

Prologue.

Earth. March, 2021.

A dying Scattershot laid helpless, thrown aside by the mighty hand of Galvatron. Hardly the first to fall, he was one of thousands to meet the maker this day. Gravely aware of his condition, Scattershot fed full power to his optics, energy he desperately needed elsewhere. The air once charged with electro static discharges was now silent as the greatest hero of his race met the most destructive force in the universe.

Scattershot died a silent witness that day.

Years passed but Scattershot would live again. In more ways than one, the world he returned to was not his own...

Chapter 1.

Earth, 2039.

Downloading

Washington Post, Headline: Presidential Candidate William Dobson promised that, if elected, he will honor his pledge to purge the planet of Transformers.

"They are a plague upon the human race, worse than drugs, terrorism or famine..." said the forty-two year old Independent Presidential front-runner.

The incumbent, President Richard Gates maintains "...the Autobots are an asset to mankind. My opponent wasn't even alive when the Autobots came to Earth. He hasn't seen all the differences that they've made...he blames them for the problems of the world, yet he has never lived in a world *without* them! Dobson has made the Autobots into a scapegoat, any fair-minded person would see that. Not since "3/21," nearly twenty years ago, have we had to worry about the Decepticons. Since then it has been an era of peace for America. The few problems we have are not the fault of the *Autobots*. No, *Congress* has a lot to answer for and I'm certain that with another four years of my administration, we will get to the bottom of things. *Including* the War."

The President refers to, of course, what many believe is escalating into World War V. The conflict is spreading West towards the cusp of the Western Hemisphere--.

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CNN, Headline News: Global Cooling Rampant, California has resorted to importing oranges for Autumn.

Downloading Dubbed "The Multi-National War" by nervous bureaucrats, is this "The War To End All Wars?" Find out, next on News.E!.Gov.

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An Official AOL Poll states "...ninety-three percent of Americans say that the Transformers are a threat to national security. Three percent say the Transformers are an asset to the mankind. Four percent state the Transformers are the Anti-Christ. Please note, there is a two percent margin of error.

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KBBC "Eye Witness" News: "In other news, Elizabeth Taylor has married her thirty-second

husband. The former first lady and astronaut has just completed her fifth term in the Senate and is preparing for her sixth bid for the seat. With a record popularity, victory seems guaranteed. Next week she is to celebrate her 215th birthday. Isn't that amazing, Gloria? "It is Dave, I can remember as a kid when she was the first person on Mars."

Downloading KRAM Headline: "This just in, Soviet Chancellor Alexhy Potzujhin, has reportedly been assassinated just hours after giving the go-ahead to use particle weaponry on pan-Asian nationalists occupying the Kremlin in Moscow. More reports as they come in. Next up--Weather."

Downloading

MSNBC Report: Smokers who quit before age ten have a much healthier sex life after fifty, scientists say We'll stay with this one after the break, Surgeon General Chip Chase weighs in.

Downloading "As reports flood in regarding the assassination of Alexhy Potzujhin, President Richard Gate's popularity has dipped to the lowest level in modern history, 2%. With the election just months away, the future of his administration seems certain. As they used to say in my baseball days, 'He is outta there!' Your news, fair and balanced, next."

Download Halted

"What'cha doing Scattershot?" asked Searchlight. "Busy?"

Scattershot disengaged the Infonet Connection and lowered his shoulders. "I was downloading the latest news from the National News Network server. At least, I was until I was interrupted."

"Oh." Searchlight paused. "If you're done...can I download from the Cartoon Server?"

"Why?" asked Scattershot. "What's on that's so important?"

"Dexter's Laboratory."

"Metroplex has four hundred Infonet connections, Searchlight. Why can you not use a *different* one? Why do you have to bug-- *Sigh* Very well, there was nothing but *bad* news anyway. Perhaps I'll--."

Perceptor's voice emanated from the intercom, interrupting Scattershot's lament. "Attention all Autobots with a class four engineering certification or higher: Please make your way towards the fifth floor robotics lab for an impromptu meeting. Attendance is mandatory. Repeat, attendance is mandatory."

Searchlight heard Scattershot quietly utter "All I wanted was to be alone." Scattershot walked away, shoulders dropped, towards the robotics lab.

Earth, 2039. The Fifth Floor Robotics Lab. Five minutes later.

"Greetings." said Perceptor, as the Autobots took their seats. "First and foremost, what is said in this room is of the utmost confidentiality." Perceptor stood at the lectern, eyeing the faces of his fellow Autobots. He rubbed his chin and gave a forced smile. "You are all asking yourselves why you are here, I'll tell you."

Perceptor lowered a view screen. A computer generated map of the Eastern Hemisphere appeared on the screen, ornamented with flashing lights and scrolling green text.

"The world is at war," Perceptor said. "You know this as well as I."

The map was a moving patchwork of large, bright colors. The borders shown on the map changed violently, redrawing themselves faster than a human eye could track. The borders grew farther apart as the

colored patches themselves grew larger. The number of colors composing Africa, Europe and Asia grew fewer and fewer. After a couple of seconds, that entire half of the globe became orange.

"This is a projection," said Perceptor. "...a two year projection."

"Are you telling us that we're cascading toward a united Eastern Hemisphere?" asked Nosecone. "Why are you showing us--."

Perceptor interjected, "No, Nosecone. Woefully, I am not."

Perceptor held a remote in his hand. With the press of a button, the image of the Eastern Hemisphere withdrew itself from the screen. The Western Hemisphere took its place. A second into the projection, orange patches appeared and quickly enveloped the Americas.

"This," Perceptor said, "*this* is a one year projection, the year following."

The Autobots talked amongst themselves, questioning what they saw.

"Three years," my friends.

Scattershot stood up. "What are you showing us, Perceptor?. What is this orange field?"

Perceptor lowered his head. "The orange field represents post-war fallout, areas left *uninhabitable*."

The rumbling of the Autobots grew louder and louder, escalating into a crescendo of discontent.

Brainstorm raised his voice. "This is impossible! What could cause such destruction? The humans are not capable of this!"

Arcana added, "Brainstorm's hypothesis is undisciplined but *not* unfounded. After the peace initiatives of 2022, there are not enough Weapons of Mass Destruction left to levy such waste to the entire planet. What data are you basing these findings from?"

Perceptor replied, "You are as insightful as always, Arcana. You have as sagacious a mind as any Autobot I know. However, as insightful as you are, you are wrong. What I have shown you is an inevitability. Left unto their own devices, the human race is meandering towards its own destruction."

Brainstorm starts to interject, "But what--."

Perceptor raises his forefinger. "*However*, we can affect this future before it becomes history. Left to his own devices, mankind will destroy itself."

Perceptor presses another button on the remote and the screen disappears from where it came. "The data, Arcana, was provided by President Gates. It is based on 'Above Top Secret' intelligence scouted from Eurasian sources. The data and the projections are sound. Optimus Prime and I have confirmed it ourselves."

"On a matter this grave," began Nosecone's loaded question, "Why does Optimus Prime not tell us this himself?"

Perceptor hesitated to answer.

Grapple interposed, breaking the silence. "Perceptor, what are we supposed to do about this? Surely the Gates administration didn't give this information to us so that we could *sit* on it?"

“Indubitably, Grapple.” Perceptor leaned forward in his chair and smiled. “As stated, we can avoid this catastrophe. We gifted Autobots are here to save humankind.”

“Why?” asked Scattershot.

Perceptor looked puzzled. “Excuse me?”

“Why are we doing this?” he responded. “Is this our responsibility? No, it is not. Why does the Gate’s administration do nothing?”

Perceptor relents. “I...I should’ve known that I could not keep this bit of information from the all of you. The United States is close to bankruptcy. Worse yet, there is no infrastructure in place to implement such an operation. The Gate’s administration has come to us to...resolve this situation. To be quite honest, Scattershot, it is in our own best interests. The people we have sworn to protect are turning against us. *We need* this. We save them, we stay. And, to answer your question, it *is* our place. We swore to protect them, no matter the costs.”

“Against the Decepticons,” added Nosecone.