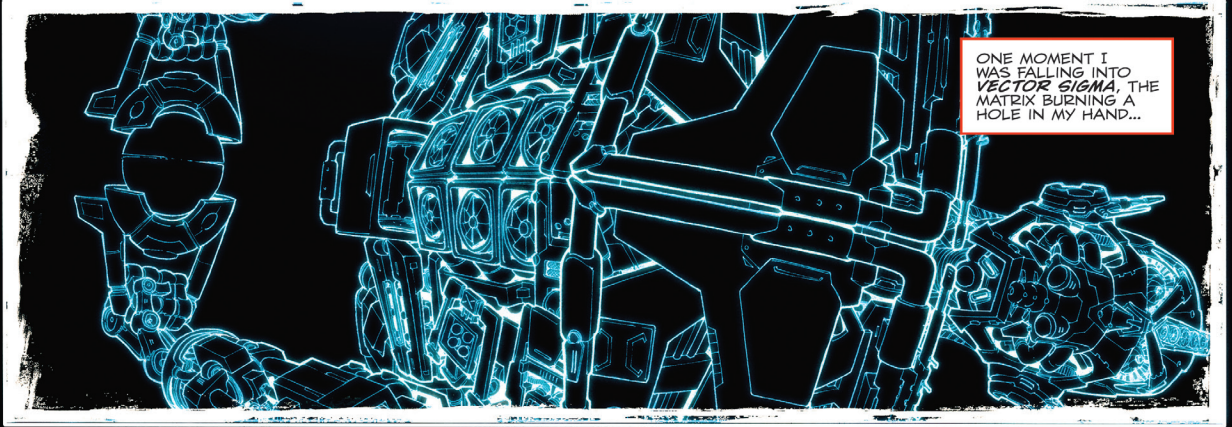
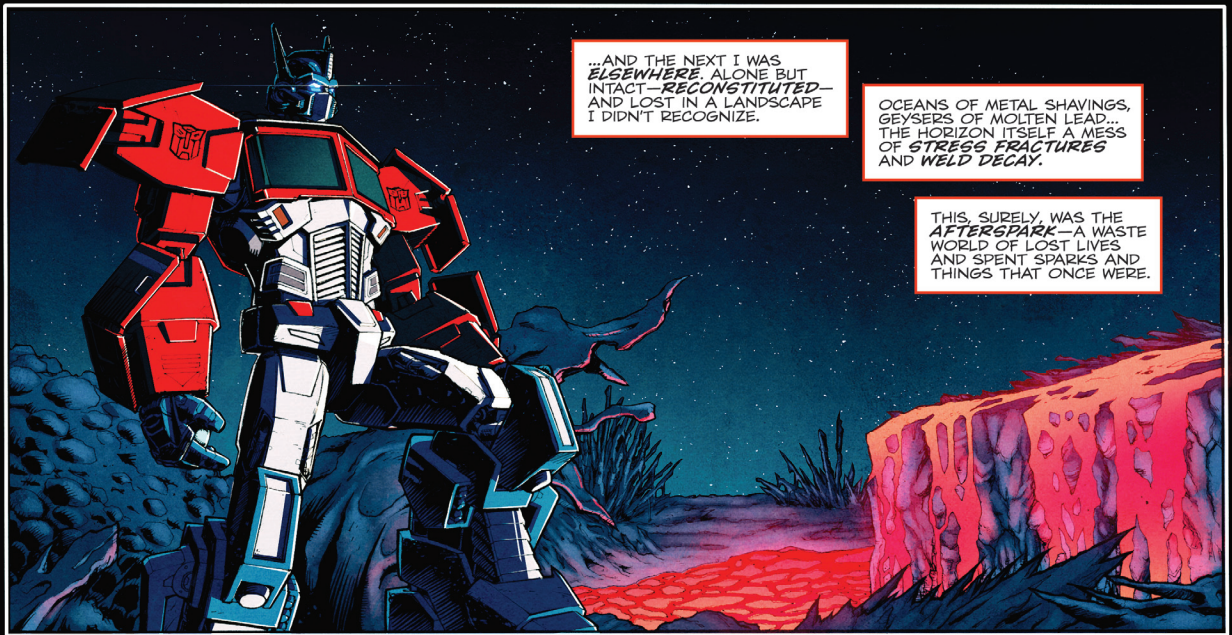


I REMEMBER IT WELL,
THE DAY I DIED.



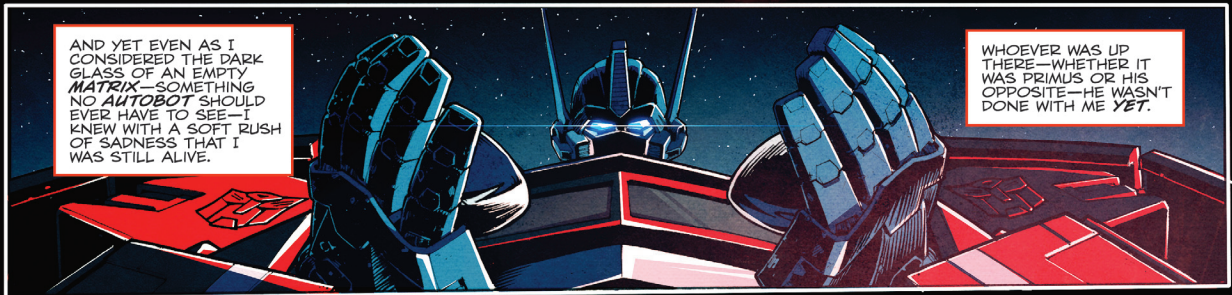
ONE MOMENT I
WAS FALLING INTO
VECTOR SIGMA, THE
MATRIX BURNING A
HOLE IN MY HAND...



...AND THE NEXT I WAS
ELSEWHERE. ALONE BUT
INTACT—**RECONSTITUTED**—
AND LOST IN A LANDSCAPE
I DIDN'T RECOGNIZE.

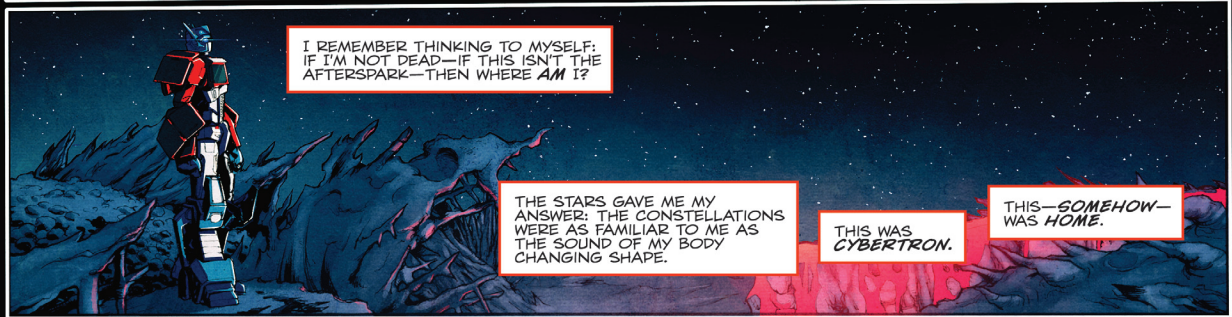
OCEANS OF METAL SHAVINGS,
GEYSERS OF MOLTEN LEAD...
THE HORIZON ITSELF A MESS
OF **STRESS FRACTURES**
AND **WELD DECAY**.

THIS, SURELY, WAS THE
AFTERSPARK—A WASTE
WORLD OF LOST LIVES
AND SPENT SPARKS AND
THINGS THAT ONCE WERE.



AND YET EVEN AS I
CONSIDERED THE DARK
GLASS OF AN EMPTY
MATRIX—SOMETHING
NO **AUTOBOT** SHOULD
EVER HAVE TO SEE—I
KNEW WITH A SOFT RUSH
OF SADNESS THAT I
WAS STILL ALIVE.

WHOEVER WAS UP
THERE—WHETHER IT
WAS **PRIMUS** OR HIS
OPPOSITE—HE WASN'T
DONE WITH ME **YET**.



I REMEMBER THINKING TO MYSELF:
IF I'M NOT DEAD—IF THIS ISN'T THE
AFTERSPARK—THEN WHERE **AM I**?

THE STARS GAVE ME MY
ANSWER: THE CONSTELLATIONS
WERE AS FAMILIAR TO ME AS
THE SOUND OF MY BODY
CHANGING SHAPE.

THIS WAS
CYBERTRON.

THIS—**SOMEHOW**—
WAS **HOME**.

TRANSFORMERS: THE DEATH OF OPTIMUS PRIME



I WANDERED.
I WANDERED.

WAS THIS CYBERTRON'S
ANCIENT PAST? WAS I
WITNESSING THE BIRTH
OF THE PLANET?

ONCE AGAIN, THE
ANSWER WAS ABOVE
MY HEAD: I COULD SEE
ONLY THE SMALLER
OF CYBERTRON'S TWO
MOONS. WHENEVER I
WAS, IT WAS AFTER
LUNA 1 DISAPPEARED.

IF NOT THE
PAST, THEN—
THE FUTURE?



AT THAT MOMENT
MY GPS* FINALLY
KICKED IN.

IT TOLD ME THAT I WAS
STANDING AMONG THE
TOWERING RUINS OF
THE GRAND IMPERIUM,
AND THAT IF I LOOKED
LEFT I WOULD SEE THE
MANGANESE MOUNTAINS
IN THE DISTANCE.

*GALACTIC
POSITIONING
SYSTEM



THAT SETTLED IT: I
WAS IN THE FUTURE.
THE DISTANT
FUTURE, AT THAT.

A FUTURE WHERE
THE MANGANESE
MOUNTAINS HAD
CORRODED AWAY.

A FUTURE WHERE
WHOLE CITIES HAD
BEEN REDUCED TO
A PATINA OF RUST.

A FUTURE WHERE...



...GALVATRON'S
SWEEPS WERE
STILL LYING
AROUND...?

IT WAS AROUND
THIS POINT THAT I
RECALLED SOMETHING
IRONHIDE USED TO
SAY: "SOMETIMES YOU
JUST GOTTA STOP
THINKING AND TAKE
IT AS IT COMES."

I WALKED FOR HOURS, UNTIL THE GPS TOLD ME THAT I WAS LOOKING AT GREATER IACON.

AND ALTHOUGH IT RESEMBLED A SHANTYTOWN OR A BOMB SITE OR A SPACEPORT GONE TO SEED, IT HAD SOMETHING OVER THE IACON I'D KNOWN FOR THE LAST FEW MILLION YEARS...

...IT WAS POPULATED.

CYBERTRONIANS OF ALL SHAPES AND SIZES, GOING ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS.

I DIDN'T RECOGNIZE THEM. THAT WAS SURPRISING IN ITSELF, BUT WHAT WAS EVEN MORE SURPRISING...

...WAS THAT THEY DIDN'T RECOGNIZE ME.

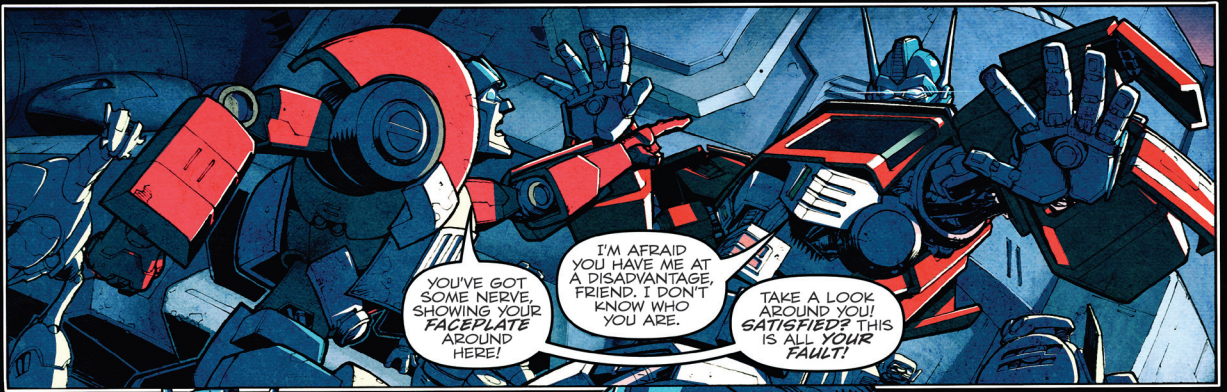


EXCEPT THAT'S NOT QUITE TRUE.

HEY PAX!

ORION PAX!





YOU'VE GOT SOME NERVE, SHOWING YOUR FACEPLATE AROUND HERE!

I'M AFRAID YOU HAVE ME AT A DISADVANTAGE, FRIEND. I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE.

TAKE A LOOK AROUND YOU! SATISFIED? THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT!



IF THAT IS THE CASE THEN I APOLOGIZE. THE LAST FEW DAYS HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT CHAOTIC.

THE LAST FEW DAYS? THE LAST FEW DAYS? THE LAST FEW MILLION YEARS!

THIS NAIL BOTHERING YOU, OPTIMUS?



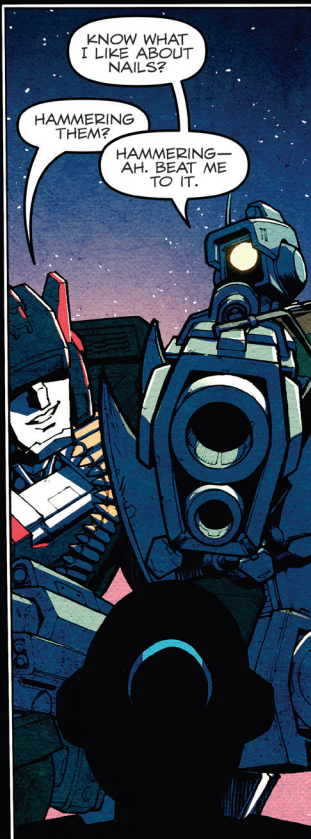
SIDESWIPE!

"NAIL"? WHAT...?



IT'S AN ACRONYM. ONE OF PROWL'S "NON-AFFILIATED INDIGENOUS LIFE-FORM."

NAIL. I LIKE SAYING IT. NAIL. NA-IL. "YOU'RE A NAIL." SUITS YOU.



KNOW WHAT I LIKE ABOUT NAILS?

HAMMERING THEM?

HAMMERING— AH. BEAT ME TO IT.



NO ONE'S HAMMERING ANYONE, WHIRL.

GOOD TO SEE YOU, BOSS. RODIMUS SAID YOU'D BE OKAY. WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? HOW'S IT FEEL TO BE A HATE FIGURE?

YOU'LL FORGIVE ME IF I IGNORE ALL THOSE QUESTIONS IN FAVOR OF ONE OF MY OWN: JUST WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?

AUTOBOT HIGH COMMAND

TURNED OUT I'D BEEN MISSING FOR THREE WEEKS. BUT IT SEEMED MY FRIENDS HAD *OTHER THINGS* ON THEIR MINDS.

WELL, WELL—LOOK WHAT THE *TURBOFOX* DRAGGED IN.

RODIMUS—GOOD TO SEE YOU, OLD FRIEND. AND *BUMBLEBEE*—

YEAH. NICE OF YOU TO *DROP BY*.

BROADSIDE, THIS *NEW SHIP* I.D.ING FROM THE *VELA PULGAR*—IT SOUNDS LIKE THERE'S SOME *TENSION* WITH THE *ALCHEMY* SEVEN CREW, SO—

SO HOW ABOUT I SET THEM DOWN ON THE *SOUTH SIDE*. YOU GOT IT.

SORRY ABOUT BEE. HE'S BEEN A LITTLE BUSY. WE ALL HAVE.

RODIMUS, IF YOU'RE WAITING FOR THE RIGHT MOMENT TO FILL ME IN, HOW ABOUT *NOW*?

SHORT VERSION...

"...WHATEVER HAPPENED AT *VECTOR SIGMA*—I DOUBT EVEN *WHEELJACK* OR *PERCEPTOR* COULD EXPLAIN THE *SCIENCE*—MADE *CYBERTRON* COME ALIVE AGAIN. ONLY IT'S—"

"*PRIMORDIAL*. I SAW."

"RIGHT, SO AFTER THE *BATTLE*, ALL US SURVIVORS SET UP *CAMP* IN THE WRECKAGE OF *KIMIA*, 'CAUSE THAT WAS THE ONLY THING STILL *STANDING*."

"WE SENT A SHIP TO PICK UP *BEE*, *PROWL*, AND THE *GANG* FROM *EARTH*, AND WHEN THEY GOT BACK, I WAS LIKE—"

WELL, BESIDES *PRIME*, I GUESS THAT'S *EVERYBODY*.

UM...