



Antilla

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The SG1 Team discover a gate address on an ancient world named Antilla; a dusty world where the inhabitants have vanished without a trace.

Work on this fic is still in progress

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P-3X-519, [Antilla](#).

The world, designated as P-3X-519, was brightly lit by the midday sun. The shadows were almost circles underneath the SG1 team from their equatorial location. High above this new world was a thin dark line that was made from the ring of ice and rocks that surrounded it.

The planet's surface was covered in a desert scrubland type vegetation. Narrow arrow head shaped leaves sprouted from pungent smelling bushes that grew in thin soil. The dry warm wind picked up and blew sand across a wide metal roadway.

The dark ring shadows crossed the location where Dr. Daniel Jackson was kneeling, dusting away at some debris from an ancient temple floor. He leaned back on his heels and heaved a great sigh of irritation. If it was not the rings causing work hindering shadows, it was the eclipses of what appeared to be about nineteen moons of various shapes and sizes. He stopped his work and waited for the smoky darkness to move so he could continue with his work.

Had he not known that he was in a different part of the galaxy, he would have sworn he was on Saturn. Only thing was; Saturn had no atmosphere that could be inhaled by humans, nor was it ever determined that it had a rocky surface. As far as science could tell, Saturn was a "solid" ball of gas that was too far from the sun to be even remotely warm.

Daniel's stomach grumbled loudly and he remembered he had missed breakfast. The only thing he had consumed was a cup of bitter coffee. He fished around in his pockets until he found a broken granola bar that had somehow become forgotten. He chewed it slowly and idly brushed at the floor as he looked toward the Stargate.

The Stargate stood alone on a hilltop not too far from the giant temple; it was tiny in comparison. It had been covered in some sort of thick vines which indicated that, up until recently, the area was more tropical than desert. He watched as Samantha Carter and Teal'c worked diligently to get the dial home device cleared of vegetation and functioning.

At last the ring shadow moved as the sun passed overhead in its waning half of the day. The archaeologist glanced up at the tall broken metallic columns that glistened at him in the renewed light. The sheer size of them amazed him. The architecture was not like anything he had seen before. It appeared from the aerial survey that much of the planet's surface was covered in these large ancient metal ruins. He glanced over his shoulder toward a large raised platform.

He had spent an hour studying the platform. It was made of a golden coloured metal that could be described as a type of titanium. There were no inscriptions of any sort other than two alien symbols that resembled faces, one on each side of a raised middle stage. The whole set up resembled a sort of open meeting room.

"Daniel, pack up. There's nothing here; let's go," said Colonel Jack O' Neill as he signalled that the others should pack up and prepare to leave.

Daniel touched his chin thoughtfully for a moment. "No, no, no... Jack, wait...I think I found something."

Jack paused and studied Daniel in annoyance. "Like what?"

Daniel knelt and brushed some more sand off a large metallic plaque and prised it carefully from the floor. "Well it resembles something like the Rosetta stone in that it is written in three separate languages. Kind of like that one that Napoleon's soldiers found in Egypt in 1799."

Jack stepped beside Daniel and studied the object in the archaeologist's hand. "Can you read it?" he inquired.

"Translation should be easy since one of the scripts is known to us. Again, if it is like the Rosetta stone, it should be almost the same thing written in all three scripts. These two are new altogether, written in glyphs I've never seen before. And this one is, of course, Asgard. These," Daniel pointed to two face-like symbols, "occur quite frequently throughout the plaque and are the same symbols on that platform behind me." He gestured absently.

Colonel O' Neill simply rolled his eyes at the enthusiastic archaeologist. "Daniel pack it up and take it with you. Then you can try to translate it back on the base," he said as he walked back toward the Stargate.

The archaeologist pushed his glasses up his nose and nodded as he wrapped the plaque in some cloth and stuffed it carefully in his backpack. He hurried along after the team leader and shot a brief glance over his shoulder at the mammoth structures. "Whoever they were, they must have been a race of giants.

"Teal'c, dial us home," O' Neill ordered as Daniel joined the group. The [Jaffa](#) warrior nodded and pressed the six symbols and the centre of the [dial home device](#). Each symbol on the gate glowed red and a vortex of blue water spun out of the Stargate before it settled back to shimmer like a glowing rippled pond surface and they stepped through.



Cheyenne Mountain, Earth  
Several months later.

Cheyenne mountain was a heavily guarded installation that stood almost as high as it was deep. Past the fences and razor wire, past the guards and into the open mouth of the mountain were secrets unknown to most of humans of Earth. Cheyenne mountain was not the place for those who were claustrophobic.

Deep under its rocky exterior was a stone ring made of an alien quartz like material. Who would have thought that the airforce would have a base so deep into the Earth's crust. The portal, the Stargate was a door to the heavens; the galaxy was but a step away for all of mankind.

New creatures, and alien technology made its way through the gate and into the hands

of the military. There it was studied so that it could be used to defend the Earth from dangers that it would never have know about. And perhaps the dangers would never have been a threat if they did not start sending out teams to explore.

Dangers such as the parasitical Goa'uld, a snake like worm that borrowed into the body of its host and took over complete control. A truly evil race that enslaved humans and other races, controlling them by acting as gods from their mythologies. There were the replicators, a small robotic alien that seemed to only want to replicate and grow. It assimilated technologies and spread out in an attempt to take over the galaxy.

But there were also the benefits, the allies, the friends, that made gate travel all worth while. From the Asgard, a gentle alien race that was known as the "Roswell greys", the source for much of the alien hysteria that was on Earth. The Tok-ra, a symbiotic creature that inhabited a human body and shared its healing qualities with its host. The Nox, a very advanced and extremely peaceful race; they felt that humans were too young and aggressive and not yet ready for the secrets they held. The military wanted these technologies, good or bad, to gain the upper hand in warfare. No longer was it sought to aid in war with other humans of earth, but to battle those threats in space, known and unknown.

Sub-level 29: Stargate Command briefing room.

Daniel stood by the white board with a section of Asgard script written out and translated. He had roughed out the writing of the ancients and was pondering the translation of the other two scripts. His marker squeaked as scrawled out the last few words. He paused for a moment read what he had written. He picked up the dry erase brush and quickly eradicated a sentence and rephrased it. After a few minutes he was satisfied and marked a long line under the scripts as a signal of completion.

Daniel turned and observed the others in the room. General Hammond had just entered and closed the door behind him. O' Neill and Teal'c sat side by side looking at the folders in front of them with slight interest. Major Samantha Carter had hers open and was reading it over with, what he hoped was, keen interest.

He crossed over to a spot at the table where he had several note books, papers as well as the file folder that the others were reading. He glanced over at General Hammond as he opened his file and briefly looked over it. The general closed his folder and glanced at Daniel with a nod. "What is it that you've found out?"

Daniel stood up once more and then paced nervously in front of the white board. "As you know we found this plaque on P-3X-519, in a rather large metal and stone temple. The world itself appeared to be abandoned and it's barely inhabited by scrub and maybe a few insects." He faintly recalled a nest of metallic ant-like creatures that scurried into holes as soon as he lifted the plaque. The peoples were gone but there was still simple life existing, but only some. Strange calls and bird-like chips. Insects that creaked unseen in crevices only to fall silent when they had stepped near. The world was abandoned, but not completely dead.

He coughed and pushed his glasses up his nose, momentarily distracted by his thoughts. "The translation of the known languages was the easy part, the hard part is trying to translate these symbols." He pointed to the two boards sporting the foreign

glyphs. Quickly he opened his notebook and picked up a blue white-board marker.

"Both the Asgard and the Ancients speak of a world that is made mostly of metal. It has two races of very advanced beings." Daniel stood in front of the other white board that had the new languages. He placed his hands on his hips for a moment and looked over the words. The description of the races were strange. It only described their tools, not the hands that used them. However, the tablet was so old that it was very possible that the races had regressed to a pre-technological society or even became extinct or left like they did on P-3X-519.

"This describes one of the two races as a very warlike group," he said gesturing at the glyphs with his marker. "What I've translated so far is they are the conquerors of other worlds, gathering," he paused for a moment as he puzzled out an untranslated section, "food, fuel or something like that to run their world, themselves and their machines." Daniel chuckled as he fiddled with the marker lid. "It's not [naquadah](#), from what I gather it's some other source or form of pure energy."

General Hammond nodded. "That could be useful to find."

"Something more efficient than the naquadah generator perhaps?" Major Carter asked. Teal'c quirked an eyebrow and O' Niell chewed on his pen. Daniel shrugged his shoulders. He had no answer to that. The translation was energy but not naquadah, the symbol was different and he had yet to locate an exact meaning.

"Anyway, it seems to suggest that they use machines such as pyramid shaped fighter craft, tank-like machines and weapons that fire bolts of energy. Much like the blast lances that the Jaffa use," he described as he pointed out several symbols.

"The other section of glyphs describe the second race as a guardian, worker or slave race who are described as weaker by the standards of the other. They seem to be the artists, architects and general workers."

"The scientists?" Jack inquired with a teasing smile.

Daniel chose to ignore the remark and continue as if he had not been interrupted. "They are also describe as being a very peaceful and gentle race." Daniel scratched his head, "It does not go into detail about their weapons if they have them. It appears that the second race had contact with both the Ancients and the Asgard looking for a solution to a civil unrest and wars that waged on for... all time." Daniel chuckled, "but the first race drove them both away and the negotiations were ditched. I think the temple was a sanctuary of some sort."

He turned back to the group and smiled. "I figure that the symbols here and here are the designations for the race's names." He picked up a glass of water and took a sip. "And these symbols of course are the gate address for this metal planet." He pointed to the six symbols in the cartouche.

"Do you have names for these two races?" asked General Hammond.

"Well, that was the hard part. The Asgard describe the first race as deceptive, cunning conniving and very tricky. Best I could do is a rough translation as Decepticon. A hybrid word between deceptive and conniving of course..." his voice trailed off as Jack O' Neill

looked bored out of his skin.

"Continue, Dr. Jackson," General Hammond insisted.

"The other race was very tricky. The rune Raido is used to describe them as a people of a cart or chariot. Horse people I would read that as, but they have machines that run on roads similar to cars on Earth," he rambled. "It also seems to describe them as having mechanical robotic devices that they also use. Mergence of those ideas I've come up with Autobots." Daniel chuckled nervously. "I know the names are very lame, but you asked for names and that's what I'll call them."

"The Decepticons might be the Goa'uld or Goa'uld enslaved, they've tried to suppress the ones known as the Autobots. There is more to this than meets the eye, I think. I'd like to go back to P-3X-519 to do some further study on this."

"Very good Dr. Jackson. Thank you," General Hammond turned his attention to the Jaffa who was sitting pensively in his seat. "Teal'c have you heard of either of these races before? Are the Decepticons Goa'uld?" he asked.

The large warrior face only registered a slight quirk of his brow. He was almost emotionless and determined. He only spoke when he had something of use to add or when spoken to. Once the first prime of [Apophis](#), now a [Shovar](#), a traitor to his Goa'uld god-master. "I have not, General Hammond," the Jaffa replied with a slight cock of his head, thinking. "But what Daniel describes sounds much like Goa'uld. I also think it would be prudent to return to P-3X-519 for further investigation." he agreed. General Hammond nodded and turned his attention to the others in the room.

"That gate address is not one that is in the dialling computer," Major Carter said, "I checked it out as soon as Daniel gave it to me." Daniel nodded in agreement. The room in Abydos had many gate addresses but it did not have the entire collection. For whatever reason, some addresses were left off.

"Ah, well, I'm not sure that it would be wise to go to this world; the Asgard were driven away from it." Colonel O' Niell put in the argument.

"Think about it, Colonel, this peaceful race or the technology, if it still exists, might be able to help us in our fight against the Goa'uld." said Major Carter.

Jack O' Neill shook his head. "If they still exist and the Goa'uld or Destrons..." he mispronounced

"Decepticons," corrected Daniel with a slight sigh.

"Decepticons, Destrons or whatever--whoever, have not wiped them out."

General Hammond glanced at the SG1 team and then rested his eyes on Daniel. "SG1 get yourselves ready to leave for P-3X-519 and in the meantime we'll send a [MALP](#) through the gate to check out the new co-ordinates of P-3G-100," he nodded to the group, "dismissed."

Daniel gathered up his notes and made his way to the door following the other out. He

spared a glance over his shoulder at the white board and the writings.

### *Cheyenne Mountain, Earth*

"Chevron seven is encoded and locked into place," the call over the loudspeakers informed. People and technicians darted from station to station looking at monitors, pressing buttons and discussing the activity. Below the control room window was the open Stargate and the MALP, a mobile analytical laboratory probe, sat in position waiting for the remote controlled signal that would drive it through.

The wormhole was established and waiting; the command given, and the MALP slowly rolled up the ramp and into the portal. It dematerialised as soon as it entered the serene, glowing, rippling, blue pool-like surface. From there it travelled along a particle stream through the vastness of space to points that could never be crossed by modern Earth technology.

SG1 team eagerly waited in the Stargate control room. What would it be this time? Would the MALP pass through without hindrance or was the Stargate on the other end buried and the MALP destroyed.

"The MALP will arrive at P-3G-100 in five, four, three, two, one," a technician called out as they traced the trajectory on a two dimensional star chart laid out on a glass window. Abruptly as the technician had finished his count, the MALP radioed back its data. The Stargate at the other end was fully functional.

It had arrived in a large plain room, it scanned its immediate area. The Stargate on the other end was inside a building. This was not uncommon, Stargates were frequently found in structures, be they temples, giant factories or sometimes stationary starships.

The MALP sent back information about the atmosphere. Was it breathable? What were the barometric pressures? Was the temperature comfortable by human standards and was the gravity compatible? The information it returned suggested the air was a bit high in carbon dioxide and there were some levels of carbon monoxide. However, there was ample oxygen present and the temperatures, pressures and gravity were compatible. Its atmosphere was similar to that of a great city, such as New York.

With that information collected and deemed acceptable they scanned for the next important feature; was there a DHD? The MALP scanned the room until it located the familiar shape. It zoomed in and the condition of the device was excellent.

General Hammond nodded his approval. "We'll make preparations to gate to this world shortly," he informed the SG1 team. Daniel beamed and Jack O' Niell appeared a bit sceptical.

The MALP continued to scan the colossal room. Huge pipes wove in and out of the walls ceilings and floors. Huge ventilation shafts covered with heavy metal grating and thick wires traced intricate patterns over the surfaces of the walls. The plates in the walls themselves appeared almost haphazard on the first shot but as the camera panned, it appeared as if the plates were placed in an pattern. To Daniel Jackson it looked like a huge circuit board of a computer, to Jack O' Neill it looked like a factory.

The telemetry video showed no writings, only a huge door that was marked in yellow and black hazard stripes. Jack O' Neill tisked as the transmission was finished. He had seen something like this before and the word "[Komtria](#)" slipped from his mouth as he clapped his hands enthusiastically. Teal'c looked at O' Neill for a moment and blinked.

"We will analyse the data and in the meantime; get yourselves ready to return to P-3X-519 in one hour." Colonel O' Neill came to attention saluted smartly and General Hammond returned the gesture.

"SG1, you heard him, lets get a move on," Jack said as the others turned to depart.

Below, in the gate room, the radio transmissions ceased and the Earth Stargate's blue ripping pool dissipated. The room was eerily silent except for the voices of the technicians who chattered excitedly.



### *P-3G-100, Cybertron*

On the other side of the gate, the MALP remained as it was in the now darkened room. It had finished gathering its information and no longer needed to transmit back its findings. Had the people on Earth maintained the wormhole for five minutes longer, they would have been treated to an unbelievable sight.

Heavy metallic footfalls hammered down the hall in a rapid yet steady cadence; getting louder. The door swept open and a large winged figure stood in the doorway. His silver body glinted in the dim light of the room. His piercing red optics glittered as they gazed about, then settled on the small machine sitting on the platform by the Stargate; that was not there before.

"Computer; increase illumination of the room by fifty percent," he ordered, his voice shrill and sharp. The lights brightened illuminating the shadows, illuminating the tall silvery figure. He stood for a few moments with his azure hands on his hips as he surveyed the room.

He stood almost seven metres tall from the top of his intakes to the bottom of his feet. He was sleek and fast in appearance. His torso was a brilliant, glossy red set with a amber coloured canopy made of a glass-like material. His face and neck were a charcoal grey set under an ebony helm.

He had two large, silvery, triangular surfaces that resembled wings attached at his shoulders. He held them high and wide; proud and powerful. They had wide bands of red and white that appeared decorative that hinted to the possibilities of great speed and flight. On each wing was an purple symbol of an angular face that was inverted.

Along his arms were long slender objects. They were attached just below the shoulder and seemed to pivot freely as he moved. They resembled rifles or turrets. One end was square almost box like with many vents and covered openings. Three of the four sides had stabilising fins while the other side was flat and flush with the arms. It continued down until the muzzle, tapered at the end, jutted past his hands. His finely jointed fingers

drummed a beat on his hip as he closely examined his surroundings.

The atmosphere within the room was electric, as if charged by a super conductor. A lingering scent of static hung in the air like an expensive perfume. He inhaled deeply as if to absorb the energy by filtering it from the very air. The tantalising scent of ozone wafted past him and out the opened door as well as a hint of plasma from highly energised ions. He drank deeply of the fragrance of power and entered a momentary rapturous state before realising that he was at possible risk. He exhaled slowly and his lip curled into a small smile; it was delicious.

He glanced at the ventilation shafts as the fans kicked in and drew out the ionised air and brought in fresh air from the planet above. He sighed almost in disappointment as the energised air was sucked away. He hungered for more, he hungered for power and he knew that the crystalline ring was the source.

He uttered a curious hmm and entered; the door swooped shut behind him. He gazed over the ring and down at the small machine. The weapons on his arm charged up as he stepped in cautiously, slowly. He placed his hands out to touch the surface of the stone ring. It seemed to feel warm and pulsate with an energy as it dissipated. He placed his head by the stoney surface and listened to the crackle and hum of the crystal structure settling after its use. The chevrons glowed ever so faintly of a lingering phosphorescence. He let his hand slide down the stony surface craving the power that was hidden in it. Angry that he had no idea how to tap it, scared that someone else might discover its secrets before him.

Reluctantly, his ruby optics slowly left the stone ring to observe the vehicle. He nudged it with his foot. It was small and had six wheels, and had a startling resemblance to Roller. A small utility vehicle that was utilised by the leader of the Consumer goods, Optimus Prime. He tapped it, poked it, hit it. He nudged it again and sighed with relief as it made no movement or sound. He decided that it was non functional if not dead. Once he was sure it did not pose a threat, he looked it over for a sign of who it belonged to. His optics settled on the Stargate Command insignia.

"Most curious," he said in a low rasp. He picked it up and turned it over in his hands, studying it from all sides. It had writings on it that were unknown to him, but it was a technology from an alien source. It had a long jointed arm that faced forward. On the end of that arm was a pincer like mechanism that suggested that it was designed for picking up things. Something similar to the Autoscout that Soundwave occasionally deployed. To the left hand side of the machine was a large dish shaped appendage which, he decided, was a radio sensor array.

The room was filled with a sudden mechanical whoosh as the door behind him opened. A large shadow fell across the Seeker as he crouched by the platform. He stifled a groan as he sighed in some frustration. He did not look over his wing; instead, he continued to visually explore the mechanism. He did not need to look to figure out who was intruding on his privacy. The sure, heavy thud of feet announced it well enough. The intruder did not want to be kept a secret, the intruder wanted all to know he was coming. "What have you found there, Starscream?" asked a harsh voice from behind as the door whirred closed.

The corner of Starscream's mouth twitched in irritation, his feelings of intense joy faded along with the energy that was contained within the ring. There was never a moment

when the warlord was not present overseeing, harping, questioning, watching. His only refuge was his laboratory and he wanted to get there with the machine. "I am not sure, Megatron," Starscream said truthfully, still refusing to look up. "But this--thing has just appeared. It was not in the room twenty minutes ago, I would have seen it for sure as I was just in here," the Seeker explained with a shrug. He was not in the mood to be questioned. He felt a pang of regret that he had missed a golden opportunity to learn how the ring worked.

"Shockwave reported a seismic disturbance and this was the epicentre. Do you care to explain what that was all about?" Megatron demanded, stepping in beside Starscream and looked down on the hunched figure. His very presence demanded an immediate attention that Starscream was not willing to give. The air was thick with the feeling of intimidation, animosity and possible danger.

Starscream exhaled windily, he too had noticed the quake; it was hard not to notice it. His laboratory's scanners had detected a radio emission for a few minutes after the intense vibrations stopped, his senses detected an immense energy residue when he had arrived. He wondered what the reports outside of the base were saying, news of a rare planet quake? Or were they speculating some sort of explosion? Or did another [Cybertonium](#) mine collapse? He doubted the enemy would investigate. But if they did, he knew they would be easily cut down.

But there was an energy source, he was eager to find out what it exactly was and how to tap it. He dreamed of the day he could finally take the reigns of command, but that would depend on his ability to locate and secret a source of energon. It had to be well hidden; Military hardware tended to detect energy like Turbo-foxes located Petrol-rabbits. He kept his eagerness hidden under his sleek exterior.

He glanced over his wing at his leader. Starscream made contact with the other's optics for a few seconds before breaking it off. Looking too long could be interpreted as a sign of challenge, and Megatron had been very moody as of late. Starscream was not ready to make such a challenge. Not until he was absolutely certain of success. To be successful he needed energon. And energon, like time and many other things, was slowly becoming scarce.

"I was not here at the time," he replied allowing hint of irritation to slip in, "but I felt those very same disturbances and I came to investigate, Megatron. I shall take this back to my lab for dissection," he said patting the machine. Megatron nodded, watching as the Seeker tucked the MALP under his arm, turned on his heel. Starscream glanced over his wing just before he exited. "I recommend we post a shift of three guards here from here on in, it might be a good idea so we can see what happens if it happens again."

"Agreed," Megatron said with an irritated nod as the red Seeker exited the room. Megatron snorted in disgust and looked at the ring. He wondered what it had that held the fascination of his lieutenant since its discovery by a small construction team that had been fortifying an ancient corridor. They broke through an old wall with intention to replace it. Starscream had been the closest at hand when the call to look at it came over the communications network.

Starscream had wrenched open a bronze door that had been welded shut, despite an old warning that forbade entry, written in a rare script. He found Starscream standing in the room, his optics were bright with delight of discovery. But the room had been hidden

for so long that it was covered in a thick layer of reddish-brown dust.

What puzzled Starscream upon discovery were the foot prints. There were faint footprints, in the ancient dust, that seemed to appear from nowhere. The dust itself was not evenly spread, but scattered in peculiar heaps, the biggest heap was near the door. There were no open ventilation shafts, all were sealed off; so drafts were not the cause for the odd formations. What was the most perplexing enigma of all was the fact the foot prints appeared only to enter, none leaving. So where did everybody go?

Starscream had mentioned that the device he carried away had appeared on the platform. Was it possible that ring was a sort of teleportation device? Megatron looked at the ring again but could not see it as his lieutenant did. He had not entered the room when it was thick with the scent of energy and had no idea of the potential. He did catch the odour of ozone but that could have been Starscream firing his Null rays at the small machine. What he saw was a curious artefact and little more.

Starscream almost immediately begged to oversee the research project. Megatron had suggested that Starscream work with Shockwave, but the young flier objected most venomously. Megatron was very reluctant to agree to the Seekers demands. He wondered why the sudden interest, but long before the war started Starscream had been an explorer of sorts. He did not care though, only if it kept Starscream's ambitious mind occupied. He figured if Starscream was sifting through dust and debris, he would be not be plotting to overthrow him. Megatron was not prone to trusting his second in command, but on occasion he would humour him.



Away in a lab, only a fifteen minute walk, and five elevator trips up about a kilometre, Starscream set the MALP down on his black topped lab workbench. He stood back rubbing his chin thoughtfully. The symbol on the machine was of an intense interest to the Seeker as he peered closer. A dissection would be in order.

He sorted through roughly organised drawers and cabinets and brought out tools that resembled screwdrivers and wrenches to other things that were for purposes unknown. He pulled out a folded plastic sheet and spread it over his work table and set the MALP on that.

Wordlessly he turned to his computer. His azure fingers fairly flew as they punched in a sequence of symbols. He glanced up at the monitor to ensure his data input was correct then hit a large red button. He turned and watched as the computer scanned the small wheeled machine. A red beam of pulsating light stroked across it. He refocused the beam to scan the insignia then the alien words.

He ran through various menus and selected the insignia. It was enlarged so he could fully see it. A large blue coloured "A" shape with a ball balanced on the point. It stood in front of a blue and green ball that could be an alien planet. Well, it looked like a planet on the black background to him. *The place of origin?* Around the planet were six other symbols outlined in white. He hummed with interest at this discovery.

He isolated the seven symbols, curious as they seemed to be faintly familiar. He ran a comparison check on the glyphs. A few moments later six symbols were shown as being present on the ring. He smiled fiercely. Only one symbol did not match the thirty-nine that

he had stored in his computer. He pondered them for a while before deciding it would be best to look at it again when his mind was not boiling with excitement.

The abrupt appearance of an alien machine with an alien scripture suggested that it was a spacebridge. He was not entirely sure of what the symbols meant and how they were to be used.

He tapped his chin in wonder. He leaned back at the table and studied the MALP and dreamed of crossing the galaxy in a flicker of an optic. The energy that could be saved from not having to travel in great ships. The energy that could possibly be found. He realised that if the machine came from a technologically advanced world, albeit somewhat primitive, there might be ample supply energy to harvest. Starscream exhaled in a wistful sigh. It was a dream, but he also knew that some dreams can come true.

Starscream picked up his tools of the table and started to dismantle the machine. He paused to look at each part carefully, remembering where they went. Examining the fine details and the miniature workmanship. It was alien technology for sure. None of the threads on the screws matched the measurements he was familiar with. Even Military hardware and Consumer goods technology could easily work together. There were a few notable differences, but nothing that was as alien as he was seeing now.

He had decided shortly after he started his dissection, that the machine was not alive and was likely never alive. He could not find anything that resembled a brain, or anything that would pump fuel and energon to areas that needed power. A primitive selection of wires and lights that were strung along in a most haphazard and disorganised manner. He examined the pieces and decided that there was no location for a spark housing, or laser core. He was certain that it was not even a primitive animal. Cybertronian fauna, despite being very simplistic, still had a rudimentary spark.

He continued on until he came across a rectangular box connected with wires. He touched the nubs on the top with a screw driver and noticed a flash of blue; a spark. Carefully he unhooked it and sniffed. The sent of energy was strong. "A primitive energon cube? or a very primitive form of energy storage?" he muttered to himself as he ran his fingers along the surface, eyeing the foreign script.

On top of the battery was one word in very large alien symbols: M E G A T R O N. He glanced it over noticing other fine writing, similar to what was on the machine. He put the block down on the table to be scanned. He hoped he could use that information to help translate and learn the true purpose of the rings.

He prised the top of the battery off, careful not to break it. Fluid slopped over the edge and burned into his metal fingers. He cursed and ran his fingers under a tap washing the acid off. He looked at the fluid that lay splattered across the plastic cloth. He had his computer scan the splash. H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>: Sulphuric Acid, appeared on the screen. He snorted in mild irritation; it was a primitive battery.

Starscream tended to his wounds as the computer hammered out a simple translation of the alien words. He glanced at the translation key his computer spat out at him. He took the plasti-film then glanced at the top of the battery and let out a shrill laugh. The word on the battery translated into the name of his leader. It was a sign that he may be on the correct track. He would have to run several translations in order to verify that he had the

correct interpretation.

Now came the tedious paperwork that Megatron would demand. He had seen the device and knew Starscream was studying it. Starscream decided to omit some of the information, most of it, and inform Megatron that he was nowhere nearer to an answer.

## Meteors

### *P-3X-519, Antilla*

The ringed planet lazily spun on its axis as it orbited its yellow-green star.

The ring itself was once the remains of a moon that had drawn too close to the planet. The gravitational pull of the orange world caused it to break apart. Larger pieces collided and broke into smaller pieces until much of the ring was made of rocks from the size of small boulders to microscopic dust particles.

Within the rings strange asteroids drifted, round, boulder-like and pockmarked with craters of their own, captured by the planet from the tail of a passing comet aeons ago. More would be picked up on occasion as they drifted into the slightly elliptical two year orbit of the planet.

The planet also had nineteen moons that orbited the world varying in size. Several of the moons orbited the world within the rings itself. Keeping the rings organised by their gravity's; herding them along as they cycled along their orbits and yet, despite their work, the foreign asteroids continued to shift about.

One of the shepherd moons passed by a particularly large cluster of asteroids pulling them along. They followed behind, rolling lazily, until they felt the tug of the planet. Unable to resist, they started to fall in toward the silent world; toward the yellow-orange clouds. These clouds covered most of the planets surface, often obscuring the sun.

As the planet turned, a beacon that shone brightly upon the clouds, came into view. It was bright, yellow and large enough to be seen from space. The symbol belonged to those who lived there before. The pilot of a [Tal'tak](#) cargo ship, if it passed by, might wonder what the beacon meant. However, Antilla was well out of the way of the usual Goa'uld shipping routes. The beacon, to those who lived on the world before, was a warning. A warning to stay away, to never return and a long forgotten cry for help.

The shepherd moon continued to herd its flock, oblivious to rocks that had fallen out of place. Those rocks tumbled and rolled along, pulling with them a trail of dust, down toward the ruined cities, slowly but gaining speed; they started to glow.

Below on the surface, four people walked along an old pitted road. Their boots kicked up dust as they walked along while rocks crunched under their feet with a grating and crackling noise. Dressed in green fatigues and caps. Armed with M-14 machine guns, side arm pistols and backpacks loaded with survival gear in the event of an unexpected extended stay.

The SG1 travelled the wide road looking around at debris and old ruins. In the distance there was a large cluster of buildings, the ruins of a massive metropolis. They stopped on occasion to look through the shattered structures. Bent beams, rods, exposed ancient wiring as well as broken walls poked up through the ground, out of dried, dead grasses.

It was vastly different from the area around the Stargate. That area alone seemed to still have simple life forms, living plants even though the ground was parched. Daniel called

the area "the sanctuary," a place of safety. But safe from what he had wondered.

They continued on their tedious journey along the desolate road, walking past the buildings through a thick rust coloured dust, dust that blew on the wind and tinted the clouds orange and the blue-green sky. The size of the surrounding structures made them feel very small and quite insignificant. Even the stoic Teal'c seemed somewhat at unease about the planet. He glanced about, his staff weapon ready for instant use.

"Bad things happened here a long time ago," Teal'c observed. The ground, as they drew closer to the city, was pitted with craters varying in size from a metre to a few hundred metres in diameter.

"A war or something?" Jack inquired examining the damage. It appeared as if the craters were formed from mortar damage. "It could explain where the natives went."

"No, I don't think so," Samantha Carter said as she strode over to a small crater. She crouched down and studied it intently. "It looks more like a small meteor impact crater and fairly recent judging by the disturbed soil." She brushed the centre with her hand and found a small pitted iron-like stone. She prised it from the ground and put it into a sealed plastic container.

"It could still explain where the natives went," Jack suggested. "Daniel?" he called as the archaeologist carried on down the road.

Daniel glanced back at the group as they stood around the crater but he had an urge to walk on. He stopped to examine a doorway to a building. The steps were high, almost as high as he was. The doors were huge: made of what looked like bronze, brass or copper, tinged with verdigris. Pits, crevices, and joints in plates were almost moss green. They were designed to last for many years, those that were not damaged or destroyed from impacts.

He studied it and could not figure out how the doors opened. There were no writings on the walls or doorways, but some of the structures appeared to have been painted at some point. Ages of wind blowing sand at high speed had sanded the surfaces clean. He assumed that it was the same elements that kept the verdigris down and other parts of the buildings bright.

Daniel Jackson eyes followed the structure up until they rested on the clouds. They moved overhead quickly making it feel as if the buildings were moving giving him a somewhat dizzy feeling. For a moment the clouds thinned enough for him to view the bright green sky. He wondered about the weather. What sort of rain fell? Was it water or ammonia? He sniffed the air and did not smell ammonia. All he could smell was the pungent sting of metal in his nostrils.

Daniel walked on for a few minutes. He stopped and pointed. Around the corner from a building was a monolith. It was at least two hundred metres tall. On one side, the front, was a section that was inscribed with symbols. From the top most point shone a bright beam of light directly into the sky, like war-time search lights.

"Now that's big," Colonel O' Neill remarked, stepping back to take in the full size of the monument. His gaze travelled up the thick vines that had grown onto the metal spire.

Daniel stepped back and looked up as well. He put his tool bag down and opening up a small notebook. The monolith was heavily corroded and eroded with time, he would have to try to brush away at some of the worn metal in order to determine what the glyphs were; those that he could reach.

"The people that must have lived here had to have be at least twenty to thirty feet tall," Sam said taking in the size. She removed her hat for a moment and smiled in awe.

"Perhaps they used stilts," O' Neill suggested.

"And yet, other than the ruins, there is no evidence that they even existed," Teal'c added looking around at the streets and paths, abandoned, empty. Alone.

"This world does seem to have a feel of a ghost planet," Samantha Carter agreed looking around at the tall ruins with a slight shudder. There was very few sounds, the whisper of wind that whined as it blew through abandoned buildings. Not even insects creaked. They could hear the sounds of their own breathing and the sounds of their hearts pounding within their chests. A cool wind blew through the streets giving them all a shiver.

"Well? Can you read it?" Colonel O' Neill inquired.

Daniel glanced at his leader, then at the papers in his hand. "It shouldn't be too much of a problem," Daniel replied comparing the symbols to a key he had written out. "It's the same as what we called the Autobot language, only it seems to be a bit more worn." He thumbed through the pages and glanced at the glyphs.

He copied them out as best as he could. There were holes but he determined these holes were due to a lingual shift. Some of the symbols were familiar yet different to his plaque but he managed to get the basic meaning of it.

He wrote the translation down on paper and filled in a few blank areas with words that fit. He hoped he had it right. He pushed his glasses back onto his nose and brushed his hand through his hair as he tapped the pen on the paper.

"Daniel, what have you got?" Colonel O' Niell asked with a nod of his head.

"Well," Daniel hesitated as he gazed over his notes for a moment. "It seems like a poem, perhaps part of a song or maybe an ancient curse," Daniel supplied.

"A song?" the Colonel repeated. He looked around at the metal buildings.

"At least as far as I can tell. Anyway it reads: If Cybertron be your home; far away never roam. Hear my message listen in fear. Danger comes the end is near. Just like us you soon will rust. All shall be turned to dust." Daniel added some emphasis to his words through gesture and tone. The others watched.

"That sounds creepy. Who's it by, Metallica?" Jack said shaking his head and gazing upward at towering monolith, "Add some drums, guitars and I think we have a hit."

Teal'c looked at O' Niell and said nothing.

"What? Oh well....it did not activate anything." He returned his gaze at the archaeologist and shrugged. "Not yet at least," he added.

Daniel smiled grimly.

Samantha Carter had taken an interest in a console that stood just in front of the monolith and to the left of the steps leading up. She had somehow climbed up and was sitting on the edge of it, careful not to touch anything. "It sounded like a type of curse," Samantha commented.

"Listen to a few metal bands and you'll realise that they all sound like curses," Jack added.

"That does appear to be a type of warning," Teal'c agreed taking a closer look at what Major Carter was working on.

"You think?" Jack asked with a hint of sarcasm.

"A warning for what?" Daniel half muttered as he walked around the monument. He gazed at the sky then at the battered buildings and finally, at the dusty ground.

Samantha Carter had a hand held scanner hooked up to the front of a very weathered control panel "Interesting...this device seems to be hooked up to a projection mechanism similar to what we found on [Cimmeria](#). The only problem is you need hands that are at least three feet in size to turn the dials," she said pushing against the knob.

"We don't know what it is," O' Niell warned, "so lets not touch it, okay?"

"I am wondering if we should look around the city and see if there is anything small enough to bring back for study," Daniel said looking at the buildings that surrounded the monolith.

"And I am wondering if we should leave. That warning sounds like it refers to a disease or something," Samantha suggested as she glanced at her fingers then at the dust coated panel

"Daniel said rust, only machines or metal get rusty," Jack interjected.

Daniel rounded the corner and merged back with the group. "That is a machine gun in your hand isn't it?" he pointed out.

Jack looked at his weapon and nodded. "True."

"Daniel, this world has been abandoned for countless years, I think it would be highly unlikely that such a disease would still be around. Perhaps we should investigate further. There might be something that can help us in our fight against the Goa'uld," the Jaffa said.

Daniel glanced at the structures that stood nearby. Almost all were metallic and in fairly good shape except for where they had been smashed from an ancient attack. "Well, okay...that building there looks important," said Daniel gesturing to a building with a large domed roof.

They looked at each other and nodded. They crossed the wide street to the building. It had a huge bronze coloured door that was slightly ajar. Daniel looked at it as they passed through. Large rivets marked the surface in an almost decorative manner. Below their feet was a groove where a track was imbedded.

"Daniel?" Jack queried as they entered he gestured to the archaeologist to follow.

They entered a huge room with a vaulting ceiling. Inside were scriptures along the walls and across what appeared to be a large altar. Behind the altar was a stepped platform with a huge black beetle on it. The room was dusty and silent but they could almost hear voices chanting in an ancient language.

Daniel's eyes almost lit up as he looked around at the walls the floor and ceiling. There was writing everywhere. He knelt down and swept back some of the rust coloured dust exposing a huge metal slab.

"There appears to be a crypt under this floor," Daniel observed. "I think this place was a type of temple," he continued. He glanced at the symbols marking the slab and it seemed to bear a strange name and numbers which could be translated as dates. He tugged on the slab, but was unable to move it. He sighed in disappointment and moved on.

Samantha Carter continued on toward the huge insect with Teal'c. It was almost two stories tall and the lower half was made from a semi-translucent, purple-black glass. It stood alone on a series of platforms that resembled a ziggurat. "This is far too large for us to bring back, but I am getting an energy and mild radiation readings from it," she said looking up at the great insect. "But this could be interesting to study."

"I have never seen anything like this before," observed Teal'c. As he started up the two foot tall steps toward the artefact.

Daniel looked up from a new script he was looking at. "It kind of reminds me of a ladybug and a firefly hybrid."

"A lady bug and firefly, Daniel?" Teal'c inquired cocking his head while raising an eyebrow.

"An Earth insect, Teal'c," Jack answered stepping along side the Jaffa, "that flashes light out of its rear end."

Teal'c remained a little puzzled but nodded, he was sure there was a logical reason for such an ability.

"I pointed them out to you when we went fishing a month ago, I called them lightning bugs then. Now, Daniel," O' Neill continued, "what have you found?"

Daniel was standing looking over a notebook where he had his translation key written. "It says that they worshipped a god named Primus, who appeared to be the source of their souls, Primus resides in the planet Cybertron, their home world. Hmm, that warning spoke of Cybertron, interesting. Well... some of them worshipped Primus, the ones we've designated as Decepticons did not, for the most part."

"So we have a Goa'uld named Primus?" Jack said.

"He must be very old. I have never heard of him before by any of the system lords," Teal'c added as he walked down the stairs to where Daniel was standing.

"No, Primus appeared to be very benevolent. Not Goa'uld-like at all," Daniel replied. "This script here describes an attack of asteroids and they created the insect to use in self defence. It is, supposedly, a gift from Primus. Only that it only made the situation worse. Instead of vaporising the meteors, it made them break apart and shower down." He pointed to an embossed image of the weapon which appeared almost like a technical blueprint.

"The city, that is why there are so many craters all around it," Major Carter said with a smile.

Daniel nodded. "This is incredible, these writings, here, describe the journey of the race from their home world," the archaeologist said excitedly pointing at another set.

"Continue?" Colonel O' Neill suggested.

"Right, yes. They felt that the rocks were sent to them by the dark god Unicron. They call him a bringer of chaos, pain and death, a sort of devil," Daniel described. "They thought he might have corrupted the insect."

"Could this be [Sokar](#)?" Jack asked, looking at the insect.

"It is possible," Teal'c agreed, "Although, I have never heard of that name either."

"Ah, what a devil," Jack remarked.

Daniel shook his head in negation. "Sokar is not symbolised in any of these scriptures, but that is not saying that Unicron is not one of his earlier names."

Jack shrugged his shoulder for a moment. "It seems that the weapon caused them more problems than it did them good. See anyone living around?"

Suddenly the wings of the insect spread open, there was a throbbing thrum as the abdomen of the insect started to pulsate with light. The thrum increased in speed as the light became brighter and brighter. The leg like projections curled in toward the thorax.

"Daniel, what did you just do?" Jack O' Neill asked the archaeologist as he backed away from the pyramid.

"What? I didn't touch anything," Daniel replied quickly.

"Sure you didn't," Jack responded.

There was a screech and groan as the ceiling slowly opened up, dropping dust on those below. It opened to expose a 360 degree view of the sky. There was a metallic whine as the insect's head turned. The pulsating thrum increased in frequency and speed.

Way above them bright fire balls appeared. Each one produced a thunderous roar as

they screamed through the atmosphere. One, two, three, four streaked with long fiery tails.

"We're just in time to see the fireworks display," Jack said dryly. "Everybody take cover!" he shouted.

The thrum of the insect increased exponentially until the pulsating of the insects abdomen was no longer visible as flashes but as a steady glow. The head turned toward the nearest meteor and abruptly a lavender bolt of energy burst froth from the mouth and hit a fireball that appeared in the sky. The air shook as fireball exploded, with a thunderous boom and rained fiery fragments down upon the city. The ground shuddered as the impact of thousands of meteor shards pummelled the ground.

Without waiting the insect's head tracked and obliterated the other meteors. The SG1 team huddled together mouths open in awe as they witnessed the event. Dust filled the sky as the ground was ripped apart by the impacts. The insect fired again destroying yet another meteor. The fireball exploded overhead and a large chunk smashed the monolith in half.

The monolith started to teeter, then fall. The sound was tremendous as the monument hit the ground. Dust and chunks of metal were freed from the ceiling and dropped around them. SG1 huddled together wondering if they were about to find themselves one with the planet.

They watched transfixed as fragments of the meteor rained around them covering them in dust and debris. Almost as abruptly as it activated, the insect fell silent. Its wings lowered against its back and the thrum stopped. The abdomen glowed slightly of a remaining phosphorescence that slowly dissipated.

Samantha Carter coughed while Daniel broke into a fit of sneezes.

Teal'c brushed himself off as he rose to his feet. "I have seen planetary defence systems before, but that one has to be one of the most unusual," he remarked.

Samantha looked up at the insect. "It takes too long to power up. It is possible that the addition of a Naquidah generator could speed its reaction time up," she mused.

Jack O'Neill brushed the dust off his face and looked up at the sky. The roof was still wide open to the sky. "Okay Daniel, You have five minutes to get the photos you need and then let's get out of here before we see that thing in action again."



### *Earth, Cheyenne Mountain*

"Incoming traveller..." Sergeant Davis called out as the Stargate's activation sequence finalised. The air was filled with the warning siren of the Stargate's activation. The silvery trinum and titanium iris closed shut over the opening. It would prevent unwanted people from entering the installation.

"Do we have an identification?" General Hammond demanded.

"It's SG1," Sergeant Davis confirmed after the [GDO](#) code was radioed back.

"It is about time," General Hammond said with a hint of relief and impatience. "Open the iris," he ordered. The SG1 team were almost late for their return. He hurried down the stairs as the team had finished passing through the portal. Daniel had hold of his hat and Teal'c was glancing behind him.

"Were you under attack Colonel O' Neill?" he asked concerned, observing the dust and dirt that covered their uniforms and faces.

"Rocks, asteroids, meteors... and lots of them," O' Neill responded. "We found a huge..." he tried to use his hands to emphasise the size, "...bug that shot them out of the sky, only it made them into smaller more numerous meteors that made escaping to the Stargate a bit more fun."

"But we have discovered more references to that planet we sent the MALP though last week," Daniel said excitedly. "The world may have been called Cybertron. The people who once inhabited P-3X-519 came from there.

"And I have some samples for the lab to run tests on," Major Carter added holding up the plastic bottle.

General Hammond nodded. "Excellent, there will be a debriefing tomorrow at 07:30."



The following morning came very quickly and the four team members sat around the briefing table with General Hammond and Captain Frasier. Several file folders were placed at each seat.

"Doctor Frasier," General Hammond said with a nod.

"What you discovered is a swift acting disease-like corrosion. We found that [Trinium](#) is adversely affected by the pathogen," she said showing a small video clip of the rapid deterioration of a Trinium bolt. "It is being observed in a glass containment unit. There is very little threat of it getting out."

"And as you all know, the Stargate's iris is fortified with Trinium based alloys. It will be important to get an anti-oxidisation treatment for all Trinium based materials. The [Tollan](#) have agreed to further research into this as it would benefit both our societies. But the report from Daniel suggests that the home world of the Antillians was the Planet Cybertron. Perhaps searching Cybertron might reveal an answer there," General Hammond outlined.

"If Cybertron be your home; far away never roam," Daniel muttered softly. "It's a warning to those who are from Cybertron never to return there if they've gone to Antilla," Daniel realised.

"At the speed at which the corrosion attacks Trinium; taking an infected space vehicle to

a distant planet might mean they could never reach Cybertron," Dr. Frasier replied.

"Unless they travelled through the Stargate," Samantha added.

"In which case, they would have transmitted it almost immediately," Dr. Frasier agreed.

"So Cybertron could be another dead and abandoned planet," Daniel sighed with a hint of disappointment. He would have loved to have seen the people who may have been involved in the construction of the giant buildings.

"Just, hopefully, without the falling meteors and rocks," Jack added.

"Nonetheless, I'd like to send a team in to investigate," General Hammond replied. "Be ready at 0800 hours tomorrow to disembark. Also, I'll be sending SG2 and SG7 back to P-3X-519 to investigate the insect weapon. The President is interested in an attempt to retrieve it. Any further questions?" he paused for a moment. "Dismissed."

### *P-3G-100, Cybertron*

Starscream stood just in front of the ring's arch, his optic just in line with the top most chevron. He studied it with an intense scrutiny, looking over the intricate lines and designs that were formed into the crystalline surface. A small glint near the top of the ring caught his attention, he paused and noticed a small fragment of stone had worked itself loose. With intense care, Starscream used a pair of tweezers he had pulled from subspace to remove the fragment and place it into a small container.

"I will examine you more closely in a little bit," he said to the fragment and tapped the container gently. He paused to make a note in his datapad about where the specimen came from. He regarded it for a moment before he placed it away in subspace. Despite the tiny size he was sure it would be enough for his private studies. He had been wanting a specimen for study but it was nearly impossible for him to collect a sample.

With a laser pointer he travelled the micro-filaments and crystalline energy conduits. They reminded him of the fibres that was found within some species of quartz crystals; rutilated quartz. There were no visible system of wires or electronic devices. What powered it was still an enigma to Starscream.

He cocked his head and gave the circular console a long pensive look. It had been the object of his most invasive study. The symbols on the console were the same as that which were on the inner ring. Enigmatic, they tickled the Seeker's curious mind. He crouched down by the console and carefully pulled it apart. He had done this several times and each time he had removed the crystals inside. He held them in his hands. Each were a different weight, a different size and a different colour; placed in what could almost be a random order. He put the console back together and pushed at the symbols. They appeared to be buttons but they did nothing; he was uncertain if the thing worked or not. If it did, he was unsure what he was looking for. Answers to most of his unspoken questions were scarce.

He returned to the platform to ponder and he gazed up at the device. The ring itself was made in two almost solid pieces. The outer ring had the nine chevrons positioned at even intervals. It also had an intricate design that appeared to serve no purpose other than for appearance. The design did not even seem Cybertronian; it seemed very alien. His research into various architectural forms from over the ages turned up nothing remotely similar.

The inner track seemed to have an ability to move but he had been unable to get it to turn. He studied it and counted the symbols. There were thirty-nine in total and each had a different glyph. Each glyph represented something. He felt like he should know what they were; it frustrated him.

From across the room, came a disappointed moan followed by raucous laughter. He cocked his head at the Seekers sitting in the corner of the room, laughing over a game of chance. There were three that were placed on guard over the ring. Two of them were his wingmates, his personal guard.

Skywarp: cruel, lazy and somewhat dim-witted. Despite that, he somehow managed win

in games that resulted in large sums of energon credits; probably through cheating. Skywarp leaned forward and scooped up a pile of credits. Thundercracker, his other wingmate patted the arm of the third Seeker, who's name he could not remember. She was a regular wingmember, one of many thousands.

Starscream shook his head at the three. Megatron, would be furious if he knew they were slacking off. But he also knew that happy troops were co-operative troops so he said little to deter them. Starscream picked up the datapad and stepped off the platform. He nodded at a Skywarp as he passed by.

"Ya gonna join us?" the black Seeker inquired, grinning over his winnings. A heap of credits glowed within his encircled hands. Around his immediate area was a half drunk energon cube and all manner of energon goodies.

Starscream studied Skywarp's pile and then looked at the others. They were nearly finished. Skywarp was cruising the waters, looking for fresh prey, like a hungry Sharkticon. "Maybe later, when I am off duty. I have business to be getting on with," was his stiff reply.

Skywarp frowned then grinned. "You're scared I'll clean house again," he taunted with a chuckle. He picked the cube up and took an enormous swig.

"Clean house, Skywarp? You? I think not, but right now my credits are being put to better use," Starscream replied as he nodded at the ring.

"That?" Thundercracker said, speaking up for the first time. He looked between the ring and Starscream and shook his head.

"Yes," the red Seeker responded.

Skywarp spat out his energon as he burst into a fit of drunken laughter. "You've got to be kidding, Screamer." Starscream gave Skywarp a searing glare, but the dark Seeker ignored it and continued to laugh.

Thundercracker shook his head in disbelief. "You'd be better off gambling with Skywarp, Starscream. You might actually win something," the blue Seeker rumbled as he cleared the table off and set up the game once more.

Skywarp had regained some semblance of self control and gestured to the upturned oil drum. Starscream shook his head in negation. "Later, Skywarp," he said as he exited the room. The chatter and laughter started up as the door whooshed closed behind him. Without looking back, he hurried on toward his laboratory.



The dimly lit room buzzed with the high pitched whine of powerful computers. Monitors and screens covered the walls; each one displaying vital information on a key sector, scanning, watching, regulating, analysing information. Those that were not currently active were on standby, glowing blue bearing the insignia of the military hardware. Long consoles stretched out underneath them with brightly lit keys in a rainbow of colours and

holographic display units.

One screen displayed a map that almost resembled a labyrinth. It was a large section of intersecting paths, chambers, rooms, halls; known territory within the local area. Levels of activity, room names and functions were displayed in a colour coded legend, arranged in the order of importance.

A second map was displayed on the screen as a cross section showing many levels going deep into the planet toward the core. The levels closest to the core were marked as unknown, unexplored or even dangerous. They were forgotten passages; ancient halls that were no longer in use due to the passage of time. Myths and legends spoke of things that abounded within the depths. But myths and legends did not describe everything. Some things were purposefully omitted.

A blue box formed around a section of the map and abruptly that area zoomed in to fill the entire screen. Individual rooms could be viewed in greater details. The placement of large machines and equipment could be seen and positively identified within the rooms. The halls appeared empty and void of any occupation. An options menu was brought up into display and suddenly, the halls and rooms were filled with moving or stationary purple beacons.

"Whereabouts is he?" a hard voice asked as the map rotated slightly to show it from a different perspective.

Without a word spoken; a command prompt window appeared on top of the map and a long string of numbers and letters appeared. With a loud click, a single beacon on the screen was isolated and turned red. The red beacon circulated around the new room then interacted with three other purple beacons before it travelled along several different halls and up elevators to a level that was near the surface.

"Hmm," Megatron murmured to himself. He rested his hands on his hips as he continued to observe the movement of the single red dot. For a moment the dot paused and then it turned into a blacked out room. As it did, it vanished from view. "Interesting," Megatron remarked, drumming his fingers on his hip in slight irritation.

"It is the same as usual, Megatron." Shockwave said as he turned his single yellow optic to face his leader. "Starscream enters his laboratory and we lose track of him. Other energy signatures fail to show up once they enter as well." His optic flashed as he spoke, in sync with his words. His voice was soft spoken and lacked the harsh sharpness or guttural growl that was common amongst his kind. "It appears that he has several devices activated in that sector, including a signal dampening device."

"I don't like this," Megatron muttered to himself. "I don't like this at all." he glanced down at the seated mech. "Can you interface with his database?" he half asked, half ordered.

Shockwave turned his attention back to the screen, typing in commands receiving "access denied" as a reward for his efforts. Each time the words were displayed, Megatron's frown became deeper and more severe. Megatron said nothing but allowed Shockwave to continue with his work.

Many minutes passed as Shockwave commanded the computer. Hacking and probing but to no avail. "I have been unable to break through his security, but rest assured,

Megatron, I will succeed."

Megatron scowled in intense irritation. "See what you can do here," he paused for a moment then continued. "I might just pay Starscream a little visit," he said with a sharp nod of his head.

"As you command, Megatron," Shockwave said and saluted.

Megatron turned and left the observation room. The dampening field disturbed him, never before had Starscream used such a device and it made him suspicious. Shockwave had been doing routine sector scans and had noticed the anomaly. It gave him angry surges to think that Starscream was hiding something from him. There was no useful data coming from the Seeker and yet it was of such importance to Starscream, that the flier had set up dampening fields around his laboratories.

The report, Starscream had given him a week before about the strange vehicle the Seeker had captured, had very little detail except a few diagrams and a remark that it was nothing of importance and would be disposed of. When probed for more details the Seeker had responded that he thought someone had placed it there as a practical joke.

He knew he would find out for sure shortly.



Starscream stood at his work bench and held the stone between some tweezers and examined it. It was semi-translucent almost like a type of glass, yet had qualities like quartz. He hummed to himself as he placed the fragment between two energy conductors.

Quartz was an important mineral on Cybertron. It was used for all purposes in science, indispensable and mined almost to exhaustion. It was required for every day objects, such as materials for grinding, the construction of perfect optical lenses, highly accurate internal chronometers and other scientific equipment such as microscope or telescope lenses. Starscream's gaze stopped at the laboratory glass that he had placed neatly on his shelves; they were also made from quartz. So much relied on quartz and it was taken for granted. Like the energy crisis Cybertron was facing, quartz was also on the list of things that were desperately sought by both sides.

His fingers deftly tightened the screw until they held the stone securely into position. He inhaled deeply and leaned down to look at the tiny fragment.

"Let's see what you can do," he murmured as he introduced some energy to the stone fragment. Slowly it began to vibrate, emitting a low level hum. "Interesting. Computer: increase energy by fifteen percent," he ordered. As the energy increased the stone became more active. The Seeker continued to order incremental energy increases as he made rapid notes of the changes in amplitude and vibrational frequency.

"Computer: Increase the energy levels to ninety-five percent." Abruptly the crystal glowed, dim at first then brighter; as it did so, the machine started to vibrate, the whine it emitted was very shrill. "fascinating, the seismic activity that we detected...", he breathed in awe.

Starscream made a few notes and remarks in his computer and took the stone out of the conductors.

He slipped the stone into a pressure chamber. "Computer: confirm the status of the containment field within the pressure chamber."

"Containment field is at one hundred percent capacity. Continue?"

Starscream nodded. "Proceed with the application of pressure in five percent increments."

Slowly pressure was increased within the chamber. The stone fragment started to vibrate and hum, then it began to glow, gaining intensity. At sixty-five percent pressure, the crystal suddenly emitted a bell-like boom and a brilliant white light. Starscream turned his head away from the searing flash and stood dazed for a moment.

"Slag..." he gasped in surprise.

His optics finally cleared and he looked at the pressure chamber, inside the crystal had reduced itself to a fine dust. "Computer: What is the current status of the containment field?" he asked as he carefully placed the dust into a glass dish.

The computer almost seemed to hesitate before it relayed the information that was requested. "Containment field is down to twenty-three point oh-four-seven percent."

Starscream inhaled sharply at the news. "A nuclear reaction of the same size within that chamber would not have done that much damage to the containment field..." He stopped his sentence mid thought as he contemplated the ramifications of such a development. Starscream felt a tingle excitement flow through his fuel lines; he was certain he was on the edge of a scientific breakthrough. "Computer: Analyse all energy data received and observed during both experiments," he instructed.

The computer beeped a warning as it finished analysing the information. "Energy analysis complete," the computer announced. Starscream turned to observe the data that he collect from the two experiments. His mouth hung open in shock as he read the information that filled the screen.

His optics glowed bright with amazement. "Absolutely incredible. The amount of energy that the ring must need to operate is...astronomical...there has to be a power supply close by," he mused excitedly, "but where?" he asked himself.

The computer continued to display its data. He realised that if he could not use the ring to gain power, he knew he had the materials for an extremely powerful bomb.



Starscream backed out of his laboratory and locked the door when he felt a firm tap upon his shoulder. He turned around to see Megatron standing behind him. He was not aware of his leader's soundless approach; usually Megatron made himself known. The Seeker gave the door a test for secureness before he stepped away. It alarmed him, what had Megatron heard? He wondered. He was unsure how far the sound of the

crystal's destruction carried, did it pass through his lab's door? He decided to feign ignorance.

The large mechanoid looked at the smaller Seeker in the optic. It was a deep penetrating stare, as if he was trying to view the Seeker's personal thoughts. His mouth curled into a sinister but grim smile. Starscream could not help but experience a shudder from stem to stern.

"I've lost track of you lately, Starscream," Megatron said, in a deep grating tone.

Starscream broke off the stare before he could be interpreted as issuing an unspoken challenge. It was not time yet. "I have been rather busy as of late," the Seeker replied truthfully, twitching a wing with slight nervousness. He did not care much for what he read in the other's optics.

Megatron observed the Seeker for a moment. He had been long accustomed to the body language that the fliers used amongst themselves. Subtle and unconscious gestures with their wings spoke a lot about what they were feeling inside. The movement suggested that Starscream was not being entirely open; that he was hiding something. Something interesting.

"This stone ring of yours seems to be occupying all of your time, yet you have nothing to show for it. Is there anything you have to show me now?" Megatron inquired. He smiled slightly as the nervous twitch in the Seeker's wing increased.

Starscream started to panic about how much Megatron had noticed within the past thirty minutes. He did not want to give in yet, just incase his worries were unfounded. "I have yet to break the code," which in itself was the truth, "but, with time, I will succeed," Starscream replied, keeping his voice easy and natural. "As soon as I know what it is, you will know," he reassured.

"This isn't good enough, I want answers and I want them now," Megatron growled grabbing Starscream by his throat and lifted him off his feet. In a rapid movement, and a resounding clank, he had the Seeker pinned to the wall with the fusion cannon aimed directly at his head.

"I don't have any..." he gasped, "...yet!" Starscream struggled as he attempted to break free.

"Don't give me that slag, I can tell that you're stalling!" The fusion cannon powered up.

Starscream's feet kicked frantically in the air as his hands grasped the larger Transformer's arm. His optics were bright with fear and panic. "I—I just...can't pull scientific answers from...my afterburner...", the Seeker managed to choke out, his hands tugging at the ebony fingers.

"You're lying and you know it. You have something and you are not telling me. Tell me, Starscream, or I will kill you now!" He threatened, tightening his grasp around the Seeker's throat, giving him a little shake.

Starscream's optics brightened a lumen more as he stared down the unforgiving barrel. His body started to quake from his terror. He opened his mouth to speak; his lips moved

in an attempt to form words but he could not make a sound.

Abruptly he could inhale a small gasp of air. "I'm not, honestly Megatron," he finally managed to squeak out after his leader eased up on his throat. "Please believe me," he pleaded.

Megatron growled in frustration and rage. Was it possible that Starscream was indeed telling the truth? For a moment he increased his grasp on his lieutenant's neck, causing the Seeker's face to darken to almost black. "You sicken me, Starscream," he growled. In a swift movement he balled his fist and slugged Starscream across the jaw. As soon as his hand contacted the youthful Seeker's face, his other hand dropped him to the floor.

Starscream cried out in pain as he sat up gasping for breath and holding his throbbing chin. He backed away quickly until he was pressed against the wall. The Seeker glanced up at Megatron with a murderous glint in his optic and hate curling at his lip. If there had been any chance that Starscream would have handed Megatron the information, it would not happen now.

Megatron smirked at the Seeker's expression, it was all too familiar and made him almost want to laugh. "I have more important things to be working on right now, Starscream," Megatron snarled as he lashed out at the Seeker with his foot. Starscream managed to avoid the attack by rolling rapidly aside. "And your useless ring isn't one of them." The large transformer turned on his heel and thundered off cursing and fuming as he went.

Starscream exhaled slowly and wiped a small trickle of energon from the corner of his mouth. He gazed at the purple shimmer on the back of his hand. "Blast you, Megatron!," he cursed under his breath. "What the pit has got into you?"

The intimidation tactics were not working like they once were. Despite threats of death and dismemberment, Starscream was no longer seeing Megatron as a real threat. His words were just that; words. Empty threats that had no weight behind them; however, Starscream was not taking chances. He would still treat Megatron with extreme caution.

"Punching me, Megatron," Starscream hissed slightly louder at his leader's back, "isn't going to make me work any faster, on the contrary, it'll make me work even slower." Starscream knew that his project would prove to be useful, but only if he was given the time he needed to crack all of its secrets. Secretly, Starscream knew that it could be the key to the domination of the entire galaxy, perhaps the universe and he wanted this key only for himself.

Megatron paused for a moment, hearing his lieutenant's angry rasp. His optic brightened for a moment as he viewed Starscream out of the corner of it. For a moment he contemplated returning to finish the job. But instead, he growled and turned the corner and disappeared from the Seeker's sight. Despite how infuriating Starscream was; he was useful and Megatron still needed the young upstart for his plans.

Starscream slowly got up to his knees alternately rubbing his throat and jaw. He scowled and stared down the hall. His neck and jaw ached and his body continued to shake violently. He groaned painfully as he pushed himself to his feet. His brushes with Megatron often left him feeling physically drained and depressed. He leaned against the wall and punched in the security passcode to reenter his lab; he had forgotten why he was

leaving in the first place. But his concern now was to repair himself and he had the tools inside his lab to do the job.

A few hours later; Starscream had resumed his work on some devices that he had scattered across his workbench. The computer was compiling a new program when the room started to shake, it was familiar yet unusual at the same time. Dare he hope? He glanced up as the computer flashed a warning on the screen: SPACEBRIDGE ACTIVATION.

He started to tremble in anticipation and he dropped what he was doing. With a jubilant shriek he exited the laboratory. As he did, he reached out and grabbed a small device off the workbench closest to the door. He ran full speed out of the science complex to the room that contained the stone ring.

As Starscream reached the first elevator, his radio communicator activated. He could hear Thundercracker's voice sounding, worried, concerned and nervous. "Starscream, your strange ring has activated..." the voice fuzzed for a moment and all he could hear was a loud watery whoosh, followed by a gasp.

The three guards watched as their Air Commander left the ancient room. They were not sure why this thing was of such interest to Starscream, or why he needed to check on it so often. All it did was stand silent and unmoving. To them it served no purpose other than to aggravate Megatron and keep them off the surface fighting battles. Starscream was their commander and they did not question his orders; not this time. It did give them some easy work which was refreshing.

The room echoed their voices as they chatted around the makeshift table. It was a piece of a battered old bronze coloured door which was set across some metal fuel drums. The door was removed from an ancient piece of dilapidated machinery from across the room. On top of it they had cubes of energon and a pile of chips from a game they were playing to bide their time.

Standing guard over a harmless ring set in the heart of the Decepticon province of Polyhex seemed rather pointless. The fact that Starscream had issued the command, and Megatron even agreed to it, made it even more of an enigma; however, they were obedient soldiers and they did it all the same. Starscream was the only one who came down to check in on them and he did not seem to object to the relaxed methods of guarding that they did. As long as they watched it and did not touch anything else within the room.

The hours had passed by since Starscream's last visit and Skywarp found himself feeling extremely bored. There was only so much he could stand playing the same game over and over with the same partners. Starscream would have been a refreshing choice. With Starscream being almost constantly distracted with the workings of the stone ring; Skywarp knew he could clean house. Starscream was rather wealthy as far as his kind went and Skywarp was feeling a little greedy.

Unfortunately Skywarp's building boredom was starting to cost him points in the game; he lost a few rounds. Thundercracker eyed him cautiously as he set his pieces down and took a sip from his cube.

Skywarp cocked his head and shrugged. The dark Seeker leaned back in his chair; the front feet lifting from the ground as he rocked it and picked up a nut off the floor. He looked at it carefully rolling it between his thumb and forefingers. His optics brightened and with slight smile, he threw it at the ring. As soon as the nut hit the quartz-like surface the inner track started to move. Skywarp abruptly set the chair down properly and looked at the stoney ring as the room began to rumble. His optics brightened in alarm as the table started to vibrate.

They all stopped and stared their mouths open lightly in an oh of surprise. The two Seekers turned their heads to look at Skywarp. He shifted nervously. He had broken a rule, he had touched something. But it was only a nut. Would Starscream seriously get that upset over a nut? He wondered. Regardless of what would happen, the ring was actually doing something.

"Hey, Skywarp...what did you just do?" Thundercracker asked bringing Skywarp out of his stunned silence. Upon the glinting stoney surface a chevron opened up and closed

over a symbol. As it did, the chevron turned bright red.

"I dunno...nothing really, I think," his voice trailed off as the inner track moved counter clockwise.

The femcon cocked her head slightly and looked accusingly at Skywarp. "You threw something at it." She flicked her wing slightly.

There was another click, that brought their attentions back to the ring. A second chevron locked into place and illuminated with an eerie red glow. The vibrational level increased. It started to feel like a planet quake was in progress. A feeling similar to the vibrations of a collapsing mine or tunnel system.

The Seekers exchanged glances as they stood up and backed away from the violently shaking table. The chips and cubes of energon jiggled and fell to the ground. The cubes exploded as they impacted with the ancient surface. The Seekers ignored them, that was not their immediate worry. Their focus was on the ring which was causing the quake that shook the room, perhaps the planet.

The room began to fill with an odour of ozone, and high energy static. Skywarp cocked his head as he sniffed. He did not care for the science behind the ring, but he was interested in the energy he could detect.

"Is that thing supposed to be doing that?" Thundercracker asked breaking Skywarp of his wonder.

The femcon, stood up slowly. She shrugged in response to Thundercracker's question as a third chevron locked and the vibration increased. "It's got my attention and I'm watching," she remarked. "What's this thing for anyway?"

Skywarp backed a few steps away from the ring. "I've no idea, Thundercracker. Starscream never said what it should be doing; just to watch it. We ought to report this to him anyway." A fourth chevron locked and the ring rolled back with a rumble.

"It's interesting. It's working like a combination lock," she observed stepping closer to take a better look at the activating device. The purple seeker stood before the arch of the ring and marvelled. "Oh, Starscream's gotta see this, he really needs to see this."

The ring stopped turning and another chevron locked into place. Five glowing triangles illuminated the outer circle of the ring.

"Yeah, Screamer's been trying to figure out what this does since we found it about three weeks ago," replied Skywarp. He watched as the female stepped in to examine the vibrating ring, his wings surface was prickling with an uneasy sensation. The energy was building up to something big. He wondered for a moment if they should run for cover. Was it about to explode?

He and Thundercracker exchanged worried glances as a sixth chevron locked.. Thundercracker removed a rifle off his arm and held it ready. He suddenly became alarmed. He could sense an almost climatic level of energy build up in the room and the femcon was still gazing at the ring. He gestured to Thundercracker to back away. He was

afraid and of what he was afraid of, he did not know.

"Thundercracker, you better contact Starscream," he said and his wingmate nodded.

"Hey, you'd better step aside Sunst..." Skywarp started and stopped. His jaw dropped in shock.

"Starscream, your ring has activated..." Thundercracker's sentence was cut short as the seventh symbol locked. He inhaled a sharp breath as a whirlpool of water-like energy spiralled out. His optics brightened as his fingers twitched over the trigger. The vortex of energy enveloped the femcon who was standing in front of the ring. The energy pulled her with it as it snapped back. The water-like surface settled looking much like the ripples in a glowing fountain of water.

"Thundercracker, what's happening?" Starscream asked excitedly over the crackling radio.

"Is--is she dead?" Skywarp inquired

Thundercracker's stared in disbelief at what remained of the femcon; a pair of darkened smoking feet. "What the frag?!" Thundercracker gasped horrified.

"Thundercracker? What's going on?" Starscream's voice urged.

"What the pit is that thing?" Skywarp demanded of his wingmate.

"Thundercracker, are you there? What do you see?" Starscream demanded. "What are you looking at?"

Thundercracker shook his head. "I dunno, Skywarp. Starscream better explain this..."

"Will someone tell me what the pit is going on in there?" Starscream's now irritated voice continued into the comms unit.

From the shimmering pool of vertical water, stepped four, small, alien creatures.

"You wouldn't believe it if I told you..." was his uneasy reply, "because I'm not even sure I believe it."



Daniel looked up at the towering robots in surprise. He glanced at his note book and pushed his glasses up closer to his eyes. The black and blue mechanoids looked down at them as if trying to figure out what they were and how they appeared there. His gaze flowed across the machines and he rested his eyes on the inverted insignia that they wore.

Both races stood taking stock of each other. Their gazes darted from the grey metal feet and back to each other. The Decepticons spoke to each other but their words barely audible.

"Well?" Jack looked at him in askance as he once again look in the sheer size of the beings.

"These are of the Decepticons," Daniel said in a low whisper. "If you look at them; you can see that they have the symbol upon those wing-like projections. But none of the writing showed the symbol inverted like that. It could possibly be a break away faction...or I had the tablet inverted..."

"I would treat them as a possible threat," Teal'c warned. "They do appear to be wearing and pointing weapons at us.

"If you don't mind, I would like to try something," Daniel said stepping closer. He held up his hand in a gesture of peace and friendship. "Bah weep granah weep ninni bong," Dr. Jackson uttered the string of nonsensical words slowly, careful to annunciate each syllable clearly.

"And what was that?" Jack O' Neill asked looking a bit confused.

"The Asgard tablet said this was how they greeted and were greeted upon meeting with the two races."

"And you think it will help?"

"We shall find out in a moment," Daniel replied as the black winged machine looked at the blue one. His optics brightened and he looked surprised. He spoke in a strange guttural language that was alien to the SG1 team. Daniel picked up only a couple words, "crush or capture" while the other responded "capture."

"This could be bad..." Daniel said when Jack O' Neill looked at him expectantly.

"Bad?"

"Very!" Daniel said suddenly ducking as the machines stooped down.

Teal'c, in a swift motion, lowered his staff weapon, armed it and fired. Two bolts of energy shot forth and hit the blue mechanoid in his palm.

Thundercracker yelled in pain as the blast burned a hole into the palm of his hand, purple glowing energon seeped out from the wound as he closed his fingers around the Jaffa warrior. "I should crush you for that, you worm," he growled angrily.

"Uh, Teal'c, I think you pissed him off," Daniel said struggling.

The door of the gate room hissed open and a sharp voice penetrated the air. "You shall do nothing of the sort, Thundercracker," the mechonoid said as he walked in. The human captives were still unable to understand what was being said. His face was a malevolent dark grey and his optics burned a bright fiery red. His wings were silver, attached to a ruby red body. His lips curled into a cruel smile.

"However, You have done well, Skywarp and Thundercracker, in capturing these...creatures." Starscream said in the language of the Decepticons. "But it appears that our Sunstar was not so lucky," he observed resting his optics on the pair of empty

feet "Pity, that means extra paperwork for me. I'll want a full report of your observations within the hour."

The winged being cocked his head and glanced at the other two and then at the wriggling humans in their hands. He watched their mouths as they spoke and realised that the noises they were making was in fact, a foreign language. He listened for a moment in an attempt to differentiate the vowels, consonants and syllables. He studied their lips as they uttered their noises, taking note of what shape went with what sound. However their sounds meant nothing to him.

A look of agitation and impatience crossed his face and he lifted his right arm and a opening appeared. He used his fingers to tap something in. There was a sort of crackle in the air; a static of some nature.

His optics settled on the insignia that was on the shoulder of the prisoners. "Now, let us hope that works" the red mechanoid said and Daniel stopped his squirming for a moment. "Thundercracker, you will not crush these creatures. I want them unharmed for examination," Starscream said.

"Examination?" Jack O' Neill mouthed.

"You speak our language?" Daniel from the confinement of a brilliant purple hand.

"No, we do not, and you do not speak ours either. What are you things anyway? And what is this?" asked Starscream as he plucked the blast lance from Thundercracker's hand. "Hmm, looks like it is made of similar material to the spacebridge. Interesting, I think I would like to examine this in my lab as well. It may prove to be useful technology."

"Who are you, first?" demand Colonel O' Neill.

Starscream brightened his optic in slight amusement. "Okay, I shall humour you. I am Starscream, Second in Command to the Military Hardware. First in command of the Air Force," he said walking toward the door. The two Seekers fell into step either side of Starscream, each holding their prisoners. "And these two are my personal guard, Skywarp and Thundercracker," he said gesturing to each one in turn.

"Where are you taking us?" Jack asked.

"Well, lets not get ahead of ourselves. You are hardly in the position to ask questions, first of all you will tell me who and what you are and then maybe I will answer some more of yours," Starscream said as the black Seeker chuckled and tightened his fingers slightly.

"Okay, right, before we become a slippery splatter. I am Colonel Jack O' Neill, the geek with the glasses is Dr. Daniel Jackson, a linguist..."

"A linguist? Oh, that could be very useful. Yes, very useful indeed." Starscream murmured with a slight nod.

"Thanks, Jack I appreciate that..." Daniel muttered softly.

O' Neill smiled coyly, "Don't mention it and Thunderclap there has Major Carter and

Teal'c."

"Thunderclap? *THUNDERCLAP?!'*"The blue Seeker boomed. "It's *Thundercracker* you flightless ball of slag!" He ground his jaw which made a sharp grating sound that caused shivers to move up the spines of the humans.

At the same time Skywarp burst into a fit of laughter. The humans clutched in his hands hung onto the smooth purple finger tightly as they were jostled around. "Do you not think it is unwise to tell these beings our names?" Teal'c asked once the movement subsided.

"Why not? They're only machines. My home computer probably has more artificial intelligence than they do," Jack responded with a dismissive shrug.

"Artificial intelligence? I'll show you artificial..." Skywarp hissed. His optics narrowed slightly and he tightened his fingers more.

"Skywarp, No! Do not damage these beings," Starscream snapped. "I need them."

"Jack, I don't think it is wise to get these...machines, robots, angry with us. After all we are in their fingers..." his voice trailed off as he looked up at Skywarp then over to Starscream. "Please, let us down, we are but peaceful explorers," Daniel implored.

"Peaceful? Bah!" Starscream hissed "You opened fire first. That is an act of war, and by the code of Cybertron law, you are now our prisoners. At least until I have determined a suitable use for you. As for explorers...we may have a common interest. I was an explorer myself once..."

Skywarp simply groaned.



They were carried along the hall. Starscream fell along side but they could tell by the direction of optic glow that he was watching them as they spoke amongst themselves. He seemed to show a intense curiosity in them and they felt that he had many questions. They were not sure what his intentions were; they were concerned. Many times in their childhood they had been told of creatures with glowing eyes that prowled forests. Tales to frighten children or tell by an evening campfire. Such creatures were always evil.

They knew the risks of gate travel and they expected the unexpected; however, they had not anticipated giant, war-like sentient machines. They realised they were expecting Goa'uld or creatures with a very hominoid appearance. Yet, there was something about the giant machines. Two arms, two legs, head mouth and hands. Each hand having four fingers and an opposable thumb. They were designed in a humanoid form but they were not humanoid.

Daniel watched Starscream as he walked ahead of his two bodyguards. He made further anatomical observations. The mechanoids were a little long in the legs and walked with a smooth gracefulness. Not in the jerky deliberate manner that science fiction movies or old Doctor Who shows would stereotypically portray. They did not have toes, but their feet and lower legs resembled boots. He cocked his head as he focused on the peculiar pattern of marks on Starscream's plating.

Add to the observations that there was some movement of the foot, knees that were hinged in a manner much like humans, elbows and shoulders. Their anatomy was very close to human proportion, but slightly out. Smaller heads and much larger shoulders. The wide smooth wings made the mechanoids seem incredibly huge. Daniel wondered, briefly, if all the robots had this form.

They came to a hallway that had several locked doors. Each door had a small panel with ten symbols. Daniel figured that each symbol represented a number. Starscream turned and used his wings to obscure the field of view from his companion and the door whooshed open.

The room brightened and they entered. The room resembled a sort of bizarre zoo with many cages lining the walls. It appeared that Cybertron had a thriving ecosystem of robotic plants and animals. The concept was incredible to Daniel. A world of machine-life. What purpose would they all serve in the great scheme of things?

Each cage had an occupant who was sealed in with energy bars or a silvery force shield. The occupants were small machines that vaguely resembled animals. Some appeared to be rats and mice, or rabbits and foxes. There were larger robotic animals that looked like equines, cats or birds. On the end wall displayed several tanks containing a clear fluid which could be water. Inside were various robotic fish. Some with fierce jutting jaws with razor sharp projections and claw like fins. Others were eel like that wriggled back and forth while some resembled a robotic piranha or Coelacanth. The fish-like machines swam into the tank's glass as Starscream passed in front of it.

Starscream ordered his bodyguards to put the humans into separate cages as he went about feeding the creatures other creatures. Skywarp looked on in anticipation and sadistic glee as the piranha's ripped apart their prey then devoured them quickly.

The humans looked around and noticed other cages containing smaller humanoid robots, sitting in squalor looking unhappy. Some appeared partly dismantled as if they had been dissected then put back for observation. Others had glowing wafers and chips scattered at their feet. Starscream leaned in and placed two glowing chips into each cage and the SG1 team looked at them in confusion.

Daniel picked the chip up and looked at it turning it carefully in his hand. He brought it up to his nose and sniffed it then touched his tongue to it and a blue spark zapped him causing him to jerk in surprise. "Ugh, this is like licking a nine volt battery," Daniel said tossing it aside.

"You always have to try the foreign food don't you?" Jack inquired.

Skywarp watched the humans and bellowed with laughter and was quickly joined in by Thundercracker. "I don't think they can eat those things," he remarked to Starscream. "The wafer knocked the geeky one back."

The red Seeker frowned and looked on them pensively. "Pity then, I doubt we have what they do eat," Starscream replied as he slipped into the other room leaving the humans behind. "We will have to work fast then," were his last audible words as the door sealed shut behind them.

The four moved as close as they could to one another as soon as the door closed and

the lights dimmed. The bars of the cage cast an eerie glow throughout the room. Strange mechanical chirps and growls as well as cries cut the air.

"Did you take a close look at them?" Daniel asked.

"It was hard not to while being held in their hands," Jack replied sarcastically.

"Well, if you looked at them, they were not what you would expect to see in a robot, they look like they can...well...transform," Daniel continued.

"Daniel's right," Major Carter spoke up. "I could not help but notice that they seemed rather strangely designed. They have those wings, a type of glass canopy on their chests. I agree with Daniel, I think they can transform too. Maybe into a rocket or a type of jet. The technology we can get from these beings...well, we could use it to fight the Goa'uld."

"And forget that we are on the wrong side of the bars in...Starscream's robotic zoo?" Jack grumbled.

"I attempted to look in their pel'tak, cockpit, and I was unable to see any person piloting them, although it appears that they could be piloted by someone or something," Teal'c informed.

"They are unmanned?" Samantha Carter asked a little surprised.

"So it would appear."

Daniel took the chip and tossed it at the the bars of the cage. As soon as the chip connected the bars sparked and glowed brighter. The chip was abruptly vaporised.

"We need to find away out of these cages...and not that way," Jack O' Neill said shaking his head.

"I think we may be best to sit back and see what Starscream wants with us, after all he said he needed a linguist."

"I think Daniel's right" Samantha agreed. Taking her packs and jacket off then stretching out on them.

"Okay... just conserve your rations, we may be here a little while." Jack O' Neill said settling himself back on some synthetic straw-like material while Teal'c sat in a meditative pose.

Darkmount Control Room , Cybertron

Starscream wasted no time leaving his lab to return to the control room, but not before threatening his wingmates with his unrestrained ire should they speak of what had just transpired. Starscream realised well enough that he would be questioned and he was surprised that Megatron had not already come questing for information.

It was quiet, too quiet perhaps? Perhaps Megatron had already sent one of his lackeys to look for him. He knew he should have returned to the control room immediately, but it was too golden of an opportunity to permit his wingmates to bungle it up. Skywarp would love nothing more than to kill something and Thundercracker would likely to want let them go out of sympathy.

No, he knew he was close, he could virtually taste the limitless power and knowledge that the spacebridge was the literal door to...it was a dream come true. And now he had creatures that seemed to know how to operate it. The key to the door and all he needed to do was get a few moments of peace in order to find out how it worked.

The Seeker came to a heavily guarded door. Security cameras and a weapons turret followed his every move with precision. The light above the door glowed a bright red.

"Security clearance is required for this area. Insert security key or depart in fifteen seconds," a monotone voice said from the grill in the wall.

"Yes, Yes...be patient," Starscream muttered as he removed a security key from his subspace pocket and slipped it carefully into the slot and waited as the timer counted down. The light glowed orange as a beam of light scanned Starscream.

"Security Clearance Level 9, Lieutenant Commander Starscream: Confirmed." The light went green and the door slid open. Starscream muttered a curse about out dated security measures that slowed down reaction time as he stepped into the control room.

He glanced around for a moment, Soundwave, Shockwave, Ramjet and Thrust were working the controls. Where's Megatron? He wondered as he glanced out the heavy armoured glass window. He noticed several ranks of troops loading onto a personnel carrier when he felt a heavy hand grasp his shoulder from behind. He stiffened in surprise for a moment.

"Megatron..."

"Yes, Starscream. It is I," his leader replied. "Interesting day down with your ring?" Megatron asked.

"Not really sir," Starscream replied immediately.

"There was more seismic activity from that location, Starscream. Do you care to discuss this?"

"Soon, Megatron. I am having Skywarp and Thundercracker compile their reports within the hour. I shall have that to you shortly."

"What can you tell me right now?" Megatron asked with some irritation.

"Uh...there was a problem, an unforeseen mishap. One of the guards was killed when there was an energy feedback in the buffering system caused a system failure and it exploded. The guard was totally fragmented and all that was left were the feet. I will have the death report filled in as soon as I get the eye witness accounts from my wingmates." Starscream said quickly.

"Then the device of yours activated?"

"It did indeed, but now we have to try to repair the damage to the buffer. An unfortunate setback, if I say so myself, and it may take some time considering the alien nature of hardware."

"Indeed," was his leader's unimpressed response . "For the amount of time you spend down there, you are getting very little done or achieved. Now add to that a lost Decepticon warrior...this is costly in time, energy and now useful lives. I am starting to feel that it you might be better to work on a worthwhile task, sector patrol or prison guard duty perhaps?" Megatron sneered.

"Megatron, please. I feel that I am about to make a historic breakthrough. I just need more time, some codes cannot be cracked this quickly." Starscream replied.

"I have given you three weeks and yet you have only turned up an alien toy that does nothing but shakes things up. I expected so much more from you, Starscream. You claimed to be an exalted scientist once. Where is the proof? Am I going to have to get someone else to take over? Someone who has a better track record with cracking data? Like Soundwave, or someone who is not easily distracted and who is highly meticulous, like Shockwave."

"No Megatron, please understand that takes more than just suddenly acquiring the knowledge of something. I have to study it, experiment a little and then and only then, can I break the code and bring you the prize that you so crave; supreme knowledge," Starscream replied in his defence. "It's my creativity and ability to improvise which makes me valuable on this project. Have either Shockwave or Soundwave involved and you won't even scratch the surface of the potential which I feel this ring has."

Megatron responded with an irritated look. "Very, well Starscream, but I insist that I see progress, not empty reports and lame excuses. You spend far too much time down there to come up so empty handed, I will be watching you and I will, if you continue to turn up nothing in your research, confiscate the contents of your laboratory, personal computers and examine it myself," he threatened.

Starscream nodded and looked at the display. "What have we here?" he asked changing the subject. His fingertips felt as if they were quivering slightly and he inhaled deeply and quietly in an attempt to calm his worried nerves.

"The consumer goods are attempting a move against our border post, no matter. They shall be eliminated soon," Megatron replied. "I have five-hundred warriors moving into

position right now to finish the attack. Victory shall soon be ours."

Starscream nodded as he settled himself down into his post and started to work.



Decepticon Laboratory , Cybertron

Several hours later, Starscream hurried along the halls of Darkmount on his way to his laboratory. Despite his fatigue and a strong desire to recharge, Starscream knew he had much work yet to do. He was about to key his way into the laboratory when he heard voices from inside. At first he thought they were the aliens which had come through the ring, but he realised it was his wingmates.

Starscream keyed the door open and stopped as Skywarp and Thundercracker looked at each other with fear in their optics. Skywarp had Thundercracker laying on the exam table and had been rooting through cabinets looking for things. They both absently rubbed the palms of their hands as if they were suffering a great irritation.

Thundercracker's mouth twitched as he watched his superior enter. "Starscream, we need to speak to you immediately," he said sitting up.

"What is it now?" Starscream asked looking around, "Why are you in here?". He studied his wingmates and noted their agitation and distress. He wondered what was so wrong that would bring them into his labs. Other than Skywarp's sadistic fascination with feeding of the captive creatures; they generally avoided the place as if it contained a great evil. Maybe it did? Starscream glanced from Skywarp in his cabinets back to Thundercracker.

"I don't know," Thundercracker replied, wringing his hands, "but we thought that you might know, since you're a scientist."

"And a medic," Skywarp added pointing at the medical equipment.

Ah, yes a scientist. The term was not often used, if it was it was used in jest or insult. A scientist who's days of renown had long since gone; forgotten. His famous reports were no longer read, his experimentation's were usually half completed. No, Starscream was not often called a scientist; often he was called a mad scientist, a dabbler or a geek. He had, for the most part, put the old teachings aside to pick up the rifle. His life was of war; a promise of everlasting fame.

Starscream placed the datapads he had been carrying on the counter and stepped over to his wingmates. Thundercracker sat up and he and Skywarp opened their hands, palms up. Their fingers were trembling slightly and Starscream noticed a strange mottled pattern across both Seekers palms. Thundercracker's was worse as the mottled pattern was extending to his wrist.

"What's this?" Starscream asked.

"We finished our guard duty, and reports then went home." Skywarp said pointing to the

two datapads on the counter.

"And when we came out of recharge, we discovered this," Thundercracker said pointing to a reddish brown marks on his hand."

Starscream made a long pensive hmm as he made his observations. It had the appearance of rust. *Odd*, Starscream thought. *Transformers do not rust...Well, not like this anyway...what is it?* He looked at it with deep interest. It had been long thought that Transformers were made of an alloy so strong it was impervious to all forms of rust, this however was an "old wives tale". Exposure to the atmosphere, chemicals, contaminants, acids and other things lent to the deterioration of the incredibly durable Cybertronian alloys.

Only through the rapid growth of the chromoderm layer, a skin-like teflon film that coated the transformer's exposed surfaces, protected a mechanoid from the deadly deterioration of corrosion and at the same time, gave the mechanoid his or her own personal hue. That, coupled with the the vigilant guard of the nanite self repair and immune systems, made the transformer appear impervious.

How long could a mech last was purely dependent on if replacement parts that were worn down from day to day use or battle damage, could be made or found. Or if they were not mortally damaged. Only a wound to the spark, or a malicious virus that was running out of control could bring them down permanently. Other than that, the natural longevity of a transformer was yet to be determined.

Starscream inhaled sharply, his circuits crawled sending an unpleasant tingle through his back and toward the tips of his wings. Something was not right, the "rust" as he decided it was, made him feel very uneasy. Starscream pushed his fears to the back of his mind and studied the finely jointed hands and fingers with a cold scientific objectivity.

"Pain? What are your symptoms other than the obvious?" Starscream asked

"It hurts like slag, especially around that slaggin' patch job I got. Right where that...creature of yours shot me," Thundercracker said pointing an accusing finger in the direction of Starscream's creature room.

The Air Commander made a slight frown as he followed his wingmates gesture then returned his attention to the extended discoloured extremity. "you didn't go to the repair bay?" Starscream asked, hoping for a negative response. Repair bay would require them to fill out paperwork regarding the source and time index of their injury. As it was Skywarp and Thundercracker, the resultant paper trails would pique Megatron's unwanted interest.

"No, you want us to keep quiet so we came here right away," said Skywarp rubbing at his palm.

Starscream nodded. He felt a small sense of relief. But it was overshadowed when he reached out and took Thundercracker's hand in his and leaned in to take a closer look; the glossy black of the Seeker's hand had turned a light grey underneath the blemish. This fact, aside of the rust-like appearance, disturbed Starscream, but he did not wish to alarm his wingmate. *chromoderm failure*, Starscream diagnosed to himself. *odd, no apparent mech fluids and no nanite activity around wound or patch...this is not good*,

*sure sign of necrosis.* he continued to muse.

"What is it?" Thundercracker asked.

"Hmm, I am unsure, I still need to examine it for the type of damage. Give me some time to examine it, be patient."

"Can't you hurry?" Skywarp asked impatiently, "it itches." Skywarp fidgeted.

"I will go as quick as I can," Starscream reassured. He took out a small probing instrument from a drawer and returned to examine Thundercracker's palm. It looked like he had exposed it to extreme heat. The Chromoderm had blistered in some areas while ruptured in others. *Blistering is dense around the wound,* he observed silently. "It is deeply pitted, Thundercracker and Skywarp, I recommend that you cease rubbing and disturbing it...what's this?" Starscream asked himself out loud as one of the blisters broke and a fine sand like dust sprinkled out into his own palm. Starscream could not help but twitch his wing uneasily as it did.

"Starscream?"

The Air Commander regarded the dust and an ominous feeling came over him. *Weren't there some ancient legends or myths that described a dust?* Starscream wondered. The Seeker glanced at the room where the latest creatures were kept.

"It's them isn't it?" Thundercracker rumbled.

"The timing is...too close to be a co-incidence, so I think so." Starscream agreed. "I will have to question them."

"Well, they spoke a funny Cybertronian dialect when they came through, but with the wrong accent," said Skywarp.

"Hmm, dubious. I will have to look up the archived medical data files on Cybertronian ailments and see if it has an index for anything more 'exotic' like this. This is not your run of the mill infection." Starscream commented. "It's something quite different." He pursed his lips for a moment and then he wiped his hands off on a soft cloth. Reaching into the open drawer he picked up a fine bristle brush, a microscope slide and cover slip. "Hold still for a moment; I'd like to take a sample," Starscream said as he brushed lightly at the wound. He narrowed his optics for a moment and studied the wound he was working with. The affected area seemed almost larger than it had been when Thundercracker had first shown it.

The blue Seeker winced as Starscream carefully brushed the open edges. Starscream was still concerned with the lack of mech fluids. Without the presence of mech fluids, Starscream knew the body's nanite population could not get into the affected areas and rebuild the damage. Starscream pressed the brush lightly near the edges of the corrosion and observed the reaction. "This hurts when I touch it with this?" Starscream inquired with a hint of surprise tapping the brush.

Thundercracker nodded. "Yeah, a lot."

"And you have no idea what it is?" Skywarp said with a hint of alarm

"Well, I am not wanting to cause any sort of alarm, Skywarp, but I would consider it some sort of microbial rust-like infection." he replied as he carefully swept some of the corroding metal onto a prepared slide and set it aside.

"Rust?" Skywarp repeated, his optics brightening and his wings jerking back in alarm. "I don't want to get rusty, I am too young to rust."

"I am sure that it is nothing to get overly worried about," Starscream lied, "but I shall examine this and let you know as soon as I get results. However, I recommend that you do not mess with it. If you do, I may have to replace your hands," Starscream warned with a wag of his finger. Starscream took a look at Skywarp's hands but the level of deterioration was minimal. He did not seem as adversely affected as Thundercracker was. There was only slight blistering. Whatever it was, Starscream knew it had entered through Thundercracker's open wound and taken a foothold.

Starscream returned to his cabinets and pushed several glass bottles aside until he found one that he decided he wanted. He checked the label and then opened the lid and had a small sniff. It was antiseptic smelling and oily. He put the bottle down on the counter and set the cap aside.

"What's that?" Thundercracker asked, watching Starscream unscrew the cap, sniffing setting it down on the table. The red Seeker opened a drawer and pulled out a small sheet of a chamois like material and poured some of the bottles contents onto a spot. He made sure not to touch the cloth to the lip of the vessel.

"It is an anti-oxidising oil, Thundercracker." Starscream replied as he rubbed the cloth lightly onto the irritated metal of Skywarp's hand. "It also will help numb the itching." He was a bit hesitant to do the same to Thundercracker's opened blisters; however, he figured it would do more good than harm. Instead he handed Thundercracker the bottle and a fresh cloth. "Use that as you feel the need, but if it worsens, let me know immediately and I will try something else, okay?" The pair nodded. "And don't share cloths"

"Megatron will probably have my head, but as I do not know what this is at the moment, I am going to request you go to the room next door, I can keep you two in there for further observations," Starscream said.

"Wonderful, Thundercracker." Skywarp murmured. "We're gonna join Screamer's pets in experimentation." Thundercracker sighed and hopped to the floor and followed Skywarp to the door that separated the lab from Starscream's repair bay-like recovery room.

"Nonsense, Skywarp. I just want to make sure we keep it under control." Starscream sighed in irritation. Experimentation could not be avoided at this point. His wingmates were ill and in order to find a solution, he needed to test things on their symptoms.

"Yeah, right." Skywarp said as the door shut behind them.

Starscream exhaled slowly and allowed himself the full body shudder he had been holding back. He glanced at the fine reddish power scattered lightly across the immediate area his optics glowed brighter as the seeds of panic started to germinate. *What if there wasn't a solution?* Starscream drew his wings back ever so slightly, as if to keep them well away from the surfaces and to protect them. Then he suddenly realised

what he was doing. Why he should feel so uncomfortable? He looked around Perhaps it was an instinctive urge for self preservation-but why? Ancient legends of lost worlds? Were there memories of long forgotten events being triggered? Fear was not always cowardice, sometimes it was healthy. Instincts? Did the subconscious spark know something he didn't?

He studied his own fingers and noted the fine dust that coated the thin film of oil on them. Although there were no cuts or noticeable abrasions in the chromoderm layer, he still made an uneasy "ick" sound as he wiped his hands, the table and floor down with a strong detergent and sanitising fluids. He picked up yet another a fresh cloth out of the drawer and wiped his hands clean of all remaining residue, ensuring that he cleaned deep into the joints.

"Fire is the best cleansing agent," he said recalling a small green femcon Seeker who had told him that as she wielded the flame thrower with expert precision. He had taken a liking to her as she had shared a similar sort of arrogance. He had admired how she used the tongues of flame to blacken and destroy her enemies. Starscream refocused his mind to the present. Without a second thought, Starscream picked up the brush and the used cloths, then opened a thick metal door and dumped them in. Waiting but a second, Starscream pressed a button and the opening glowed bright with an internal fire. The oily rags ignited and were burned instantly; the brush's hairs singed until they were consumed completely. The metal handle melted and ran through an opening and deep into a fiery pit.

"Computer; Search known medical databases for all known rust like diseases, time index date 13050714:39. Cross search with any reference to alien diseases, plagues and pandemics. Search for all known chemical corrosives which cause; blistering of chromoderm, the red rust-like disintegration of trinium, tridium and titanium metal alloy which is used in the mechanoid builds underneath; and the resultant necrosis of said chromoderm and finally; the dysfunction of repair nanites in regions of infection this is due to the lack of mech fluid presence. Conclude the query with a search for all weapons, native and alien. Include all prototype and classified weapons which may cause symptoms as described above. Authorisation code is Starscream SSS905-1"

"Search parameters acknowledged, process time approximately one hour," the computer responded.

"Computer; Also add to the search parameters, all data I reveal with the electron microscope," Starscream said as an afterthought.

"Additional parameters acknowledged. Further data may narrow search fields down and optimise search times."

He rubbed his chin for a moment deep in thought, part of him wished he could simply burn away the creepy surges that continued to jolt and shudder through his systems, like he could the used brush and clothes. *Calm down and remain detached and objective*, Starscream urged himself. *"If you work yourself into a panic, you'll become useless.*

Starscream carefully picked the slide with the sample up. He gazed at it for a long moment pursing his lips then slipped it into an electron microscope. He focused on the dust and examined it. Fine, yet highly detailed. They resembled chips of metal that could have been removed from a milling machine and yet there was something strange in

amongst it. He hummed as he zoomed in on that particular section, enlarging it until a strange, unfamiliar organism filled the screen.

"What is this?" he asked himself cocking his head. The organism resembled a sea urchin; small, round covered in spikes and clustered in a heap with other similar star-like balls. The surface of one of the balls creased and formed small splits that radiated out from the centre dividing it into six sections. He watched in fascination and revulsion as the sections curled back and exposed a smooth round surface with a hole in the middle. As soon as the sections flattened a small cloud of spores were ejected from the central part. Starscream zoomed in further and noticed that these spores were identical to their larger counterparts. "Strange...that is definitely not the typical activity of normal corrosion," he spoke to himself.

Starscream suddenly looked about the room, at the counter, the walls, ceiling, vents. *If the spores are exploding like that, they--they could have spread almost anywhere.* His optics brightened in alarm. He inhaled deeply then held his breath for a moment. His tanks churned uneasily as he realised that he had probably had been inhaling them.

"Computer; deactivate all ventilation units and activate air purifiers instead." Starscream ordered.

"Ventilation systems are deactivated, purifiers are online."

Starscream nodded as the hum of the fans ceased and the lighter whine of the purifiers took their place. "there's more than one way to peel the plates off a predacon," Starscream commented. As he glanced over his lab until his optics finally came to rest on a small rack of stasis pods hooked into the wall. His wingmates called him paranoid when he added them to his labs but now he wondered if he may have had some foresight. "I might need those after all," he said as slipped into the next room.



Cheyenne Mountain, Earth  
Current time.

General Hammond, looked into the gate room as the technicians frantically worked on the Stargate. "Progress report?"

"So far, we've determined that the dust on SG1 infected the trinium of the Iris. The iris will fail if we try to use it." Sergeant Davis responded. "So far, nothing has stopped it. However, WD-40 has proven to slow down the spread."

"Contact all SGC Teams which are off world and inform them to go to the Alpha site until further notice. Inform SG1, SG2 and SG7 to stay where they are to reduce the spread of the infection. In the meantime, contact Tollan and find out what they have come up with. Get more WD-40 handy."

"Yes, Sir" Sergeant Davis saluted and started the dialup of P-3X-519, Antilla to spread the warning.



Decepticon Laboratory , Cybertron

Back in the laboratory, the members of the SG1 team rested against their packs, dozing lightly. They awoke anytime one of the robotic creatures made a sound or a movement. They watched the door and argued quietly amongst themselves.

"If they are unmanned, I think they are like a sort of remote controlled robot," Jack stated.

"But I *still* think it is possible that they are the indigenous life form on this planet," Daniel argued.

"They're robots. Robots are not alive, they don't think for themselves and if they do, it's programmed in. On Earth robots are made by humans. So I think there must be someone or something that has made them and is controlling them." Jack insisted

"These are not the first robotic life-forms we have come across though. Think. Remember Harlan?"

"Daniel does have a point. Harlan was very much a living robot," Samantha Carter replied.

"And, if you remember he was only 'living' because he was programmed with the actual mind of the original Harlan," Jack retorted.

"Well if they are unmanned remote controlled robots then if we can find the frequency at which they operate we might be able to gain control of one of them ourselves," Samantha Carter suggested, interrupting the argument which had gone on far too long.. "If we can figure out how they change forms, well we could figure out how to fly one.

"If they are indeed remote controlled mechanism, then perhaps the Goa'uld have a control centre nearby," Teal'c added.

Daniel rolled on his stomach and propped his chin on his back pack. "You are missing some points. They appear to be, sentient and sapient. And I am not so sure there is Goa'uld involvement here."

"The key words are 'they appear to be'" said Jack.

"What brings you to that conclusion, Daniel?"

"Okay" Daniel sat up and crossed his legs. He looked pensive for a few moments. "Teal'c when you reacted to our capture, you fired on the blue robot in self defence, he reacted in pain; it hurt and he was angered. I have no idea what he said, but his tone was very angry, his expression was very angry."

Teal'c nodded. "His apparent mood changed quite rapidly."

"How are we to know if they express themselves in the same way as we do? For all we know it tickled and that was laughter," Jack retorted.

"True, they may not have the same sort of expressions we do, but I think that the

Decepticons perceive pain, experience curiosity, anger and excitement, much as we do. If they can think and plot complex ideas then they are quite likely sapient beings," Daniel elaborated.

"Now I think about it, you could be right with the expression, after all they did laugh when you were shocked," Jack said with a slight smirk.

There was a sound from across the darkened room, like the creak of a chair. Daniel looked past his bars and spotted the two glowing coal-like optics set in a dark face. The dim light illuminated the dark figure. Pink glow from the cages gave his already alien form an even more alien appearance.

"I hope I am not intruding upon your philosophical discussions on what is considered life by your personal standards, but I do have need to discuss matters of great importance with the one you called Jackson." Starscream said glancing at Daniel.

As soon as he had finished his sentence, the laboratory began to shake. The computer monitor flashed the sign once more "SPACEBRIDGE ACTIVATION" along with the warning beacon.

"Slag, there is no one in there this time." Starscream hissed turning on his heel and heading toward the door.

Daniel, Jack, Teal'c and Samantha Carter flattened themselves against the bottom of their cages. There was a hiss then the crackle of static as their radios came to life.

Hurrying from the room Starscream cocked his head as he also intercepted the transmission and cringed inwardly as he was sure that Soundwave would be alert to the foreign call. "Slag, this couldn't be anymore inconvenient to my plans..."

"SG1, we have a foothold situation back at the SGC that requires you to remain where you are." He listened. "We are passing some supplies through the gate now. DO NOT return to the SGC DO not go to the Alpha Site. STAY where you are."

Starscream paused as he detected the sound of urgency in the call. *Foothold?* he wondered.

"This is Colonel O' Neil, exactly what is the problem?"

"The rust has infected the trinium alloy of the iris." Starscream inhaled sharply as soon as the word rust had been mentioned. "We have slowed it's progress but we can't stop it. The lack of an iris means we will be open to any hostile situation. However, we are in working in collaboration with the Tollan to find a permanent solution."

*To the pit with possible radio interception...* Starscream thought. "Computer activate isolating containment field around the cages designated Beta 42, 43, 44 and 45," Starscream hissed. A yellow force shield was abruptly erected over the cages containing the humans. "If you haven't found a permeant solution, then you have found a temporary one? You said you've slowed it's progress?" Starscream inquired as he returned to the creature room.

"Who's that?" was the reply.

"That's one of the Destrons", Jack O' Neil responded looking surprised as the new barrier formed around the team.

"Decepticons," Daniel automatically corrected. The SG1 Team had stood up and were watching the Seeker as he rapidly looked over the various robotic creatures then to his hands and back to the animals, then over at the humans. A multitude of expressions crossed his face. Most of them worry and fear.

"You've encountered the Decepticons?"

"Yeah a few..." Jack started.

"I am Starscream," the Seeker announced. "Yes, I am a...Decepticon...as you insist on calling me," he hesitated using the new term for the first time, "the rest of it is immaterial at this time. So it seems the rust problem is not just a isolated incidence, we have it here on Cybertron, too." The SG1 team exchanged concerned glances. "So, if you have found a solution to slowing its progress then, I want all data that you have collect thus far regarding this outbreak on your world. Perhaps if we can combine our heads we may find a solution quickly and save lives. Also, I will be willing to trade something you need in payment," Starscream offered, thinking fast. "You said you have enemies, perhaps I can help."

"This is General Hammond. We would be willing to trade with you, Starscream. O' Neil, what is the situation there?"

"We aren't exactly sure...They're robots..."

"Robots?" The General replied.

"A type of mechanoid life form," Samantha started.

"As I said, it is immaterial," Starscream said with irritation. "I have your warriors, General. They're in a containment field for now and they are safe from harm. Hopefully that will restrict them from spreading the infection . Already two of my warriors have become ill, they too are in quarantine. It concerns me as we have not seen the likes of this sickness before and we must stop it at once!" his voice taking an edge of panic.

"We are adding a shipment of the WD-40 with the supplies, We will discuss trade agreements as soon as we find a cure," General Hammond reassured.

"Good, I will get to the Spacebridge and collect the supplies," Starscream replied heading to the ring room as fast as he could manage.

"We are contacting the other SGC teams and we will contact you as soon as we get word of a solution. Hammond out."

"Great. Well campers, it looks like our stay will be extended."

"If Cybertron be your home; far away never roam..." Daniel recited. "We brought it to

Cybertron..."

"And we seemed to have already infected some of the population," Teal'c added.

"If it remains unchecked..." Daniel started.

"It could annihilate a whole ecosystem of alien life," Samantha Carter finished looking over at the strange alien animals.

"Well hurry up and sit tight as we aren't going anywhere with this containment field," said Colonel O' Neil as he leaned back against the back of his cell.

Darkmount Control Room , Cybertron

It sounded like strange animal-like babble, the radio transmission that Soundwave had intercepted and played on the control room address system. The alien voices made no sense and then there was another puzzle, there was Starscream.

Megatron was not entirely interested in the transmission, no matter how odd it was until the familiar voice, came on. Familiar that he recognised the sharp vocal tone and not the language it was speaking. 'Starscream?' Megatron wondered. He was familiar with the pitch and tone of his Sub Commander's voice. Starscream sounded a bit on edge, there was definite hint of panic. Megatron wondered what was worrying his Sub Commander.

Megatron glanced at his usual post. The datapads Starscream given him were still on top. There were none of the promised reports from Skywarp and Thundercracker. He turned his attention back to Soundwave as the room abruptly went silent.

"Alien transmission has ceased." Soundwave intoned. He ejected a cassette and popped it into another machine.

"Indeed," Megatron replied, slightly irritated and drumming his fingers on his hip plate. "Translation?"

"Language dynamics are primitive. Translation should be simple. " Soundwave replied. "Starscream has adapted to speak the language fluently."

"Was he using a translation device?"

"Negative. A Translation device would have enabled us to understand the transmission," Soundwave replied. "The possibility has been considered and dismissed."

Megatron nodded. "If that idiot can speak it, then anyone can." Megatron muttered disliking the idea that Starscream could understand something alien and he could not. It also concerned him that Soundwave had not already been able to translate; and Starscream, if it was his first exposure, could translate and respond. That suggested some familiarity with the terms. When it came down to it; Megatron found it very suspicious. "And this alien transmission started up immediately after the planet quake ceased?" Megatron inquired.

"Affirmative. All the seismic activity comes from the ring as did the radio transmission," Soundwave said. "I was unable to triangulate the source of the transmission. I am positive it is not Cybertronian in origin."

Megatron nodded. "Continue to work on the translation, then, Soundwave." Megatron turned back to Shockwave. "Reports?" Shockwave had been keeping tabs on Starscream for a while. His attempts in trying to access Starscream's laboratory computers, up until this point, had been unsuccessful, this aggravated Megatron even more.

From the frequent reports of Shockwave; Starscream's route was fairly simple and rarely deviated. He spent much of his waking hours in the laboratory or the room with the ring. Deviations from typical path was the visits to the control room. The modified key system bought Shockwave sometime to close down the monitors. And the other, although more infrequent deviation was to his private quarters. Megatron was unsure if and where Starscream spent the time he required for full system shut down. It was not uncommon for Starscream to run several days straight without taking a break.

"Some, Megatron. Starscream has left his laboratory and is moving toward the ring room. But not before he activated a level red containment field around his laboratory complex." Shockwave said dutifully.

Megatron brightened an optic. "Level red?" he said perplexed, "That's a quarantine order. What in the name of Primus is going on down there?"

"I am uncertain, my lord," Shockwave replied lightly. "However, I suspect it may have to do with Skywarp and Thundercracker. They went into Starscream's laboratory and have not emerged. Also the level red containment field went up part way through the radio transmission." Shockwave paused for a moment then continued. "I hypothesise that one of Starscream's experiments went out of control."

"Could Skywarp have teleported them out?" Megatron asked. "Maybe they are not in that section."

"Negative," Shockwave responded. "An act of teleportation would be detectable. They are still in Starscream's Laboratories." Shockwave continued to sift through the data that streamed in.

"Megatron, there is a notation in the records that Skywarp and Thundercracker are excused from active duty," Soundwave intoned.

"What? By who's order?" Megatron demanded already suspecting the answer.

"The order was issued and authorised by Starscream. Reason: unknown," Soundwave said displaying the two Seeker's military records side by side on the next screen. "Condition: Level Red"

"Blast that Starscream. Give the mech an inch and he takes a mile," Megatron growled.

"Unusual," Soundwave observed.

"What is?" Megatron asked in irritation.

"Starscream's level red condition may be valid. Starscream is searching databases for medical information," Soundwave replied. "I have not broken his encryption. He has, however, targeted all major medical facilities on Cybertron."

"A reason he has not personally cared to explain..." Megatron snarled. "I need to be informed immediately when any code red is called." Megatron turned toward the control room exit. "I intend to get my answers now!"

"Proceed with caution, Megatron," Shockwave warned.



Decepticon Laboratory , Cybertron

As Starscream left the Creature lab, he paused to look at the monitor as it displayed some new and terrifying information.

Ancient Cybertronian name: Antillomorphococcus Corrosus.

Common name: Cosmic Rust.

Cure: None known

Virulence: Lethal

Known Survivors: None

Found: Planet known as Antilla was one of several planets to fall to the cosmic rust plague. Source of the cosmic rust is unknown. Attacks: Trinium and Tridium based alloys.

"NO!" he said horrified, "You have to be wrong about this..." Starscream inhaled sharply. "But I am not taking chances, Computer: Erect a level red containment field around the lab containing Skywarp and Thundercracker.

Starscream ran as quickly as he could to the ring room. He stooped to grab several small packages up off the floor. He was unsure which one contained the WD-40 but he hoped that the creatures in his lab would know what it was. If it could slow down.

He stopped by the door of the ring room and glanced at his hands, he realised suddenly that he had begun to blister.

"Oh, no!" he rasped as he hurried toward the lab complex. "The diagnosis must be wrong!" He clung to his packages and struggled to read the tiny alien writing when he nearly ran into Megatron.

"Starscream?" Megatron asked as he reached out to grasp his lieutenant.

Starscream inhaled sharply and leapt back away from Megatron. "No, don't come near me. M-Megatron. Listen, you must leave this place now. This whole section must be sealed off. "

"I am not going anywhere until I get answers, Starscream."

"I don't have the answers myself, Megatron. I insist, you must leave." Starscream, raised his arm and charged his weapons.

It was then Megatron noticed the mottling on Starscream's hand and the tiny blisters." Starscream! What in Cybertron is going on here," Megatron demanded charging his own weapon and taking a step back. "Have you lost your mind?" Megatron said reaching once again for Starscream.

Starscream fired at the ground, effectively drawing a line in the metal plating between him and Megatron. "You must not touch me, you must not cross this line. You must

leave"

"Starscream you are not being clear. What is going on? Why are you acting in this manner?"

"It's-look, there is no time. I'm working on a cure, and I'm wasting precious time arguing with you. You must go-GO NOW!" Starscream urged, his voice clearly expressed his fear and urgency. Starscream coded his door open and hesitated for a moment glancing over his wing. "If you stay longer you may be condemned to remain with me. You are possibly contaminated..." panic lived in Starscream's optics.

Megatron looked at Starscream feeling a chill wash over him "Starscream..." he said warningly.

"For the sake of Cybertron, you must leave. I'll keep you posted, as soon as I know more. If my condition worsens, I'll send orders to incinerate and bury this place." He looked around and his wings quivered as he wrestled with the thought of being burned and buried alive. "Trust me this one time, Megatron."

"Starscream?" Megatron asked in surprise at his Sub Commanders words.

"The condition is now level black: GO NOW!" Starscream screamed his voice cracking as he closed the door behind him.



Megatron stood dumbstruck as he watched the panic stricken Seeker enter his lab. The words, "level black" hit Megatron like the force of a cannon blast. Such quarantine levels were extremely rare except under the most dire of situations. For Starscream to declare a level black quarantine and even warn Megatron to stay back indicated that there was something so terrifyingly severe that Starscream would insist on being incinerated and buried rather than let it get out. Starscream, of all Decepticons, would not willingly sacrifice himself. Not unless he had a reason-

"Megatron to Shockwave, I am returning to my personal quarters. Please forward all correspondence to me there."

"Sir?" Shockwave inquired.

"Something is very wrong," he said. "Order the entire lab complex sealed off, quarantine level black, until I say otherwise Anyone attempting to leave is to be shot and killed on sight, the remains are to be incinerated where they lay. This includes Starscream and myself."

"As you command, Megatron." Shockwave replied.

"Blast you, Starscream, for not telling me sooner," Megatron cursed as he head towards his private quarters.



Starscream entered his wingmate's sickroom and looked at Thundercracker. The blue Seeker lay on the exam table gasping for breath.

"Thundercracker..." Starscream said coming closer.

"What can we do?" Skywarp asked. "He's been mumbling nonsense for the last half hour and he's completely covered in those blisters."

"I have a stasis pod that we can use to suspend all current animation. I hope it will slow the rust down as well. Right now, it's his only chance," Starscream said returning to the main lab and activating a pair of stasis pods.

"Two?" Skywarp asked looking between Starscream and his dying Wingmate.

"Yes, one for you too. Help me get him in and then you get in yourself." Starscream grabbed Thundercracker's pitted legs and hefted him into his arms.

"What about you? You're going to get infected too," Skywarp warned, picking Thundercracker up from behind his wings, "and I don't want to go into one of those..." The two settled Thundercracker into the pod and lowered the lid.

Starscream switched the pod on and backed away. He pointed to the other pod and gestured to Skywarp to get in. "Get in, now."

"Starscream..." Skywarp started.

"It's too late for me, Skywarp. I'm infected too. So its only a matter of time before I am too far gone to work. I have to work, and I can't be worrying about you. Now, get into that pod-now. You don't have any option, Skywarp. It's a fragging order. Now stop wasting my time and obey. We maybe halfway to a cure, but it may take longer than what you've got so, get in. I'm trying to buy you a chance."

"What about you, how much time do you have?" Skywarp said reluctantly climbing into the coffin-like pod.

"Enough, Skywarp." Starscream said as he made some connections to Skywarp. "I have just enough." Starscream inhaled deeply and closed the lid down and put Skywarp into a stasis locked sleep.

Starscream turned from the stasis pods and went into the Computer.

"Computer: I require a message to be recorded and classified as last entry. Keep message until I request it sent or deleted."

"Record message when ready."

"Start recording. This is Air Commander Starscream. My final message is to request incineration, implosion and burial of all lower corridors from my lab complex to the Spacebridge room. This is a Level Black condition. I understand the warnings on the door now and I realise that I have opened Pandora's box. If this message has been received, then I have failed to find the antidote and I am most likely dead or dying. I have attached to the recording all known information about the Virulence. Under no

circumstances must you attempt a rescue. For the sake of Cybertron; Keep Away. Starscream out. Computer end recording."

"Recording saved and designated last entry."

"Good, now, deactivate beta containment field on cages 42 through 45."

"Containment fields have been deactivated."

Starscream entered the creature room and strode over to the cages. He looked at the creatures sourly angry for them bringing in the disease that was about to destroy him and his world.

"It is pointless to keep you contained when I, myself, have fallen ill to this plague you brought to my world." Starscream scowled. "I have your required supplies. Now, tell me which is the WD-40." Starscream opened his painfully blistered palm and extended it so the humans could climb on.

"We are, terribly sorry we brought this-disease, if that is what you call it here," Daniel said apologetically.

"I bet you are sorry. Yes, it does appear that my kind does have a name for it-Cosmic Rust. Which, with my kind, is classified as lethal. So, with that said, I am relying upon you to help save me, my wingmates and my whole slagging world. As for my wingmates, I have put them into stasis in hopes of giving them a bit more of a chance. Save me, and I promise, I can give you things beyond your wildest dreams, perhaps even beyond your technological understanding. Do we have a deal?" Starscream said.

"Colonel, the SGC has sent us enough supplies to last us a few weeks." Samantha Carter said looking over the supply list. "Good, let us get started, and yes, Starscream. We have a deal."

"Good glad to hear that. Now, weeks? What are weeks? Starscream asked.

"It's a period of time, One week is seven days," Samantha replied.

"Hmmm, please describe your view of time so I might put it in perspective with my view of time."

"Uh, the simplest way I can think of is this," Samantha Carter said setting her wrist watch on. "I am timing one minute," she paused and stopped the watch again. "That was one minute." Starscream nodded, understanding. "There are sixty of those in an hour. There are twenty-four hours in an Earth day. And seven days in a week. To go further, there are three hundred and sixty-five days in a standard Earth year."

Starscream looked pensive for a moment and nodded. "Similar concept to ours, just different terminology. Well it appears that I don't have that sort of time, so you'd better expedite your progress. I may have a few hours to a couple of days at best."

Jack O' Neil, pointed to several boxes that were inside another larger box. "That's the WD-40." He pulled out a large can and held it up for Starscream. "It doesn't look like much..."he said looking at the size of the can as compared to Starscream's great fingers.

Starscream took the miniscule can from the humans hand and looked at it. "It is smaller than I had hoped...It will work?"

"I doubt they'd have sent it if it didn't" the Colonel replied.

"You will have to help me, I can't use it, it's far too small." Starscream said than burst into a fit of coughing. The Colonel fit the spray nozzle onto the can and waited for Starscream to get over his fit before he coated the blistered and rupturing surfaces with the spray. Starscream sighed "It is soothing the itch." He picked a swab off out of a drawer and held it near the human. "I want to analyse the chemical makeup of this so I may replicate more. Those cans won't last me very long, I can assure you that. We must hurry."

Jack O' Neil shrugged and sprayed the swab with the WD-40 and Starscream placed it into a chemical analyser.

Starscream turned to the lab's analysis equipment.

"What we should do," Samantha started "Is find out why the WD-40 slows the progress. And find out what it is we are dealing with."

Starscream aimed his finger at the monitor. "what you need to know is displayed right there." He muttered looking through a microscope.

"I can't read Decepticon," Samantha replied.

"Decepticon...you've called me that before. Computer: Display monitor in the language of the Spacebridge people." Abruptly the text shifted into English.

"Thank you, that does help things a little-sort of-it reads like English."

"What do you call yourselves?" Daniel inquired looking over some of the large buttons and dials.

Starscream wrote a note down on some plastifilm. "Collectively, we are called Cybertronians, but we have two definite races. There's us, the Military Hardware. We are the defending class, You call us Decepticons. And then you have...the Consumer Goods. They're the working-slave class. They want to get rid of us. Have a name for them?"

"We called them, Autobots."

"How very dull. Anyway, you can further break our race down into sub groups such as ground troops, shock troops and aerial warriors. I'm a Seeker, Aerial Warrior and Aerospace Commander. I am the fastest, the best that has ever flown in the sky and this is why I command. I-I do...hope to see the sky again."

"Hmm, the data you collected says that the Cosmic Rust spreads by spores," Samantha said after studying the information on the screen.

"Yes, the cell splits and ejects them then they fall onto the surface and do it over again until it totally consumes it's host." Starscream shuddered as he remembered that he was now host to millions of the robotic bacterium.

"Right, now if the WD-40 prevents the cell from splitting and ejecting its payload, then it will slow the spread down. Correct?"

Starscream nodded. "Yeah, it sounds like an inhibitor. What does WD-40 stand for anyway?"

"Water displacement on the 40th try. However...if you want to consider it medicine for your particular use, it may cause drying and dust collection if used over an extended period of time."

Starscream chuckled grimly. "If I can't find a cure, then I doubt I need to worry about the drying effects." Starscream put the back of his hand to his mouth and started to cough violently. "The spores have entered my air intake systems," he wheezed "it's attacking my internal systems, my time grows rapidly short," he said fearfully... "I need something that stops it not inhibits it and that will destroy it. I am created of a trinium, tridum and titanium based alloy...my whole race is." He coughed again doubling over at his work station. "Cosmic rust will kill us."

"Then we'd better hurry," Samantha agreed.



The event horizon of the Stargate faded as Narim, of the Tollan, walked down the platform.

"Welcome back, Narim." General Hammond greeted as the Tollan stepped off the ramp. "You are taking a risk by coming here."

"The Tollan rely upon the use of Trinium based alloys so I was selected as the ambassador for this project. I will remain on this side as we work."

"The Tok'ra have also offered to help devise a solution to this rapidly getting out of hand problem."

"Yes, I cannot return to my own world until we have solved this problem. Is Samantha Carter on Earth?"

"I'm afraid she isn't, she's away on a mission on another world which is now affected by the problem we are facing. We are contacting them now, if you'd follow me." General Hammond stepped out of the gate room and quickly climbed the stairs to the control room.

Sergeant Davis had already started the dialling sequence to P-3G-100 and the final symbol had locked into place, the wormhole connected and stabilised.

General Hammond took up the comms. "This is Stargate Command, SG1 Do you copy?"

"Captain Carter here, we copy."

"What news do you have?"

"Oh, its pretty bad. We are working with Starscream in hopes of devising something to stop it, let alone slow it down, but the WD-40 seems to not be having much effect on him. It may be his Cybertronian alloy."

"It's worse? Have any new information that we could use? For our own efforts against it?"

"They call it Cosmic Rust. It's considered an absolutely deadly disease," Daniel put in.

"Cosmic Rust, Dr. Jackson?"

"It was the disease that wiped out the race on Antilla, Like Starscream, they were a race of sentient machines. They originated from Cybertron. The warning on the Monolith was basically telling anyone who went to Antilla, never to go to Cybertron." Daniel informed. "My study of some articles in this lab suggest the Stargate had been buried here, to protect Cybertron and forgotten. Starscream and a team excavated it and were attempting to figure it out when we came through."

"Bringing the disease, that they attempted to save themselves from, with you." General Hammond finished.

"It could have come with us on our boots, clothes or anything," Samantha added.

"I-I'm," Starscream started then stopped as he was overcome by a fit of hacking coughs, "sending you a data...file of all that I have...gathered so far," his weak voice was punctuated by wheezes.

"Sir, we need to find something fast, this planet is an ecosystem of robotic life. All manner of things from insects, plants, and animals...If this disease spreads, it will destroy an entire unique form of life, and it's fast...Starscream's deteriorated rapidly in the past six hours."

"We have one of the Tollan here to aid our development into a cure for this 'cosmic rust' "

"We are going to use the information that Starscream is sending us in order to hasten our research," the Tollan said.

"Narim?"

"Hello Samantha."

"Hi..."

"Sorry to interrupt what sounds like a charming little reunion..." Starscream interjected, "but, I have finished the transmission, all data is sent," he wheezed raggedly. "Now, hurry!"

"We will communicate again soon," General Hammond said and the Stargate closed down.



"Soundwave, to Megatron." The communications officer hailed the Decepticon leader in his quarters.

"Megatron here, Soundwave. Report?"

"Spacebridge has activated again. Radio transmission was intercepted and interpreted," Soundwave informed.

"Data?"

"Starscream is communicating with a previously unknown species on an alien planet. He appears to be gravely ill..."

"Sick? What ails him?" Megatron demanded. He recalled the panic Seeker in the laboratory. Starscream did not appear to be gravely ill, if only a little neurotic.

"Uncertain. The term was 'cosmic rust' but they did not explain what it was. Only that it could have devastating effects on Cybertron. Starscream piggybacked a data stream on the transmission, data remains encrypted. I will collaborate with Shockwave in order to reveal answers."

"Very good, Soundwave. I do not think I have been exposed to Starscream's plague. I will return to the control room shortly."

"Negative: Level black quarantine requires extended isolation of those exposed. I will keep you informed and I have translated the previous transmission also. Starscream has the aliens with him in his lab. They brought the disease to Cybertron and he tried to contain them. There is no word on Skywarp and Thundercracker, but their quarters have been black flagged, by Starscream, as off limits."

"Hmmm. Sounds like Starscream has attempted to use his head for once." Megatron said. "Very well, Soundwave. Continue monitoring transmissions."

TO BE CONTNUED...

## Glossary and Episode references

In case it is really needed, I generally prefer not to have to include one of these since I find having to translate fics into something I can understand a bit of an irksome task. But I am only including words that occur in Stargate. Just in case there are those who are not familiar with the terms.

**Antilla:** A planet that Cosmic rust was supposed to have originated. See transformers Season 2 - Episode: Cosmic Rust

**Apophis:** Egyptian god of the night, symbolised by the serpent.

**Cimmeria:** A world inhabited by Viking-like people. See Stargate: Season 1 - Episode #8: Thor's Hammer.

**Cybertonium:** A green mineral found only on Cybertron that is required for the proper function of all Cybertronian peoples. See Transformers: Season 2 part 1 – Episode: Desertion of the Dinobots.

**DHD:** Dial Home Device. A double ringed console in which thirty-eight of the thirty-nine Stargate Symbols are presented. In order to return to Earth; six symbols that represent Earth must be pressed in the proper sequence followed by pressing the activation button.

**GDO:** Garage Door Opener. A device worn on the wrist that sends a radio signal through the Stargate as an identification and a request to open the Stargate's protective iris.

**Goa'uld:** A parasitical alien worm thing that inhabits the body of, typically, a human. Goa'uld usually take over the body's control.

**Jaffa:** A slave in the service of the Goa'uld. Usually used as incubators to the larva of the Goa'uld.

**Komtria:** A greeting used by Harlan, last of his race. See Stargate: Season 1 - Episode #17: Tin Man.

**MALP:** Mobile Analytical Laboratory Probe. This is sent out prior to human contact with the planet. It will send back information that will determine if a mission will indeed be sent.

**Naquadah:** Quartz like material from which Stargates and other Goa'uld technologies are based on.

**Pel'tak:** Goa'uld or Jaffa word for cockpit.

**Shovar:** Goa'uld or Jaffa word for a traitor.

**Sokar:** Goa'uld who was similar in nature to the Christian devil. Symbol is the inverted pentagram

**Tollan:** Highly advanced race of humans, not particularly fond of trade with "primitive races". See Stargate: Season 1 - Episode #16: Enigma

**Tal'tak:** Goa'uld cargo ship that has no armament and is frequently used by the Tok'ra or the SG1

**Tridium:** Fan made metal that is stronger than steel and maintains a razor sharp edge. Often used for close combat weapons such as swords.

**Trinium:** A very brittle metal, but once refined it is 100 times stronger than steel. See Stargate Season 2 - Episode #13: Spirits