What are you going to do now?" Boaty asked turning in my direction.

"Going to spend some time with my lover and friends. Because every day now, it a gift." I replied.