

## Foreword

As noted in the previous story forward this is part of what I would consider three stories, and now we are up to episode two of a three-part mini-series. This is another short story that just establishes the Headmasters, Targetmasters, and Fortress Misslemax. While short it's integral to the introduction of my Shortstop body which becomes a huge part of the saga going forward.

Enjoy!

Anthony S. Anselmo

# The Next Generation

By Anthony S. Anselmo

## Chapter 1

*"Masters Log - Stardate, 1989.05.06 - As it has been several months since our battle with the Sun Monsters, we have continued to move forward with our progress of recolonizing Gearatron. While on Earth, all the countries continued to provide a lock-down for their inhabitants as they are afraid of the return of these hideous creatures.*

*"Even though we have had no indication of the return of these monsters, all the world leaders insist that life on planet Earth must come to a halt. A fear pandemic has spread over the entire globe as humans are ushered in to stay inside their houses and hide until further instructions are provided. Even after meeting with several world leaders, they continue to ignore my pleas to open everything back up. Schools have been shut down, millions of jobs are lost as manufacturing and production have come to a complete halt. Only basic essential jobs are allowed to continue such as grocery stores, farming, and basic manufacturing such as toilet paper and tissue.*

*"To hopefully prepare ourselves, my Zapbots move forward though...."*

The sun was shining, and the desert glowed with its bright yellow light. The fresh desert air skimmed over the horizon, and my Zapbots were busy at work.

I was sitting on my deck watching the breathtaking work in progress. It amazed me how incredibly fast they were and how everything was done to complete perfection.

Construction had already begun on the Next Generation of Zapbots, including many more members to our already vast family. The creatures of such an advanced race, that sometimes I wondered if I was dreaming.

Maybe all it was just a dream, a fake reality. Maybe that spaceship didn't land in my backyard that one fateful night? Maybe I was still a loser at school, asleep in my bed, and soon I would wake up, go to school, face bullies, tormenting teachers, and come home again to sleep the dreams I so often had dreamt.

My life was so wondrous now it still seemed like a dream. Who would have thought that a normal average red-blooded American boy would become a leader of a race of amazing, advanced robots that transformed into cars? Who would have thought that same boy would have fought giant fire monsters and evil robots also as powerful and incredible as his creations?

Still, my life was real and I was not dreaming. If I was dreaming, how could I have physically died and then be brought back to life? How could I be sitting here at the top of my tower on Duplaflex, watching construction on an enormous station, even bigger than the one I was living in now, but just as powerful?

Here I was sipping my lemonade, miles above the terrain. Every day I thanked my blessings for what I had and every day I almost cried from my happiness. I guess luck and fairness change dramatically in one's life.

Over the past several months our robotic family grew. We had birthed many more Zapbot ranging to all types of Earth vehicles. Based on a suggestion from Scan we developed a special team that had mini Zapbots as weapons. These mini Zapbots would transform into the weapon of their larger bonded brothers. We called them the [Targetmasters](#) and they were extremely powerful in battle.

We also started construction on some Zapbot bodies for my human friends called [Headmasters](#). With this new technology, it would allow humans such as myself to interact with my Zapbots on their levels. One would wear an X-O suit like my own and then they could change into a head of a regular-

sided Zapbot merging with the enlarged body. While your human body and senses were dormant it would reroute these to the Zapbot body. The feelings was very much like you grew twenty feet instantly.

We had received no word from the Super Changers. In fact, we were wondering if the special Zapbots that could change into multiple vehicles were ever coming back.

Furthermore, we developed a new technology called **Transforming Adaptable Protection Effective Services** (or [Tapes](#) for short) for Hightone. For Scan we developed **Digital Integrated Service Knowledge Selection** know as [Disks](#) for Scan. These, however, were not just ordinary tapes and disks, for they could also transform. The Tapes could change into mini Zapbots and the disks could change into special attachments for them to use in battle.

Finally, we had new spies, clones, commanders and we were just finishing up on the construction of a new base.

As I was finishing up my inspection, Hightone called out from far below on the radio com.

"Master, incoming transmission from Space Ace," he replied.

"I'll take it in my room," I replied. I stood up and the glass doors of my outside balcony opened and closed automatically. I walked up to my computer screen and up appeared the image of Space Ace my Combatabot Space Shuttle commander. From the view-screen, I saw the inner workings of his cockpit and the view of the earth outside his windows from the camera that he had on board.

"Master, I've been conducting my regular studies on Earth terrain surface and I've found a slight alteration in a mountain near the Nevada border," Space Ace said. Almost immediately up came the computer graphics and diagrams of which examined them closely.

"Hmmm, very interesting," I said. "You haven't searched this area before?"

"I did a sonar sweep this time and I just happened to notice it. It's very out of place."

"Well, it worth checking out," I replied. "What do you think it could be?"

"It looks like some kind of giant creator. From these schematics, I doubt if it's human or Zapbot made."

"But then the obvious question is."

"Who put it there?"

While it had been some time since the Junkicons attacked and our skirmish with the fire monsters, I was still itching for adventure. My adrenaline was just ready to be pumped out of its hiding places to allow myself to explore what I could throughout both Earth and Gearatron. I pressed a button on the screen.

"Hightone round up an away party to investigate something in sector 51," I noted.

"Confirmed Master Dude," replied Hightone in his jockish style manner.

The small scout party consisted of Botimus Prime, Timetravel, Flier, Boaty, Speedy, and myself and we transformed and flew off to the location. I met with the team at the bottom of Duplaflex's ramp as we were stationed in a secret location in the Rocky Mountains, not far from my old Battle-base. They transformed into aerial vehicle modes and we made our way to the sector to investigate.

We started and reached the area under direction of Space Ace. As we approached, we saw what appeared to be a large crater in the ground somewhat newly created. It was a least a mile wide and about half a mile deep.

I was riding along in Botimus Prime, as we pulled up, I leaped out as they transformed to begin to inspect the area. It was truly an unbelievable sight. The crater was perfectly carved out with no alterations. Somehow this didn't make any logical sense.

I turned to Flier who had proceeded to start scanning the site.

"What are your readings?" I asked him.

"Well, lately I've taken up Sherlock Homes, but..."

"No about the crater!" I said noting Flier was being his usual funny self, trying to lighten the mood of the situation.

"Well, I can tell you one thing. It's definitely not human-made," replied Flier.

"No shit Sherlock!" replied Timetravel.

"Master, I'm getting a strange energy reading coming within the center of the crater," Boaty replied.

"What kind of energy reading?" I asked.

"I don't know. It's like nothing I analyzed before."

"Uh Master?" cried Speedy.

I saw out of the corner of my eye, Speedy falling. At first, I thought he had tripped over something (which was very unlikely for a Zapbot), but then I saw that something was PULLING him towards the center of the giant hole.

I sprang to grab him but soon found out that I too was being drawn towards the center of the hole. Botimus ran to help me only to find himself being grabbed by the unstoppable force and being sucked in along with the two of us.

"STAY BACK!" Botimus ordered to the rest. Boaty dug his feet into the ground and fired his tractor beam.

The tractor beam shot out from his arm but as soon as it reached the border of the crater it stopped. Boaty re-engaged and fired again, and still, it failed. After several attempts, Boaty discontinued.

"Quick join hands!" yelled Flier. With that, they linked hands and tried to reach Botimus. Timetravel finally reached him and then Botimus reached for us, but it was too late. We were almost towards the bottom of the crater.

As Speedy and I clung to the side crumbling away at our robotic fingertips, the bottom of the crater opened up and a huge black hole appeared. Speedy tried climbing back up, but his results were futile. I tried taking off into the air, only to find I was low on energy.

As we approached the bottom of the hole it became bigger and bigger. My body became extremely nervous at this strange occurrence. I looked back at my Zapbots trying to reach us and then back at the hole and before I knew it a giant flash of light surrounded me, and I suffered a total system blackout!

## Chapter 2

When I came to, I saw that my surroundings were unfamiliar. I stood up and peered across the misty horizon. I saw vast mountains of strange chromatic colors. The landscape seemed to move in a wavelike motion, without any consistency or pattern. Purplish clouds hanged in the air as the terrain looked like distinctive glowing lines of green. It felt very much like we stepped into a computer game. I realized that we were now on another planet.

I did a system check and found myself in perfect condition. I looked around and found that my fellow Zapbots were by my side, also getting up off the ground.

"Report!?" I asked looking at my fellow robotic warriors as they too were getting to their feet.

"Everyone is functional Master," replied Botimus.

"But where the hell are we?" asked Flier.

"It seems that we have passed through an energy distortion of some kind, leading through space to another reality," said Boaty.

"In other words, we passed through a warp hole of some kind and now we're here," replied Botimus.

"Yes, however, my sensors are picking up numerous disturbances all around us, just like the one we just encountered. If we got here via a warp hole, it should be possible to return."

While everyone was talking, I was admiring this weird planet. It was so different, yet so pretty. I never saw anything like it before in my life and I just stood there, gazing at the horizon. It was the stuff I only dreamed about. Was I still dreaming? I still pondered the thought.

"Master are you all, right?" asked Speedy.

"Oh. yeah, little bud, I'm fine," I replied.

We started to walk on the strange land. Our metallic foot left imprints behind in the thick mud. There was fog and gas everywhere and the terrain was difficult to overcome.

Just as we were about to transform and fly off, we heard a giant crash in the distance. Like the sound of a lightning bolt, only a thousand times greater. We turned around to see a ghostly figure rising out of the horizon. It looked like something from a nightmare! It was transparent, yet moved in a shape of a human, but had no substance. It sleeked across the ground and swooped through the darkness of the night. Its face was ghoulish, and we could easily see that it saw us and was heading in our direction.

"Quick! Send out a universal welcome message!" I cried.

"I've already tried that Master, no affect!" Boaty replied.

As it came closer without hesitation, we opened fire. Our lasers flew right through the monster and he drew somewhat back in pain. But after several seconds he regained his strength and from his eyes came blasts of his own. It struck Boaty and he flew back hitting the ground with a large burn mark in his armor.

"Zapbots transform and retreat!" I ordered. Flier grabbed Boaty and we started off to the nearest mountain, having no idea where we were going. The ghost monster continued to pursue us at an amazing pace and was gaining on us.

As we flew over the horizon, I fired some of my firepower to delay the monster and allow my Zapbots time for escape. However, out of my hand came, the power of the Matrix and it hit the monster so hard that he immediately turned around and retreated. I softly landed on the ground as we saw the ghoulish monster fly away.

My Zapbots flew up to me and realized what had happened.

"Was that the Matrix?" asked Speedy.

"Apparently, I still haven't figured out how this blasted thing works now," I replied.

"It would be safe to assume the Matrix only provides you with resources when absolutely necessary," replied Boaty.

"Interesting, I wonder how powerful that device truly is?" Botimus Prime questioned.

"Did you ever use it while I was gone," I asked Botimus.

"No, never the need, do did I ever feel the necessity," replied Botimus.

"Let's find the nearest place of shelter and help Boaty. Then we can find a way off this crazy planet!" I said as my Zapbots assisted Boaty with moving.

But then, I heard the voice of the monster. In plain English yelling back to us in the distance.

"BEWARE!!! YOU CAN NOT HIDE!!!"

We found what could only be considered a cave and began repairs on Boaty. His damage was significant and I was now more concerned about getting back to Earth than the beauty of the planet.

I came up to my robotic mentor lying on the ground.

"How are we doing little warrior?" I asked smiling.

"Master... I don't know if I can make..."

"Hey, don't talk nonsense. If anybody can pull through it here, it's you. Just take it easy and everything will be fine."

"Yeah bro, you're not leaving me anytime soon," responded Flier.

I stood up and walked towards the back of the cave. My mind wandered to the countless images of when I first created Boaty and how he had become such a good friend and companion to me. When my Zapbots first came online, Boaty was my guide to the weird world of the Zapbots. He answered every question I asked and worked hard to provide me with whatever I needed to survive (technically Click and SuperRobot did this too, but Boaty was very much a mentor-like figure to me.) Imagine yourself an ordinary human boy and now you had a giant robot as your best friend that transformed into a rather nice boat. I remembered spending some time with him and my family on Lake Erie. My sisters insisting that Boaty fly fast as my mother was constantly getting seasick.

Before long I had reached what appeared to be a clearing in the mountain. I was now standing over a waterfall that swooped into a huge pool below. The blueish water flowed from the cave sources and congealed below my feet.

I heard the roar once again and I ran back to the front of the cave approaching my Zapbots, once again fleeing from the hideous ghost monster. Helping Flier with Boaty, we began to run at top speed towards the back of the cave. The monster was hot on our robotic heels and I was so busy carrying Boaty that I didn't have time to use any of my Matrix firepower.

We all came to the waterfall, and not watching what I was doing I stumbled off the ledge and fell into the water below. My Zapbots in kind followed my lead.

When I emerged, I found myself back on Earth, in a large lake near our entry point. The pool must of have been another warp hole and we were now back where we had started. As we exited the lake to dry off, we took a look around the landscape. As we approached dry land, I felt a relief that it was now all over, and we were safely back at home.

"What do we do with this crater," asked Speedy.

"I am guessing we should be able to find a way to seal up these warp holes," responded Flier.

With a giant roar and a tidal wave, the monster appeared out of the lake. We turned in horror and realization that he followed us too closely and now was on our planet. He emerged from the lake throwing the water everywhere, with it swirling around his body as if the water began to become one with him. Soon a substance began to form as the monster's shape became more defined as he began to solidify and was more visible.

We opened fire, but the monster sensing us decided to retreat flying off into the horizon. I looked in the distance and saw he was heading towards a nearby city.

"We have to stop that monster!" Flier cried.

"Zapbots Transform and pursue!" I ordered.

### Chapter 3

Time was slim and I knew we had to act quickly. We had to lure the monster back into a warp hole, find some way to contain him or destroy him. Either option worked for me.

"Botimus, we need to take Boaty back to base and get re-enforcements. I need you to pursue that creature and keep him at bay!" I ordered.

"Understood Master!" Botimus said transforming in vehicle mode with Speedy and Timetravel heading towards the city.

As Flier and I flew back to base with Boaty, Botimus and the gang transformed and flew towards the large city in the desert. When they reached the outer limits of the town, they stopped dead in their floating tracks as humans were running and screaming frantically from the sight of the purplish devil terrorizing the city.

"Transform and grab as many humans as you can!" said Botimus.

The monster was slowly moving across the city demolishing skyscrapers and everything else in his path. With one sweep of his fist, he would hit an office building and people began to tumble from the sky. Timetravel immediately flew up into the air and grabbed the falling victims.

"Whoa... Hang on there I got ya!" Timetravel said holding the humans in his arms.

"But... who's got you?" asked one of the ladies in his arm.

The monster continued to move like a ghost over cars, crushing them a second after the people fled from them. While we moved through the city, he left a wave of obliteration in his path as if King Kong was on the ground destroying everything he could.

Speedy came rolling up to Botimus after taking his survey. He transformed back into robot mode.

"I've talked to almost everyone and we have a ton of injuries among the humans!" Speedy cried.

"LOOK OUT!" cried Botimus pushing Speedy just out of the path of a flying car. The car hit the building next to them and it tumbled into pieces. Botimus quickly dug them out of the rubble.

"I don't know what Masters doing, but I hope he gets here fast!" replied Botimus.

Meanwhile, Timetravel was flying around the monster like an angry bee swarming his attacker. The monster continued to wave his arms madly trying to knock Flier out of the sky.

"Ha Ha, you poor excuse for a ghost!" Timetravel remarked. With that remark, the ghost made impact with him and sent him flying. He flew back into a billboard and landed on top of a building.

"Whoa! Next time I better keep my mouth shut!"

The Zapbots continued to fire at the monster, but it did little to stop his fierce attack on the city. As they followed him through the town, they did everything they could to distract him from hurting humans. As they would fire, he would become somewhat distracted, conduct a loud roar, and then proceed to continue his rampage.

Then in a distance, Speedy heard a hum and turned around to find a shadow flying over the horizon. He used his special optical sensors and saw that the shadow was the entire army of Zapbots, flying to the battle scene.

Over the mountain flew the entire Zapbot family. The new Targetmasters in front leading the charge. However, behind them, flew a gigantic fortress as it was bigger than the city itself. Two large towers with a longer middle one made up the main part as long extruding ramps formed the front. Mostly green in color except for the blue-tinted windows it was a sight to behold.

Inside the almost completed bridge of this fortress stood a new robot, with my new X-O suit transformed into the new robot's head. This was my new Zapbot Headmaster body, which I called [Shortstop](#).

"All right you disgusting excuse for a being, prepare to meet [Fortress Misslemax!](#)" I said.



From on the control bridge of the floating spaceship city, I walked into a white square on the bridge. Above me, the ceiling opened leading to a special area above for interaction. With that, I flew up into the air and began the special transformation.

The fortress flew over the city casting the entire city in darkness. People continued to run for cover as the automatic street lights went on. The fortress then began to rumble and move as thousands of moving parts interacted with each other, changing the shape and dimension of the floating city. The two side towers extended moving outward, while the ramps retracted and navigated down. The whole body began to form extended high about the atmosphere and within a minute stood a new Zapbot body, bigger than anything before.

I flew up a compartment inside the bridge and combined it with the larger Zapbot Headmaster body. I exited through my shuttle bay and flew high into the sky with my new *Shortstop* body. Then I started my own special transformation and interlocked with the main key of the robot forming its head. I flew back down and combined, making a giant crashing sound. I felt my body grow and fill the entire robotic body as if the world shrunk around my senses. Within seconds I felt a lot larger and there I stood, my new Zapbot interface body, *Fortress Misslemax*.

My new Zapbots had already engaged in battle and were firing at the monster with an onslaught of weapons and lasers. However, the monster continued to fight them with all his might.

Without warning the monster began to grow, and his already enormous body filled the blank cold negative space in the city air, as he grew, he was now as big as *Fortress Misslemax*.

He flew out from the city into the desert where I was waiting on the ground. He came straight towards me and crashed right into my body. I stepped backward and crashed into the ground, causing a massive earthquake. I slowly got up and extended my giant robot hand. I fired my Matrix magic at the monster from the depths of my body.

He dodged the lightning bolt and flew around for another attempt. I soon found out that this new body of mine was making my movements hard to navigate. I quickly pushed myself up and continued to fire at him.

He continued to dodge the lightning bolts and flew once again towards me. I turned my body just in time and he flew past like a bull after hitting the red cape. I raised my hand and hit him dead center with my Matrix magic.

"ARGGGGGGGHHHH" the monster cried in pain. He flew back and began to decrease in size, but it only lasted for a second and he then increased back to his larger size. I then began running and leaped at the monster. However, my effort would prove futile cause I went right through him like a ghost and landed clumsily on the ground, which caused yet another earthquake.

I turned around and saw that the monster had turned red and from his eyes came a red laser. It hit me dead on and cut a hole through my body. I quickly turned off my pain switch but felt my energy began to decrease rapidly. I tried to get up but I felt even more tired and clumsier in my new body.

The ghost monster continued to roar and fire his laser at me. I finally fell back to the ground exhausted. I disengaged my head from *Misslemax* and returned to *Shortstop* mode. I slowly crawled to the edge of my giant body to see what was next. My energy was drained and I felt helpless and frustrated.

The monster, however, changed direction and continued his war on the city. He fired his laser and within seconds I saw buildings crumble to dust. My Zapbots immediately scrambled to gather people and started to retreat.

"Damn it. What can I do?" I cried

Suddenly I heard a voice...

"Master!click" it was Click with SuperRobot, and two other mini-Zapbots I hadn't noticed before.

"What!! Who are they?" I cried.

"These are Tiny and Experiment. Master <sup>click</sup> we have developed our special transformation. Reengage with Misslemax...<sup>click</sup>"

"Why?" I inquired.

"No time to explain. Please, Master! Trust us!" said SuperRobot.

I retransformed with Misslemax and once again felt myself grow inside the body until I was it, but I still felt weak. All of a sudden, Click, SuperRobot, Tiny, and Experiment transformed into dimensional objects. Click changed into a spear, SuperRobot into a cube, Tiny into a triangle, and Experiment into a rectangle. With that, they flew up towards my chest and where four-holes that were that matched their shapes they filled with their presence. They interlocked with my body and then I felt different.

I felt my power returning to my agility. I now had more flexibility as I didn't feel weighed down by my bulky body. Energy increased as if I was brand new. I felt stronger, more agile. I flew up and launched myself at the monster. I fired all of my Matrix power at him and it hit him dead on in the center of his ghostly chest.

The monster cried out of more in pain and tried to run away, but I continued to fly after him firing with every amount of energy that entered my hand. He continued to cry, but I didn't stop and my firepower. The onslaught of power from my floating robot's hands continued till the monster finally exploded above the metropolis causing the city to shake and shattering windows everywhere.

Mass pieces of liquid goop fell everywhere, but upon reaching the ground the goop dissolved into the sand.

Within seconds the desert was once again empty except for the lone body of a Zapbot warrior and his tiny friends. My Zapbots returned to help pick up the pieces of the broken humans, getting them to nearby hospitals and emergency centers.

## Chapter 4

*"Master's Log Supplemental, the past week we have concentrated on the clean-up of the destroyed city. Fortress Misslemax, Duplaflex, and as well as the rest of the current Zapbot army were all called in to help repair and fix the demolished city.*

*Casualties were low, but even one person hurt sinks my heart. Scan established the location of six other warp holes and we sealed them with a force field to prevent further problems in the future. However, Boaty informed me some most disturbing news."*

"The warp holes would appear to be linked to a disturbance in the time fluctuation of the universe..." replied Boaty standing in our newly finished Zapbot bridge aboard Misslemax. I stood there in my new Shortstop body looking over his results on my monitor screen.

"In other words?" Botimus asked.

"New ones can form at any time," Boaty replied.

"Wonderful!" Flier cried.

"However, Scan and I have set up a program in a normal Earthling satellite to detect any future incursions. If one should appear we should be able to locate and seal it quickly," Boaty replied.

"Let's just hope this doesn't become a regular occurrence," I said. "Oh, by the way, where did Click and his gang come up with that special improvement?"

"We developed a special attachment to Fortress Misslemax just in case you are not here to transform it into robot mode," replied Scan.

"But why Misslemax?" I asked.

"Both Duplaflex and our battle station [Omega Dupreme](#) (the new Zapbot battle base) are sole Zapbots, in that they are in full control of their own bodies. However, since Misslemax must rely on one person, YOU, Master for transformation and personality, we thought this would be a good idea to have as a backup."

"Great but why didn't you tell me?"

"We were not sure if it would work yet, having four or five minds working as one. But as you can see Click, SuperRobot, Tiny and Experiment proved our experiment was a success."

"Interesting. I have to compliment you Scan."

"Well of course only a brilliant mind like myself..."

"Yeah, yeah yeah," mumbled the crew.

"So, what's next?" asked Speedy.

"After we finish here with the city, we are taking Fortress Misslemax back to Gearatron for now," I responded.

"So, our first space voyage in the new ship?" asked Flier.

"You are correct Mr. Adventure," I said winking at him.

After the meeting, I walked up to a platform on the main bridge. My Shortstop body was raised to a special garage and I disengaged from it. I flew back up a shaft in my X-O suit and reached the topmost part of Misslemax. All of our cities were furnished with human levels. But Misslemax had extra 15 levels in the topmost tower just for the Headmasters, my human friends, and myself.

Soon I would ask my closest human friends to become Headmasters joining me in this adventure. I wanted to start a new school to help humans become Zapbots like myself and hopefully help protect Earth. This would take an extremely long time.

At the top level was my new room. I met Click, SuperRobot, and the new guys Tiny, and Experiment on the way and thanked them for their help. Then I entered my garage and then the doors to my room opened up with a "swish".

I saw my new apartment. Lavishly decorated with a warm homey appearance. The tilted windows gave an outlook onto the city around the futuristic countertops the light panels gave it that Zapbot feel. I slowly walked around and looked at my unpacked boxes, and then turned towards the window.

I finally had found a home...

to be continued...

