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PRESENTS



"Fall From Glory"

Part Two

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Transformers: Generation 2!

They're here... HASBRO has unleashed the second generation of Transformers. And, as one would expect, SUNBOW and MARVEL COMICS have released their own interpretations... I've seen samples of it all, now, and here's an inside scoop on what we're really in for...

The new cartoon has yet to impress me... As I write this, I have only seen the first episode... but don't worry--you *all* have. It was merely the first show of the original cartoon, with a new startup and a whole slew of added computer animation. The computer animation was quite nice, even though it can really get on your nerves after a while... but how about some new shows, SUNBOW?

But, I am quite pleased to announce that the new comic from MARVEL is *very* impressive. It was well-written (by Simon Furman, in case you're interested...), and the art was excellent... now *that* was a great comic! Don't you dare miss it!

Well, that about covers it... as for how TF:G2 will effect TF:BOP, it's hard to say, right now... as you've seen, a few of the new characters are making appearances... it is quite possible that some of them may actually become major characters. You'll just have to wait and see...

Transformers: Balance of Power

Created by Tom Yaghi

Number 2; Volume 1

"Fall From Glory"

Part Two

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Fall From Glory (part 2)

By Tom Zavier

Earth, 2010.

The Autobots thought that the threat of the Decepticons was gone forever.

If so, then this is the end of forever...

Seaspray was under the surface of the water before he could even scream... He struggled in the deadly grasp of his unknown assailant, and managed to free himself... he turned to identify his attacker: it was Overbite, the Seacon!

In his shark mode, the aquatic Decepticon lunged at Seaspray, his jaws wanting for Seaspray's metal flesh. Seaspray fired his lasers and dodged the attack; barely evading Overbite's hungry fangs. The laser beams hit their mark, but hardly slowed the rampaging Seacon down...

"Heavens to Proxima!!" cried Beachcomber, stunned by Seaspray's disappearance.

Skram was even more confused. "What should we do, Hot Rod? What should we do..."

Hot Rod felt a cold sense of dread sweep over him... he knew this could be the beginning of a disastrous chain of events...

"Beachcomber, Skram... go get Fort Max... he'll know what's going on."

"But what are you going to do??" demanded Beachcomber.

Hot Rod paused for a moment, then shrugged. "I'll think of something. Now go!"

At that, Hot Rod dived into the water.

The channel was deep... very deep. Much deeper than it had appeared to Hot Rod before he dived in after his comrade. He didn't know why he did it; he hadn't even thought about it. He had simply done it. It was instinct.

His attention was drawn immediately to the battle between Seaspray and Overbite. But before he could intervene, Hot Rod felt metallic tentacles wrap around him, and pull him even deeper into the channel.

Hot Rod felt a powerful surge of emotion welling up within him; he had recognized Overbite for what he was, and even knew that he was now caught in the grasp of the Seacon named Tentakil. Hot Rod had waited for hundreds of years for the end of the Cybertronian War... and was one of the first to cheer when Optimus Prime declared that it was actually over. And now, the appearance of the Seacons here at Autobot City not only made Optimus Prime appear to be a fool and a liar, but fueled a fiery rage that Hot Rod had never felt before. He had just been given the peace he had always longed for, but now, it was proven to be only an illusion...all of it...had meant nothing...

With a muffled cry of unbridled rage, he broke free from Tentakil's clutches. Hot Rod spun around and, with force beyond his normal strength level, he thrust his fist into his opponent's right eye... which shattered easily under the pressure. Tentakil screamed in agony, and tried to back away; but Hot Rod wasn't finished yet...

"Why??" he cried, grabbing one of the Seacon's tentacles at it's base. He squeezed until

his fingers were tearing into Tentakil's skin. "Why??" He pulled, ripping the appendage from the Decepticon's body. "Why did you have to come back?!?" He grabbed another tentacle and did the same, all while Tentakil continued screaming... "Why?" Again. "WHY??" Again. "WHY???"

Hot Rod suddenly stopped; revolted, after realizing what he was doing. He was killing. No Autobot had killed anything for the last ten years. But the instinct was there... the instinct of war... how to fight, how to kill... peace had only suppressed it. And now, confronted by the possibility of an all-new war, Hot Rod saw how little it took to revive old hatred...

Tentakil had stopped screaming. In fact, he had stopped moving. He was dead; Hot Rod had killed him. It had seemed so easy... and now Tentakil was released from facing the horrors that were to come. Hot Rod found himself wishing the roles were reversed... But he knew better.

Hot Rod and his victim were surrounded in a cloud of heavy fluid and metal fragments, and he could currently see nothing but Tentakil's remains slowly sinking toward the bottom of the channel. As the cloud began to disperse, Hot Rod felt something touch his shoulder... he spun around, and realized it was only Seaspray's hand. And Hot Rod was relieved to see that it was still attached to Seaspray's body.

Seaspray was wounded, but alive. Hot Rod could see a look of shock and confusion in Seaspray's optical sensors.

"Hot Rod..." Seaspray began uneasily, "What happened?"

Kup and Rapido, completely unaware of what had just occurred nearby, walked out on to the shuttle landing pad, as the shuttle itself slowly approached. Kup looked at Rapido suspiciously. "No forwardin' communications?"

"Not at all," Rapido replied quickly. "No request to land, no approach beacon... something must be wrong with their comm system... but there isn't."

"But what about the defense perimeter?"

"The early warning systems detected no anomalies. The hardware checks out, but no one's talking to us..."

Kup paused. "If Hot Rod or Jazz were flyin' that thing, I could understand it... but both of 'em are already here, in the city. Cliffjumper has always stuck to Autobot protocols before..."

The shuttle was now hovering over the landing area, deploying it's landing gear as it slowly descended. With a 'thump' the landing gear flattened themselves against the ground, and the landing procedure was complete.

"Damn unusual..." Kup muttered, as they walked out toward the spacecraft. The boarding hatch on the shuttle slowly opened...

And all hell broke loose.

It was all a blur to Kup... laser beams erupting from the hatch in all directions... a blast from a particle cannon, Rapido's body exploding into millions of metal fragments... the pain of Blitzwing's electro-sword as it was plunged into Kup's chest compartment... darkness falling upon him...

* * *

Main control tower, Iacon...

Hubcap sat at his control console, pressing buttons frantically. "Boost your signal, Jazz!

Boost your signal! I can't get a two-way connection..."

"Jazz to Cybertron! Cybertron! Mayday! Mayday! S.O.S.! Decepticons!! Lot's of 'em! Attackin' Autobot City! We're really takin' a--ffs-s-sh-hzz-zz...z-z..."

"Do something!" urged Arcee.

"I can't!!" cried Hubcap. "Connection terminated at source..."

The control tower at Iacon was in chaos. Monitors blinking on and off, Autobots running everywhere... a scene that conflicted with the peacefulness far below them.

Ultra Magnus turned to Optimus Prime. "You were right, Prime. They are back..."

Optimus Prime nodded solemnly. "We must help our friends on Earth." He turned to Rad. "Prepare the trans-time dimensional portal."

"But... we haven't used that in years!" Rad cried in protest.

"It is far too dangerous," Perceptor agreed. "If something goes wrong... if anything goes wrong, your forms could be disrupted, or you might be teleported anywhere in the solar system..."

Arcee didn't let him finish. "It's a risk we have to take."

"Agreed," said Optimus Prime. "If we used a shuttle, our comrades would be dead before we could arrive. We must use the portal."

"Very well..." Rad reluctantly started to leave. "But don't say I didn't warn you..."

Hubcap slammed his fist against the console. "Damn it! I can't regain contact, Optimus... he must have stopped transmitting."

Ultra Magnus stiffened up. "I'll lead the reinforcements, Prime."

"Not if I can help it, old friend." Optimus placed his hand on Ultra Magnus' shoulder. "I want you here, in case anything else happens."

"But Prime, you are our leader. Compared to you, I'm expendable. If the Decepticons are truly back, we will need you to lead us against them. What good will it do to put yourself in danger at this first encounter?"

"Magnus..."

"And besides," Ultra Magnus continued, "Tornado can hold up the fort if you are needed elsewhere..."

"I order you to remain here, Magnus," said Optimus Prime coldly. "Trust me; I will not risk my life unnecessarily."

Ultra Magnus nodded. "Alright, Prime. Just make sure you come back alive."

Optimus Prime took Ultra Magnus' hand in his. "Till all are one." Then, motioning for Arcee and Perceptor to follow him, Optimus Prime left the room.

"Till all are one." Ultra Magnus replied.

As they left the tower, headed to the scientific lab where the trans-time dimensional portal generator was being stored, Optimus Prime felt at odds with himself. He knew he must lead this mission; he didn't know why, but he simply had to... But at the same time, Optimus Prime couldn't shake the sense of dread that was welling up within him... for he also knew, somehow, that this would be his final battle.

* * *

Cybertron's second moon...

The blue and white aircraft landed in front of an impatiently waiting Shockwave. As it slowed to a stop, the cockpit opened, and the Decepticon saboteur Ravage leapt out. That done,

Lightning reverted to his robot form...

"Report, Lightning," Shockwave demanded.

"Why so formal, Shocky? I'm not that late..."

"You are 12.6 time units over the allowed parameters for your mission. Report."

"Oh, all right..." Lightning tossed a small keypad to Shockwave. "Thanks to Ravage, the force-field dome's been 'modified'... with that, you can raise or lower it any time it suits your convenience. Happy?"

"Excellent work, Ravage," Shockwave replied.

Ravage growled a response.

"No, no, Ravage," said Lightning, patting the Decepticon feline on the head, "You're much too modest. You did do most of the work..."

Ravage purred contentedly.

"For how long a duration will this device be effective?" asked Shockwave.

"Indefinitely," Lightning replied, "It'll work just fine, until they notice our sabotage..."

"Excellent. What else have you to report?"

"Well..." Lightning turned away. "I don't know if you're interested..."

Shockwave was getting annoyed. "If I were to ever lose interest in what you had to say, Lightning, I would make certain that your speech functions were promptly rendered inoperative."

"My, my! Someone's in a wee bit of a snit today...!" Lightning chuckled. "Since you are so interested, the Autobots are preparing to send reinforcements as we speak... and Optimus Prime is among them."

"Just as I had anticipated," said Shockwave. "By shuttle, I presume?"

"Nope--by the good old, trans-time dimensional portal."

"In that case," Shockwave began, "As soon as the reinforcements are underway, we will begin our attack."

Lightning's optics widened, a wicked smile forming on his face. "I was hoping you would say that!"

* * *

Autobot City, Earth...

Columns of flame rose from Autobot City's skyline, almost every structure reduced to burning wreckage... there was no place to hide, at least no safe place... only debris, which the remaining Autobots could only use as temporary cover, to avoid oncoming attacks. Everyone had been scattered out and separated, small groups of tired Autobots trying to devise strategies to end this carnage, or at least survive it...

"Cowards!!" cried Galvatron, firing randomly with his particle cannon, laying waste to anything the beams would hit. "Weaklings! Why don't you show yourselves? Show yourselves and fight? And die?? You are all too easy to destroy!! If you at least presented a challenge, I might feel a sense of satisfaction in ending your pitiful existences!!"

Hot Rod and Seaspray, having met up with Beachcomber, Skram and Jazz, made up most of the surviving Autobots. Taking refuge behind some wreckage, they assessed the situation...

"Who do you think's left out there?" asked Seaspray.

Jazz began: "I think Warpath and Powerglide are still out there, somewhere... Rapido, Cosmos and Turbofire are definitely down... Prowl and Wheeljack hafta' still be alive; they've been doin' this stuff for too long to go down now..." He paused. "But I'm not so sure about

Inferno, Kup or Sideswipe..."

"What about Fort Max?" asked Hot Rod. "He can't be..."

Jazz nodded. "You shoulda' seen it, man... it was horrible... they all just ganged up on him... poor guy, he didn't have a chance..."

"Like we do?" moaned Beachcomber, flinching at the sound of a nearby explosion.

"What about the Deceps?" asked Hot Rod, "Just how overmatched are we??"

"Not very..." replied Skram, "It's only the Decepticon Triple Changers, the Constructicons, Starscream, Ramjet, not to mention Galvatron..."

"And don't forget the Seacons," added Seaspray.

"Except for Tentakil." Hot Rod frowned. "And he's the only Decepticon casualty yet."

"This is definitely not a very pleasant situation," said Beachcomber.

"In that case..." Seaspray stiffened up. "I see no alternative but to at least try to improve it."

Skram nodded. "Better to go down fighting, than hiding."

"You have rather warped ideals, Skram," said Beachcomber, "But in this case, I actually agree with them." He paused. "Considering that we're obviously all going to die anyway..."

"I'm in," agreed Jazz. "Let's get back out there, amigos."

They leapt from their hiding place, becoming face to face with their enemies almost instantly. The battle would continue...

But Hot Rod had not followed them.

Meanwhile, in another corner of the city, more survivors were still trying to stay that way... Warpath, in his tank mode, took potshots at Starscream and Ramjet, who were closing in on Powerglide in an aerial drama of deadly proportions...

"Pathetic weakling!" spouted Starscream, firing his null-rays at the smaller Autobot. "You cannot escape us!"

Powerglide was unfazed, knowing his aerial agility was better than both of his pursuers combined.

"Your aim is the only thing pathetic around here, Starscream!" he cried, taunting.

"Your death will be an example to all who insult Starscream!" the Decepticon cried in response.

Powerglide was not the least bit discouraged. Unlike his opponents, he had a plan...

He dodged his enemies, each time allowing them to fly past him with closer and closer proximity. It didn't look like either Ramjet or Starscream were realizing what the pattern would lead to...

"You'll never catch me!!" Powerglide yelled at them.

"We'll see about that..." Ramjet flew toward Powerglide on a direct collision course, which was exactly what Powerglide was hoping he'd do. Dodging the Decepticon at the last minute, Powerglide evaded being hit... and sent Ramjet crashing straight into Starscream.

It had been a long time since Powerglide had fought Decepticons... and, apparently, they hadn't gotten any smarter since then.

There was a sickening crunch as their metal bodies were crushed against one another, immediately followed by an explosion. Somehow, the collision had triggered one of Starscream's missiles; it burst forth from the ball of flame, and, by the wildest stroke of chance, squarely hit an unprepared Powerglide.

The burning debris from the three bodies rained down from the sky... and took another life, as it relentlessly bombarded the defenseless Warpath...

With a satisfying clang!, Prowl's fist slammed against Octane's jaw. The Decepticon stumbled backwards, reeling from the blow, only to have his legs knocked out from under him by Wheeljack. Octane fell to the ground, unconscious.

Prowl stood beside Octane, staring down at the fallen Decepticon. "What are you waiting for?" Wheeljack cried. "Finish him off!"

"Are you insane?" Prowl snapped. "I'd be no better than him."

"If the roles were reversed, he wouldn't hesitate to kill you."

"Then, I thank Primus the roles aren't reversed," Prowl replied. He locked his stare on to Wheeljack. "We're Autobots, Wheeljack, not killers. If we abandoned our morals, we'd have nothing to be proud of."

"We might have peace," sneered Wheeljack, walking away.

Uncertainty engulfed Prowl's logic circuits. Was Wheeljack right? Would it be excusable to lower themselves to the Decepticon's level, to attempt genocide in the name of peace?

He forced the doubts from his mind. There was no time for indecision; and this surprise attack was not going to break him. He had to be strong... and he would not cast aside Autobot integrity just because it had become inconvenient.

He looked over the devastation that surrounded him. No matter what condition his morals were, it wouldn't matter any more if reinforcements didn't arrive soon...

Very soon...

* * *

Iacon...

Arcee paced back and forth through the technical lab, where the only remaining operational trans-time dimensional portal on Cybertron was located. With her was Optimus Prime, Perceptor and the Dinobots; together, they formed the team of reinforcements that were Autobot City's only hope.

"Isn't it ready yet??" Arcee demanded. "Autobots could be dying over there..."

"Yes, Arcee, it is finally ready," responded Rad with contempt, pressing buttons on a large computer console. He turned to look at the reinforcements. "Optimus Prime, Perceptor, Grimlock... would you all please step over there..." Rad motioned to an empty corner of the room.

"Me Grimlock no like this idea," grumbled the Dinobot leader. "Not after what portal did last time Autobots used it..."

"That was with Decepticon interference," Rad corrected. "When I activate the portal this time, you should all materialize right in the middle of Autobot City."

"Should," Snarl muttered. "Not will."

Arcee was reluctant. "In the middle of the city? Is that strategically sound, Optimus?"

"It will do nicely, Arcee." the team of reinforcements had crowded themselves into the corner. "Activate the portal, Rad." Optimus ordered.

Rad nodded. "Good luck, Optimus." He pressed a button on the console, and held it down... "Charging... charging... charging... Activated!!"

The part of the room that the reinforcements were standing in exploded into blinding

light. In the light, Rad could see the images of Optimus Prime and the others slowly dissolve, and as they disappeared, the light blinked out, along with a ‘pop’ sound as the air rushed to fill the space that the reinforcements took up previously.

Rad began to press buttons frantically. There was no indication of confirmed transport, yet no indication of an error of any kind. “Damn this archaic piece of machinery...” he muttered, trying to get a fix on the team’s location. If the portal had worked properly, it should tell him so... or if it had disintegrated them, there would be a sign of malfunction. But the computer betrayed no secrets on the whereabouts of the reinforcement team.

It could have worked; they could be in Autobot City at that very moment.

It could have worked.

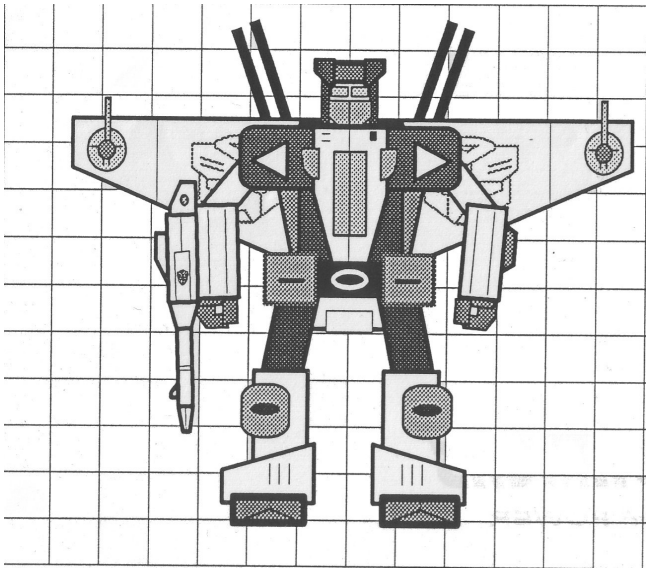
Or their atoms could be scattered all across the Sol System.

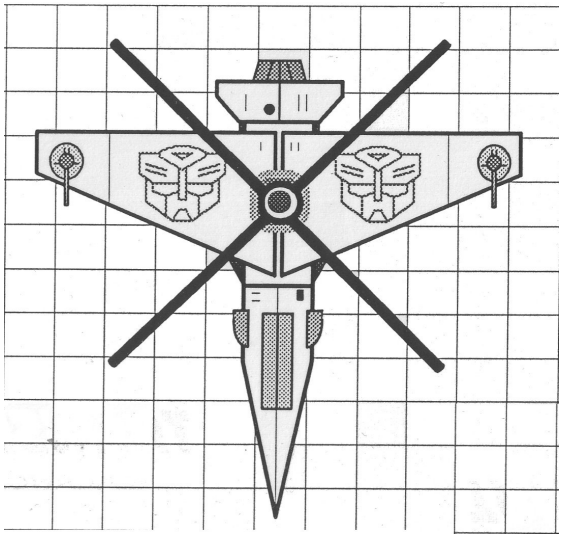
There was no way of knowing...

Tornado

Function: Air Defense Force Leader
Sub-Group: Air Defense Force
First Appearance: TF: Balance of Power #3

Valor is a virtue that all must share





Tornado is an experimental cross between a jet and a helicopter, created in an attempt to develop a 'superior' aircraft. Unfortunately, it didn't work too well... *Tornado*'s aircraft design is anything *but* superior. But he is hardly a weakling or misfit; it seems that his physical limitations have only improved his strength of character. He is dedicated, intelligent, and *very* brave... probably fearless. He takes his motto to heart--showing no pretense or indecision on the battlefield. And he cares deeply for the Autobots placed under his command, pushing himself harder to reduce the danger to them. There is no doubt among the Air Defence Force that *Tornado* was the best choice for their leader.



Because of his unusual design, *Tornado* demonstrates unusual abilities. In aircraft mode, his airborne agility in unmatched; he has learned to use his rotor blades and thrusters in unison, allowing him to perform feats of maneuvering that seem almost impossible. He can use his rear jets for short bursts of incredible forward speed... and he possesses formidable weaponry: namely two wing-mounted laser cannons, and a large heat-ray cannon on his underside, which produces a concentrated beam of intense heat that will melt most substances on contact. In robot mode, he is very strong, and uses the same heat-ray cannon, on his right arm.

Tornado has few weaknesses; except that he is not very fast, overall, in either mode. His airborne bursts of speed help compensate for this, but that is only truly useful as a surprise tactic in dogfights, because of the fuel consumption involved. Other than that, *Tornado* is very fuel efficient. He *is* noble and brave, but sometimes *too* brave, and can get himself into a fight in which he is clearly overmatched.

NEXT ISSUE:

What has become of the reinforcements?
Is Autobot City truly doomed?
And what horrors lie in store for Iacon?

The answers await you, in the next issue of...
Transformers: Balance of Power!