

Blurry Robot Theater

17

IT'S OVER!
IT'S THE END!

....THE END OF THE WORLD,
THE END OF ALL THE WORLDS!



EVERYTHING'S
GOING DARK...

WE ARE LINKAGE...
WE HAVE NEVER SEEN
SUCH A NIGHT...
NOR WILL WE SEE ANOTHER...



*I SAW IT.
WELL...*

*SOMEONE SAW IT.
SOMEONE OF THE LINKAGE.*

*I DIDN'T KNOW THE STARS,
OR THE PLANET.*

IT WAS BEAUTIFUL.



AND THEN IT STARTED...

ENORMOUS SHADOWY
BLOBS OF EMPTY SPACE,
SWALLOWING UP THE STARS...

AND I KNEW...
THE LINKAGE KNEW...
THAT IT HAD STARTED HERE.



IT IS THE END...
THE NAMELESS LADY IS NAMED ONCE MORE...
SHE IS RELEASED...
SHE IS TSUGARU.

SHE CANNOT RAISE HER SWORD.
SHE CANNOT BEAR HER NAME.



I DIDN'T REALLY UNDERSTAND
BUT I...SAW... A SORT OF PICTURE...
THE VAST PHYSICAL UNIVERSE,
BALANCED... LIKE... STRAIGHT PINS...
BALANCED ON A DRUMHEAD...

WHEN THE GREEN LADY
WAS RELEASED FROM THE TRAP
AT THE NEXUS OF UNIVERSES...
SPACETIME HAD DISTORTED.

...GIVEN THE DRUMHEAD A FLICK.

I WONDERED WHAT ELSE WAS RELEASED.
ALL THE ENEMIES SHE HAD IMPRISONED...BUT...






*THEN THERE
WAS A BRIGHT LIGHT...*



*THE LINKAGE DIDN'T
REMEMBER ANYTHING PAST THAT.*

WE ARE LINKAGE.
IN THE END,
WE UNDERSTAND...

NO!!!


A red, glowing, mechanical figure, possibly a robot or a complex machine, is shown in the lower right corner. It has a speech bubble pointing towards the text 'NO!!!'. The figure is composed of various mechanical parts, including what looks like a head with a single glowing eye, a torso with a complex internal structure, and limbs. The entire scene is set against a dark background with a yellowish glow in the upper left corner.



PRIMUS
DAMMIT,
LINKAGE!!

SHUT UP
AND LET
ME THINK!!

MAYBE THIS
IS THE END...
MAYBE WE'LL ALL
COME TO NOTHING...
BUT THIS BATTLE
ISN'T OVER
UNTIL...



HYPE!

HYPE, LISTEN
TO ME!



I HEAR YA, BURN.
JUST RELAX. OKAY?
YOU'RE GONNA BE
ALL RIGHT...

**-ALL RIGHT?! DAMMIT, HYPE!
IT'S THE SLAGGING END
OF THE WORLD!!**

OH, GOOD...
YOU HEAR, WHEELJACK?
HE SOUNDS BETTER...
MORE LIKE HIMSELF...

⇒TAPPA TAKK⇐

**-WHEELJACK!!
DO YOU HEAR ME?!
TURN THE SHIP AROUND!**

**YOU'RE HEADED TOWARD
THE END OF THE UNIVERSE!
TURN THE SHIP AROUND!!**

I TRY TO DESCRIBE IT...
TO EXPLAIN HOW AND WHY I KNOW
WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN, BUT...

IT'S LIKE DESCRIBING A DREAM.
I MUST SOUND LIKE A LUNATIC...

THEY'RE NOT
GOING TO
BELIEVE ME...






*THEY DON'T
BELIEVE ME.*

OF COURSE.


ISN'T THAT THE WAY
THE STORIES
ALWAYS GO?






NO, BUHNOUT,
I DON'T
BELIEVE YA.

WHEELJACK!



WAY I SEE IT, YA' ON MY SHIP.
AND YA' TRIPPIN' BEARINGS.
YA' STRAIGHT UP DELUSIONAL.

HOWEVAH...



GIVEN DA' POSSIBLE
CONSEQUENCES, HYPE
AN' MAHSMAN THINK
WE SHOULD CONSIDAH
YA' CRAZY SCENARIO.

BEEP
BEEP!

SO! DUBYA DUBYA BEE DEE.
WHAT WOULD BURNOUT DO?

**JACK! THIS IS NO TIME TO JOKE!
REVERSE TRANSWARP! GO BACK!**

**OY, IF ONLY
IT SHOULD BE
SO EASY, YOU
SCHMENDRIK!**

**OR DID YA FORGET WE'RE
OUTRUNNIN' A TIME WAVE?
THERE AIN'T NO PAST
WE CAN GO BACK TO.
DAT LEAVES ONE CHOICE...**

GO RIGHT INTO IT!

**HE'S
INSANE!!**



I MUST BE CRAZY, I'M
TRYNA' OULTRUN TIME!

NOTHIN' BACK THERE.
NO WHEN TA' GO TO.

BUT IN DA' FUTURE,
PAST WHERE YOU
CLAIM TA' BE,
BURNOUT...


DERE IS ONE THING
WE KNOW ABAHT...

AN' THAT'S DA
LOST DIMENSION
WHERE DA ALLSPACE
COMPUTER IS AT...

AN' DA GOSTAN BALIK WRECK.
AN' DA KIDS THAT ARE STILL
LEFT ON IT...

...ANNAT'S WHERE
WE'RE GOIN',
ANNAHWAY. RIGHT?
SO...





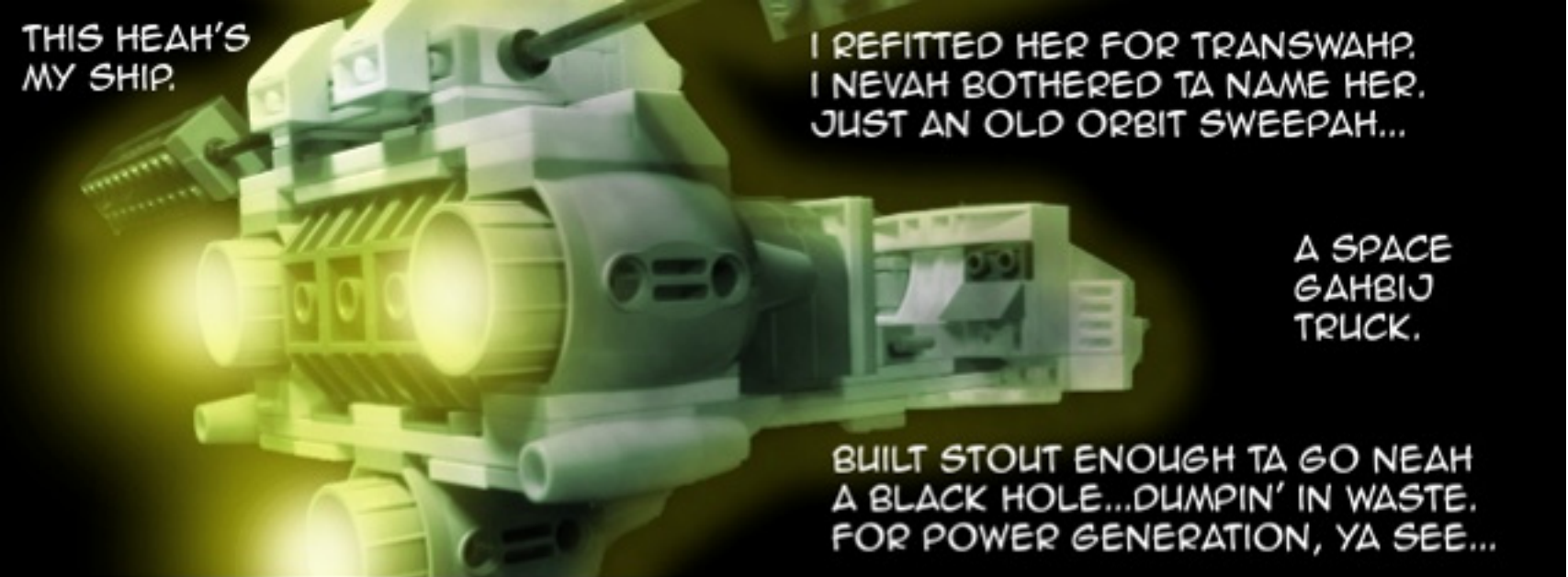
GIMME' A BEACON
BURNOUT. RIGHT?
SOMETHIN' WE CAN
PICK UP ON OUR
TIMESCAN.

WE'LL SET OUR
CHRONOS TA THAT,
AN' FOLLOW IT
RIGHT TROO
WHATEVAH MESS
MIGHT EXIST IN
DA MEANTIME.

SO WHAT YA'
GOT, BURN?

COULD YOU FOLLOW...

...A SONG?



THIS HEAH'S
MY SHIP.

I REFITTED HER FOR TRANSWAHP.
I NEVAH BOTHERED TA NAME HER.
JUST AN OLD ORBIT SWEEPAH...

A SPACE
GAHBIJ
TRUCK.

BUILT STOUT ENOUGH TA GO NEAH
A BLACK HOLE...DUMPIN' IN WASTE.
FOR POWER GENERATION, YA SEE...

BUT HEAH I'M NOT SEEIN' VERY MUCH AT ALL,
OR HEARIN' THE SONG I'M TRYIN' TO TRANSWAHP TO...

SO I SPIN DA WHEELS,
DO A TRANSLATE.

SLIDE A BIT UP THE TAU AXIS.

I'M MOVIN' SIDEWAYS THROUGH TIME, YA MIGHT SAY.
SELECTIN' A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT SEQUENCE OF EVENTS.
'NEXUS 1' VERSUS 'NEXUS 2' IF YA' READ COMICS.

SOME PEOPLE DO.

IT'S
THE
SAME.



I'M TRANSLATIN' ON T-AXIS.
GOIN' AHEAD IN TIME, THAT IS.
WATCHIN' THE STAHS GO OUT.



ONE AFTAH
ANOTHAH.



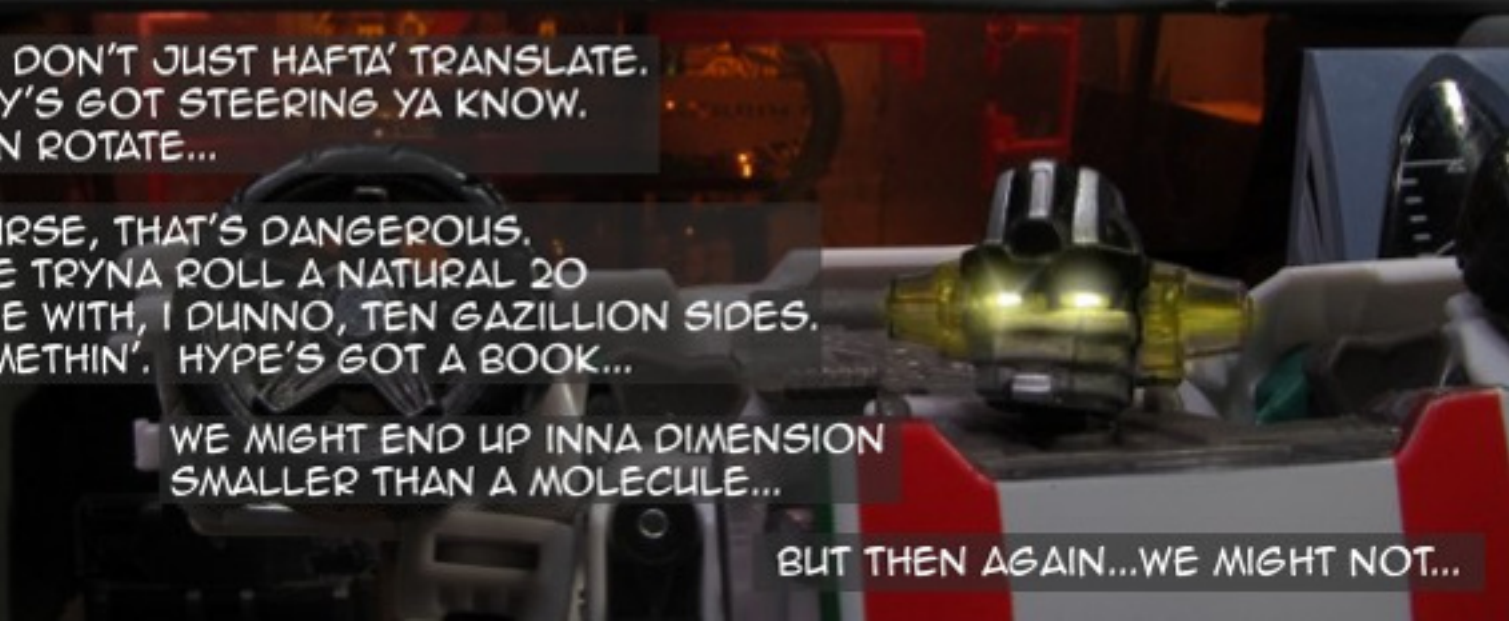
IT'S ALL OVAH, BUT THERE
AIN'T NO SINGIN'...

NAOW, I DON'T JUST HAFTA' TRANSLATE.
MY BABY'S GOT STEERING YA KNOW.
SHE CAN ROTATE...

OF COURSE, THAT'S DANGEROUS.
IT'S LIKE TRYNA ROLL A NATURAL 20
ON A DIE WITH, I DUNNO, TEN GAZILLION SIDES.
OR SOMETHIN'. HYPE'S GOT A BOOK...

WE MIGHT END UP INNA DIMENSION
SMALLER THAN A MOLECULE...

BUT THEN AGAIN...WE MIGHT NOT...



NEEPO
NEEPO

DEEDEE
DEEDEE
DEE
DEE

NEEPO

NEEPO

B
7
E
R
K

HOW ABOUT THAT!

IT *CAN* MAKE
YOU GO BLIND.



⇒DING
DING!⇐

HANG ON TIGHT,
EVRA' ONE!

⇒SQUELCHED
CACKLING⇐



OH NO
YOU D-I-INT!



DEATH STAR

BEEEEEEEEOOOOOW

RRRRRRRRRR

SHINK!!!



OH...
HELL.




A GREEN
STAR...

WHEELJACK!

WHAT IS THAT
GREEN STAR?

WHERE ARE
WE, WHEELJACK?



WHEELJACK!
WE'RE HAVING SOME,
UH, PARANORMAL
ACTIVITY DOWN HERE!

⌘:LL7:74,
||ΔL::7::77:57




THAT'S
NO STAR...

...IS IT?


WE'RE
THERE.



THE DARK HEART
OF THE ALTERNITY...



A GREEN STAR,
A STAR THAT
HAD NO NAME...

A LEGO Star Wars scene featuring a droid with glowing blue eyes and a ship. The droid is in the foreground, and the ship is in the background. The scene is set against a dark background with a red diagonal line.

WE'RE HEADING
RIGHT FOR IT...

GOTTA'
TRANSLATE...

...GET US OUT OF HERE...

⇒CHOW-ROW-ROW-ROWWW...⇐

THUNK!
THUNK!

IT'S NO GOOD...
WE CAN'T
BREAK FREE...
NO SHIP CAN
BREAK FREE
FROM THIS PLACE...

ALL WHO TOUCH IT
ARE DRAWN IN...

WHEELJACK!
THIS IS TALA!

WHEELJACK! THIS IS TALA!
TALA: WHEELJACK! THIS IS TALA!
WHEELJACK: TALA: WHEELJACK! THIS IS TALA!
TALA: WHEELJACK! THIS IS TALA!
WHEELJACK: TALA: WHEELJACK! THIS IS TALA!
TALA: WHEELJACK! THIS IS TALA!

TACHYON ANOMALIES
DETECTED! TRANSWARP
CRAFT APPROACHING
FROM THE GREEN STAR-

THIS IS WEIRD. NO LIFEFORMS
ON BOARD...NO REACTOR PLANT
SIGNATURE...NO NAV BEACONS...
WHAT KIND OF SHIP-

I DON'T THINK IT IS A SHIP...






**BATTLE STATIONS!
ALL HANDS TO
BATTLE STATIONS!**

⇒EERAAW⇐

⇒EERAAW⇐

⇒EERAAW⇐



THE HALL CLOSET IS
NOT YOUR BATTLE STATION,
HACKER X3.



I SAW IT, D.P.
I LOOKED OUT
AND I SAW IT...

Duck
Cover

*"I'M STAYING
RIGHT HERE,
THANK YOU."*




O-KEH, SO, UH...
LET'S, AH, TARGET
SOME, UM, TORPEDAHS...

YEAH, DAT'S GOOD,
WE'LL GO WIDDAT, AN'...

OY VEY.







C'MON, KID, PICK UP.

ALL THE MENTAL
COMMUNICATION
POWERS OF THE
MICRON LINKAGE,
AND STILL THE
LINE IS BUSY...

⇒TSURLURLURL⇐

⇒TSURLURLURL⇐



⇒CALL FROM...HYPE-1⇐

⇒RRRRING⇐

⇒RRRRING⇐

HLH.

AND YET CELL
SERVICE SEEMS
TO WORK FINE...

COME TO THINK OF IT, I DID SIGN MY CONTRACT IN BLOOD...

A close-up photograph of a mechanical keyboard switch, specifically a Cherry MX Red, with its red LED light illuminated. The switch is mounted on a white keyboard plate. The background is dark and out of focus, showing other parts of the keyboard.

HM...


IF WE SURVIVE THE
END OF THE UNIVERSE,
I'M DEFINITELY
CHANGING CARRIERS.

HEY HYPE,
HOW'S IT
HANGING?

KINDA' LOW,
YOU SEE...

WE'RE IN HELL.

WHAT?!




WHAT DO YOU MEAN, HELL?

SAME PLACE
YOU'RE IN.

GGAH...
WHAT DID
YOU DO?

NOT ME. WHEELJACK--

SAY NO MORE.



SO, JACK SCREWED UP,
NOW YOU'RE ALL DEAD,
AND OUR RESCUE OP
IS COMPLETELY F--

NOT NECESSARILY.
YOU SEE, BURNOUT...




WE STILL
GOT THE
SHIP.

HOW?!

WELL...

A BIG WEIRD CREATURE
BURST OUT OF THIS PLACE.
IT LEFT THE GREEN STAR.
IT TRANSWARPED RIGHT BY
US, HEADED FOR THE PAST.
BUT THERE ISN'T ANY PAST.



THE CREATURE
EXPLODED, AND
BLEW US TO HELL.
LITERALLY.

"WELL, THAT WAS AN
UNBELIEVEABLE
STROKE OF LUCK..."

"YEAH. NOT TO MENTION, A MISLEADING SEGUE..."


"SO...IF YOU'RE HERE, CAN I GET A RIDE?"

SURE. WE'RE JUST STOPPING
TO PICK UP THE GREEN LADY.

WHAT?!!

HE DIDN'T TAKE THAT
VERY WELL...



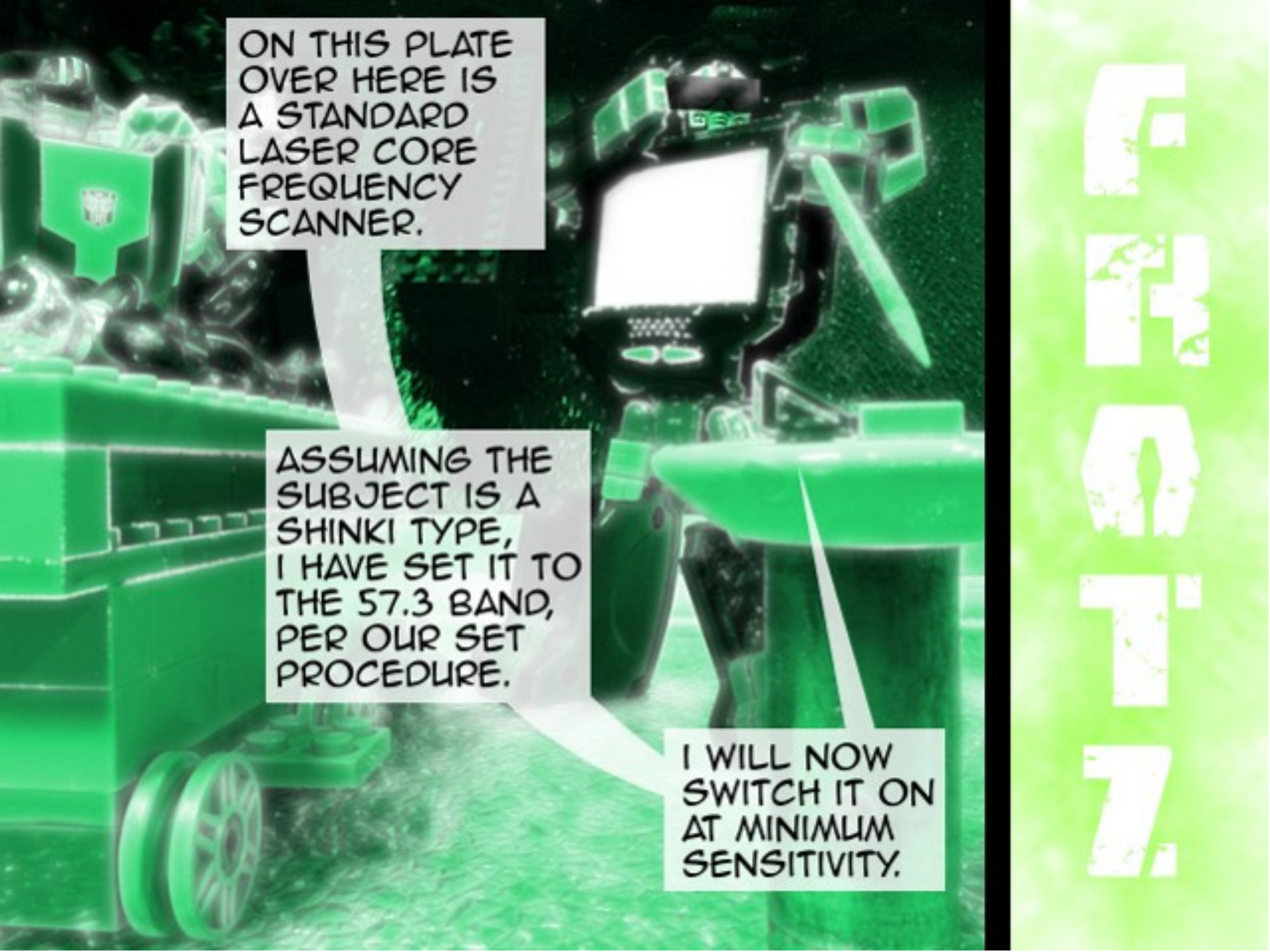


WELL, HACKEH,
IS SHE ALIVE?

ARE WE ALIVE,
WHEELJACK?

I ASKED
FOIST.

WELL...I'LL
SHOW YOU
WHAT I'VE
FOUND...

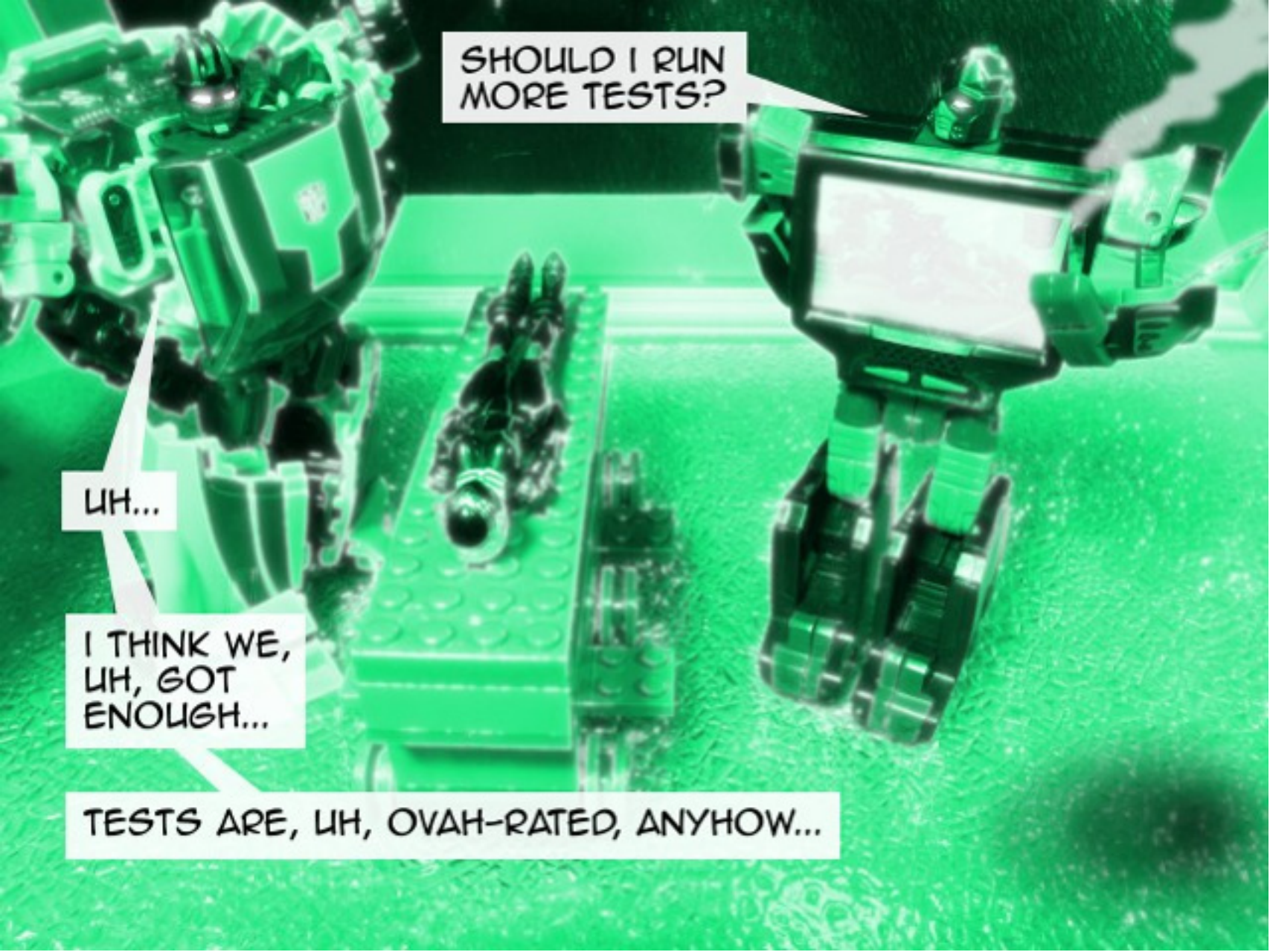


ON THIS PLATE
OVER HERE IS
A STANDARD
LASER CORE
FREQUENCY
SCANNER.

ASSUMING THE
SUBJECT IS A
SHINKI TYPE,
I HAVE SET IT TO
THE 57.3 BAND,
PER OUR SET
PROCEDURE.

I WILL NOW
SWITCH IT ON
AT MINIMUM
SENSITIVITY.

E
R
O
T
Z

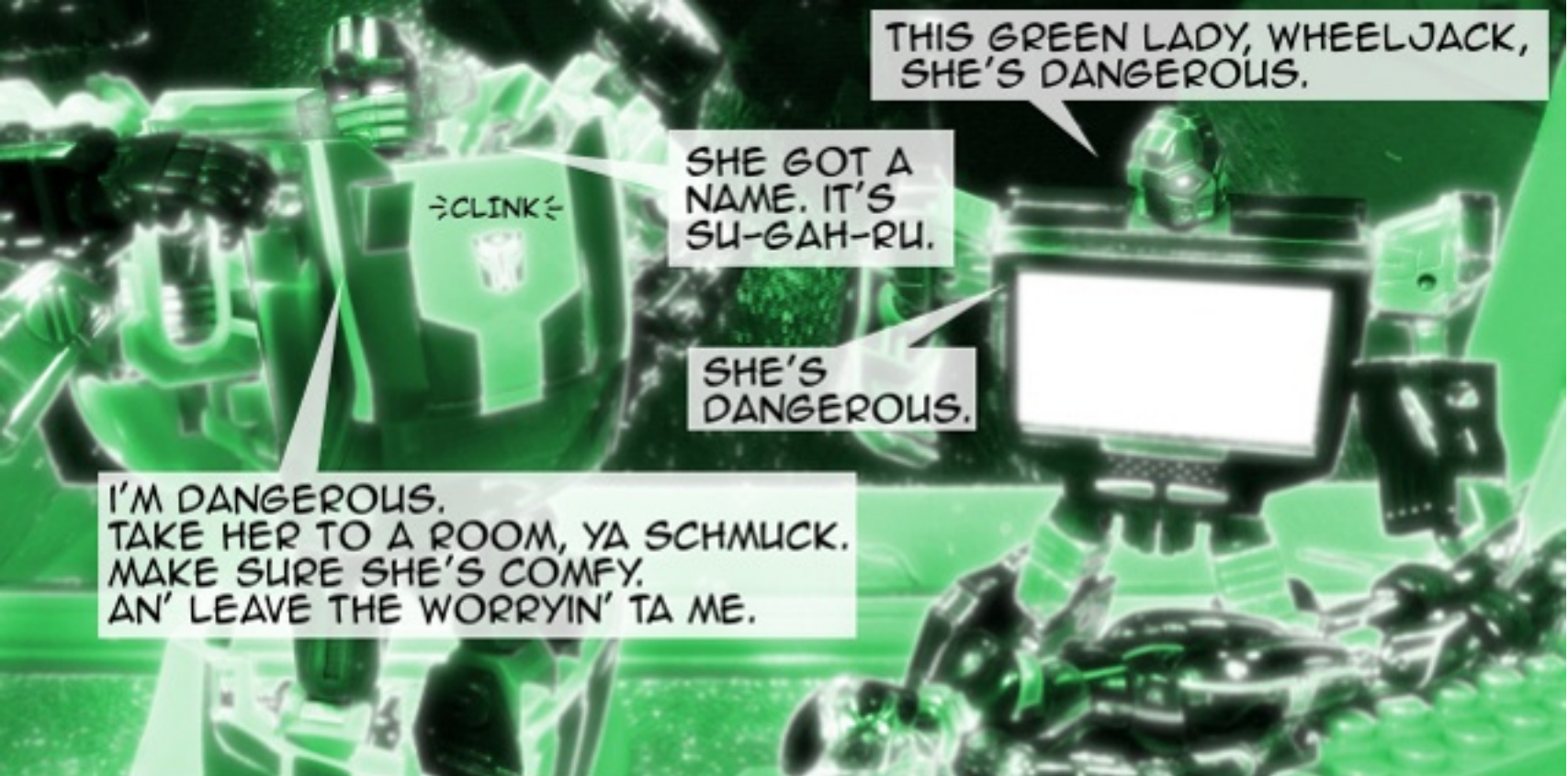
A LEGO Technic scene set against a black background. On the left, a large, complex robot with a grey and black body and a small black head with glowing red eyes. In the center, a small black figure with a white helmet lies on a grey Technic table. On the right, another large robot with a grey and black body and a black head with glowing red eyes. The scene is lit with a strong red light, creating a dramatic effect. Four white speech bubbles with black text are overlaid on the image.

SHOULD I RUN
MORE TESTS?

UH...

I THINK WE,
UH, GOT
ENOUGH...

TESTS ARE, UH, OVAH-RATED, ANYHOW...



THIS GREEN LADY, WHEELJACK,
SHE'S DANGEROUS.

CLINK


SHE GOT A
NAME. IT'S
SU-GAH-RU.

SHE'S
DANGEROUS.

I'M DANGEROUS.
TAKE HER TO A ROOM, YA SCHMUCK.
MAKE SURE SHE'S COMFY.
AN' LEAVE THE WORRYIN' TA ME.

HE'S RIGHT, YA KNOW.
WE PROB'LY SHOULDA
LEFT HER RIGHT THERE.


BUT WE BUSTED
INTA DIS PLACE,
TORPEDAHS
READY TA FIAH...




AN' RIGHT THEAH BELOW US WAS DA GREEN LADY...

HELPLESS, AN'
WIT MONSTAHS
ALL 'ROUND...

SO WE RESCUED HER. RIGHT?
BUT NOW WHAT DO WE DO?



WELL...

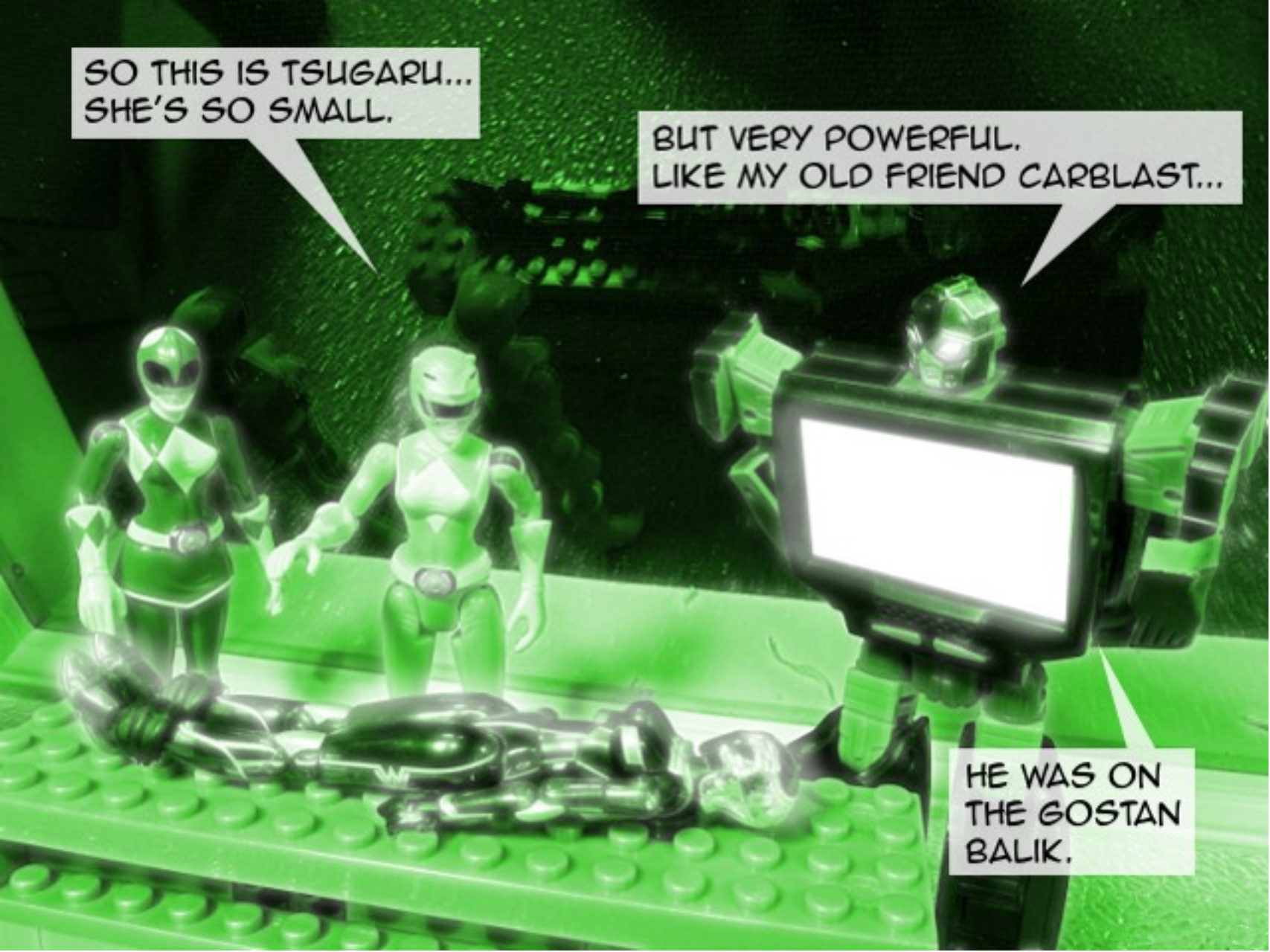


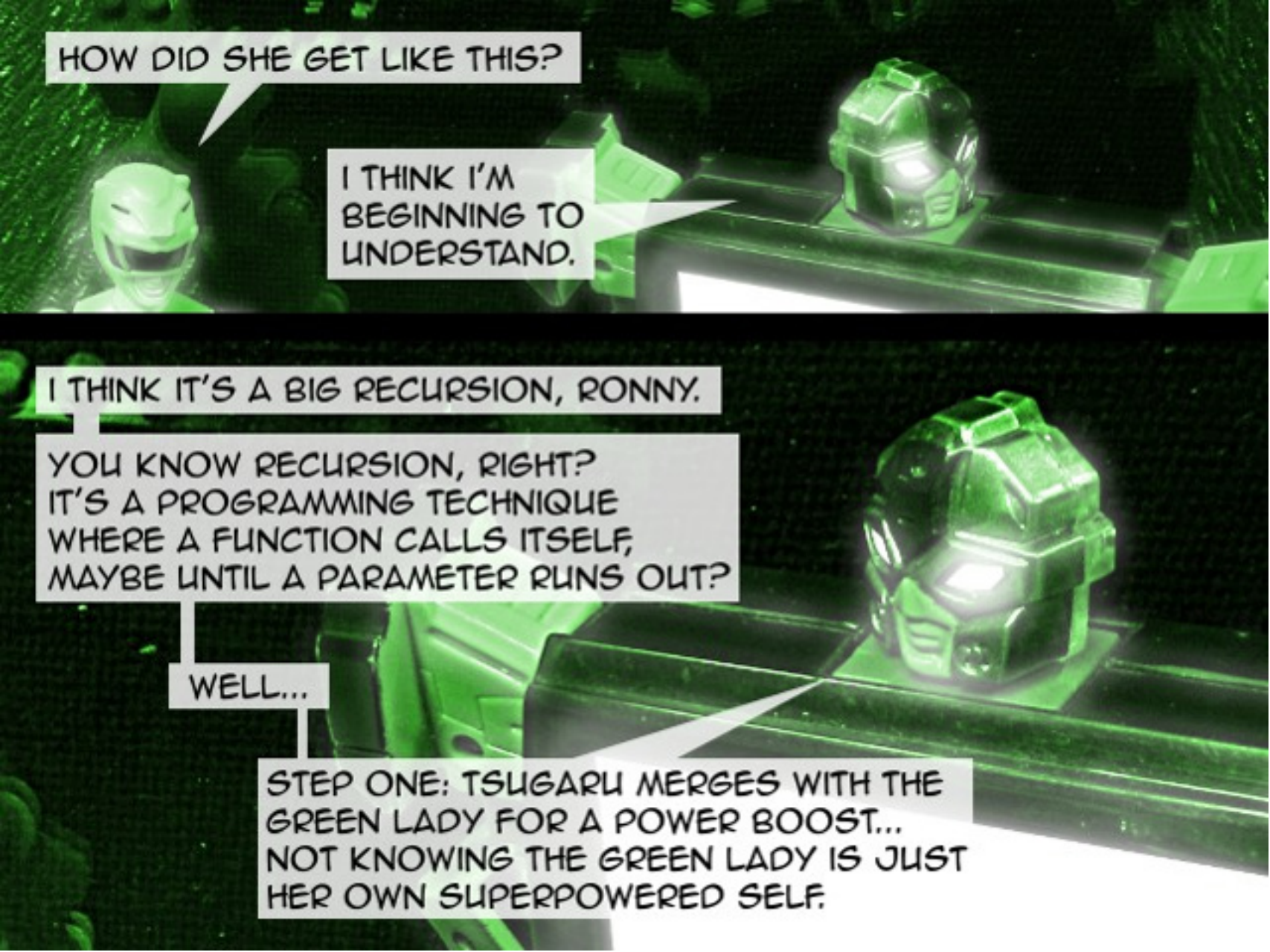
SHADDAP YOU.

SO THIS IS TSUGARU...
SHE'S SO SMALL.

BUT VERY POWERFUL,
LIKE MY OLD FRIEND CARBLAST...

HE WAS ON
THE GOSTAN
BALIK.



The image is a composite of two panels from the anime 'Mazinger Z'. The top panel shows the Green Mazinger Z on the left, looking towards a smaller robot head (likely the Green Lady's head) mounted on a mechanical structure on the right. The bottom panel is a closer shot of the same smaller robot head. The background is dark and industrial.

HOW DID SHE GET LIKE THIS?

I THINK I'M
BEGINNING TO
UNDERSTAND.

I THINK IT'S A BIG RECURSION, RONNY.

YOU KNOW RECURSION, RIGHT?
IT'S A PROGRAMMING TECHNIQUE
WHERE A FUNCTION CALLS ITSELF,
MAYBE UNTIL A PARAMETER RUNS OUT?

WELL...

STEP ONE: TSUGARU MERGES WITH THE
GREEN LADY FOR A POWER BOOST...
NOT KNOWING THE GREEN LADY IS JUST
HER OWN SUPERPOWERED SELF.

STEP TWO:
TSUGARU USES THAT
POWER TO TURN
A NIGHTMARE INTO
A ONE-WAY TRIP TO
THIS DIMENSION...

LOSING HER NAME AND HER
IDENTITY, AND BECOMING
STUCK HERE AS THE GREEN
LADY...FOR ALL TIME.

NOW LOOK BACK TO
STEP ONE AGAIN. AND
AGAIN. AND AGAIN...

DO YOU SEE WHAT IT IS, RONNY?
IT'S A RECIPE FOR A MULTIVERSAL
SINGULARITY. AN INFINITY OF
LIFETIMES IN ONE...I DON'T KNOW
IF...IF I SHOULD SAY THIS...AT A
TIME LIKE THIS...BUT PRIMUS...
SHE COULD HAVE RIVALED...



BUT SHE DIDN'T WANT THAT.
SHE WANTED THE ONE SHE LOVED.

POOR TSUGARU... BUT AT LEAST
SHE'S SAFE HERE, WITH US...

YES, WITH US. AND ALSO
WITH THE WHITE SERPENT,
AND WHEREVER ELSE?
THIS CAN'T BE GOOD...

NO, THIS CAN'T BE GOOD AT ALL.

THIS FUTURE, RONNY...
HE MAY HAVE HAD THE RIGHT IDEA...
KEEPING IT ALL FROM HAPPENING...

SHADOWDRAGON, I MEAN...

SHADOWDRAGON.

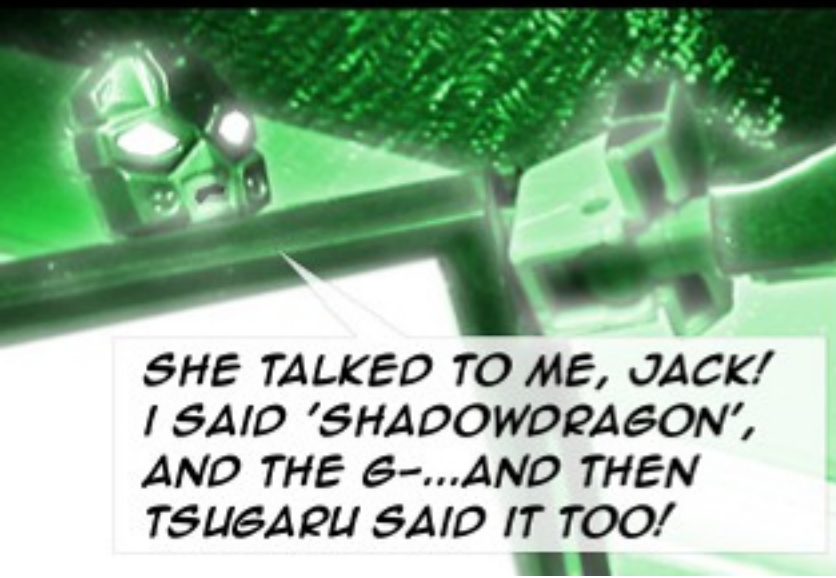





WAAAAAAAAAAAA!

SCREEEEEEEEEEEECH







N-NO...NOT ANGRY...MAYBE A LITTLE...SAD?
...AND I PROBABLY SOUNDED THE SAME...
....MAYBE SHE WAS ONLY REPEATING.

HM. SHE'S QUIET NOW, ANYWAY.
SEE, RONNY CALLED ME, JUST
BEFORE YA GOT HERE, HACKER.

SHE SAID YA'D RUN OFF
LIKE A LI'L CHICKENBOT.
CLASSY, GAMEBOY...

I'M...SORRY.
...I WAS SURPRISED...
I GUESS...I GOT...SCARED.

WELL YA' CAN'T
DO THAT. YA'
GOTTA KEEP YA
CHIPS COOL...



YA NEED TA THINK.


*I NEED TO THINK!
WHAT ABOUT YOU?!!*

I AM A SCIENTIST.
I ALWAYS THINK.

OH REALLY.

REALLY!

FOR EXAMPLE,
RIGHT NOW...



I THINK WE'RE GONNNA'
FLY DIS SHIP ALL ROUN'
THIS HEAH DIMENSION,
AN' RESCUE ALL DA
POOR SHMUCKS WE CAN
BEFOAH TIME RUNS OUT!


AAAUGH!!

IS THAT THE
GREEN LADY'S
SWORD?!

SURE IS!
WHADDYA THINK?

KEEPBLINK!

SEE, HE'S NOT
A THINKAH...



FORWAHD INTA DA MOUTH OF HELL ITSELF,
TA TEAR DA PREY FROM ITS VERRAH TEETH!

DIS HEAH DRILL A' MINE
GLOWS WITH AN
AWESOME POWAAAAAAAAAH-

⇒PHIZZ⇐


⇒WHIZZ⇐

OH, WAIT, I
SHOULD CALL
BURNAHT FOIST.




ROW
ROW
FIGHT
THE
POWER

JACK'S
CALLING!



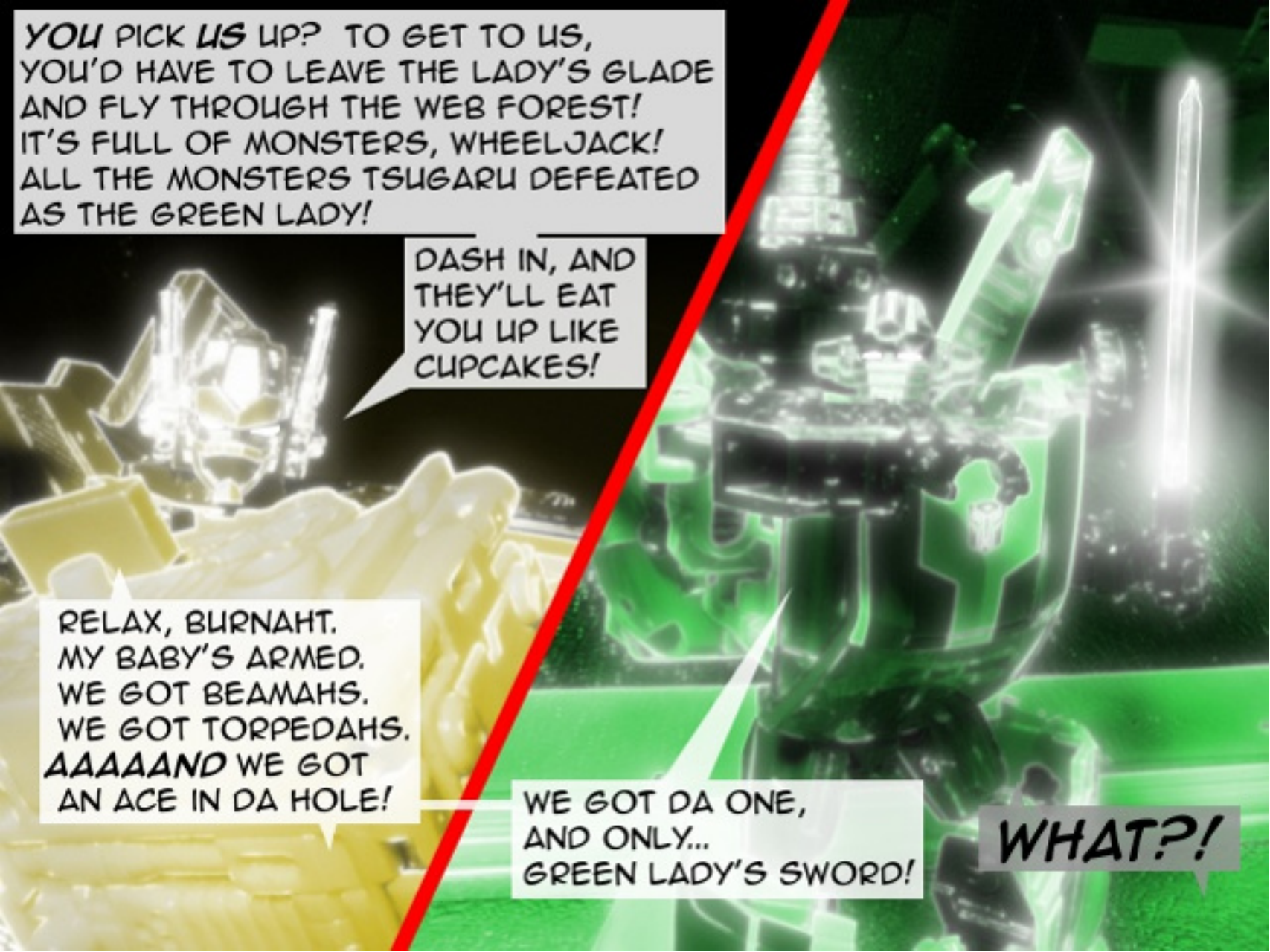
JACK! ARE YOU
ALL RIGHT? ARE
YOU UNDER
ATTACK?

HUH? WE'RE FINE. WE GOT DA
GREEN LADY ON BOAHD AHRIGHT,
UH, RAN HER VITALS, AN' PUT HER
IN A CABIN. MORE ON DAT LATEH...
OKAY, NOW LISSEN, BURNAHT...



I WANT YA' TA GO
'ROUND, AN' GET
EVERYONE
TOGETHAH, OK?

WE'RE COMIN'
TA PICK YA UP.
ALLA YOUSE.




YOU PICK *US* UP? TO GET TO US,
YOU'D HAVE TO LEAVE THE LADY'S GLADE
AND FLY THROUGH THE WEB FOREST!
IT'S FULL OF MONSTERS, WHEELJACK!
ALL THE MONSTERS TSUGARU DEFEATED
AS THE GREEN LADY!

DASH IN, AND
THEY'LL EAT
YOU UP LIKE
CUPCAKES!

RELAX, BURNAHT.
MY BABY'S ARMED.
WE GOT BEAMAHS.
WE GOT TORPEDAHS.
AAAAAND WE GOT
AN ACE IN DA HOLE!

WE GOT DA ONE,
AND ONLY...
GREEN LADY'S SWORD!

WHAT?!



YEAH, IT NEEDS A BETTER NAME, DOESN'T IT?

YOU'RE GOING TO NEED A BETTER NAME,
IF YOU USE THAT THING!

WHEELJACK, THAT SWORD REPRESENTS
A NEAR-INFINITY OF MORTAL LIFETIMES
SPENT IN BROKENHEARTED MISERY!

IT WAS FORGED
IN THIS HELL
AND TEMPERED
IN HER TEARS!!

DON'T USE IT!
PUT IT SOMEWHERE SAFE!

OH.

SO...I PROBABLY
SHOULDN'T USE
IT AS A BACK-
SCRATCHER?

*OF COURSE NOT!
WERE YOU?!*

UMMMM...NO?

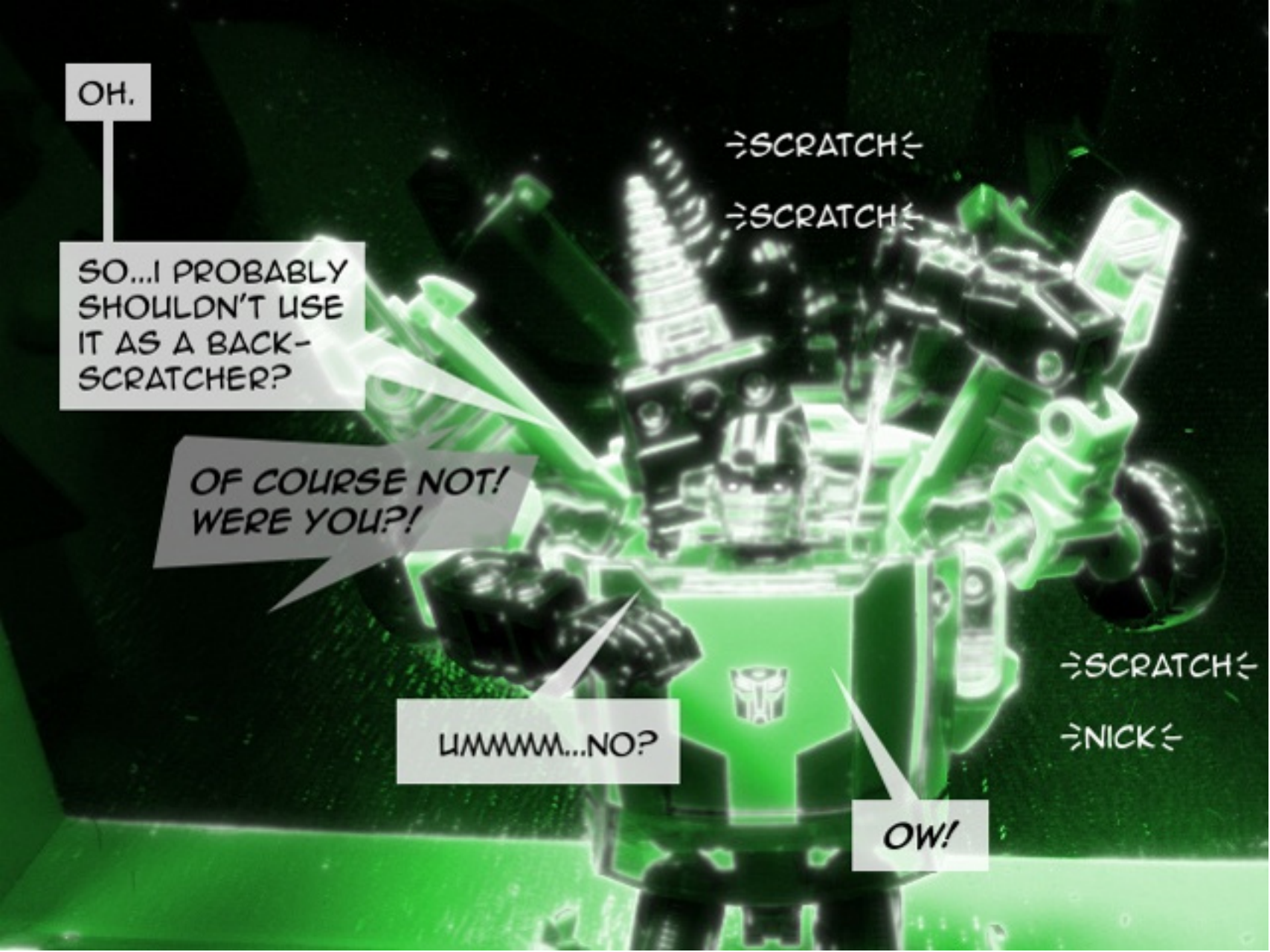
OW!

⇒SCRATCH⇐

⇒SCRATCH⇐

⇒SCRATCH⇐

⇒NICK⇐





DAMN THING
BIT ME!!

PUT IT DOWN. GENTLY.
LIKE IT'S A BABY...

DON'T DO ANYTHING
ELSE. NOTHING!
UNTIL I ASK THE
LINKAGE...

UH...BURNAHT?

⇒MMMM-MMMM-MMMM-MMMM




I T'INK I
MADE DA
BABY CRY...

UH...LULLABY...
AN' GOODNIGHT...



...RONNY?



ARE YOU
ASTERN?

UH, NO...

WE'RE ON OUR WAY
THERE, THOUGH, TAKING
HACKER TO THE INFIRMARY.
WHAT'S UP, D.P.?

HULL NOISE,
I THINK. HOLD ON...

AN' WIT' RO-SES,
SLEEP TI-IIGHT...



WHAT IS IT?
WHO'S THERE?

I.

WH-WHAT--!

The blade.



WHEELJACK!!

DAT'S RIGHT...I'M...WHEELJACK...

I T'INK IT'S GONNA BE OKAY...
I T'INK IT'S GOIN' BACK TA SLEEP...



IT'S CALLED THE
'FORBID BLADE'...

THE LINKAGE SAYS DROP IT!
DROP IT, JACK, AND RUN!



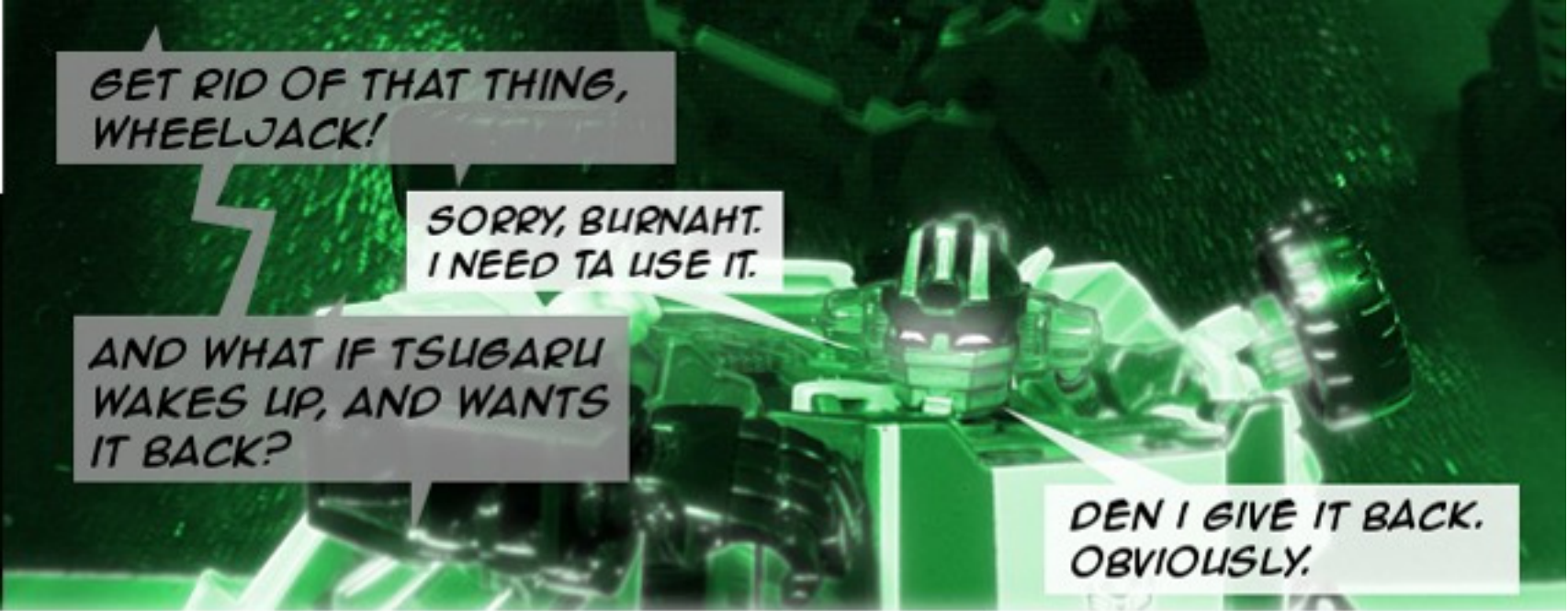
DROP IT WHY?

AND RUN FROM WHAT?
YA' PANICKING, BURNAHT.

IT'S A G-G-GHOOST!!

The blade!
Where is the blade?
Who has the blade?

'YA NEED TA BE MORE LIKE RONNY.
SHE WOULDN'T BE FREAKIN' OUT LIKE DAT.'

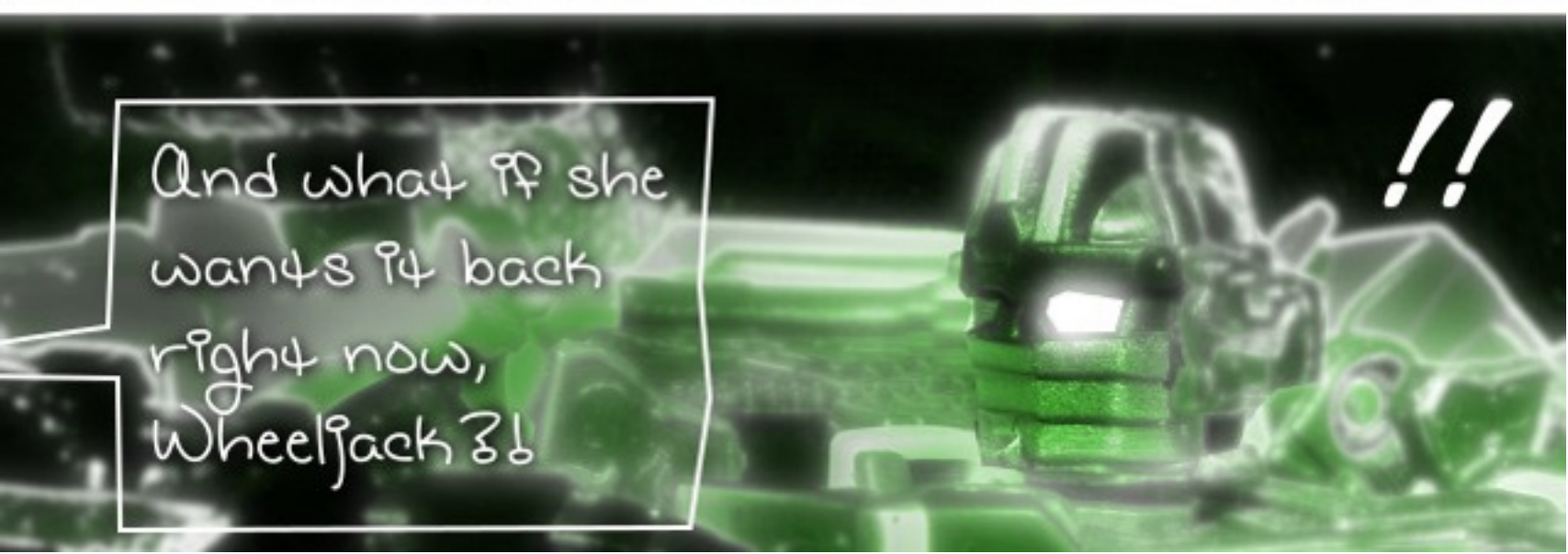


GET RID OF THAT THING,
WHEELJACK!


SORRY, BURNAHT.
I NEED TA USE IT.

AND WHAT IF TSUGARU
WAKES UP, AND WANTS
IT BACK?

DEN I GIVE IT BACK.
OBSVIOUSLY.



And what if she
wants it back
right now,
Wheeljack?!



⇒VRRRRROOM!⇐

B-BACK!

IF SU-GARA
WANTED IT
RIGHT NOW,

DEN I'D GIVE
IT BACK,
RIGHT NOW!

BUT YOU AIN'T HER!



That's right.
I'm not.

I'm Stellite.

And since
I'm a Micron,
that blade
has no power
over me.

Hand it over,
Wheeljack,
before it
eats you up.







YA' CUTE, STELLA.
AND YA' GOT CHUTZPAH.
I LIKE DAT. BUT...
I'M NOT GIVIN' YA DA BLADE.

IT AIN'T
YOURS.

Oh really,
Wheeljack?



That
blade
is a
shard
of
Side-
swipe's
soul.



His ruthlessness
in every fight...

His buried urge
to destroy...

The only thing
Sideswipe feared...

You're holding it in your hand.

CLATTER

TAKE IT!

TAKE IIIIT!!







Quick, now...
my 4-time in the
light is...is short or...

...Wheeljack...
Let's...go get...
your friends...



FWOOOSH!


All right, Jack.

We are leaving
the Lady's Glade.
It's surrounded
by the Web Forest.

Burnout and the gang are on the
other side of the Web Forest.
It's a nasty maze, there's no
way around it, and it's full of
interdimensional monsters.



YEAH, WE SORTA' SAW ONE
ON DA WAY IN. PURPLE, HAD
TENTACLES, T'REE EYES...



Oh, one of those? That's a larval form.
The full-grown ones are kinda' nasty.

FULL-GROWN?

Never mind. Here's how we'll do this.
You're going to take this crate up to
maximum speed. You're going to shut
off all the lights, and darken all the
windows. I'm going to sit on the roof
and call down directions, and you
steer exactly where I tell you.



FLYIN' BLIND.
COOL.

It's the safest way.
I can't risk you
losing your nerve.

AND WHAT ABOUT
YOU, STELLITE?

I'll be fine.



I won't
be alone.

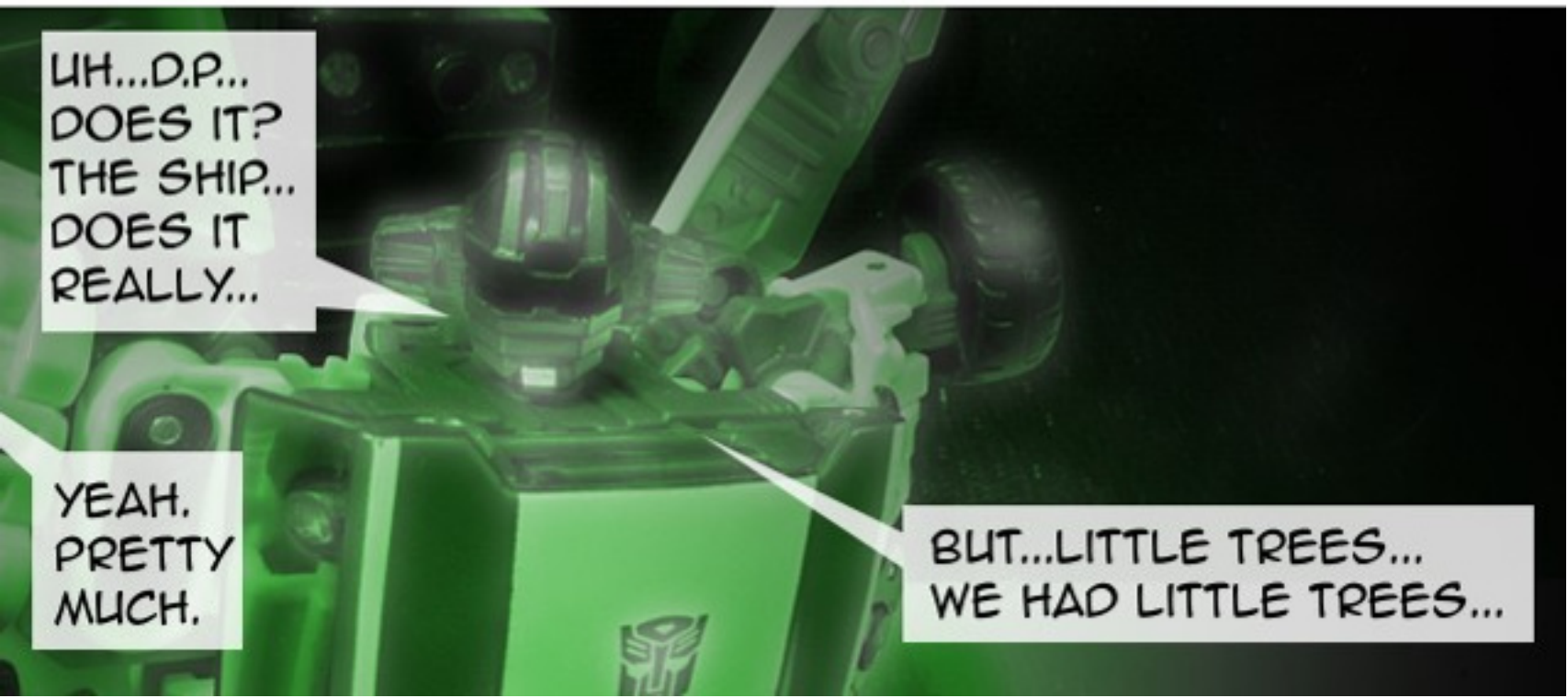
WHY DON'T YA STAY INSIDE?
WE'LL GIVE YA A WINDA' SEAT,
IF YA NEED TA SEE OUT.





Nah.
The ship
smells like
nerd.

See ya.



UH...D.P...
DOES IT?
THE SHIP...
DOES IT
REALLY...

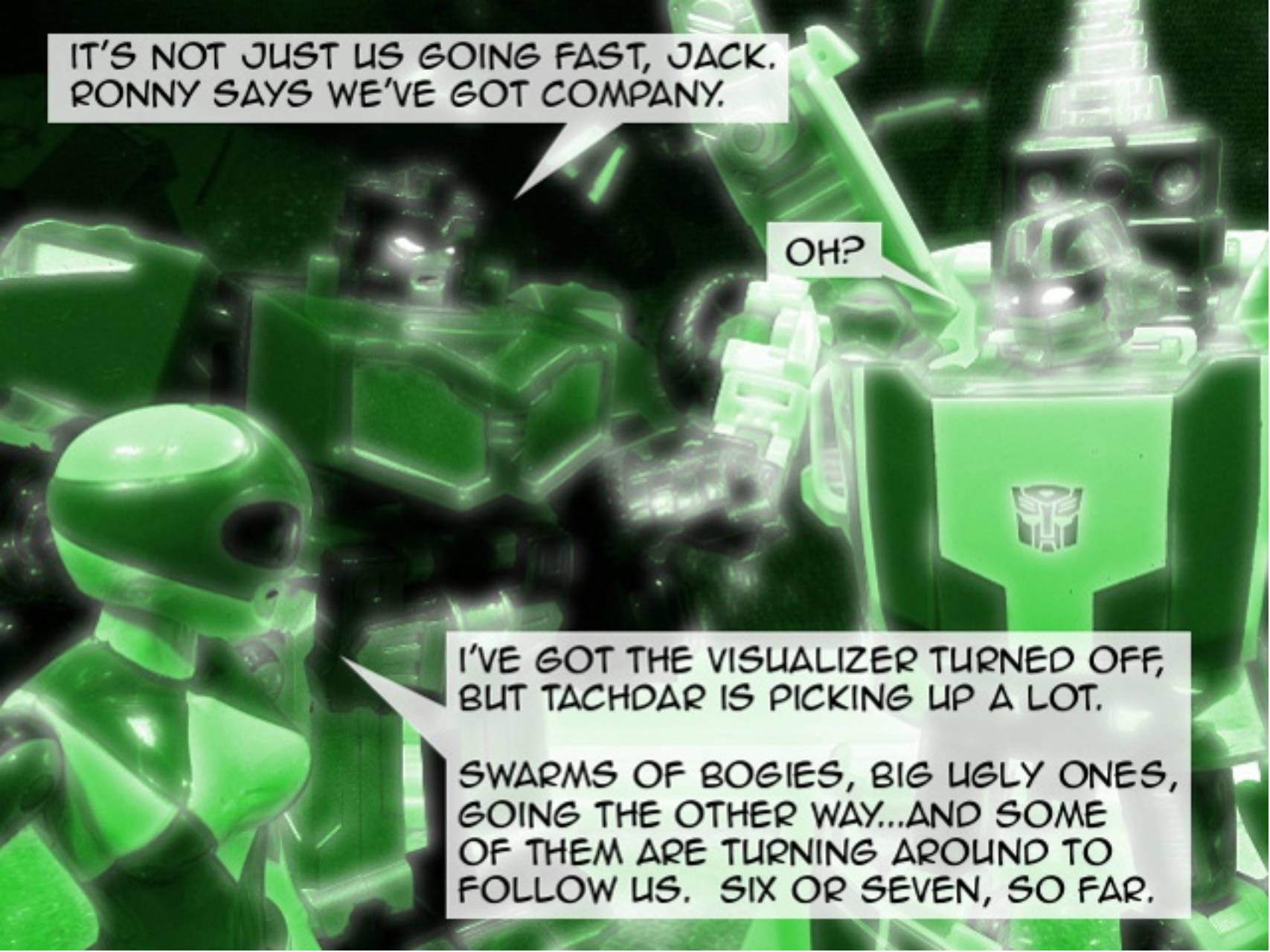
YEAH.
PRETTY
MUCH.

BUT...LITTLE TREES...
WE HAD LITTLE TREES...

'FLYIN' BLIND
T'ROO DIS
UNNERWORT,
DIRECK'ED BY
A GHOST...'



'AT LEAST
WE'RE MAKIN'
GOOD TIME!'



IT'S NOT JUST US GOING FAST, JACK.
RONNY SAYS WE'VE GOT COMPANY.

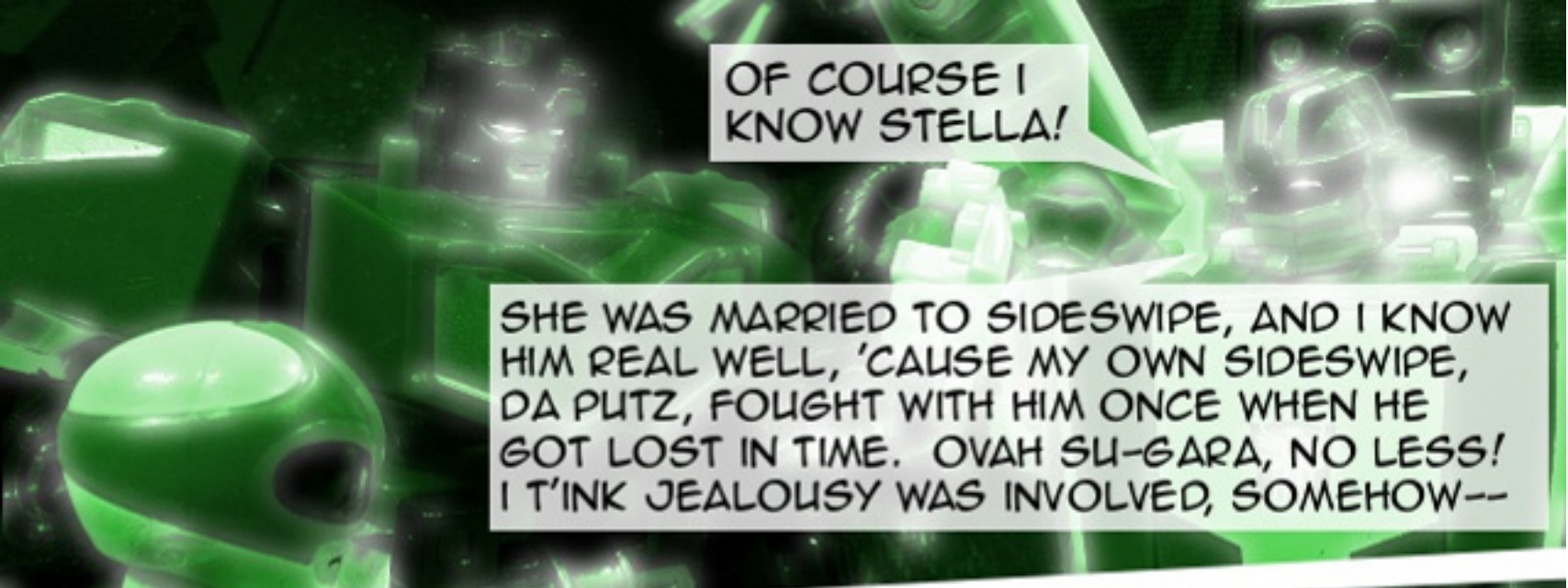
OH?

I'VE GOT THE VISUALIZER TURNED OFF,
BUT TACHDAR IS PICKING UP A LOT.

SWARMS OF BOGIES, BIG UGLY ONES,
GOING THE OTHER WAY...AND SOME
OF THEM ARE TURNING AROUND TO
FOLLOW US. SIX OR SEVEN, SO FAR.


'HOW WELL
DO YOU KNOW
THIS STELLITE,
CAPTAIN JACK?'





OF COURSE I
KNOW STELLA!


SHE WAS MARRIED TO SIDESWIPE, AND I KNOW
HIM REAL WELL, 'CAUSE MY OWN SIDESWIPE,
DA PUTZ, FOUGHT WITH HIM ONCE WHEN HE
GOT LOST IN TIME. OVAH SU-GARA, NO LESS!
I T'INK JEALOUSY WAS INVOLVED, SOMEHOW--



YOU...
GAGO!


OY.

OKAY, HER DIRECTIONS HAVE
BEEN A-OK SO FAR, BUT I ALWAHS
SAY IT NEVAH HURTS TA BE CAREFUL.
RIGHT? LEMME GO GET HYPE...

A close-up shot of a robot's head, featuring a green visor with white horizontal stripes. The robot is in a dark environment, and its hand is visible in the foreground, holding a small, glowing green object.

OKAY, HYPE. YOU'RE
BETWEEN DA HULLS,
RIGHT ABOUT WHERE
STELLA OUGHT TA BE.


DON'T WORRY ABOUT
LEAKS, CAUSE WE'RE
IN ATMOSPHERE, AND
DON'T WORRY ABOUT
BIRNAHT. MARSMAN'S
STAYIN' WITH HIM.

A robot with a green visor is shown in a dark, industrial setting. The robot is holding a small, glowing green object. The background is dark and filled with mechanical components.

WHADDYA HEAR,
HYPE? IS SHE
STILL THERE?

UH...YEAH.
SHE'S THERE...
WAIT.

SHE'S...
SHE'S TALKING.



SHE'S DEF
TALKING TO
SOMEBODY...


,,,BUT I
CAN'T MAKE
OUT WORDS,
AND I CAN'T
HEAR WHO...

HEY MARSMAN.
WHY DON'T YOU
LEAVE BURN
AND TAKE A
QUICK LOOK
TOPSIDE?

⇒BEEP
VZZZT⇐

NO NEED TO
BE RUDE,
MARSMAN.

Calling:
MARSMAN

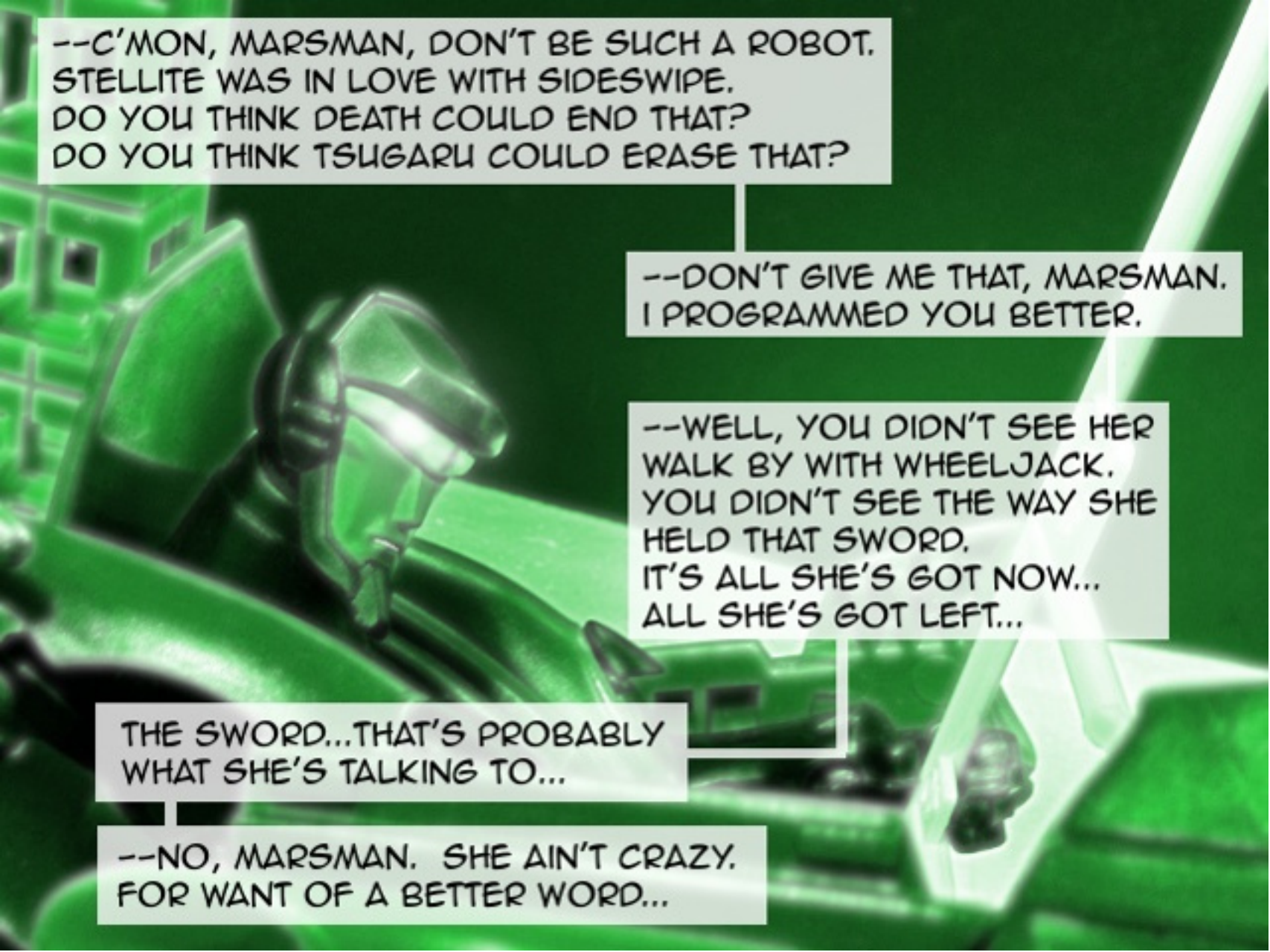


--NO, MARSMAN,
DON'T LET JACK KNOW ABOUT IT.
HE'S LIABLE TO BLAST STELLITE OFF THE ROOF
IF HE THINKS SHE'S UP TO SOMETHING.

--WHAT DO YOU
MEAN, 'PROTON
STREAMS'?

--NO, I DON'T REALLY
THINK SHE'S UP TO
SOMETHING, BUT
WOULD YOU BLAME
STELLITE IF SHE WAS?

I WOULDN'T BLAME HER.
MOS DEF I WOULDN'T.



--C'MON, MARSMAN, DON'T BE SUCH A ROBOT.
STELLITE WAS IN LOVE WITH SIDESWIPE.
DO YOU THINK DEATH COULD END THAT?
DO YOU THINK TSUGARU COULD ERASE THAT?

--DON'T GIVE ME THAT, MARSMAN.
I PROGRAMMED YOU BETTER.

--WELL, YOU DIDN'T SEE HER
WALK BY WITH WHEELJACK.
YOU DIDN'T SEE THE WAY SHE
HELD THAT SWORD.
IT'S ALL SHE'S GOT NOW...
ALL SHE'S GOT LEFT...

THE SWORD...THAT'S PROBABLY
WHAT SHE'S TALKING TO...

--NO, MARSMAN. SHE AIN'T CRAZY.
FOR WANT OF A BETTER WORD...

SHE'S A
PERS--




SON OF EARTH,
SON OF CYBERTRON...

WHAT IS A PERSON
BUT A BLURRY ROBOT,
ALL TOO PREDICTABLE,
AND ALL TOO
PROGRAMMABLE?

Hype66






**CAPTAIN!!
CAPTAIN JACK!**

**SOUND THE
ALARM!**

**THE PINK PICKUP'S
LED US INTO A TRAP!**




HAS SHE, NOW?



AAAUGH!
WHAT ARE YOU?!



HE'S YOUR FRIEND
WHEELJACK, HYPE




DON'T YOU
RECOGNIZE HIM?

T-TALA!! RONNY! NO!

A green Bionicle robot, Marsman, is shown floating in space. He has a green head with two large eyes, a green torso with a central opening, and green limbs. He is holding a green object in his right hand. The background is a solid green color.


**MARSMAN!
GET TO A SHUTTLE!**

**THE CREW! THEY'VE
ALL BEEN TURNED
INTO MONSTERS!!**

A green toy robot, possibly a Transformer, is shown from the chest up. It has a red zigzag pattern on its chest and a speech bubble coming from its mouth. The background is a bright green gradient.

THERE ARE NO
MONSTERS HERE,
HYPERION.

H-HACKER?!



WHAT-?

...OH NO...

CRASH!!!

HYPERION.

NOTHIN'.
HIT 'IM AGAIN.

NO, WAIT...HERE
HE COMES...



YOU'RE ONE
LUCKY MECH,
HYPERION.

NEXT TIME,
DON'T LOOK.

To be fair, Moonscream, Hype was following orders. From a moron.

HEY, I TOLD YA I WAS REAL SORRY, STELLA...

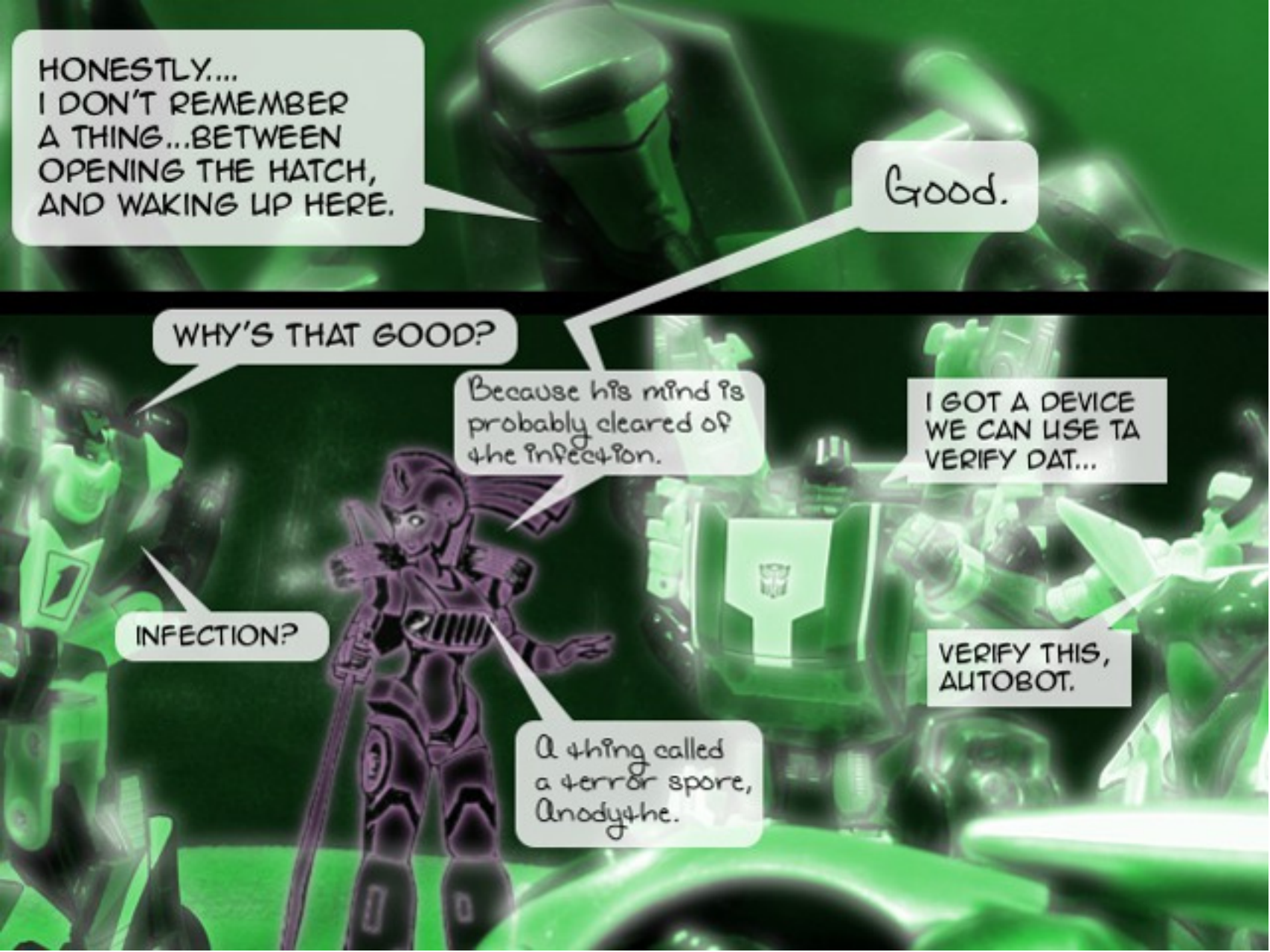
See this, Jack?

This is my hand.
Talk to the hand.
It's listening.

S-STELLITE!

Hello, Hype.
Did you enjoy the show?





HONESTLY...
I DON'T REMEMBER
A THING...BETWEEN
OPENING THE HATCH,
AND WAKING UP HERE.

Good.

WHY'S THAT GOOD?

Because his mind is
probably cleared of
the infection.

I GOT A DEVICE
WE CAN USE TO
VERIFY DAT...

INFECTION?

VERIFY THIS,
AUTOBOT.

A thing called
a terror spore,
Anodythe.



WHAT'S A
TERRA'
SPORE?

It's the full-grown form
of that weird thing you
saw in space, outside.


FULL-GROWN?
HOW BIG?

Tiny. It's a spore...
but instead of a log,
it rots your mind.

I'VE SEEN IT BEFORE.
JUST ONE CASE...

Did the patient recover?

NAW, HE WENT ON TO DIRECT
3 TRANSFORMERS MOVIES.



MOONSCREAM, DID YOU REALLY
TREAT MICHAEL BAY, OR DID YOU
JUST MAKE THAT UP?

READ MY LAVISHLY
ILLUSTRATED COMIC,

**House of 1000
Seekerlets,**


AT SEEKERLETS.
COMICGENESIS.COM,
AND YOU'LL FIND
OUT, ANODYNE!

I CERTAINLY WILL,
SOON AS I UPDATE MY
OWN PHOTOCOMIC,

ANODYNE AND KIDS,

PUBLISHED IN THE
TFW2005.COM
FUNNIES FORUM!

EVERYBODY
GOT THAT?




I GUESS I OWE YOU
MY LIFE, STELLITE.


No one here is alive.

THE INTEGRITY
OF MY MIND, THEN.
SOUL, WHATEVER.

I guided your ship.
That's all, Hype.
I didn't deactivate
the terror spore, or
restore your delusional
thoughts and warped
perceptions.



I'm a researcher, Hype.
I don't have powers like that.




AREN'T YOU A GHOST?

A ghost is a shadow of a thing that was. I don't believe that's what I am, or you, or any of us here. Dead? Sure.

But not ghosts. I don't believe in ghosts.

I'm Stellite, and Stellite is a girl who finds things out.

I've studied everything I can. Terror spores, the Legion, the Green Lady, the White Serpent...



This blade I hold in my hand... -and, yes, Hype. I talk to him.

A weapon.



To some people, that's all Sideswipe was. Sometimes, to himself...but I knew him. This blade is not forbidden to me, because I know him.

At various times in history, it has been given to Microns. I am Micon; we are in linkage. We can use this terrible thing.

Anyone else who used it was eventually swallowed up... becoming a relentless killing machine.

And here is the strange part. I knew some of this...before I died. Sideswipe and I...we transcribed stories about this blade...it appears many times in Micon legends.

One we found was its origin story...




We found a piece of
an ancient engraved
record plate.

On it were several
verses of a song.

The title of the song:

'The Battle of the
Thunderbird...
and the Serpent'.



HEY, DEMS.

WHAT,
CYC?


CAN WE LOOK
FOR FUEL?
I'M HUNGRY.

FUEL, CYC?
HERE?!


WHAT ARE WE
LOOKING FOR,
ANYWAY, THRUST?

A PORTAL OUT OF HERE.
AND TSUGARU...
WHATEVER WAS LEFT OF HER
AFTER HER LAST FIGHT HERE.


MOONSCREAM SAID
THEY WON'T BE FAR...

A close-up of a robot's head, likely Inferno, with a speech bubble pointing to it.

INFERNO.

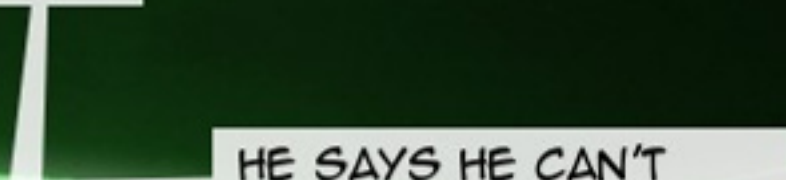
A close-up of a robot's head, likely Inferno, with a speech bubble pointing to it.

HE'S FOUND
SOMETHING...

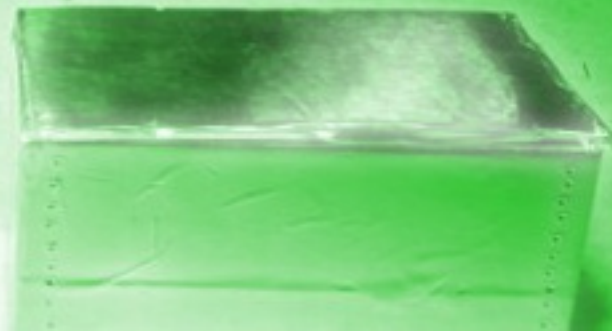
A robot, Inferno, is shown from the waist up, pointing its right arm towards a small box on the ground. A speech bubble points from the robot to the box.

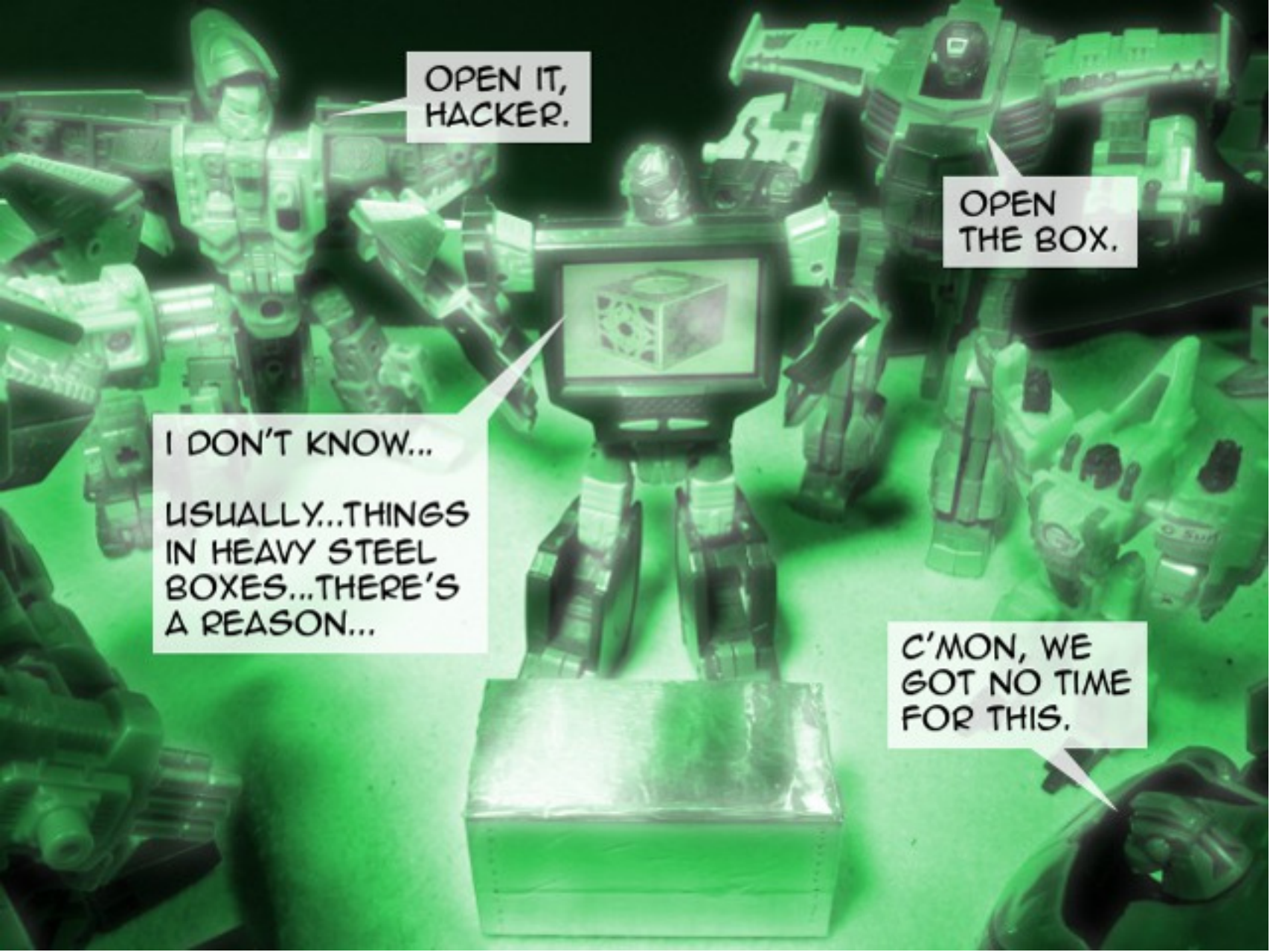
LOOK!
A BOX...

⇒BEEP
BZZT⇐

A speech bubble points from the robot's previous speech to a larger speech bubble containing more text.

HE SAYS HE CAN'T
TELL WHAT'S IN IT...
IT'S THICK...SHIELDED...






OPEN IT,
HACKER.

OPEN
THE BOX.

I DON'T KNOW...

USUALLY...THINGS
IN HEAVY STEEL
BOXES...THERE'S
A REASON...

C'MON, WE
GOT NO TIME
FOR THIS.




CANISTERS.
THREE SMALL CANISTERS.

SEALED
WITH LEAD...

THEY'RE MUCH
TOO SMALL FOR...

OPEN
THEM!



KONAMI!

THEY'RE--

**HOSTESS
FRUIT PIES!**

**WITH LIGHT, TENDER CRUST
AND REAL FRUIT FILLING?!**

**HOSTESS
FRUIT PIES...
...YES...**

**IN THE LAND
OF THE DEAD.**

**YOU GET A BIG DELIGHT
IN EVERY BITE OF
HOSTESS FRUIT PIES!**



