

Preface

While doing these revamps of my stories, the concepts and plots have changed a little, but the original ideas have remained the same. Granted some of my ideas seemed lame at times, but sometimes I feel we take these lame things for granted. The trust that only comes through a long lasting friendship, the comfort of a parent's voice, and the undying love of a small pet we all take for granted, too, too often.

So when I was doing these rewrites at this point since I was no longer friends with the person that inspired Matt E., as I killed him off in the last story. This was around 1996/97 when my life had moved on from High School and I was now fully in college. It was time to move on with the saga and incorporate new friends and new people.

Originally this rewrite was focused on my good 'straight friend' Bill Thomas. However when I reread these in 2020, the stories really lost their lack of romance if I didn't use Mike Quartz as the main companion in the adventure. Nothing against Bill, it just wasn't interesting unless the subtle gay context is there, as it was in the original version with Matt E. (yeah don't ask.) As such I have modified this (and the next story) a bit, to put Mike Quartz as the key companion in these adventures.

When I first re-wrote this story in 1996/97, it was a huge departure in my writing process as I started to incorporate two linear plots at once (oooh I know fancy.) I added the whole gay subplot as this was very controversial at the time. Rereading this, I'm happy for the advancements we've made over the years and very proud of this still to this day.

Anthony S. Anselmo

Back in Time

By Anthony Anselmo

Chapter 1

The door chimed and I said the familiar "yes", bending my reply in the middle and raising it to completion at the end. Making it sound like "YYYEeeesssSSS!"

Botimus entered my office on and stood in front of my desk. I continued to look over the various files on my computer's monitor.

"You wished to see me Master?" Botimus inquired.

I turned my Shortstop body to my second in command.

"Yes, I've been reviewing the logs of what happened during my brief, so-called death."

"Yes?" said Botimus raising his electronic eyebrow.

"Quite interesting. What I want to know is why there is a gap between a month, of logs, and no recorded file of any connection with Earth?"

"I'm sure the files are there Master."

"No, in fact, not only are the file's not there, but the main computer registers them as being deleted."

Botimus suddenly stiffened up for a second. I motioned to him to sit down in the chair.

"Now I know there was some translation errors when converting info from Duplaflex to Misslemax, but I fail to believe that we are missing an entire month of logs- or deleted logs for some strange reason. What's the deal?"

Botimus sat silent.

"Ahem? Botimus?" I inquired again.

"I can not reveal that information. It is... classified," he responded.

"What?" I said in stupor, "Hello, Leader of Zapbots, created all you guys, here! There is nothing classified from moi..."

"Are you ordering me to reveal the information Master?"

"Is that the only way you will tell me."

"I'm afraid so. All I can say is information is encrypted for your protection. Just as you won't disclose information about where Rup and Bop came from."

"I'm not sure on Bop to be honest. Rup I have an idea... and my protection?"

What was up with him? I've know him for; now what, six years, had it been that long? We've created numerous Zapbots, conquered monsters, and created of all sorts of technological wonders, destroyed an evil ghost monster, fought giant sun monsters - twice; rescued human hostages, rescued myself, built cities...and here he is withholding information for my protection?

"So you can't tell me personally?" I asked.

"I'm afraid not Master," he replied with a sigh.

I paused for a minute.

"Fine, dismissed."

"Are you upset Master?"

"No, I usually figure it out sooner or later. No need to rush. Maybe you are right, I shouldn't know."

With that Botimus got up and left the room. I went back to my investigation.

"Master's Log... What a strange world we live in. Once again so many things were happening in the Zapbot Universe where do I begin. After finally solving our Gongo infiltration problem, we have now begun space exploration to almost full extent. The main problem now was trying to get everyone

to agree on some sort of Federation. What fun that has been trying to get everyone to agree on the same rules with multi-cultures and ideas of science and god.

"But what a busy life I have been doing. Meetings, discussions, letters, conversations oh my! Once again the promise of being a supreme leader of a race got to me. Supreme leader? Have I gotten this arrogant and snobby again. You figure the incident with Unicron would have solved this?

"Family is being a pain as usual. 'Come visit, come spend time with your folks'. Friends run in and out of here, preparing for this and that.

"My Zapbots are my family now which is weird considering how they have all grown to populate the levels of Misslemax. It's like a big Italian family all living together in one apartment building, but a nice apartment building... not something from the 1930's... My Grandma would tell me stories of her and her brothers and sisters, twelve kids living in a two bedroom apartment in Cleveland, my goodness!

"While the extended Zapbot family has grown there are those who are closest to me. Boaty and Flier being the foremost as I consider Boaty my logical side and Flier my for-lack-of-a-better-word 'emotional' side. They tend to give me some balance to my life when I am feeling stressed. We're still trying to get Boaty to tell a good joke though.

"Botimus is ever there as my second in command, picking up the pieces when I can't fill in the gaps. Between Botimus, Click and Superrobot my daily bionic human needs are met so I can carry on with whatever mission we are on for the day. Click and Super usually help me on the regular human side, and Botimus assists when I'm in Shortstop mode.

"Speedy and Timetravel keep things jovial as well on the bridge, as the two brothers are the happiest group you will see with the wonder of twelve year old children when they deal with humans. Speedy tends to ask all the redundant questions but I never criticize anyone seeking knowledge.

"Scan and Hightone keep the scientific and communication lines open as Scan will be so excited he will be talking Hightone's receptors off, and that's hard to do with a communicator!

"Pliers, and Repairs keep us moving and mending the wounds of those in battle, and Terrain and Overload keep everything straight with Security.

"And then there are my human friends...

"David D. and Jeremy D. are completing Zapbot training for their Headmaster placements. Probably my two best friends at the moment. However, David is starting to take some of his religion a little too much to heart which is causing some consternation among the regular Zapbots as science has pretty much proven the non-existence of any God (at least as the humans would describe.) Still I hold to the truth that everyone needs to find their own path and freedom of expression.

"My two other new found friends, Mike B. (who I'll call 'Mikey' to not confuse him with Mike Quartz) and Alan F., always running around Misslemax like a bunch of little children.. 'Oh let's try this program on the game room deck'. Gosh. If they paid that much attention to their Headmaster studies they might actually get somewhere.

"Jon C. my bulletin board friend has gotten so busy with school I hardly hear from him. Mike Quartz had returned to visit from college for a brief period between finishing his studies. Likewise my friends Bill T. and Matt R. (aka Rogish) did too, except they were more involved with partying and showing everyone what a cool friend they have (mainly me). I have to go through explaining how Zapbot technology works to a new person every week. Auygggghhh.

"And then there is or was... the other Matt (not the same as Rogish.) My poor dear friend, who passed away with a single breath. I still grieved for him. I have yet to forgive myself for my arrogance, and I'm not sure if I ever will.

"A friendship and a family lost. What else could go wrong in my life?"

I looked out of the window of Fortress Misslemax in my regular human quarters, staring at the bright sky. A sunny day only happened once in a full red moon. What was wrong with the coffee

machine? I tossed the coffee cup into the sink with disgust. The cup dissipated into atoms and the energy was conserved for the next meal. Was Pliers still fixing the food replicators?

Walking out of my room I entered the turbo-lift, adjacent to my garage.

"Level 2," I said, and the lift took off down a level.

I stepped into my friend Mike Quartz's room. He was sitting on his couch in the comfortable, multi-level loft playing a video game with an old fashion controller device. As I stepped in he had just made a touchdown.

"YES!" he cried.

My various other friends were sitting with him, and proceeded to call him a number of slurs that meant "Cheater."

"Having fun?" I asked.

"Whoo eye! Yes I am!" Mike cried with excitement in his voice.

"Funny, we had multidimensional graphic programs now, and you still like to play this primitive thing," I said.

"These old games are the best," Rogish replied.

"So what's up in Zapbot land?" Bill asked as I plopped down on the couch.

"Nothing.... fricking nothing," I replied.

"What about those missing log files?" asked Alan.

I jerked suddenly. "How the hell did you know about that?" I asked.

"We were talking with some of the Zapbots. You know what big mouths Flier and Terrain have," replied Mikey B.

"Oh great, Zapbot security is already jeopardized. You would think these complex machines of high intelligence would know not to open their audio speakers..."

"I thought you said yourself you gave them part organic brains so they would have the ability to make mistakes and free will?" Jeremy asked.

"Not really me but my programming when I first created them from the Matrix, part of the Zapbot biology if you want to call it that. Still you would expect these guys to be a little more discreet."

"Do you think an angel said to God, 'You would expect these humans to be perfect'?" asked David.

"Good point? That is if you believe that."

"What you don't believe in God anymore?" asked Rogish.

"I don't know what I believe anymore. I carry around a glowing ball of crystals in my chest, I sleep in a floating bed, I talk to three eyed monsters, and I just happened to jump to another reality a short while ago. Good golly miss molly I never in my life thought this all could... or would happen."

Rogish, and Jeremy proceeded to get up and walk up the stairs to the kitchen to prepare some alcoholic beverages. Bill came over and starting lightly punching me trying to cheer me up.

"I read your report, was I really in that bad of a predicament in the other reality?" he asked.

"Yeah, your parents were... well I don't like to talk bad about people. It's funny, I would never think that someone had it as bad as me in another life."

"You had it worse!" replied Rogish getting a drink from the replicators.

"Wonder what that Anthony is doing right now?" Jeremy asked.

"Probably doing well, hell he could be writing about a life like this now, in some sort of story."

"Nah, I can't image you being that big of a geek." replied Bill.

We laughed and chuckled. At that moment the call speakers began to play the familiar tone we knew all so well.

"Boaty you have some incredible timing," I replied.

"Sorry Master, but we have something here you might want to take into consideration..." Boaty, my faithful and uncomplaining Zapbot said.

"Huh? What is it?"

"According to Botimus I'm not suppose to release this information, it is a so-called surprise?"

"All right I'll be down in a minute." I replied.

"We are located in Docking Bay two."

"Will do, Out."

I got up to leave, with only Mike Q. coming to follow me out of interest. While my various other friends, uninterested sat down on the couch and began playing the primitive electronic games once again.

Chapter 2

"What do you mean we've lost three power converters in the last week?" asked Repairs.

"I'm telling you, everything's falling to pieces for no reason," replied Pliers tinkering with a small recorder device.

"Wonderful. What else could go wrong?"

"Have you seen Tiretracks lately?" inquired Terrain tapping at the keyboard at engineering.

"No, why?" asked Repairs.

"Well you know..." replied Scan.

"No, what did I miss a memo?" asked Repairs.

"You mean you haven't heard?" responded Scan.

Pliers dropped an electronic wrench, and everyone was slightly startled.

"What's up?" asked Repairs.

"Put it this way, do you ever see him with any female Zapbots?" asked Scan.

"Well considering we only have one enlisted in the army and the rest are civilians, I doubt that is cause for concern?"

"Repairs... Repairs, do you ever look up from your toys and look around you?" cried Pliers.

"What we are trying to point out is the fact that Tiretracks programming is messed up. His-"

The doors of the room opening and Speedy walking in; interrupted Scan.

"Hey did you guys turn off the speakers to the engine room or what?" asked Speedy in his whiny voice.

"Aw gosh, what else could go wrong down here!" replied Repairs.

"Botimus wants you in the docking bay right away," answered Speedy.

"All right let's go! As the humans say 'Chop Chop'," replied Repairs.

"Time... travel? Like actual.... not just your name?" I asked.

"Yes?" replied Timetravel.

"No, no no I was just pondering the idea," I replied.

"You did create the ability for Timetravel to time travel, Master." replied Scan.

"True, but it was, I mean, I never intended it to be used so soon."

"Well it's not the only way we can accomplish it," said Pliers.

"It is possible for a ship to warp around a sun and be able to travel through time. Several successful probe tests have proven this to be possible," stated Boaty.

"Yes but guys, time travel is not a thing to play with. Why do you think we set up the Temporal Office to control such affairs? We don't want people jumping back and forth through time like kids and messing up history. It's bad enough I jumped to another reality and messed things up!"

"Aw come on Master, I know you want to go for a spin," said Timetravel, the holder of this special power we were discussing. My fellow Zapbots had perfected his ability I had started but never tested, yet.

"Might as well try it Anthony," yelled Mike from the human balcony above.

"According to your theory Master, all time travel is predestined, and everything in life is predestined," stated Boaty.

"Fine we'll 'test' his ability you guys have so-called perfected, but if I come back and you guys are all gone, I'm going to be pissed!" I said disengaging from my Shortstop body and flying down to Timetravel's location with him transforming into vehicle mode.

"You'll be more than pissed, we'll be screwed," said Mike coming down the stairs to the Zapbot level.

"Hello, who said you were going?" I inquired.

"Ahem, and why not?" asked Mike.

I sighed, "Scan, what's the rules here?"

"Well very simple really, anyone can do it. Timetravel will venture out into space, accelerate into high speeds and then travel through time, through a cosmic blast," replied Scan.

"Yeah, what else?"

"You will be visible and tangible in that time period, where, or when ever you may choose. However your time gone will match the time you return. For example if you are gone ten minutes, we will see you back here in ten minutes, compared to time travel around the sun and-"

"I get the idea, let's go Mike."

Mike and myself climbed into Timetravel's travel compartment and strapped in.

"Botimus, you're in charge till my return. Try to keep everything in one piece?" I stated.

"That's not going to be easy," replied Repairs.

"Understood Master," replied Botimus, "As the humans say, have a nice trip..."

With that, the docking bay doors opened showing the bright sunny atmosphere of Gearatron, sparkling on the metal of the docking back. Timetravel started his thrusters.

"You're cleared for takeoff," stated Scan.

Timetravel lifted up and proceeded to venture forward, out of space dock and into the atmosphere. Then with a suddenly jolt, ventured into high gear and headed up, towards the outer atmosphere.

"Destination Master?" Timetravel asked.

"Earth, and any time between 1 A.D. and 1000 A.D. will do. Surprise me, just be careful when you enter Earth's atmosphere we are unseen. I'm the only one with the cloaking device, and my X-O suit can't hide you too."

"Gotcha Master, random time period selected."

"Here we go," said Mike.

Timetravel sped up and Mike and I both grabbed out seats. The stars got increasing faster, and faster, and suddenly there were nothing but streaks of light, and then before we knew it...

Chapter 3

"So where did you come from Rup?" asked Hot Shot.

"Classified information my boy. You should learn to not ask so many questions," replied Rup.

"Well where did Bop come from? Everyone says he just appeared out of no where. Like I guess Grandparents are to Earth children."

"Huh? What are you talking about?"

"I was talking with human Mike the other day. Humans grow up usually with Grandparents and Parents around all the time. However, they can not recall the first time they met them. They were just always there."

"Interesting, but then again humans can be so arrogant..."

"Rup, be nice."

As they continued to walk down the hallway Tiretracks walked by with an unlisted Zapbot civilian. Both Rup and Hot Shot turned around and stared. They soon turned the corner and disappeared down the hallway.

"Disgusting!" mumbled Rup under his breath.

"What?" asked Hot Shot.

"That?"

"What?"

"Lad, don't you notice anything?"

"He's walking with a civilian? What's so wrong with that?"

"That Zapbot needs some major reprogramming, and he continues to deny anything."

"Rup, you're losing me old timer..."

"It's better for now, if you don't know."

Rup turned away from Hot Shot, giving the indication the conversation was over. Hot Shot just turned and continued walking with his friend.

"I guess I'll never understand these old guys," he thought Hot Shot to himself.

"Anthony, are you okay?" asked Mike shaking me in the cab of Timetravel.

I opened my eyes, slowly as I saw the pink blue atmosphere of Earth. The clouds were rushing by the yellow body of Timetravel as any cloud would rush by a normal jet.

"Timetravel, status?"

"Well we're definitely back in time Master, but I can not tell exactly when," Timetravel replied.

Looking out the window Earth was below us, but it was not any Earth I had seen before.

"We did it!" I exclaimed. We had gone back through time and I couldn't believe it. My sudden frustration with all the day's events has disappeared and the sheer excitement of the Zapbot Universe astounded me again.

"Judging by the atmosphere pollution Master, we have traveled back to Earth, sometime around the Middle Ages."

"Anthony, look!" cried Mike with over excitement, talking and laughing at the same time.

I looked out the window to see tiny castles, draw bridges, huts and towns below. All in perfect fashion, surrounded by an endless array of trees.

"My gawd would you look at the size of that castle!" cried Mike.

"Timetravel, are we being detected at all?" I asked.

"I take it we are high enough that the clouds should be obscuring our view. I see no immediate threat to the humans. Then again they're missing out on my new paint job."

"Oh poor guys, okay, let's find a place to set down." I replied.

Timetravel drifted down into a nearby forest, and was obscured beneath the overcast of the giant trees.

"Botimus you need to do something!" cried Scan.

"Why? I have no reason to act, nor do I have any cause for action until Master Anthony gets back," replied Botimus Prime.

"He asked about the deleted files didn't he?" asked Speedy.

"Unfortunately, but he doesn't know yet. Still, I don't think we'll be able to keep this from him very long."

"So what about Tiretracks?" asked Repairs.

"My Matrix Botimus, he likes the same gender!" cried Scan.

"Scan! That is enough. You know this! When all the Zapbots are created they are programmed with a series of random numbers from the main computer. Thus these random numbers give each of us personalities to some extent."

"But current research on the Zapbot organic brain Master created indicated there might of had a flaw," replied Scan.

"Who says it's a flaw?" argued Boaty.

"Bro, look around you. Do you see any other Zapbot attracted to the same gender? The rest of the Zapbot population is attracted to the female gender. It's always been this way, and it should stay this way," replied Flier looking into his brother's eyes.

"Incorrect my Brother. Current reports that 10 percent of the Zapbot population have this same sort of strange attraction to the male gender," Boaty corrected Flier staring back into his eyes until Flier turned away.

"I don't understand why we need gender anyhow, it's not like we reproduce like the humans do. We just press a few buttons, and there you go, new Zapbot," said Dodge.

"Actually it's more complicated than that," responded Scan.

"The point is, the majority of Zapbots go this direction, so everyone else should abide the same way!" cried Flier.

"Majority rules," replied Scan.

"But minorities have rights also," responded Boaty.

"Oh gigabit you're arguing like humans!" cried Speedy, trying to keep peace with everyone.

"Look, there is nothing that says what Tiretracks does in his own personal time is wrong. The only ones with the problems are you bots because it's something you have never seen before. So I suggest you adjust and leave him alone, and leave it up to Master Ant-" Botimus started but was interrupted.

"Botimus, it is disgusting! It is unnatural. Look at the way we are created. If Master didn't want us to be attracted to females, he wouldn't have created them in the first place!" cried Flier.

"Actually Master almost didn't create Roberta because he felt any sort of gender distraction would hinder our ability in battle. Then he discovered the ability for us to turn off our emotions, and thus continued with Roberta," replied Boaty.

"And a wise idea indeed!" said Roberta walking into the meeting room, and sitting down to the glass table, "Why you GUYS have been arguing I went and talked with Tiretracks about the whole ordeal."

"You did?" asked Scan and Flier in unison.

"Yes, first of all he states that his program was made this way, and that his research concludes that this gender trait is just another random number sequence that pops up 1 in every 10 Zapbots. That is the reason why he is attracted to other male Zapbots with the same attraction. Second, he said any reprogramming of this sequence would cause a major breakdown of his program, and would probably make him dysfunctional."

"I'm sure we could just rearrange some numbers..." replied Scan.

"Nope it's been tried..."

"What?"

Roberta was silent for a minute. Trying to be calm and compassionate, she finally spoke.

"Tiretracks tried to help reprogram Shortwing!"

Everyone was silent. Shortwing was a Zapbot, the only Zapbot who committed suicide a week after activation. He was brought online during their Master's short death and quickly went offline before Anthony came back. It dumbfounded everyone, but especially his dear brothers Speedy and Timetravel. Now all eyes were on Speedy.

"I had no idea... he said something about a problem with his programming, but I took it as a random bug or virus," Speedy said starting to get emotional. Flier came over and put his robotic hand on Speedy's arm.

Everyone all of a sudden got real quiet. Finally Botimus spoke.

"If anything I think we ALL should show a little compassion to Tiretracks. We may not understand, or even agree with what he does, but we have no reason to prohibit him from being himself, if it is natural. So until further research is conducted, or Tiretracks brings it up himself, I will have no slander or back talking to him. He will be treated with all proper respect. Agreed?" stated Botimus.

Everyone shook his or her heads. Even Pliers who kept quiet for most the duration of the conversation.

"This matter is closed until Master gets back. Dismissed," said Botimus.

Everyone got up and left, but Speedy remained looking into the windows, into the now orbiting Fortress Misslemax.

"Shortwing, why didn't you tell me?"

Chapter 4

"I told you to set down carefully!" I cried to Timetravel.

"Relax, so I scraped some trees," replied Timetravel.

"Uh uh, you pretty much blew a hole in the forest! Geez, next thing you'll know the entire population of this period will be on us!" I cried scrapping the leaves off myself.

"Anthony, relax, we're miles away from any people," said Mike trying to calm me down.

"Ughhhh, we should have never come here, or when, or...." I was getting so frustrated again. Suddenly Mike grabbed me and we began walking.

"We'll be back in a bit Timetravel, take a breather," said Mike.

"Will do," Timetravel responding pulling a tree from ground and proceeding to carve into it.

"Your doing it again," said Mike after we were a bit away from Timetravel.

"What?"

"Getting upset over something insignificant, and not even worth getting upset about."

"Oh excuse me, who's the guy who jumped through several realities? Who's the guy who built--"

"Bull, who cares. I'm sure there's bigger men than you in the Universe, there's no need--"

Mike was interrupted by my hand to his chest, motioning that someone was in the area. I quickly grabbed him and put on my cloaking device. A giant electric box formed around us and then the normal rays of light were wrapped around us and we were invisible.

I saw two people riding through the forest. They were dressed in medieval satire and riding along happily, as if they were coming back from some hunt. Sacks and bags were slung over their shoulders.

"Eh fine day for a snipe hunt eh?" said the one man. He was fairly built with heavy armor that clanked that the horse moved along. As we suddenly became interested as I had always had a particular interest in the Medieval period, I slowly grabbed Mike and took off following the horsemen, unnoticed and as quietly as we could.

They rode off to the nearby town. It was then I realized how simple humans were back then. Small houses made up of logs and dried mud bricks served as their accommodations. A single wall of thin tree trunks stood around the town for defense.

Up high on the hill stood a small castle, with signs of deterioration all ready showing.

I set down on the ground, in the middle of the busy village. I motioned to Mike (who still could see me) to stay within the box (which we could only see) and we began walking within the confines of the small village.

It really was quite exciting. I never realized how much I could take advantage of the holographic game room till now. Still here was something not composed by a computer, and had spontaneity and random chance, all by itself.

Speaking of spontaneity, Mike suddenly caused some. As we were walking he stumbled over a rock and fell out of the electronic square. I turned to see him lying, visible on the ground. I ran to grab him, but it was too late, he was seen.

"Shit!" I said, and tried to conjure up a plan. I modified my X-O suit's clothing to look like the medieval armor at the time and became visible. I walked up to Mike and helped him to his feet. I was going to have a hard time explaining his clothes, clean condition and personal hygiene to the natives.

The Universal translator went into effect and the locals came up to me and began asking all sorts of questions.

"Who is thou strange boy?"

"Do not worry," I replied, "He is my apprentice, and he is dressed in some new clothes he has mended."

"My lord, Thou aren't so clean. Never has thou seen someone this well groomed!"

"Well what can I say, I bathe daily," Mike said trying to pull a joke off.

"Gasp!" went the crowd. I raised my hand to my face. Why doesn't he just insult them!

"Come on let's go lad," I said grabbing him and trying to usher him out of the crowd. How I would give for a distraction now.

Just as I was about to call Timetravel, I heard and saw a giant explosion near the castle up on the hill. The crowd went screaming and scattering in all directions. I grabbed Mike and zoomed into the castle with my viewfinder.

What I saw I couldn't believe! An actual dragon like creature was attacking the castle. It had wings the size of Timetravel and an S-shaped body with scales and fangs. Its body moved in a serpent like fashion, gnashing and clawing at the castle.

"Take cover, I'll be right back," I said, and took off to the castle, still in my medieval attire. I switched back to regular X-O suit mode, cloaked and flew around the battle scene.

Men from the castle were throwing rocks and weapons at the fiery dragon. The dragon itself was gnashing his teeth and throwing his giant razor sharp claws everywhere. He took out a tower and it came collapsing on a small group of men.

Now I faced a dilemma. If my theory was correct, that everything was predestined, then if I helped them, I was meant to do it, or it was so recorded in history.

However, if time wasn't predestined I was subject for causing a catastrophe. If I tried to help them, and saved a life of someone that was meant to die, then I could possibly alter the fate of the future, making so many possible things happen. The great grandson of that man's kid could be the person that killed my grandfather, thus making myself being born nonexistent, etc.

I stood there floating in air, invisible unsure of what to do. Then before I could look the dragon had swooped up to my position and ran into my body. I flew into the ground below and made a nice impression into the rock. I got up and contacted Timetravel.

"Timetravel, are you there?"

"Present Master dude, I've-"

"Listen! Go back to the future and get all information you can about this time period. Specifically any known attacks by a dragons around this time!"

"Dragons?"

"GO!"

"Woah will do, out!"

If I disrupted the time line I would just have to go back, or forward and tell myself not to go back. So I got up and flew up and landed my big fist in the middle of the dragon's stomach. He lurched back and unsure where that punch came from, started to take off and flee back into the sky.

I flew down to the castle and began scraping the rocks off people. I swung my fists back and forth, giving the impression a huge wind or something had knocked the rocks of the knights. After I made sure all was secure I headed back to the town below to check on Mike. He was hiding a nearby alley.

"We've got problems," I said. I grabbed him and took off toward the direction of the dragon's retreat.

Chapter 5

Botimus walked into the cafeteria and began to peer around. It was unusually quiet for this time of day. Bop was working at the bar, cleaning up spilled Energon and tidying up the bar in his anal-retentive way.

In the far corner sat a single Zapbot, of yellowish glow and small size. Botimus strolled over to the table.

"Mind if I joined you?" he asked Speedy.

Speedy said nothing.

"I'll take that as a 'Yes'" Botimus said and Bop eagerly came over.

"Anything for ya Botty?"

"A plus please," replied Botimus.

"What you holding Speedy?"

Speedy was looking at and caressing a small chip.

"It was, a gift," Speedy replied.

"From Shortwing?" asked Botimus.

"Yes. It was his suggested remedy for his strange 'disease'."

"A cure?"

"Supposedly if this chip was interchanged with another chip he had it would cure him of his so-called disease. At the time I didn't know what he was talking about."

"Strange how sometimes, Zapbots don't listen to what others have to say. We can be thoughtful and arrogant, just like humans."

"Still, I'm not going to let it happen again."

Speedy carefully placed the chip on the table and with one sweep he raised his hand and brought it down upon the chip, breaking it into a million pieces. Botimus jumped back startled.

"Why did you do that?"

"There shall never be a cure for somewhat that doesn't need a cure, and I'll make sure of that as long as I am functional. As far as I'm concerned it is computer brain washing to make someone try to become something their creator did not originally intended for them."

Suddenly the call speakers beeped in and Botimus answered them. He got up to leave and Bop came over with the Energon.

"Had to leave eh?" asked Bop once a military specialist, now a bartender.

"Unfortunately," replied Speedy, staring out the windows.

"Rumors are spreading again I hear."

"About Tiretracks?"

"No me..."

"You?"

"Yeah, Oh the days of being a military operations, blasting the damn purple one eyed freak, nothing could compare to talking to people now."

"Huh?"

"What I am trying to say, is sometimes we need to talk, and sometimes we need to fight. It depends on what life is calling you for now?"

"Are you saying we should fight?"

"Not us, Tiretracks should fight for his right to be himself."

Speedy paused for a moment.

"The first time I saw you, you were working on the old Battle Base, just before we closed it up in the mountain. The next thing I know you were telling jokes and making everyone laugh. Bop? Where did you come from?"

Bop got up and pushed the Energy drink to Speedy.

"Drink this, and someday you'll know...." Bop said walking away smiling.

"Dragon?" asked Scan in computer mode, buzzing with lights and computing all sorts of data.

"Yes that's what he said," said Timetravel pulling the information out of the wi-fi to his computer.

Boaty continued to peer at Scan's computer consul hooked up to the Zapbot main computer.

"Our records don't show anything of any sort of dragon existing during that time period," stated Boaty, working with his technology advanced comrade.

"There has to be something?" said Ultra Attack.

"Only myths and fables, but those were regarded by humans as just that, myths and fables," said Scan, computing information by the millisecond.

"Well what do I tell him?" asked Timetravel.

"That we have no living record of a dragon on record," said Scan.

"That's all I needed," and Timetravel darted for the turbo-lift to space dock.

"What do you mean Religious significance?" cried Hot Shot.

"It doesn't matter what you believe in, it's what was meant to be. Otherwise it wouldn't be the majority," replied Rup

"You know as well as I do there are minorities within majorities," replied Hot Shot.

"If it wasn't wrong why do we find it so disgusting?" replied Pliers.

"I dunno, you may, but I sure don't."

"Look it's already caused a life, do we need to cause another?!" shouted Repairs.

"Maybe?"

"What? Are you saying he should die?" cried Repairs getting furious. His sidelights blinking like crazy.

"I'm not saying anything."

Botimus Prime entering the engine room's office interrupted the conversation.

"Gentlemen we have a problem."

I entered the dragon's cave slowly, setting down on the ground and placing Mike out of my way, activating X-O armor went into visual battle mode.

"A dragon?" Mike asked.

"Believe or not," I said.

"I don't."

We walked slowly down the dark tunnel, as I turned on my headlights when it became too dark but kept them at a slow dim, matching the darkness, just enough to keep us full of light, but not surprise anything or anyone. As we proceeded down into the cave we heard the sound of dripping water and bats slowly sleeping.

We finally came around the corner to what seemed to be the dragon's cave. The cavern opened up to a huge cavern and inside shown the bright light coming from what seemed to be blue crystals.

There beside the crystals stood the dragon, scaly flesh and asleep.

Very carefully, I pressed buttons on my arm to set up my scans and began to examine this amazing creature.

"I don't believe this?" I whispered to Mike.

"Is he an actual dragon?" asked Mike.

"According to what is humanly, or possible. Yeah, it has all the normal reptilian body parts with the concept of a bird. But something is off here. I can't penetrate his shell..."

Suddenly the dragon began to stir, and switched his head over to his other arm.

"Sure has a long neck."

"Tell me about it."

"The crystal is... I've seen this before."

My readouts were surprising as this crystal was almost the same element that my Matrix was built from. The Matrix had eluded all of our top scientists. No one could figure out where it came from or what it was really meant for. Maybe if I could grab a few crystals I could duplicate them and take them back in time for study. I doubt any few crystals missing for a while would rupture the time and space continuum.

"Start heading back, I'm going to grab a few things. Meet me outside."

Mike nodded and headed back down the tunnel slow. I turned on my cloaking device and flew over and very delicately picked up a few crystals.

With warning I heard a terrifying scream down the tunnel, and then bats came flying from the tunnel. The dragon himself leaped up and flew down the tunnel before I could even react. I engaged my boosters and flew after him.

As I swerved down the corners I saw him ahead of me. He was traveling at amazing speed for such a big dragon in a huge tunnel. I was fearful for my friend's life. Mike was lying on the ground huddled in a curl as bats were flying around him and I saw the dragon hurl up and open his mouth.

"NO!" I cried and fired my lasers at the dragon. It was too late, a burst of fire hit Mike and my lasers hit the dragon and ceiling, causing the ceiling to start to collapse on top of us all.

I flew over to Mike's body and quickly covered him with my body and a force field as I saw the damage the monster had done. His body was burned beyond recognition. What once had been a beautiful young man was now a charred corpse. I quickly grabbed him and engaged my jet transformation.

Busting out of the rubble and flying out of the cave with a fury, I flew towards the meeting place with Timetravel and set down in the clearing in the forest.

He had not returned yet to this point in time.

"Dammit!" I cried as I set Mike down and began administering first aid. His life signs were failing fast. I was doing everything I could, but I was poorly equipped for this mission.

"Nooo not another so soon!" I cried.

Suddenly Mike opened his charred eyes and looked at me.

"Don't let me die!" he said in a soft sad voice.

I screamed at the top of my lungs. I was so frustrated. What could I do? I was stuck in another time with a sick friend, and with no Zapbot medical help!

Before I could finish the thought I heard a rustle in the bushes and looked out to see several people dressed in long robes and hoods coming through the bushes. They appeared to be medieval monks. They slowly came over to Mike and picked his body up and began to walk at a semi fast pace through the forest. They seemed unaware of this giant robotic warrior standing in the forest, as I was visible.

I followed them through the trees.

Chapter 6

Pliers administered his scalpel to the broken body part. He had never seen so much damage on a Zapbot, and yet he was still functioning.

"I can't believe another Zapbot did this to a fellow Zapbot," said Ultra Attack.

"Believe it," said Tiretracks holding his knee.

"Your in surprising good shape, despite your present appearance," replied Scan.

Botimus Prime walked into the sick bay.

"We have sent a scout party out to find the Zapbots that caused this disgrace," Botimus stated.

"They were civilians correct?" asked Speedy.

"Unfortunately yes," replied Tiretracks. Pliers patched up a hole where oil was leaking out.

"Whew!" went Speedy.

"Why the sigh of relief?" asked Repairs handing the laser to his brother Pliers.

"I just had a feeling, I doubt any enlisted Zapbot could cause this," and Speedy looked straight at Pliers. Who paused only for a moment to reflect his optic sensors in that direction.

"Botimus you have to do something. This is happening everywhere!" said Tiretracks trying not to cringe while the laser was patching up his metal.

"Believe me, once Master Anthony gets back, I'm sure he will address the High Council."

"Botimus! You're in charge now."

Suddenly Botimus was silent, and then quickly walked out of sick bay, down the hall and to the turbo elevator. Everyone heard him utter the word "Entrance" which meant he was leaving Misslemax through the front door.

"He's pissed," replied Speedy.

I followed the monks into the deep shadowed areas of the forest. Mike's vital signs hung in there as they slowly marched towards somewhere. After what seemed like an eternity, they finally came to a dwelling of huts and houses made out of logs and straw. Mike was carried up to the houses and the rest of the monks turned aside to allow me passage.

The lone monk entered the house and placed Mike on the bed of straw. He suddenly turned to me and held out his hand. At first I had no idea what he was doing, and then I noticed I still carried a piece of crystal in my hand. I gave it to the monk and he placed it on Mike's chest.

Suddenly a blue light began to glow from inside of my chest, and the Matrix of Leadership shot a lighting bolt of energy towards the crystal. Mike was suddenly encased in a blue aurora of lights. The room was lit with the brightest light I had ever seen and suddenly through all my pain and tears a glimmer of hope appeared.

I saw Mike's body being reconstructed. His charred skin slowly return to its golden state as the light continued to work its way around him, a mixture of gases and smells. Then as if nothing had ever happened the light disappeared and Mike lay there in perfect, somber state.

I knelt down to him and he slowly opened his eyes and smiled at me. I was trying my best to contain the tears of joy.

"What happened?" he asked.

"We took out a very big Nazi!" I said, referring to our past adventure.

"Looks like you saved the world again."

I laughed and cried.

Chapter 7

"Bot time you got here!" I said.

"Sorry, I had to stop a fight in the progress," replied Timetravel landing down to Earth.

"FIGHT? With who?" I asked.

"Nobody except a few Zapbots ganging up on another."

"What!" I screamed.

"Long story, Tiretracks was damaged but he is okay."

"I don't believe this, what is the Universe doing to me?" I said rubbing my hand down my face, yet again.

"Hey we've got a bigger problem," said Mike.

I motioned to Timetravel to follow me as I took him inside of a house to view a book one of the monks had given me. It wasn't until later I realized the monks were blind. They must of thought of me as some armored knight. Timetravel leaned forward and cast a shadow over Mike and myself. He turned on his parking lights as he began reading the old manuscript.

"A warrior of cast metal will fall from the sky. Thou friend shall be injured. And thy crystal will save thee?" Timetravel said turning his head upwards in inquiry.

"Read on," I said.

"He shall slay the dragon, and thy kingdom shall be free forever more. Is this for real?"

"All of my scans show it as real. This explains why the monks haven't reacted that much to presence, and what the dragon is."

"So I'm taking your suppose to kill this sucker?" asked Timetravel.

"Unfortunately, yes. I'm not fond of killing animals."

"Too bad we can't take him back with us. My compartment ain't that big."

"Likewise, you need to take Mike back now. I want him to go under a full medical diagnosis."

"Oh yeah, sure let me go back to the future alone!" said Mike smiling and being scooped up by Timetravel.

"And this time, don't take forever getting back, I may need you," I replied as I transformed into vehicle mode and took off into the sky.

"Gotcha Master," said Timetravel transforming as well and heading out.

My theories had proven somewhat correct. According to that book I was suppose to be here, during this time period, and all the events, the stranger in the town (my appearance), the dragon burning Mike, and I guess what now was suppose to be the final countdown, were all meant to happen.

Needless to say the idea of slaying the beast didn't appeal to me, and at the same time I still had a debt to pay back for his attack on my friend. Although we were technically invading his space. Now that the fear of messing up time was gone, I proceeded back to the cave where the dragon lived.

As I flew over the small town. I saw once were the houses of people all ransacked and burned. It appeared the dragon had once again attacked. I increased my speed to the mountain. Flying straight into the cave, and the roar of my approach scared the bats out of place. Scanning for the beast my screen told me he had heard me and was moving out of his hole.

Moving into the giant cavern, I was surprised not to find him. Then I saw that his dot and mine were at the exact place on my grid.

Looking up I saw the monster through my viewfinder grid come sweeping down towards me.

I darted out of the way and crashed into the heap of crystals turning over and fired a laser blast at the dragon. It hit him and he lunged back as it hit him well, but instead of blood flowing out of his body, a strange black substance flowed out.

As he flew back and charged at me once again, his mouth opened and a huge fire blast came from his mouth. The fire didn't bother my X-O suit, but it caused a change reaction with the crystals. The explosion sent me flying into the rock. Before I knew it I was completely buried within a wall.

With some effort I managed to tunnel myself outside with my lasers. Disappointed that the dragon had accidentally done himself in, I flew high on the mountain and observed the world below. The towns people had seen the explosion and were moving up towards the site.

Suddenly I heard a crash and from the rumble emerged the winged green beast. A bit scarred but angry as ever. Acting fast cause as I couldn't let him torch the town, I flew up and began firing everything I could at the monster, swirling around him and shooting from every angle. I stayed close and he thankfully couldn't get a good enough shot at me.

I grabbed him by the tail and began to swing him around. He screamed out in his hawk-like voice. Letting go of my grip and he went flying into the mountain. Crashing into the mountain with a thud and for that minute I thought I had killed him. But he reared right back up. The darn beast simply would not die!

He came so fast I didn't have time to recharge. He lashed out his claw and they ripped right through my X-O suit. I grabbed my side as I began to fall to the ground below.

I hit the ground and couldn't believe I let my shield down, nor that fact that his claws that sharp to puncture the strongest steel in the Universe. I looked up and saw him approaching me. His claws suddenly scared me as I was helpless. I needed time to recharge, but my power grid was down. Hurrying I switching to auxiliary, but I knew it would take a few seconds for that to warm up, and he was incoming fast.

Suddenly from out behind a cloud a yellow aerial vehicle appeared and shot a laser blast at the monster. Timetravel's more powerful weapon cut a hole through the monster. I stood up and realized I still had one weapon I hadn't tried.

Charging up my Matrix power I saw on my display it was ready. Clapping my hands together and extended my finger, out emerged a powerful laser. It hit the dragon and it screamed back in horror.

My Matrix power encompassed him and he suddenly began to break apart, and before I knew it, what had once been a body of a large green monster, began to separate. He fell to the ground and what we saw amazed our optic sensors.

"It's... a robot?" said Timetravel.

"The very same...." I said walking up to it, scanning the wreckage.

"Where did it come from?"

"Unknown, but we can't leave this technology here in this time and place." I said and began to run a disperser ray across the wreckage causing it to become dust. Timetravel walked up to me and looked down.

"Master, you functional? Did he ruin your paint job?"

I laughed at his strange concern for my finish. Nodding he scooped me up and placed me in his compartment and transformed in vehicle mode.

We made sure all the inhabitants were safe in the village and then once again, this time laying down, I saw an array of lights and the stars became streaks, as we returned to our own time.

The door beeped, and the wounded warrior slowly got up from his console and pressed the button to unlock it.

"Hi," said Pliers.

"I'm doing fine Doc," said Tiretracks.

"Oh, okay I was just checking up on you." Pliers responded.

"Wonderful, now if you don't mind," said Tiretracks, about to close the door on Plier's face.

"Wait," said Pliers.

"What?"

"Can I come in for a sec?" asked Pliers.

Tiretracks allowed him to enter the room; while checking to make sure no one was around and closed the door. Among the standard Zapbot quarters of a desk, chair, recharging chamber, and accessory closet and console, Tiretracks had several paintings hung on the wall. Each would tower a small human, but to a Zapbot they were an average size.

"Did you do these?" asked Pliers,

"Yep," said Tiretracks sitting down in his chair. His aching gears still hadn't reheated.

"Standard Electric Program?" asked Pliers.

"No actually a standard paintbrush."

"You mean hair?"

"Yep, Master Anthony says you first need to paint with an old paintbrush before you can have a computer do it."

"These are incredible. How come we'd never saw these before."

"If you haven't noticed recently, no one around here ever visits me."

"Oh, um. I came here to apologize."

"Oh really?"

"I never understood what you had to go through, and I was very rude, and um... said too numerous bad things about you."

"I see."

"I criticized you for something I didn't even understand, and for that I am truly sorry."

Tiretracks sat there staring out the window into space.

"You know, I think we're more like humans that we think," said Tiretracks.

"You mean the human term for."

"Yes...Strange, today Earthlings still believe a holy book or some sort of all power knowledge. Science can disprove them wrong, and still they remain ignorant. They continue to hold on to old traditions, old myths, and mistake what they call 'mother nature' for a 'defect'. They will even kill someone cause they will not believe in the same thing they believe in, or like the same things they like."

"Very strange indeed."

"Here we're suppose to be the 'superior' life forms, and still we fight and argue like everyone else. I'm surprise the humans even trust us."

The door chimed and Tiretracks began to get up, but Pliers got it for him. When the door opened Botimus Prime stood there, looking very tense.

"I found the culprits," he said.

Chapter 8

"All systems are go Master," said Tiny finishing Mike's checkup as I walked into the medbay.

"It's too bad all those crystals exploded, could've taken some back for a souvenir," said Mike.

"And disrupt the time continuum? Sure...." I said sarcastically.

Rogish ran into the room, behind him came my fellow friends, Alan, Mikey B., David, and Jeremy.

"What the hell were you thinking?" asked Rogish.

"I'm fine," said Mike.

"Your Aunt's extremely worried,"^{click} replied Click.

"You told her?" I asked Mike.

"Well what was I suppose to do, lie?"^{click}

"Ahhhhh!" I said running my hand down my face, yet again! Granted I learned a lot this time, but the pressure of the daily life was still there.

David came up to myself and punched me in the arm.

"Chill will ya. Everyone's alright..." he said.

I sighed; at least everyone was safe and sound once again.

"So this was your intention all along?" asked Botimus sipping an Energon cube with me in the cafeteria as I was sitting in my Shortstop form this time.

"I told the computer to place random digits and let what happen, happen. I took out all the ones, which would cause 'bad intentions' and keep the 'good ones'. I didn't realize a single digit would cause so much trouble." I replied.

"I doubt neither did we, but how did these civilian Zapbots get so angry against a fellow Zapbot then, if all intentions were good."

"Sometimes intentions themselves can be mistaken. A good intention for the good of a fellow Zapbot can be mistaken for violence. These Zapbots thought they were acting to save their race. Thus their programs made reasoning for this."

"Maybe you should install the three basic rules of robots?" asked Botimus getting a new glass from Bop.

"From the Asmiov guy? Don't think so, wouldn't allow free will and I'm sure there are times those rules need to be broken."

"Well the Zapbots that caused the ruckuses are being helped and through their own reprogramming, they are realizing the error in their actions..."

I paused for a minute.

"Master?"

"Well sometimes I wonder if we're doing the right thing here."

"We're not forcing them to be programmed. They did get charged for the crime, assaulting another Zapbot. Their opinions will remain their own. After I talked to them a bit they realized they didn't understand and wanted to know more."

"Maybe then we shouldn't say 'reprogram' but 'teaching' as the correct term."

Botimus shrugged, "Probably."

"By the way, you handled yourself extremely well, your performance was exemplary."

"Thank you, I've been trying to battle with my own fears of being the 'one in charge' for a long time."

"You know, you don't have to do that anymore. You can be whatever you want to be."

"I at first didn't care for it, and knew we needed to do it because of our situation with the Junkicons, but now I feel I am ready to lead whenever you feel the need."

"Well like I said, you did a fine job."

"Thank You," said Botimus and we toasted.

"Oh so I take it the reason you guys were miscommunicated from Earth for that while was for a reason similar to what we have faced recently?"

Botimus was shocked.

"Master you are the wisest human being I have ever met."

"Considering you're only several years old that ain't saying much?"

We laughed as I was at peace again, and enjoying time just with my friends and Zapbots. The stress of the adventure and problems had gone away with the gulps of energy human equivalent.

"We at first were ashamed of being in contact with humans for the same problem we had here, and then realized our error. We should've learned, but I guess we didn't even take the human's advice and apply it to our own. We decided to encode the files in embarrassment."

"I see."

"We hoped if you ever found out about this you would understand."

"Oh believe me I do, I do..."

"This place is filthy!" cried Mike and I walking into Rogish's room.

"So?"

I tried to step over several piles of clothes on the floor.

"You know you don't have to use a washer and drying to clean clothes here?" I said.

"Really?" asked Rogish

"Duh!" said Mike starting to laugh realizing you could just put them in the reatomizer.

"Wow excuse me for not knowing. Geez. I'm not the one who goes and steps right in the path of a flying dragon," replied Rogish.

"No, you just forget to turn the game room's safe guards back on!" I said laughing.

"I'll shoot you...." Rogish said tossing a pile of clothes towards us.

"Next time, be a bit more careful, in fact both of you need to be more careful. In ANYTHING WE ALL DO!" I stated.

"Well that's why we have you here to protect us," said Rogish.

"Sheesh, well I have to go attend another diplomatic meeting, so shall we meet for lunch later?"

"Will do!"

I walked out of the room and once again went to my day of busy diplomatic meetings and trying to bring peace to the Galaxy.

"Eh life..." I said to myself.

The End

Epilogue

I pressed the button on the door creating the hail, and the door opened. In the room Tiretracks had a visitor, another blue Zapbot named Tiremarks who was sitting down on the recharge chamber. In my Shortstop body I walked into the room and gave him a hug. My own faults had caused this problem and I should've been more prepared.

"I'm sorry for all of this happening," I said to my creation.

"Tis okay, it was bound to happen sooner or later." Tiretracks responded.

"You know I never intended for any of this to happen." I replied.

"I know, believe me I know..."

We stood there in silence for a while and then after a quick discussion on his health, and Shortwing, and some of my own concerns, I left to go attend to my log entries.

I ended up deleting a few....