

HEROES AND LEGENDS

Megatron

By Tony “Thunder” Klepack

The ship hummed slightly as we moved. It was merely a side effect of the ship’s drive but bereft of any other sound to mask it, I was keenly aware of it’s presence.

I glanced to my right, noting Soundwave as he was hunched over his console, performing his duties. The bridge was surprisingly quiet, it’s occupants all set on their tasks while we moved toward our ultimate goal—the final crushing defeat of our enemy. Once Optimus Prime and his top officers were destroyed we would finally be in a position to put down the rest of the Autobots and their resistance to the new order.

I had dreamed of this moment a long time. My careful planning and manipulations had gone perfectly. I had eliminated that fool Teryhex—he had started mobilizing the Decepticons long before they were ready and with his ineptitude, all that we had worked for would have been for naught, crushed by the might of the Council Guard. Thanks to my wiles, we had pulled back just in time, suing for peace and diplomacy instead of warfare. I told Cybertron’s politicians and populace exactly what they wanted to hear and they ate it up. All the while, I worked hard drawing newcomers to our cause, preparing, building for the day when we would at last be ready to reveal ourselves.

The time came. Sentinel Prime and most of the Council were wiped out in our initial declaration of war. We struck so suddenly, so fiercely, that none of them were prepared and we nearly succeeded in total domination of our people.

So close... but the remnants of the Council Guard would not be defeated so easily. The Autobots as they took to calling themselves fought back over the years, doing anything they could to forestall the inevitable. As hard as we tried, they would not yield to our might.

Then, years into the conflict, a new Prime rose from their ranks and united the resistance as they never had been before. A new leader, a charismatic power that equaled my own. A beacon of hope to those whom’s spirits we had fought so hard to darken.

Optimus Prime.

He had done it somehow, keeping the war going far longer than it ever should have. Why couldn’t he have just accepted the inevitable? Our people were stagnant, dying and we offered them a new path. A better way to live. But he would have none of it and he rallied those fossils that would have us perish under the heel of the galaxy’s organics.

The fool! He was responsible for Cybertron’s suffering more than any one of the Decepticons ever could be. If the resistance had fallen, our world would succumb to the new order and gradually, they would fall in-line with the Decepticon philosophy. Change was inevitable to the way of the Universe—the strong survived while the weak perished. We would make Cybertron strong instead of keeping it weak.

“Status?” I asked.

“They are beginning their operations,” Soundwave’s harmonic, multi-toned voice replied.

“Excellent,” I said. “Continue to monitor. When the moment is ripe, we will strike!”

“Why not strike now?” I turned to my left, where the aerial commander Starscream stood on the second level. “They’ll never even know what hit them!”

“They are strong now,” I replied. “But once they are finished their task, they will be depleted. Helpless. Then we shall strike and have our well deserved victory.”

A couple of the other bridge officers made affirmative noises at my proclamation and Starscream fell silent, no doubt still believing he knew better. He was a power hungry fool but I had kept him around all this time since he had his uses. He was a skilled warrior and competent battle commander—under the right circumstances anyway. One day, though, he would outlive his usefulness to me and then I would see to it he met with an unfortunate accident.

Assassination, treachery, corruption... all tools of the Decepticon cause that we had all devoted ourselves to so wholly. Tools that had served me well over the years.

The cause was all I ever knew... I could not recall the circumstances of my creation, merely stumbling about in my early years, learning the hard lessons of the streets. I learned swiftly that the strong had the power and they took from the weak. I rose swiftly, becoming a force to be reckoned with, making sure no one could take what little I had.

In time, as my understanding of the world around me increased, so did my ambitions. I controlled a street gang for a while before moving on to becoming a gladiator in the state games. I swiftly realized my position as a champion gave me a certain power and influence. An advantage I fully exploited with other cybertronians of prominence.

In the company of the wealthy, it was easy to see where Cybertron's real power and dependencies lay. The rich owed their dominance to off-worlders whom had invaded our world, spreading their free market economies and peddling foreign goods to our Cybertronian brethren. It was equally amazing and repulsive to me. I had been taught that the strong had the power and it was clear the aliens were the ones with the true power on our world. With our dependencies on them and their goods, it was obvious our people were losing their independence and their resolve. How long would it have been before we became puppets to outsiders instead of taking control of our own destiny.

Even then, the Decepticon cause existed, but it was small in those days, weak, aimless. It needed guidance, focus, if it was to ever achieve its objectives. I saw what needed to be done and used my position to funnel credits and resources, build it better and recruit from the masses that were in so desperate need of what could be offered. I cautiously leant my support to the "leaders" of our cause in those days, preferring to manipulate circumstances from the background anonymously.

The Decepticons grew slowly but steadily while fools like Teryhex represented them openly, diverting attention away from my real objectives. When he eventually acted out prematurely, I knew the time had come to eliminate him and reveal myself publicly—I could not risk another repeat of his ambition with his successor. We needed to stall for time while I continued on the path to our eventual war. I used all the methods at my disposal to convince those fools in the Council that I wanted peace and diplomacy above all else.

Amazingly, they fell for it. Oh, not at first. They didn't trust me any more then they did any other Decepticon and that was understandable. But the more time went by, the more of them fell under my sway. I would invite them to lavish parties, find favors that I could exchange with their membership and sometimes outright bribery. With time and patience, they came to believe I was legitimate and that I would settle for doing things their way.

Ego is a dangerous thing but I admit that I was quite wily in my dealings. No one suspected my true motives as I moved among their numbers. Free to purchase land and holdings openly—after all, I was Lord Megatron of Polyhex. A nobleman now. Certainly no one had any more reason to suspect that I was funding a private army for anything other than my own legitimate security needs.

It all fell into play so easily... the war was well orchestrated and I removed all but those whom had sworn their personal loyalty to me—Straxus, Starscream and a select group of the wealthy who knew where the real power would lie in the new order.

I glanced at the nearby Seeker and wondered how much longer I would need to suffer his presence among my ranks. Despite his proclamation of loyalty, Starscream had been nothing but belligerent and egotistical the entire time since he'd joined our ranks. I'd suffered him because he had brought his own clan into the fold—warriors such as Skywarp, Thundercracker, Thrust, Sunstorm and

many others that greatly enhanced our aerial superiority. They had proven even more useful in the later war with the Autobots. It was true Starscream had never dared to openly defy me but that was only because he had not yet found the right circumstances to do so, I suspected. It would only be a matter of time before he would oppose me and I did not plan to allow him the opportunity. Once we had dealt with Optimus and his forces, I would see to it Starscream was quietly eliminated. I suspected Skywarp and the other Seekers wouldn't be too saddened by the loss of their aerial commander based off how I'd seen them react to him, anyway. There was no love lost there.

There were few among my ranks I felt I could truly trust... Soundwave had always been quiet, kept to himself and tinkered with his inventions, yet I knew somehow that he was loyal. I had no concerns when he was along on a mission with me. Shockwave, my second in command was another. He was cold and logical but he knew I was our world's best hope and he always did as commanded, sometimes even taking initiative that benefitted our cause without express order. So few I could trust and those that I did were cold, distant machines that seemed devoid of passion at times. Sometimes I wondered if they possessed no inner fire at all or if they merely had become adept at masking their hopes and dreams, growing a thick shell to prevent pain from their more savage brethren. I couldn't live like that—I had to be true to my convictions and be praised or damned for them.

Nothing less would do...

I turned my attention back to the view screen before me, watching and waiting. It was ironic in some ways... Optimus Prime stood for everything I opposed yet I think that he alone was the only one who would likely truly understand me. We were enemies yet both tools of our own inner passions. We had to live by our codes, fight and die for them if necessary. It was maddening—in another time and place, we could have been fast friends, comrades in arms. But we stood for different things and nothing would ever change that.

That was why he had to die.

I watched the asteroid field beyond the ship. Small pin-pricks of light and streams of gas erupted from our prey, tearing into the deadly debris all about it. Destroying it, paving the way for their most prized possession.

My most prized possession.

Home.

The Great War that had erupted between our two kinds had shaken the entire world free of its orbital axis, throwing it violently into space. The War had continued for eons beyond that event even while Cybertron traversed the cosmos like a deadly missile. Somehow in all that time, fate had smiled on our kind—if one can truly say such a thing—and we avoided colliding with any other celestial bodies or burning inside a star.

Until now, anyway.

Decepticon scouts had detected the large asteroid belt approaching our world and reported back to the Command Center with their findings. We had worked in secret, constructing a vast battleship, the Nemesis, and had planned to wipe a path clear through the field with thermo-nuclear weapons so that Cybertron could continue on unabated.

At least, that had been the plan. My spies reported back that the Autobots had similarly discovered the impending threat, constructed their own battleship and planned to launch it into space to stop the devastation. Once again, Optimus Prime proved my equal in ingenuity and resourcefulness.

I swiftly realized that we could allow our enemy to destroy the threat themselves and then we would be there, ready for the kill. Devoid of power and ammunition from their exertions, the best of the Autobots would be easy prey.

"They have ceased fire," Soundwave announced.

I mulled it over a moment.

"Is the path clear for Cybertron?" I asked.

He tapped a few buttons on the console before him. "Affirmative."

I sighed quietly and concentrated on what needed to be done next. I rose from my seat.

“My fellow Decepticons, it appears our enemy has done our job for us. Cybertron is safe!”

There were cheers at my proclamation and I allowed myself a smile.

“Now, the time has come to end the Great War once and for all!” I continued. “The Autobots are in no position to resist our might. We strike a great blow, a final blow for the Decepticon Empire!”

I raised my fist. “For Cybertron!”

“For Cybertron!” A multitude of voices and fists joined mine in proclamation.

It was a moment in history that would not soon be forgotten. The day the last of the great Primes was killed and the Autobot resistance was crushed forever. At long last, Cybertron would know peace.

“Commence the attack!” I commanded. “Decepticons forever!”