

## TRANSFORMERS: THE LAST DEBATE

By Thomas Zavier

The room burst into radiance -- the walls of gleaming silver metal were carved and decorated with huge, complicated abstract designs; depicting concepts and ideas far beyond the comprehension of an organic mind. A large circular table of shining gold sat in the center of the room, its surface empty except for a single glowing sphere, warm and bright.

A section of the wall slid silently aside, and the four representatives of the Traditional Party entered. On the room's opposite side another section opened, and in came the leaders of the Progressive Party, also four in number. As both wall-sections were sliding closed, a third opened, and Sentinal Prime, Prophet of Primus and the former head of Cybertron's Ruling Council, entered.

Sentinal Prime placed his hands on the sphere, and spoke: "Hail to you, Primus, the beloved and respected, our father and creator, for eternity. And also to you, Prima the First, guardian of the Essential Matrix and mother to our race. May you rest in peace, and guide us in spirit."

Each representative bowed, and repeated the words; but not all were sincere in doing so.

Sentinal Prime spoke again, saying, "Here now convenes the third Conference of Debate, and hopefully the final one. May these disputes be resolved, and both Parties appeased. To begin, I believe Mor'Tac Sar has received Right of Statement."

"He has," said Orion P'Ax, of the Traditional Party.

"Do not speak before your Right," said Sentinal Prime, as a warning. "You have broken our guidelines of conduct, and infringed upon Mor'Tac's right to speak. That will be remembered."

Orion P'Ax bowed low, in apology.

Mor'Tac Sar stepped forward; a tall and strong mechanoid of cold silver and black, with burning red eyes. He was the true leader of the Progressive Party, set against Orion P'Ax who usually spoke for the Traditionalists. "I thank you, Prime," he said sweetly, though his voice was low and harsh to hear.

Mor'Tac continued, "For three centuries and fifty-two cycles, we have stood against the so-called 'traditional' values of our society. All this time, we have talked, talked, and talked yet more... but now, my vocal apparatus nears breakdown from over-use! We have accomplished nothing. I tire of talk. This *will* be the last Conference, in any case.

"We, the Progressionists, are viewed as heretics, damned by Primus for our refusal of his supposed teachings. He, or at least his current Prophet, preaches peace, quiet, inactivity -- a so-called harmony with other living things. According to him, we need not seek new knowledge, new technology... we need not *progress*." Mor'Tac's metallic brows drew together. "Bah!"

"I will not banter with you anymore. We stagnate here on Cybertron, and will continue to stagnate unless a change is brought about. We seek true progress, and nothing less is acceptable. Say what you will, to that."

Sentinal Prime nodded. "The Statement is finished -- the floor is open for debate." He paused, and sighed. "However, Mor'Tac, I had hoped you had grown wise enough not to contest the will of Primus in the presence of his Prophet."

"Prophet, indeed!" said another Progressionist, white, red, and silver colored, with large flaring wings and yellow eyes set in a sneering face; he was called Siir'Cal Arnis. His voice was grating and rather high pitched, adding additional bite to his sarcasm. "Do not bother us with your religious holy-babble. We are not blind -- we know exactly what you are, and your relation to the Creator. If Primus doesn't like our talk, let him say so himself!"

"If you know what I am," said Sentinal Prime, "Then you know he cannot."

"So! You see my point? Primus has no power. You are his tool, and too timid to think for yourself." Siir'Cal raised his voice mockingly, "Where are you, great Primus? Come, speak up! Speak!" He laughed sardonically.

"Be quiet, moron!" cried a Traditionalist, called Kup'Tra Ner. "If you laugh too hard, you might bite off your tongue."

Siir'Cal frowned. "I have no 'tongue'. Is that an expression of one of those filthy little Organics you communicate with?"

"Inferior creatures," muttered Waar Sil'Mak, a tall and dark Progressionist with a single, piercing yellow eye. "Does Primus desire that we allow these flesh-things to swarm over the planets that surround us, while we sit, confined to our own world? We are obviously superior beings, and should control them, dominate them. *That* is a far more logical course of action."

"It is against the will of Primus to subjugate what you call 'inferior' creatures," said Orion P'Ax. "And even if it were not so, I would still not harm the organic life-forms. They are sentient, and deserve life and freedom as much as we."

"Which only demonstrates your lack of intelligence, P'Ax." Mor'Tac glared at him. "You have no vision. Would you lie in inactivity, while worlds await our dominion? Can you not see?! Open your eyes, I implore you -- before it is too late."

"And when will that be, Mor'Tac?" asked Par'Ta Nas, another Traditionalist, with a body of white and blue chrome; his blue eyes were cold and expressionless, set in a hard, stern face. "When will it be 'too late'? Are you actually *threatening* us?"

"I may well be. My actions depend on *your* foresight -- or lack of it."

The last Traditionalist, Ultra Mag'Nus, spoke up; he was very large and strong, and his voice was clear and deep. "I assure you, Mor'Tac -- we have more foresight than you know. Do you think all of your activities have gone unnoticed? We have watched your, fall from grace, and are prepared to deal with it -- but, in Sentinal Prime's wisdom, you are allowed an opportunity to repent."

"*Repent?* For what?"

Orion P'Ax said: "We know what you've been doing, and so do you. Admit the truth, and we may find the means to help you, to pity you."

Mor'Tac was growing angry, but retained his composure. "I do not seek pity from fools such as yourselves. I do pity you, however -- your lack of vision may prove to be your undoing."

"Another threat. Is it empty, or shall you enforce it?"

The final Progressionist spoke, his voice low and monotone, devoid of emotion. "This grows tiresome, and entirely unproductive. Obviously, you have called this debate not to talk, but to make an accusation of some kind." Snar'Tu Fal paused, his masked face and glowing visor betraying no thoughts or feelings. "If so, then make it, and be done with it!"

"Yes," agreed Siir'Cal Amis, "We have nothing to hide."

"Don't you?" said Orion, "Very well -- we accuse you, Mor'Tac Sar, of the construction and concealment of *weapons*, and various other tools of warfare -- we accuse you of deception,

feigning peaceful relations, while preparing for war, Do you deny this?"

Mor'Tac stood, silent.

"Well, then? said Orion impatiently, "What do you answer?"

"It is a *lie!*" hissed Siir'Cal viciously. "A terrible lie! Have the Traditionalists sunk so low, as to fabricate offences made by their enemies? We have done nothing, harmed no-one --"

"Stop!" cried Mor'Tac suddenly. "Quiet, Siir'Cal -- the facade is broken. I do not deny your charges. Yes -- I *have* prepared for war."

Sentinal Prime broke his long silence. "And *who* do you intend to fight, Mor'Tac?"

Mor'Tac did not answer immediately. His face had darkened, torn in rage and sorrow... "I lead those who desire progress -- I fight stagnation, waste and seek the true path of our race. I will say no more."

"You need not," said Ultra Mag'Nus, "For your insinuation is clear enough. You intend to fight *us*, if we do not submit to your blasphemous and brutal ideals." He sighed deeply. "I feared it so."

"Why, Mor'Tac?" Orion pleaded, his deep red eyes wrought with sorrow. "Why have you done this? Must it come to violence? You have changed over these years, become dark and twisted, sheltering a terrible hidden fire. A lust for power has consumed you. But it is not too late, Mor'Tac! The weapons can be dismantled, lies can be forgiven. Think about what you are doing, before it *is* too late, for *you!*"

Mor'Tac Sar stared at Orion P'Ax; and for a moment, they could feel each other's pain and sadness. Very briefly, it seemed like they could just give it all up -- end the debate, the conflict, halt the rising hostility... Everything would be just fine, if they could just *let go*.

The two paths were laid before them: to back off, and avoid disaster... or to pursue their beliefs, to the *end*. The long, distant, bitter end...

Mor'Tac bowed his head. "No... It is already too late. The choice is yours... will you not join us?"

Orion shook his head slowly. "No. We will not."

Mor'Tac looked up, eyes aflame. "The choice is made, then. So be it."

And suddenly, Mor'tac leapt into the air -- his body bent and folded in onto itself, transforming not into his usual vehicle form, but into a laser-fusion pistol, small but terribly powerful. It landed in Siir'Cal's waiting grasp, who aimed the weapon at Sentinal Prime.

Orion P'Ax dashed forward, to stop Siir'Cal Amis; but Waar Sil'Mak and Snar'Tu Fal barred his path. Then, Mor'Tac fired.

The beams tore and sliced deeply into Sentinal Prime's body... he cried out in pain and horror, falling backwards against the wall.

Siir'Cal then aimed at the glowing sphere, which exploded in a burst of white light as Mor'Tac destroyed it. The room plunged into darkness, the only light coming from each rnechanoid's eyes, and Prime's burning wounds.

Siir'Cal released Mor'Tac, who returned to his humanoid form. In the dim and terrible glow of Prime's agony, he spoke these historical words...

"As of this moment, I declare open war upon the Traditional Party of Cybertron, and all who follow them. We will not rest, until Cybertron is ours -- and our race's true destiny can be fulfilled." He looked at Orion P'Ax. "I will not repent, for we are both damned."

And the Progressionists left, the wall opening before them, while Siir'Cal's laughter echoed throughout the chamber. Orion sent his friends for help, while he rushed down to

Sentinal Prime's side.

"Be calm, Prophet," he said, "We will help you."

"The wounds are too d-deep, young Orion..." Prime sputtered, "I can-an-not be helped..."

"No, Prime, it'll be all--"

"Listen, Orion, l-listen to me... I should have f-f-foreseen this... it i-is too early, but-t that cannot be helped... thus, I d-die... p-please, young Orion, take my hand..."

Orion grasped the Prophet's limp hand, and felt a strange energy rush up from it, into his own body... it surrounded him, embraced him, engulfed him...

The energy flow was so powerful, that it threw Orion across the room; his body glowed and shimmered, and his very physical form was suddenly re-made... at that moment, he was no longer Orion P'Ax, but became *Optimus Prime*, having received the Creation Matrix into his keeping.

And so began the Cybertronian War; Mor'Tac Sar was renamed *Megatron*, the Murderer... but Sentinal Prime was only the first to fall, and the end of this conflict is yet to be seen.

#### SPECIAL NOTE:

The Transformers in this short story have been referred to by their original, 'true' names, given at their creation. To prevent confusion, I list here these characters by their personal names, as well as their common names, that we are more familiar with.

#### Traditional Party (Autobots)

**Orion P'Ax** --> Optimus Prime

**Ultra Mag'Nus** --> Ultra Magnus

**Par'Ta Nas** --> Prowl

**Kup'Tra Ner** --> Kup

#### Progressive Party (Decepticons)

**Mor'Tac Sar** --> Megatron

**Waar Sil'Mak** --> Shockwave

**Snar'Tu Fal** --> Soundwave

**Siir'Ca1 Amis** --> Starscream

