

Dynamic Power Rangers

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Taylor Hicks works for Astral Dynamics which has recently come upon a floating island in the sky with a cache of half finished Morph Tech. He soon finds himself embroiled with a secret project to test the technology and an alien plot to conquer the planet. He, along with the Dynamic Power Rangers, must now protect the Earth from this new threat.

** Goseiger Adaptation*

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1 - Impossible Pilot .1

Taylor Hicks was a man who generally enjoyed his job. He loved to fly. He got to fly. When he wasn't tasked with test flying experimental aircraft the company he worked for developed, he was flying hither and yon making passenger and supply runs. Astral Dynamics had research facilities; it seemed, all over the world. The main office was in Los Angeles. He'd been working out of Clear Water Creek, California for the past two years. He'd been to many other places. He didn't always know what was going on at said places. He assumed it was science-y stuff that went over his head.

This particular day, he was making both a cargo and passenger run to a new facility AD was trying to get established. He wasn't told much; just that it was based in the mountains over Starkweather Valley. He was given a set of coordinates that included altitude as well as longitude and latitude. "We're almost over the city," he said to his passenger, a pretty African-American girl with dark eyes, blondish hair and a green tinge to her face.

Tempest Strong nodded. She hated flying so she hadn't said much. She just nodded at him. She liked to think of herself as a brave person. She'd chosen to be paramedic over studying to become a surgeon because of the fast pace of the life. That and she couldn't afford medical school. It was part of the reason she was taking this job with Astral Dynamics. They were going to pay her very well.

Tay shot her a crooked grin. People who afraid of flying amused him. He frowned as he checked his instruments. He was almost on the base but the mountains were still in the distance. He grabbed his radio to double check his coordinates were right when something slammed into the tail of the plane.

Tempest screamed and gripped her seat for dear life.

Tay couldn't even begin to imagine what had hit him but before he went into a tailspin, he managed to bring the nose back up. "May Day. May Day. Astral Dynamics Base, this is Cargo Plan Delta. We're coming in hot. Where the hell are you guys? There's nothing at the coordinates supplied to me," he said into his radio. He could barely talk. It was taking all his will power to keep the plane in the air. It was shaking so hard he thought Tempest was going to pass out from fear.

"Delta, this is Sky Base. Keep on your trajectory. You're almost on top of us. Whatever you do, do not lose altitude," a male voice said over the radio.

"What the hell are you talking about there's nothing--never mind," he said and almost lost the plane when a city in the sky appeared below him. It had gleaming white spires and pointed domes, and a lake and river and a waterfall that fell off the side of the floating hunk of earth but ended in a cloud of mist that surrounded the entire thing. He could clearly see the make shift landing strip. "Hold on. This is going to be bad," he warned Tempest.

"How can it get worse?" she asked.

Tay didn't have time to explain that the plane was on fire and their landing gear was gone. He went in for

the landing. He hit the ground hard. Tempest screamed. Luckily, Tay managed to go in at an angle, but they still jumped and skipped and spun around several times. It was a monstrous effort not to let it flip over.

They finally shuddered to a stop. People came running using water buckets to put out the fire. Tay took off his headset and collapsed backwards in his seat. He was going to pay for exerting so much energy.

When he opened his eyes again he realized he'd passed out. He was now lying on the ground near the plain with Tempest Strong poking and prodding him. "I'm fine. I'm fine," he assured her and sat up.

"Baby, that was amazing," she told him with stars in her eyes.

Tay shrugged it off without a word. He heard a loud whoop. It was an oddly familiar sound. He turned his head. Out of one of the white buildings, a lanky Latino man was running toward them. "I knew there was only one person in the universe that could have made that landing," he cried. "Eagle Eye Hicks. Son of gun," he declared.

Tay grinned and got to his feet. "Ramrod!" he greeted.

The other man hugged him and beat on his back. "Man, you should have seen yourself trying to bring in that plane. Still trying to upstage every other pilot in the world," he said and slapped Tay on the back again.

"I do what I can," Tay demurred.

"The boy is too modest," Tempest said. "He saved my life," she said.

"So he did. What I want to know is what happened to that plane," a new voice said. A short girl with red hair in a haphazard bun was walking toward them flanked by two soldiers with pistols strapped to their legs. Tay wasn't surprised. Astral Dynamics security force was composed of elite ex-military personnel.

He looked at the plane. Almost the entire back end was gone. He whistled. "I hope there's some fancy radar in this place. I'd like to know what hit me as well," he said.

"It's amazing you both survived," said the taller soldier with dark brown hair, green-gray eyes and a slightly sardonic air.

"How did you keep that bird in the air?" asked the other soldier. He was shorter and stockier than the other and slightly more serious and professional as evidenced by his short dirty-blond hair.

Tay shrugged.

"He's Eagle Eye Hicks," Enrique "Ramrod" Ramon announced.

"Eagle Eye Hicks?" Dr. Lark Walker asked, confused.

"It was my call sign in the Air Force," Taylor explained. "Name's Taylor, ma'am. Taylor Hicks," he said

politely.

She narrowed light gray eyes at him then checked something on the tablet she was holding. She frowned at him. "Ah," she said.

Taylor raised an eyebrow at her. "Ah?" he asked.

"That means she's less than impressed with you and you are no longer worth her attention," Sinclair Monning said with a faint grin.

"I get that reaction all the time," Taylor admitted.

"With good reason it seems. You barely passed high school, your grades declining drastically in your senior year. Your disciplinary record from the Air Force is plentiful, it's a wonder you weren't kicked out. After your honorable discharge you worked as an instructor in a martial arts establishment before finally being hired by the company. It seems, your only saving grace is your ability to fly aircraft," she declared.

"Yeah," Taylor said. He didn't really fancy his life being broken down like that. It made him sound as if he hadn't accomplished anything. True, most of his work in the Air Force was classified and before that, so top secret he couldn't even allude to it.

Ramrod slapped him on the back again. "Don't mind the Doc. She's always got her head in facts and figures," he said.

"I've met people like that," Tay said.

"Well, regardless of your skill at flying, you appear to be grounded here for awhile," Dr. Walker said. "Come, we'll escort you both to where you'll be staying," she said.

"What is this place?" Tempest asked. She was holding judgment on these people. She didn't care what that girl's computer said. Taylor Hicks had saved her life. In her books, that made him a hero.

"Maybe you shouldn't have asked," Ramrod said in a muttered whisper.

"It's an abandoned colony established by a race of aliens almost ten thousand years ago. A group of spelunkers found some items they assumed were Native American several years ago. It was determined they were actually extra-terrestrial. Further exploration of Stark Peak revealed a teleport pad. That's how we initially discover the city. We've spent months trying to decipher the writings so we can hopefully gain a better understanding of the technology.

"We didn't have any luck for the longest time until we hired a couple of experts in linguistics. Best in the world we were told," Dr. Walker explained, warming to her subject.

"Fox Oliver and Daiki Singuji?" Tay asked curiously, listening with half an ear. He was looking at everything with some awe.

Dr. Walker stopped and looked at him surprise. "Yes. How did you know?" she asked him.

"I guess your little computer didn't mention that I worked with Daiki in Angel Grove and Fox Oliver is a friend of the man I worked for," Tay couldn't help pointing out childishly. For a moment there he could sworn he saw the shorter soldier smile.

Dr. Walker sniffed. "After that, with an understanding of the language we began to figure out how to operate the city. We call it Sky Base. We're still in the process of bringing in supplies and personal for further research and exploration," she said. "We'll be staying in the Central Cathedral. It appears to be the nerve center of the island," she said.

"Lieutenant Houston, please see to Ms. Strong and her things," she said to the quiet soldier. "Lieutenant Ramon, I assume you can show Mr. Hicks to where he'll be staying?" she asked.

Ramrod nodded. "This way Hawk Eye," he said. Tay followed along. "How did you end up here, anyway? I thought you had your eye on all four stars," he said.

"I did, and then my Abuela got sick. Astral Dynamics paid a lot more than the Air Force," Ramrod answered.

"That they do," Tay agreed with a grin.

"You don't even know what the best part of this job is going to be," Ramrod said with a grin. He dropped Tay off at a sparse room and disappeared.

Tay didn't even bother to look around. He went straight for the bed and crashed face first.

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Gregory Houston, better known as Gore, had been an Army Ranger for all of six months. He had a dishonorable discharge on his record for disobeying a superior officer but he had reasons for what he'd done. The job offer from Astral Dynamics had been a God send.

After breakfast the following day, he came down to the wreckage of the plane. There was no way it should have stayed in the air. He couldn't even begin to imagine how that squirrely guy did it.

It was true, he hadn't been impressed with Taylor Hicks either. He was a not-tall not-short guy. Young, still in his early twenties. Sandy hair and hazel eyes and crooked smile that just screamed he was trouble. After hearing Dr. Walker's recitation of his life history, he was even less impressed.

So how the hell did someone like that not only keep half a plane in the air and land it safely as well?

The bigger question was what collided with the plane. It had to have been something going very fast and not overly large.

His headset beeped. He tapped a button on his wrist. "Houston," he said.

"Meet me in the lab," Dr. Walker ordered.

With one last glance at the mystery that was the cargo plane, Gore went back to the Center Citadel.

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Tay woke starving. He grunted when he realized he was still fully dressed and in the same position in which he collapsed the day before. He had to been asleep for over twelve hours. It'd been longer than since his last meal.

He got to his feet, found a bathroom, cleaned himself up and came back to his room, stripping down to his pants. He knew there was only one cure for the stiff ache in his body the overexertion of energy caused him. Exercise. He began his morning/waking routine of stretching, push ups, sit ups and chin ups. He ran into a slight problem with the chin-up. There was nothing to do them on.

He looked up. The ceiling was high and as he hoped, there were crossbeams that would easily support him. He bounced on his toes for a moment and jumped, bouncing off the bed, turning a half back flip to the opposite wall, landing feet against it to help him spring off again, bouncing off the other wall, and once more until he was able to grasp the beam. He steadied himself on his hands, holding his body upside down. He lowered himself gingerly and completed the set number of chin-ups.

Once he was finished, he simply let go. He fell feet first but his didn't crash. He generated a cushion of air beneath his feet and landed easily.

His stomach growled. He really needed food now. Throwing his boots and a shirt back on, he left the room in search of an eatery of some sort.

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Taylor had a good sense of direction, a good nose and the uncanny ability to not make a sound when he walked. He was pretty sure he was on the right track. He could smell food. He saw Ramrod and the tall soldier from the day before. He was about to go around the corner when he heard them talking. He paused, old habits from his youth coming to fore. He always had a knack for knowing when things were afoot.

"He's not going to be a problem is he, Ram?" the soldier asked.

"Who? Eagle Eye? No. He'll out of here when the next cargo planes in tomorrow," Ram said.

"Good. Something tells me Doc wouldn't like him finding out about the Lab."

Ram snorted. "Doc sure didn't seem to like him, did she, Sin? She doesn't get it though. After flight school, Eagle Eye got absorbed into some Special Forces stuff. It's all so top secret records don't even exist. I'm inclined to think he'd be a good candidate for the test," he said.

"I think there's more to it than doing some black ops and being able to fly well," Sinclair Monning commented.

"Like being able to shoot out the eye out of a bird at a thousand yards?" Ram asked, raising a brow.

"That helps I'm sure," he said.

Tay followed them until they entered an elevator of some sort. Frowning at his complaining stomach, he jumped down from the cross beams of the passage. Not for the first time he wondered at the design of the place. The ceilings were high, and the cross beams seemed to be designed for uses similar to his.

"What were you doing up there?" Tempest asked. She was getting acquainted with what will be the infirmary when Tay dropped from the ceiling in front of her door. She looked up at the crossbeams. "How did you even get up there?" she asked, jaw dropping.

Tay scratched his cheek as he looked up. "Uh...I jumped," he answered honestly.

Tempest gave him a look of disbelief. "If you don't want to tell me, that's fine. Don't make things up," she said and closed the door in his face.

Tay sighed. It was time for food. Maybe if he could get a signal up here, he'd call his friend Kane Watanabe. A friendly voice right now would be helpful. Speaking with someone who knew he wasn't a loser would just be a bonus.

He never realized before how his life might look to outsiders since he couldn't reveal half of it. Shrugging off those thoughts he headed toward the dining room where a make-shift mess had been set up.

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Lark Walker paged Tempest to the Lab after an accident left his right arm and the side of his face severely burned. She hated that it had to have happened that way. What she termed the Lab was filled with half finished, or almost finished, gadgets and gizmos and weapons. The computers were full of specs the original inhabitants of the city had been working on.

From what she and her experts had gathered, the alien races were called Caervinians. They'd been winged humanoid creatures. They'd had to flee their home world thousands of years before and then settled on Earth. Enemies followed. The ones who'd destroyed their world had come to do the same to Earth. They were still piecing together the history, but Lark's boss cared less about that than the technology of this lab. He wanted it operational as soon as possible.

Found in progress where what appeared to be six very advanced card readers that went on the wrist. Codes for the cards were stored in the computers and new codes could be written if necessary. Lark had more technicians to help her, but the emphasis was on getting the tech working. Period. Even if it meant one of the card readers erupting in the face of one of her tests subjects.

"The Green on appears to be broken," Sin pointed out.

"So I see," she said sharply. Tempest gave him a dark look as she treated his wounds.

"It's not as bad as it looks," Ram assured them. He hissed when Tempest applied some antiseptic to the

burns. "Aiee, mamasita," he cried out.

"Baby," Tempest responded.

Lark made a note of the malfunction. "The card for the red one still hasn't been located," she said with a frown. She meant the code in the computer. They'd found no cards already made, but she has been able to manufacture cards for the rest with the supplies found in the lab. Unfortunately, hardware was not her specialty. She had to wait for more staff to arrive before they could even attempt to repair it.

An alarm sounded.

"What's that?" Gore asked her.

She went to a terminal that accessed the entire computer core for the base. "The alarm is coming from a device at the top of the Citadel," she said. She saw a symbol blinking on her screen. She touched it. A blank white area on the wall of the Lab came to life, showing them a live video of Starkweather Valley.

Green slime ooze from the ground and them assembled into several green humanoid things with wicked curved bladed weapons that also seemed to shoot laser beams.

"It's an alien alarm system. Aliens are attacking the city," she said. She turned and eyed the card reader devices. "I was hoping to actually test their Morph capabilities before they were ever needed. My other three test subjects haven't even arrived yet. There's no one else qualified o hand," she said.

Sin went over and picked up one of the readers. In actuality it was a Morpher, which tapped into an energy field known as the Morphing Grid in some circles. They allowed a person to become a Power Ranger. "Then you and Tempest will just have to fill in. You're both well trained. You're as good at karate as you are at science stuff and Tempest is a champion boxer. You'll have to do. We can't just have this technology and do nothing when the city below us is under attack," he said.

He strapped the reader to his left wrist. It was basically the shape of a face, a motif abundant in the City. This particular face had blue eyes. There was a thin slot on the left of the face for sliding the Power Cards through. He grabbed the card that went to it.

"Are you sure about this?" Tempest asked as he picked up a Morpher and handed it to her.

"Isn't this why you became a paramedic?" Ram asked. "Go to it," he urged her.

Though trepidations she took the yellow eyed Morpher.

Sin handed the pink-eyed Morpher to Lark. She took it grimly.

He noticed the face Gore made. "There's no choice," he said.

Gore nodded and picked up the black-eyed Morpher.

"Now, how do we activate these things?" Sin asked, seeing the one big flaw in his attempt to be the

pep-talk guy.

Lark gave a grim smile. "DynaMorpher!" She held her arm up next to her face. The eyes glowed. "Pink Ranger Power!" She slid her card along the reader slot. A whirlwind of pink energy enveloped her.

"DynaMorpher! Blue Ranger Power!"

"DynaMorpher! Yellow Ranger Power!"

"DynaMorpher! Black Ranger Power!"

Multicolored energy enveloped each of them. The energy formed power suits, blasters and helmets.

Ranger Pink's morph suit had white bottom and pink top. A gold emblem emblazoned her chest. Like sun ray wings it was a symbol they'd come to realize the ancient Caervinians used to represent Air. Her helmet had a phoenix motif and was crested by the Caervinian sacred face.

Ranger Blue's morph suit had white bottom and blue top, a gold emblem emblazoned his chest. Fluid swirling wings were the symbol the ancient Caervinians used to represent Water. His helmet had a shark motif and crested by the sacred face.

Ranger Yellow's morph suit had white bottoms and yellow top. Dynamic Black's morph suit had white bottom and black top. Both of them had the same symbol emblazoned on their chests. More angular wings were the symbol the ancient Caervinians used to represent Earth. Yellow's helmet had a tiger motif while Black's had a snake motif. The sacred face crested both.

Pink led them to a platform that she activated. It was a teleportation platform. The four of them disappeared in multicolored flashes of light.

"So that was the big secret, huh? Power Ranger research."

Ram, still in awe over what he'd seen, jumped when he saw Taylor in the door of the lab. "Uh...er...um..." he had no idea what to say.

Tay grinned. "Don't worry about it. See ya," he said.

"Where are you going?" Ram demanded.

"To help!" Tay said with a big grin on his face.

Ram watched helplessly as Taylor ran from the lab. "What did he mean by that?" he wondered. He turned to the view screen to see what was happening.

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The green foot soldiers were terrorizing people near a parking garage in the center of Starkweather Valley. People were running for their lives in fear. Starkweather had never been the subject of an alien

invasion. They were usually so squared and away and peaceful that they were quite boring. The appearance of the little green men with the hideous weapons was terrifying for even the most stout hearted among them.

The aliens themselves were having a grand time destroying cars and tipping them over.

The Power Rangers appeared in the middle of them.

Black reached down into his belt and pulled out a card. "Land Axe!" He called and slid it along the DynaMorpher's reader. The card turned into a physical axe.

"Do I have one of those?" Yellow asked.

"Check the belt!" he called out as he engaged the green men.

Yellow reached into her belt and pulled out a card. Thankfully, Lark had been able to encode the cards in English. "Land Claw!" she called and slid it along her card reader. The card turned into an odd looking weapon with pincer claws on it that fit onto her hand. She used it to slash and hit the aliens.

A group of the alien warrior lined up and pointed the gun ends of their weapons at them and fired. They protected each other, Black using the flat of his axe to block while Yellow used he Claw like a shield.

"Follow my lead. These powers seem to be element based. Land Combination!" he said and lifted his axe. She raised her claw. They hit the ground at the same time. A fissure opened up in the concrete and sucked the aliens into it.

"We did that?" Yellow asked in shock.

"It appears so," Black agreed.

They didn't have to celebrate much as more of the creatures came at them.

"Sea Sniper!" Blue summoned a weapon that greatly resembled a cross bow. He pulled the trigger and a bolt of blue energy took out several aliens. He engaged several in close quarters fighting. And fire the Sniper several more times.

"Having fun yet?" he asked as he joined Black and Yellow.

"Getting there," Yellow answered. Black just grunted noncommittally.

Several creatures fire on them and tried to over run them.

"Sky Shooter!" Pink summoned an odd weapon that looked somewhat like a boogey board shaped like a rocket. She jumped and it spun around with her, shooting as she flew across the sky. She took out the aliens surround the others and landed with a wobbled. "Whoa," she gasped.

"A. Maze. Ing," Yellow declared.

"Pretty sweet," Blue agreed.

"You almost hit us," Black pointed out.

They just beginning to relax when more of the aliens oozed up from the ground. "Just when we thought it was over," Blue complained and raised his Sniper. The aliens rushed at them.

A whirlwind of red energy swept through them, blades of air send them splattering into nothingness. The whirlwind stopped before them. "Ah, this brings back memories," Taylor Hicks declared.

"You! What are you doing down here?" Pink demanded.

"How did you even get down here?" Blue asked.

"I jumped," Tay answered.

"You what? Don't make things up!" Pink shouted.

"That...sounds awfully familiar," Yellow said thoughtfully.

"What? I came to help," Tay snapped at them.

Blue shook his head. He pulled out another card from his belt. "Water Pressure!" He slid the card through the reader. Geysers of water erupted around them, taking out the remaining aliens.

Black wrapped his arm around Tay's neck. He activated a return teleport by pressing the eyes of his Morpher. The other three did the same.

-/End 01 - To Be Continued\-

2 - Impossible Pilot .2

Taylor didn't waste a moment when they returned to the lab after the battle with the aliens. He broke the grip around his neck, grabbed the arm and flipped Gore over, twisting the arm behind his back. "Never grab me like that again," he warned.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa. Eagle Eye, chill out," Ram said trying to intervene.

Gore gritted his teeth. "You had no reason to be there. It was dangerous and you are a civilian," he said tightly.

Tay released him and stepped away. "I'm not trained to stand idly by," Tay declared and stalked out of the Lab without a word.

No one tried to stop or follow him.

Sin crossed his arms over his chest. "Great. You guys pissed him so much no one got the chance to ask him he did that," he told them.

Gore rubbed his shoulder. "He obviously has some kind of elite training," he said.

"That's what I been trying to tell you guys. Taylor Hicks is not what he appears to be on paper," Ram said with a sigh.

Yellow nodded. "Don't ask me for anything for the pain. You deserved that," Tempest said to Gore. "You on the other hand, look like you could use something. Come on to the infirmary," she prodded Ram. He made a fuss but went anyway.

Lark frowned. "It's not often I'm wrong. Looks like I may have to do some digging on this matter," she said and sat down at her terminal. "You two may go," she dismissed Sin and Gore.

Sin left with Gore. The other man was quiet. The mystery of Taylor Hicks had just deepened greatly.

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Earth Orbit

A ship, invisible to satellites, orbited Earth. Three beings gathered on the bridge of the *Devourer* as they watched the Earth below. One appeared to be a moth-like creature. Another; a giant lava lizard made of actual lava and rock. The third was cricket-like in appearance.

"You won't find conquering Earth easy," Sylon, the cricket-like creature warned.

Captain Drage glared at him. "It was you who brought us here," he reminded.

"The Earth is well guarded, but you have crushed other planets with Power Rangers. So I hear," Sylon said. They were aware that Sylon wasn't truly one of them. Neither knew who or what he was only that a short time ago he contacted the Warstar Council and invited his help in conquering earth. His main contribution was the Oozers and Ooze. They had yet to see the Ooze in action, but Oozers appeared to be a success. They could never truly be destroyed, only splattered apart until they eventually come back together again.

Commander Kragar sneered. "It's a pathetic planet. Power Rangers. I eat them for dinner," he said. "I already had a taste. An aerial vehicle. It was yummy," he added.

"What was that?" Captain Drage demanded.

"When I went to meet with this thing. I crashed through an aerial vehicle. It was fun," he said.

Captain Drake grunted, dismissing that from his mind. It was irrelevant. "Commander, have Lieutenant Scumorg conduct a ground raid," he ordered.

"Aye, captain," Kragar agreed. He left the bridge.

Drage eyed Sylon for a long moment. "What do you gain from this?" he asked.

"Human beings are lesser life forms that deserve nothing. No mercy. No life," Sylon answered easily.

Drage grunted. He turned on his heel and walked away from him.

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"Ah! Caught you!"

Tay lifted his head from his pillow and glared at his intruder. "Don't you knock?" he asked. He yawned and sat up.

Ram just grinned. "Well, everyone's been scouring this place for you since yesterday. I thought maybe a middle of the night ambush might be in order," he answered.

Tay scrubbed a hand through his hair. "Even on a floating island in the sky, no one looks up," he said grumpily. "I'm just biding my time until the next plane comes and not answering awkward questions," he said pointedly.

Ram propped up against the door, crossing his feet at the ankles. "We've known each other since flight school. Even then, everyone knew you weren't like the others. I'm not saying you owe anyone answers. Your business is your business, especially if you aren't allowed to talk about it. I just thought you might be interested in this," he pulled a card out of his pocket.

Even in the semi-darkness, Tay could see that it was the Morph Card that the others used. He stood and went over to him. "Where did this come from? I thought Little Miss Smarty-Pants couldn't find it," he said

as he took the card and looked it over.

"One thing I've noticed about Doc, she tends to be too literal and linear minded. Now, me on the other hand... Wanna know how I originally got into the military?" he asked.

"I already know, but tell me in your words," Tay said.

Ram narrowed his eyes at Tay's answer. "Hacking. I got into a few places I wasn't supposed to go. Eventually government goons hunted me down and all but forced me into the Air Force and expunged my records," he explained. "How--?"

"I have a friend whose cousin has never gotten caught," Tay answered. "So, you used the computer's back alleys to find the code?" he asked.

"That I did," Ram agreed. "I figure you'd know what to do with that. I've been around long enough to know incidents like this don't just happen once and that's the end of it," he said.

"No. No they don't," Tay agreed.

"And you, my friend, have serious skills. You jumped from two miles in the sky, landed without a scratch, and someone created a whirlwind. When you want to tell me about that, I'll listen. Until then, hold on to that. Don't let Doc and Gore get to you. She's too dependent on her tablet and he's got a few issues." Ram nodded to him and left the room.

Tay looked at the Morph Card. He shook his head. He knew that Ram meant well, but that wasn't way he did things. He'd hand it over to the Doc in the morning. It went against the goat not to help if he could, but he's sat out before when asked to. He could do it again.

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Lieutenant Sclumorg was a large scarab-like creature with a grinder belt into his middle and was primarily gold, blue and red. He appeared in Starkweather Valley's downtown business district. He looked up at a building. "I guess I'll start with this one," he said. He hit the building at its weakest point until it collapsed in a massive pile of rubble.

"It's always a good idea to start with a planet's infrastructure," he declared and stood on top of the pile of rubble. He sucked it into his chest and ground it up. He spit it out from a tube at his waist. The ground up rubble formed several large boulders of ground concrete and metal and wood and plastic.

"I needed that pick me up. Next target!" He said and looked around. He spotted two more buildings and fired lasers from his eyes. Each beam hit one of the buildings, reducing them to rubble within seconds.

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Captain Drape watched Sclumorg at work. "One of our best," he gloated.

"That guy really knows what he's doing," Kragar agreed.

Sylon watched quietly. They would definitely see about that.

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Sclumorg rolled around a top of a ball of debris. He chased around people who'd been in the area or managed to survive the destruction of the buildings. "Run run, as fast as you can! I'll catch you and make you part of the rubble!" he crowed.

"Hold it right there!"

Four Rangers had appeared in his path between him and the humans. "What's this now?" he asked.

"We're here to stop you from destroying this city," Ranger Blue said.

Sclumorg laughed. His eyes flashed and from the desolate shells of building around them several rubble boulders crashed through. They flung themselves at the Rangers.

They split up to run away. Ranger Blue spun around, reaching for the Sea Sniper Card but he wasn't fast enough. The Boulder rolled over him and he was absorbed into the debris, causing his Morph to fail.

Yellow ran somewhere she hoped was safe enough to use her Land Claw Card. It wasn't. Black only just knocked her way. He was absorbed into another boulder.

A third one came out of nowhere and rolled over Yellow. She cried out as she was absorbed and her Morph failed.

Ranger Pink ran away as one of the boulders stayed right on her heels. She screwed up and skid on a piece of loose debris on her feet. She fell. She quickly rolled over but she had to crab walk backwards to try and stay ahead of the debris. She wasn't anywhere near fast enough for that. She screamed as she was absorbed into the debris.

Sclumorg laughed and summoned the four smaller boulders to him.

A sharp whistle sounded. He looked up to see a lone guy standing before him. "You want to be part of the debris, too?" he asked. He shot eye lasers at the interloper.

Taylor rolled out of the way. He got to his feet. "Not going to happen. You have no idea who you're dealing with," he warned.

"You'll just suffer more if you keep resisting!" Sclumorg warned him.

"Call me a radical," Tay declared.

"You were warned!" Sclumorg said. The Ranger boulders rolled toward him. He jumped and rolled, dodging them as he heard the others' muffled protests. He jumped over one and landed in a crouch. He got to his feet.

"Now I'm warning you. Release them or you'll regret it. I've eaten bigger monster than you for breakfast before I graduated high school," he said.

The four boulders rolled toward them at intersecting courses. He jumped just before they got to him. They collided with such force that they exploded, allowing the others their freedom. He stabilized himself and began running on air toward the monster.

Sclumorg activated his grinder and Tay found himself caught up in the suction. "Crap," he said and pushed against the monster's chest so that his face didn't get ground into hamburger. Sclumorg laughed and hit him as hard as inhumanly possible. He went flying into a wall before he could even attempt to correct himself. He landed hard.

Grunting he got to his knees. He walked out of the building, brushing himself off.

"You pest! Who are you?!" Sclumorg rolled toward him on the big boulder. Taylor jumped up and over him. He landed and winced. He'd banged his knee up pretty bad going through the wall.

"That's the question of the hour, isn't it?" Gore said he and the other three moved up behind him.

"Me? I'm just your friendly neighborhood Wind Ninja. Oh, and I have this. Sorry, Doc. I'm just borrowing it," Tay said and flipped out the Red Morph Card.

"Where--"

"Later," Sin said.

"Yeah, let's deal with that thing first," Tempest agreed.

"Oozers!" Sclumorg summoned, sensing a new determination in the five of them.

"DynaMorphers!" Tay called. He held up his wrist to reveal his borrowed Morpher. The others flipped out their Morph Cards as well and held up their Morphers.

"Blue Ranger Power!"

"Pink Ranger Power!"

"Black Ranger Power!"

"Yellow Ranger Power!"

"Red Ranger Power!" Taylor slid the Morph Card along the reader. Red energy surrounded him. It formed a red and white power suit, a side arm blaster and a helmet. His power suit was emblazoned with the Air symbol wings. His helmet had a dragon motif and was crested by the Scared Face.

Remembering what the data on the card said, Red felt obliged to introduce himself properly. "With the

power of Sky and Storms. Dynamic Ranger Red!"

"With the power of Sky and Life. Dynamic Pink Ranger!" Pink found herself getting caught up.

"With the power of Land and Rock! Dynamic Black Ranger!"

"With the power of Land and Flora! Dynamic Yellow Ranger!"

"With the Sea and Waves! Dynamic Blue Ranger!"

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"So, those are the Power Rangers," Captain Drape said.

"They don't look so tough," Kragar said.

"I wouldn't underestimate them," Sylon warned. He all but seethed in rage but he hid it from the two Warstars. These humans were using Caervinian technology. He should have realized it sooner but he'd been too distracted by his own plans. How was it even possible for them to not only have access to the technology but make use of it as well?

He would find out and destroy it all and them along with it before finally wiping the human race from this planet like the vermin they were.

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Red flexed his fingers. "I almost forgot how awesome this was," he said.

Sclumorg scoffed. "Oozers! Get them!"

The Oozers rushed forward preparing to fire their weapons.

"Summon the Micro DynaZords!" Pink said and reached into her belt, pulling out a card. "Micro DynaZord! Phoenix!" she slid the card through the reader.

"Micro DynaZord! Shark!"

"Micro DynaZord! Snake!"

"Micro DynaZord! Tiger!"

"Micro DynaZord! Dragon!"

Their cards turned into tiny animal heads. "Dynamic Blasters!" Pink drew her blaster and stuck the Phoenix head on it. The others drew their blasters as well and stuck the heads on them.

They met the Oozers in battle. Blue fought off several and blasted several others with blue energy. He

was very comfortable with the blaster in his hand. Guns were kind of his thing. Seeing more coming, he stopped and got the blaster in a double handed grip and held the trigger half way in. "Shark Bullet!" He squeezed the trigger. A massive shot of blue energy fired, taking out all of them.

Black walked into the middle of the Oozers, firing his blaster at them. He may not be a super sniper like Blue, but he was a soldier and it was time he remembered that. Oozers kept coming. He held the trigger halfway in to charge the blaster and allowed them to get closer. "Snake Bullet!" He fired a massive shot of ultraviolet purple energy at them. They exploded.

Yellow she fought her way through them and fired yellow energy blasts. She wasn't some shrinking violet. Her father was a cop and she wasn't from the best neighborhood in her hometown. She held the button of blaster down half way, letting the blaster charge as punched and kicked her way through Oozers. It was time to stop acting like she didn't belong in this suit. "Tiger Bullet!" She went down on one knee and fired at them. An explosive blast of yellow energy erupted, taking out any Oozers near her. She mimed blowing on the barrel.

Pink jumped around, nearly floating as she fired pink blasts at Oozers as they chased her around. Her main assets seemed to be her speed and agility. She wasn't particularly good at aiming. She landed once and charged her blaster. She could hear Oozers coming up behind her. "Phoenix Bullet!" She spun and fired a massive blast of pink energy at the Oozers. They exploded.

Red's tendency was to go high. Oozer followed him around broken walls of buildings even as he fired at them. He back flipped off the building and landed in the center of a group of them. He took them out one by one. He charged his blaster. "Dragon Bullet!" He fired at them. They exploded around him as the explosive red energy blast hit them.

The others regrouped around him.

"You've done this before," Blue commented.

"No comment," Red said.

"I'll crush you!" Sclumorg cried out as he began rolling his debris boulder toward them.

"All together!" Red said and the five of them fired at the boulder.

It exploded and Sclumorg crashed into the ground. He gained his feet. "Reverse Suction!" his grinder began spitting large hunk of debris at them. They fired their blasters at the rubble making it explode around them before it could crush him.

"What?!"

"Let's go with the weapons," Red said. He holstered his blaster and pulled a new Card out of his belt. "Sky Sword!" He slid his Card through the reader and it turned into a red sword.

"Sky Shooter!"

"Sea Sniper!"

"Land Axe!"

"Land Claw!"

They summoned their weapons. "In that case," Sclumorg held out his arms and summoned dark matter bursts and threw them at the Rangers. It exploded around them.

"Dragon Blast!"

"Phoenix Fired!"

Red and Pink gave out of the explosion, jumping over his head. She shot him with her Shooter. He slashed him with red energy from his Sword.

Yellow ran forward, crouching and sliding on the ground as she slid forward. "Tiger Shock!" She slashed him with electric yellow energy from her Claw.

Black followed her with his Axe. "Snake Bite!" He hacked upwards hitting the monster with black-violet energy.

Blue rushed forward and jumped nearly upside down. "Shark Snipe!" he fired blue energy from his Sniper and landed behind him.

Sclumorg fell hard. He tried to get to his feet.

"Let's bring 'em together," Red said.

They combined their weapons. "Dynamic Cannon!"

They pulled out new Cards. "The Shining Power of the Sky!" Pink and Red put the cards into the Cannon.

"The Raging Power of the Land!" Black and Yellow their cards into the Cannon.

"The Serene Power of the Sea!" Blue put his card into the Cannon.

The Cannon Charged.

"What?" Sclumorg started to run away.

"Dynamic Cannon Fire!" The Cannon fired a powerful blast of golden light and electricity that tore into Sclumorg. He flew into the sky from the force of it and exploded. They turned away from the sight, Red still holding the Cannon.

"For the record I wasn't trying to butt in. I was just trying to do the right thing. If any of you plan on

continuing to be Power Rangers, the Right Thing is an important concept to grasp," he said as he lowered the Cannon. It disappeared in a wink of light and returned to its dormant state. He activated the teleports.

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Tay was about to board the plane taking him away from Sky Base. He'd given back the Morpher and Morph Card. He'd refused to answer any of their questions. If he wasn't on their team, and he wasn't otherwise given permission, he wasn't going to break the confidences he held.

The cargo plane that would take him home arrived along with three new people. Doc's other test subjects he presumed. He didn't stick around to find out. It wasn't his place. He'd signed a new confidential agreement that said he wouldn't reveal the true purpose of this base and figured that was the end of it. Ram had obviously been disappointed with how things turned out.

Even though Tay hadn't turned him in, he'd admitted himself to being the one who found the Red Ranger code and given it to Taylor. Doc and Gore had been stunned and mildly angry but Sin hadn't said much.

After saying his goodbyes to Tempest and Ram he'd come to the air strip where the cargo plane was preparing to leave.

"Mr. Hicks! Mr. Hicks! Wait! You can't go!"

Tay turned around to see Doc running toward him. "Excuse me? Aren't you the ones trying to get rid of me?" he asked.

"That was before," Doc said as she came to a stop.

"Before what?" he asked, raising a brow.

"Before we redistributed the Morphers and only Lieutenant Monning's worked," she answered tightly.

"Come again?"

"The Morpher has molecularly bonded to each of us. They will only work for the ones who they were first activated by. You can't leave because you have to be our Red Ranger," she said in an annoyed tone.

"I don't hear a please in there anywhere," he said.

"Please stay. We need your help," Lark said and she meant it. She didn't understand why she couldn't find out anything about him other than what she already knew, but he'd proved that he was much more capable than anyone, especially her, had given him credit for. Well, perhaps Tempest and Lieutenant Ramon had had inklings.

"Well, ok then. But I need clothes. Seriously. I've been living in these for three days. They are not fresh," he said.

"That can be arranged," she agreed and began leading him back to Central Citadel.

"And I want a room higher up," he added.

"You can have your choice."

"Oh, and you need to start learning how to control your Sky Powers when your morphed. We'll start your training tomorrow morning."

"Wait. What?"

"I did mention I was a Wind Ninja right? It wasn't a joke. I can manipulate air with my ki. Sin should get a handle on his Sea Powers quickly enough. He'd actually make a pretty awesome Water Ninja. Gore looks like the type to master Land Powers or die and Tempest has a real natural feeling for it. You, on the other hand, suck. It's your head space. You have to think outside of the box. The Laws of Physics don't necessarily apply when you're in the sky," he explained.

She looked at him oddly. He just grinned at her. She blinked. She had really underestimated Taylor Hicks.

"Oh. Just because that stung a bit, I'll explain. The reason my grades dropped in my senior year is because I was fighting Shadow Ninjas bent on world domination as the Red Wind Ranger," he said and sauntered off ahead of her. She finally came out of her stupor and caught up with him, peppering him with questions.

It was the beginning of a new adventure for Taylor Hicks and his team of Dynamic Power Rangers.

-/End 02\-

3 - Mysterious Power

"So let me get this straight; the thing with the plane, that was you using ninja skills?" Sinclair Monning asked the man across the table from him. He, Taylor Hicks, Enrique Ramon, and Tempest Strong had left Sky Base earlier to get some lunch in Starkweather Valley. They sat at a round picnic table in Valley Park, near the Game Preserve that edged one part of the city.

Taylor Hicks nodded but waited until he swallowed his bite of hamburger before speaking. "I basically generated a funnel of wind that actually moved us in the direction I needed to go. I had no navigation whatsoever. The only thing keeping us in the air was me," he explained.

"I'm not sure I wanted to hear that," Tempest said, and sat down her fork. She had a rather green tinge to her skin. Her scrummy chicken salad just became less scrummy.

Ram was watching him with narrowed eyes. Sin was surprised. In the short amount of time he'd known Enrique 'Ramrod' Ramon, he'd never seen him with such a serious expression.

"What?" Taylor asked.

Ram shook his head. "You do it on purpose don't you? Despite your skills, you stayed upper-middle range of our class unless you weren't being tested," he said.

Ram and Taylor had been in the Air Force flight school together.

"If you're too good at something, people ask questions. How would a scruffy, wet-behind-the-ears nineteen-year-old know how to pilot an A-10 when supposedly he'd never even been -on- an airplane before?" he asked pointedly.

"Good point," Sin said.

Taylor shrugged. "It's a fine line to walk between doing something you shouldn't know how to do too well and being completely inept at it. I always I wanted to learn to fly a plane. Instead I got a flying Zord. My career path seemed inevitable," he said.

"So why'd you get out?" Sin asked.

Taylor shook his head. "Idealistic differences," he said simply.

Sin understood that sentiment. He and Gore were dishonorably discharged from the Army for just that reason.

"What about this Ninja training? How did you get into that?" Sin asked. "How does anyone if it's this secret?"

"Well, usually previous students recommend new students as they go out into the world. In my case, I had an in with the family. That's a story for another time," Tay said and jumped to his feet.

Sin whipped around, hearing the same crunching, crashing sound as Taylor from the forests behind them. Ram's arm was still in a sling because of burns he'd received in a lab accident but he and Tempest scrambled to their feet when Sin and Tay did.

The vision that made Sin's skills as a sniper legendary caught the movement of something large running away from them. He took off after it. Taylor and Tempest were right behind him.

"I'll just stay here and guard the food!" Ram called after them. He frowned at his arm and the fact that the Morpher he was meant to have blew up on him. He'd give anything to be with them now. His hand dropped to his sidearm, strapped to his thigh, just in case there was actually trouble.

Commander Kragar turned when he heard them coming up behind him. "Ah, Power Rangers," he said.

"Who are you and what do you want here?" Taylor demanded.

"I suppose it won't hurt to warn you. We are the Warstars. I'm Commander Kragar. My most esteemed Captain Drage will be conquering your world and I'll be having this planet for dinner," he said and rubbed his pincers together.

"We'll give you indigestion and gas," Tay said.

"It'll be worth it. I already had a taste. The petroleum based combustion fuel is most delicious. Jet-fuel I believe it's called," he said thoughtfully. As a being that could produce his own meteors, he did enjoy fuel sources.

Tay started. "Did you eat my plane?" he demanded.

"I was in that plane!" Tempest gasped.

Kragar laughed. "It was delicious," he taunted.

"Enough chatter," Sin said and flipped out his Morph Card.

Kragar threw molten rocks at them. They ducked and dove and rolled out of way but the rocks exploded the landscape around them.

"I was just doing some recon. I don't have the time to play," he said and disappeared.

Sin frowned as he got to his feet, dusting himself off.

Tempest got to her feet. She looked around for Tay.

"No one ever looks up," Tay said as he jumped out of the tree he'd landed in. It hadn't been on purpose either. "Come on, we'd better gather Ram up and head back to the base," he said.

Sin nodded. "We have a name now for the enemy," he said.

Tempest nodded. "Yeah, but what are Warstars?" she wondered.

"I have a few contacts that know people who know people. Maybe I can find out," Tay said he led them back to where they left Ram.

"Why am I not surprised?" Sin said drolly. If Taylor Hicks suddenly said he could walk on the moon, he wouldn't doubt it at this point. Tay just threw him a grin over his shoulder.

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Devourer

"I did warn you that Earth was well guarded," Sylon told Captain Drage pointedly.

Kragar gave an impatient slash of his arm. "Nonsense. The Power Rangers are nothing. My recon tells me as much," he said.

"We shall just have to keep trying until we've destroyed them," Captain Drage stated.

"Of course," Sylon said. "I'll keep the Oozers and the Ooze on standby when you need them," he assured humbly.

"Send for Lieutenant Kuufor," Drape told Kragar. The Commander saluted and went to do as he was told.

"I'll take my leave until you have need of me," Sylon said and gave a curt bow and left the bridge. When he arrived in the quarters he was provided, he dropped his disguise and shook himself.

"That disguise makes my skin crawl," a voice said from within the darkness.

"Imagine how I feel. It's my skin. What are you doing here, Azula?" he demanded of the shadowy figure perched in a chair. She was a young woman with light skin, dark hair pulled back into a wild ponytail, and pale, pale golden eyes.

"I brought you the Ooze," she said and handed him a canister. "You don't need much and it will get the job done," she informed him.

He nodded and set the canister aside. "You shouldn't be here. What do you think would happen to you if you were caught? They'd think you were human," he pointed out. His lips curled as he looked at her. "For all intents and purposes you are human," he said.

Azula frowned. "It's not my fault. You're the one who pulled my spirit from my body before I died. I don't have any other options except to possess humans. This one, however, I think is the best yet," she said and gestured to her body. "The things this human can do are amazing for their standards. I'll have to

show you sometime," she said and reached her hand out to him.

He knocked it aside. "Don't touch me with that human's hand. When the Power Rangers have been eradicated, I shall locate Skycrest and reproduce your real body," he said. "Go now," he said.

Azula seethed silently. Her magic was part of her spirit. In a bright flash of lightning, she disappeared.

Sylon frowned. She was mad at him. He'd have to find a way to make up for it soon. He picked up the canister of Ooze. Until he could, he'd have to deal with these disgusting insect creatures. They were only slightly less disgusting than humans.

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Sin stood at the edge of Sky Base, looking down at the mist formed by the waterfall. It was a curious but that isn't why he was here. Ever since he bonded with the Blue Morpher, he'd been drawn to places of high concentrations of water. He also spent too much time in the shower lately. He wondered if it was some sort of side effect or if it was supposed to happen.

It wasn't like he could control water with his mind or anything. That'd actually be pretty cool.

"Thinking of jumping?"

Sin glanced back to see Gregory Houston coming toward him. He grinned. "I'm not that crazy. I'll leave that to Taylor," he said. Gore's mouth tightened slightly. Sin knew Gore was still sore about Taylor. Gore was supposed to get the Red Morpher, but because the Morph Card for it had been lost, he'd had to use the Black Morpher instead. He was now bonded to it.

"Came for a reason?" he asked.

"Came to fetch you. Doc wants us in the Lab," Gore explained.

Sin nodded. The two of them walked in companionable silence through the gleaming white buildings of Sky Base. Gore and Sin had grown up together, and were old friends. They'd enlisted together, they made it to the same unit, they'd disobeyed orders together, and they'd gotten fired together. When Sin was hired on at Astral Dynamics Security Force, he'd recommended Gore as well. They'd both been selected for the Morph test when the Dynamic Morphers had been discovered. Gore had been chosen to test Red and Sin was fine with Blue.

Then monsters began attacking Starkweather Valley, the city below Sky Base and they'd been forced to act before the other test subjects had arrived. Little did they know that they would become molecularly bonded to the Morphers.

Sin was fine with Blue. He had a gun. Well, it was sort of like a gun. He was happy.

The entered the Central Citadel, the tallest building and nerve center of Sky Base. The Lab was on of the lower levels. They went there.

Inside the Lab was the center of the Morphing Technology an advanced race of ancient aliens was working on prior to their mysterious disappearance. "You wanted to see us, Doc?" he asked the slight figure.

Doctor Lark Walker looked up; a petite girl with gray eyes and red hair. "Yes," she said simply.

Lounging around the Lab was Taylor, Tempest and Ram.

Sin was used to dealing with Lark. He waited patiently for her to get around to telling what it was she wanted.

Lark put a few finishing touches on a code she was working on. She began printing new cards. The process would take several hours. "I found the codes for the Macro DynaZords," she announced with a proud smile.

"I helped," Ram pointed out. He was finding ways to make himself useful, including putting to use his surprising knowledge of computers.

"That's good. I was a bit worried last time that the alien would get big and we wouldn't have full-sized Zords," Taylor admitted.

"We got lucky," Sin agreed. "Is that why we were brought here?" he asked.

"No. I wanted to see everybody, too," Gore stated. "I've been thinking, we didn't exactly ask for this team, but here we are. It would benefit everyone if we met here on a regular basis and started a training regimen," he said.

"That's good idea. I've already started working with Doc," Taylor said. "Wind Techniques will go a long way in helping her control the Sky Powers of her Morph," he said.

Sin raised a brow at Lark. She nodded. She had indeed begun training with Taylor Hicks.

Gore looked steadily at Taylor. "That's not exactly what I meant," he said.

"Well, I can teach the rest of you basic techniques but I am a Wind Master. The only way I've ever been able to move dirt around by hand and my Water Technique is far from exemplary but I can show Sin a few things. A group training session every other day is pretty much a given. We need to work as a team, we have to learn to rely on each other," he said.

Sin stepped back a few paces. He leaned against a console beside Tempest. She was watching the show with wide eyes. Sin grinned.

"Yes, exactly," Gore said tightly. "Group training," he agreed.

Taylor nodded. "Then I will scout a location with plenty of room for it. I wonder if there's a simulator around here somewhere," he said, talking to himself.

"What about the Warstars?" Tempest asked, hoping to change the subject.

"Still waiting. These things take time to find out," Taylor answered. He clapped his hands together, "right then, a training area. If these people had warriors, there's probably a place for them," he said and started to leave.

"I'll come with you," Ram said and followed Taylor out.

Lark was already working on the computers again.

Sin straightened up. "Spend some time with Tempest. She's your partner. Don't be a horse's rear," he told Gore. "I'm gonna go help Ram and Taylor," he said and sauntered out.

Gore looked at Tempest and she bestowed him with her best smile.

"Well, let's go see how good you are with the gloves," he said. No reason to be a horse's rear to her, after all.

"Prepare yourself," she warned as she followed him out of the Lab.

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Devourer

Lieutenant Kuufor in the form of flying turtle shell entered the bridge and transformed into his true form, a turtle-esque being. "You sent for me, *mon Capitan*?" he asked in a high nasally voice.

"Good, good. There are some pests on Earth. See that you are rid of them," Drage ordered.

"I will see to it at once," he said and turned into a flying turtle shell again and left the devourer.

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Instead of finding somewhere on Sky Base to spar, Tempest and Gore went down to Starkweather Game Preserve to spar with the earth under their feet. Gore found out rather quickly that Tempe did have skills. He took the opportunity to show her a few kickboxing moves she can incorporate.

She was a fast learner and wanted to measure up to the rest of the team. Her opinion of Gore was going up a bit as well. He was actually pretty patient with her. Not at all the jerk he ends up being when Taylor's around. Men and their egos.

They were both barefoot in the dirt. They weren't able to do anything fancy like Taylor, but they could both feel the connection to the land and were enjoying it.

Gore held up a hand and paused their training. She paused and understood why. There was a high pitched whirring and whining sound vibrating the air.

They watched as turtle shelled UFO zoomed overhead in the direction of the city. In the distance they saw it split into multiple crafts.

"That's not good, is it?" she asked unnecessarily.

Gore shook his head. "Nope. C'mon," he said and took off running after the flying turtle shells. Tempest ran behind him.

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Innocent Starkweather Valley citizens were going about their daily business. Surely the event of earlier that week was an anomaly and they wouldn't be plagued by alien monsters again. Power Rangers has swept through and ended any threats and all was well again.

When the UFOs appeared above them, they looked up, wondering what was going on. "What is that?" one woman wondered.

"Run!" someone else yelled as all over the city, Oozers seeped out of the ground and herded the hapless humans into a bunch as they panicked. The UFOs sped over them and shot nets at them. The nets scooped them up and carried them away.

The Kuufor UFOs carried their captive to a seaside cliff out of the way.

Kuufor reformed. "Ah, zee Earthlings. Such ugly specimens, but I know people who'll pay for the chance do experiments on you," he said and rubbed his hands together.

Dynamic Black and Yellow arrived and pulled their Blasters, placing their Microzords on them.

"Snake Bullet!"

"Tiger Bullet!"

They fired but Kuufor ducked and the blasts bounced off his hard-shelled head. "Ah, so you're zee pests. Excellent! I know people who'll definitely pay for Power Rangers," he said greedily.

"Uh, excuse me? No one's selling me," Yellow declared, placing a fist on her hip.

"But I will! For a very high price I zink," he said.

"Not going to happen," Black said.

"Oozaires!" he called. Oozers seeped from the ground around him. Yellow and Black sprang into action to engage them.

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Lark was working in the lab fine tuning the programming for the Macro Zords. It was unnecessary but

she felt better doing it. The Alien Alarm System went off. The deafening tolling from the Citadel made her wince. "Dr. Walker Note-to-Self: Located and adjust Alarm System alert tone," she said out loud. She pressed a button and the screen lit up to show the scene at the cliffside. She opened a communications channel. "All Dynamic Rangers to the Lab. You, too, Ramon. There's an alien abducting humans. Strong and Houston have engaged," she said.

"I'll take the shortcut," Taylor stated in reply.

"Of course he will," she muttered and began setting the coordinates for the teleporter.

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Taylor gave Sin and Ram a quick salute and ran to the nearest wall and jumped up on to it. He Flipped out his card and held up his arm. "DynaMorpher! Red Ranger Power!" He slid his along along his Morpher. Red energy surrounded him. It formed a red and white power suit, a side arm blaster and a helmet. His power suit was emblazoned with the Air symbol wings. His helmet had a dragon motif and was crested by the Scared Face.

With that he jumped. He used both the wind and his Morpher's innate locating beacon to guide him to the cliffside where the captives and his team mates were.

Yellow and Black were engaged with the Oozers. Yellow wielding her Land Claw and Black his Land Axe.

"Dragon Bullet," Dynamic Red entered the fray.

"Re-enforcements," Yellow said, grinning under her helmet.

"So I see," Black said noncommittally.

"Ahaha! More merchandise! My sales, zey will be spectaculaire," Kuufor said eagerly. "Take zis!" he said and blasted the three Rangers with lasers from his shell head.

The beams hit the Rangers and knocked them backwards.

"Phoenix Bullet!"

"Shark Bullet!"

Dynamic Blue and Pink appeared and fired on the alien. They joined the other's and helped them to their feet.

"So you're big shortcut didn't knock off too much time," Blue pointed out with a grin behind his helmet to Red.

"Ah well. What can I say?" Red said and pulled a Card from his belt. "Sky Sword!"

"Sea Sniper!"

"Sky Shooter!"

Several more Oozers went down.

"Sacre bleu! Looks like I'll have to damage zee merchandise just to get it to behave!" Kuufor spat and then spat large flaming rocks at them. They exploded around them.

"This guy is getting on my nerves," Blue declared.

"Tell me about it," Black said and got to his feet. Oozers were reappearing. He helped Yellow to her feet and the two of them engaged the Oozers.

Red and Pink charged another set of Oozers. Blue sake back and took cover, firing his Sea Sniper at any stragglers.

"Phoenix Fire!" Pink jumped, swirling through a group of Oozers, leaving a swirl of flame in her wake.

"Dragon Blast!" Red caught the air under his feet and used it to push his way through another group of Oozers, slashing red energy from his Sword.

Yellow relied on years of training, using the balls of her feet to almost glide through the Oozers, slashing with expert ease. "Tiger Shock!" she said, leaving behind crackling electric yellow energy.

Black relied on sheer brute force and power, hacking into the Oozers with devastating blows. "Snake Bite!"

All around them, Oozers exploded.

"It's time to finish zis messy business once and for all and take my stock," Kuufor stated and suddenly crackled with energy. He fired innumerable flying shells at the four standing in the open. They were hit, each shell exploding as it hit. Throwing the each several feet.

"Damn," Blue said and ran out from his cover and jumped. "Shark Snipe!" He fired directly into what he assumed was a face. Being a sniper by training and trade, he wasn't really used to such close combat, not even working security for Astral Dynamics. Kuufor fell backwards and thrashed around like a turtle on its back.

The other's scrambled to their feet. "Good shot," Black said.

"Yes, yes. Sinclair's a good shot, we get it," Pink said.

"We have to take care of that thing," Yellow said, nodding toward Kuufor.

Kuufor had managed to regain his feet. "Now!" Red said and ran forward with Pink.

"Phoenix Fire!"

"Dragon Blast!"

Still rocking from the hits from the Sky Rangers, the Land Ranger's went on the offensive. Yellow went low and Black went head on.

"Tiger Shock!"

"Snake Bite!"

Twice more he sparked and exploded. Blue rushed forward again, but he didn't fire, he knocked the alien over the cliff and fell with him into the sea. The alien struggled fiercely and Blue, finding himself shocking maneuverable, knocked himself back and aimed his Sniper. "Shark Snipe!"

He fired several times, hitting the alien from slightly below. The alien blew out of the water and landed on a beach. Blue jumped out after him. He wasn't even wet it appeared. "That was a trip," he said as the others ran down to join them.

"That's nothing," Red said. "You're journey's only just beginning," he said.

Blue nodded. "Shall we?" he asked, nodding toward the alien finally gaining his feet.

"Yes, let's," Red agreed. "Bring them together!"

They combined their weapons. "Dynamic Cannon!" They pulled out new Cards.

"The Shining Power of the Sky!" Pink and Red put the cards into the Cannon.

"The Raging Power of the Land!" Black and Yellow their cards into the Cannon.

"The Serene Power of the Sea!" Blue put his card into the Cannon.

The Cannon Charged.

"Zis is no good," Kuufor uttered.

"Dynamic Cannon Fire!" The Cannon fired a powerful blast of golden light and electricity that tore into Sclumorg. He flew into the sky from the force of it and exploded. They turned away from the sight, Red still holding the Cannon.

With Kuufor out of commission, the nets around the captured humans disappeared. "We need a damage control contingency," Pink murmured to herself as she stepped forward to deal with the confused and rightfully terrified people.

"That's not a bad idea," Red said and stopped dead. Just for a second, he thought he saw someone in the crowd that he recognized, but when he tried to look closer, there was no one there.

"Uh, something's happening," Yellow said, hitting Black on the arm urgently to get attention. "Something bad!" she shouted in the end.

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Devourer

Captain Drage rounded on Sylon. "Your Ooze had better be what you said it is," he snarled. "Or your life won't be worth the dirt on that planet," he warned fiercely.

Sylon was unperturbed. "Launching Ooze," he said and hit a button the Captain hadn't even realized had been installed on his command console. A canister, perhaps the size of a pill bottle was fired from the Devourer.

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It hit the ground where Kuufor had exploded. Ooze exploded everywhere and brought the pieced back together. Not only did the Ooze reintegrate the alien but it began to increase its mass.

"I must get a sample of that stuff," Pink said quietly.

"Really? You want a sample of the green slime that did *that!*" Yellow squawked gesturing wildly at the now giant Kuufor.

Kuufor looked at himself in surprise then laughed. "Ah, now zis I can work with!" he said and attempted to squash the Rangers with one shelled hand.

From her vantage point, Azula clapped her hands. Having created the Ooze herself, she knew it work perfectly, but it was still gratifying to watch it work perfectly. She was disguised as a human girl. Well since she inhabited a human girl, it was an easy disguise. She was dressed as a human girl. There had been a strange moment when the Red Ranger had looked directly at her. It made her uneasy. It was almost as if he'd known she wasn't a prisoner.

She bit her lip. She definitely would not mention that to Sylon. He was uptight enough as it was. She sniffed as she watched. She was a bit disappointed. Surely the Skycrest Guardians had been clever enough to predict that eventually the Ooze would be used for this purpose.

As it turned out, they were.

"Guys, check your arsenals," Ram communicated to the Power Rangers.

As they scrambled away from the giant alien now shooting fire at them, the Rangers reach into their belts and pulled out newly minted Cards.

"It's Zord time," Red declared. "Dragon DynaZord!" He slid the Card through his Morpher. The Card disappeared and above him a swirling red portal appeared in the sky.

"Phoenix DynaZord!" Pink slid the card through her Morpher. The Card disappeared and a swirling pink portal appeared beside the red one.

"Snake DynaZord!" Black slid his Card through his Morpher. The Card disappeared and swirling black portal appeared on the cliff face.

"Tiger DynaZord!" Yellow slid her Card through her Morpher. The Card disappeared and swirling yellow portal appeared next to the black one on the cliff face.

"Shark DynaZord!" Blue slid his Card through his Morpher. The Card disappeared and a swirling blue portal appeared on the water's surface.

The Dragon DynaZord was similar in shape and size to a jetliner except more agile. It shot out of the red portal which closed behind it.

The Phoenix was slightly smaller, about the size and shape of a stealth bomber. It screamed out of the pink portal which closed behind it.

The Snake DynaZord was long and agile, about the size and shape of a zip train with four segments. It barreled out of the black portal which closed behind it.

The Tiger DynaZord was big and blocky, about the size and similar to a bulldozer with wicked jaws instead of a scoop. It roared out the yellow portal which closed behind it.

The Shark DynaZord was about the size and shape of a military submarine. It glided out of the blue portal which closed behind it.

The five DynaZords fired on Kuufor, knocking him back.

"You guys! She didn't find the combination sequence!" Ram said urgently. "I'm looking, but you'll have to keep him busy until I can find it," he said.

"Doc, Zords combine. It's kinda their thing," Red said with a sigh.

"I was looking for it," Pink said tightly.

"Never mind that. Let's take these beauties for a test drive," Blue said. They nodded and pressed the eyes of their Morphers and transported to the cockpits of her Zords. Each cockpit had an independent card reader similar to that of their Morphers.

"Errr. Take zis, you expired meat sacks!" Kuufor crackled with energy moments before splitting out more flying turtle shells. They spiraled away from him and went on the offensive with the Zords.

Many of the flying turtle shells zoomed into the sky after the sky bound Zords, firing on them.

"That's it. Come and get me," Red muttered and he gripped the yoke. When one or two shells got too

close, he depressed a firing mechanism on the point of the yoke. Dragon opened its mouth and fire shot out.

"I don't suppose now would be a good time to point out that I don't know how to fly," Pink questioned.

"Just relax. The Zord knows what to do. You just guide it," Red told her.

She nodded and gripped the yoke. She squeaked when a flying shell buzzed her tail. She spotted a road tunnel. "I hope he's right about this," she said. The Zord responded easily with a little guidance from her. She zoomed into the tunnel but the shells were right behind her.

Red had to grin. "When you come out of the tunnel, come straight, don't slow down," he said.

She popped out of the tunnel and was stunned to see he'd positioned the Dragon right in her path.

"Trust me. I got this," he said.

He flipped the cover off another button on his yoke. He fired when she was in just the right position. Several missiles dropped from his middle and honed in on the shells. Each missile hit a shell and they exploded around them both.

"Thanks," she said.

"Schedule it, Doc. Flying lessons," Red said.

Several of the flying shells crashed into the ocean after Blue and his Shark. "Do you seriously think this was a good move on your part?" he asked with a wide grin. He'd never been a Navy boy but this was some seriously cool stuff.

Perhaps they realized the mistake they made coming into the water after him. They turned and began speeding away.

"Oh, no, you don't," he said. His sonar tracked them easily. "Weapon's systems, online. Acquiring target," he said. Several missile silos stuck out from the Zord. The targeting systems locked on to the shells. "Bogeys acquired. Firing missiles," he depressed a button on his yoke. Missiles zoomed through the water, connecting with the shells. Explosions churned the waters.

"Well that's them out of the way," he said. He made a gun with his finger and blew on his imaginary barrel.

His celebration was too soon. From nowhere, another shell crashed into him. Or tried to. The Shark opened massive jaws and clamped down. He had some difficulty controlling the Zord as it thrashed around with the shell. "Ah, here we go," he said when he finally regained control.

He opened the jaws and the shell tried to get away, emerging from the ocean. Shark jumped out of the ocean at his command and clamped jaws around it again, hitting it just right. The shell exploded. He landed on the shore was able to maneuver even out of water.

Overland, more shells buzzed around firing on Snake and Tiger. They tilted on their sides and rolled along like grotesque wheels. They fired as the Land Zords pursued them.

Yellow was having a blast. The Zord drove better than the ambulances handled for years. She hit the gas and jerked the yoke, avoiding laser blasts.

"You were a paramedic, right?" Black asked as he came up beside her.

"Trying to say something?" she asked.

"No, not at all," he denied, but felt a certain sympathy for the patients she transported. He picked up speed and snaked his way through the shells ahead of them, ready to end this. "Prepare yourself," he warned her. His Zord moved more like an actual snake than a train. When he got ahead of the shells, he jerked hard on his yoke, making a U with his Zord.

The shells bounced into him and ricocheted. Tiger caught one in its powerful jaws. Yellow pushed the break and at the same time, turned the wheel. The shell smashed into the others but she continued spinning. Finally she released her hold on the shell and it's went flying. It landed with an explosion.

"Not one word. Ok. My high school boyfriend liked to race. I picked up a few tricks," she stated before her partner could say anything else about her driving.

"I wasn't going to say anything. That was impressive," he assured her.

With tacit agreement, the Rangers turned their Zords to their final enemy. They took out any straggling shells.

"Blasted Rangers!" Kuufor snarled.

"All right, amigos. Combination is a go!" Ram announced triumphantly.

"Just in time," Red said and pulled a card from his belt. "Let's show the Warstars a proper Megazord," he said. He slid the Megazord Card through the reader on his console.

The other Rangers pulled their Cards and did the same; activating the combination sequence. .

"Dynamic Megazord!"

The Snake Zord twisted its tail around and connected with the Tiger Zord. The bodies rose as the heads stayed stationary, forming the legs. The Dragon Zord maneuvered down and connected with Snake and Tiger, becoming a torso while its tail became a sword. Shark Zord and Phoenix Zord changed into arms and connected to the Dragon torso. Finally a helmeted head sprang from Dragon Zord's back crested by the Sacred Face.

Each of the Rangers was transported to a shared cockpit.

Black blinked and looked around. "Ok, this is kind of cool," he admitted.

Blue grinned. "Yeah. Kinda," he drawled.

Pink rubbed her hands together. "I can't wait to explore the programming that went into this," she declared and gripped her yoke eagerly.

"Yeah, it's awesome. Now kick some alien tush," Yellow declared eagerly.

"Newbies," Red chuckled, conveniently forgetting that he was once a newbie. "I'm with Tempe. Let's end this guy once and for all," he said.

The Dynamic Megazord strode forward.

Kuufor took a few steps back but threw lightning attacks at the Megazord.

"Dragon Sword!" The Megazord reached behind its back and pulled the blade from its back. It swung on Kuufor several times. The alien stumbled back.

The Megazord replaced the Sword. "Let's try this. Dynamic Head-but!" Red said and pressed a button before him. The others followed suit.

The Dragon Zord's head detached from the Megazord's chest. Each arm swung forward as the Phoenix and Shark head detached. Each leg kicked out as the Tiger and Snake detached. Each of the Zord head's slammed into the alien before curving back to reattach to the Megazord.

The Megazord drew the Dragon Sword again and took to the air, hovering above the wounded. "Time to finish this. Don't worry, we'll give your boss your resignation," Red said and pulled another card from his belt. The others pulled the same card.

They slid the Cards through the readers. The Dragon Sword caught flame. "Dynamic Astral Strike!" The Megazord zoomed forward and slashed through the alien. It zoomed away, hovering a safe distance as the alien exploded.

"We did it!" Yellow and Pink both exclaimed in surprised surprise.

"Damn right we did," Blue confirmed.

"Not bad. Not bad," Red said blithely.

"There should have been no doubt," Black said.

Red gave him a thumbs-up and grinned even if it couldn't be seen.

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Devourer

Sylon ignored blustering from Drage and Kragar. "The Ooze worked. It was your man's ineptness that lost the day," he pointed out to them. "Choose more wisely next time," he said and left the bridge as they glared at him.

"When we have this planet I will get the secret of the Ooze from him and dispose of his arrogant carcass," Kragar seethed.

"Until then, we need him," Drage said a little more calmly.

Still within earshot, Sylon smirked. Good luck to them trying to kill him.

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Sin stood on the cliff where the humans had been held captive. While they'd been battling the alien, an Astral Dynamics insertion team had been sent to sort out the civilians and get them home or medical care.

All was calm now. Serene and peaceful. The ocean had even washed away traces of the battle fought here. Somehow that made him smile. As much as it was obvious Sky Base had been intended as a haven for the three central elements of its society, Land, Sea and Sky, the peaceful waterfall/stream/lake thing was nothing like the wild untamed sea calling to him.

He should probably talk to Taylor about the draw the sea had over him but right now he just wanted to swim. He took off his belt and began removing his boots. When he stood back up to remove his jacket he saw people on the beach. A group of perhaps eight men and women near his age. They were dressed as if for yoga except they had no mats and they waded part way into the ocean.

A woman faced the others and began leading them in a series of martial arts moves. Fluid and gliding, but he had a strong suspicion that the moves would be catastrophic if used in combat. From his vantage point and the eyesight he'd always been gifted with, he could barely make out her features. She had red hair, short and bouncy but her features were ethnically ambiguous. He started when he realized they weren't *in* the water. They were standing *on* the water. Each of their movements also compensated for the rhythm of the waves gently lapping the shoreline.

Quickly he grabbed his boots and sidearm and began to make his way down the cliff. Some almost indiscernible movement or sound on his part must have alerted them to his approach. By the time he reached the area of the beach, they were gone as if they had never been there.

He bit back a curse. "I mean no harm!" he called. "I just wanted to learn from you guys!" he shouted toward the thick forests surrounding that particular bit of beach. He had a strange feeling they were watching him.

"Check me out if you want. My name is Sinclair Monning and I work for Astral Dynamics with a guy named Taylor Hicks," he said. No response. He didn't expect one. He wasn't even sure if Taylor's name would even mean anything to them. "I'll be back. Let's just say, he's crap at Water Techniques and they'd probably really help me out. I'll be back when I can," he added, feeling like a dunce talking just in case anyone was listening to him.

His communicator beeped. He frowned and tapped the eyes on his Morpher. "Yeah?" he asked, turning his back to the forests.

"We need you back. I'm teleporting you straight to the Lab," Doc said. Before he could object that he was quite possibly being watched, he was looking at her from inside the teleporter. "What's the big ado?" he asked.

The screen was blinking. "We're getting a call. On an alien frequency that doesn't exist anywhere on Earth," Doc answered.

"Isn't it excitin'?" Ram asked with a grin.

"D'you think it's the Warstars?" Tempest asked.

"Doubt it. They don't know where we are," Gore answered.

"Then who does?" Sin asked.

"Someone with answers," Tay said as he entered the lab. He was covered in sweat and sloppily dressed. He'd obviously been making use of the Arena. "Answer the phone, Doc," he insisted.

Lark opened the communication channel. A man in a white robe holding an intricate white staff was on the screen. He was a young man, no older than any of them, with messy golden blond hair and bright blue eyes and sun tanned skin. "I was beginning to think no one was going to answer," he said in a lazy farm boy drawl.

They blinked at him. He cocked an eyebrow. "Uh, Taylor Hicks?" he asked.

"That'd be me. You must be the White Wizard," he said, holding back a grin.

The other man unsuccessfully suppressed an annoyed look. "When I find out who started calling me that--"

"Give it up, sweetie, there're too many suspects," said a woman's voice off screen, obviously amused.

"Yeah, you included," he shot back with a grin. He cleared his throat. "Anyway, I'm Taran Goldsmith," he said introducing himself to the others, who obviously had no idea whatsoever who he was, even as a joke. "Ya'll wanted information about the Warstars? Well I have it. I'm going transmit a coded file in a few minutes that included our entire dossier on them. Long story short, they're planet traders. They go to a planet, decimate its dominant life forms, strip it of vital resources and then sell it to whoever wants what's left. They've been a nuisance for a long time. What you're dealing with is the **Devourer**. That's the flagship.

"The Warstars fleet is about fifteen ships strong but Drage is your main guy. If you manage to end him, then the rest of them will erupt into civil war to see who will be the next Captain. They're a bunch of backstabbing bandits. Only Drage keeps them in line," he informed them.

"Who are you and how do you know all this?" Gore asked.

"Well, you could call me...an ambassador, I guess. I sort of, er...run Eltar and have access to its entire galactic database," he answered.

"What's Eltar?" Tempest asked.

"It's the source of all Morphing Technology. It's where the Caervinian scientists learned how to build their Morphers. Any Morph Technology is based in part on Eltarin technology, no matter its origins," Lark answered.

"Got it in one," Taran said with a smile.

"Master Tarantules, files are being transmitted now," came another voice off screen.

A computer began to beep. Lark went over to it and began the receipt of the file.

"I'm also sending ya'll what we know about the Caervinians. They were strong allies of Eltar once. Many of the remaining Eltarins are sad to hear of their fate," he said seriously.

"Thank you, Taran. All your help is appreciated," Taylor assured him. "Though I gotta admit, I wasn't expecting to hear from the top of the rung on this," he admitted.

"I'm hardly top rung," Taran denied flatly.

"Taran, the Ambassador from the Galfreid Alliance is waiting to speak to you," said the same female voice from earlier.

Taran didn't hide his grimace. "Oh to be a Power Ranger again. Excuse me and good luck with the Warstars," he said and the screen went blank.

Sin raised a brow and looked at Tay.

"Don't look at me. The network of former Power Rangers is extensive," he said and walked out of the lab. Sin hesitated a moment before catching up with him to eventually tell about the people on the beach and see if he had any insight. At this point, he wouldn't put anything past Taylor Hicks.

--/End 03\--

4 - Subtle Strength

Tempest Strong was trying to get used to her new lot in life. She'd gone from big city paramedic to accepting what she thought was going to be a calmer, higher paying job. She'd be in charge of a few medics on a research base. She'd work for a year and save enough money to be able to live while going to med school.

Boy was she wrong.

The first thing to go wrong was the airplane ride of death. She just knew she was going to die. If her pilot had been anyone else but Taylor Hicks, she would have.

Then, she got talked into putting on a Power Morpher. It was supposed to be a one time thing. That was the second thing to go wrong. The Morpher bonded to her molecules and won't work for anyone else. This was not making happy the woman who'd originally been chosen to wear it.

All in all, Tempe was having a blast. She was still in charge of the Infirmary, but she had the added bonus of getting to save the world, using cool weapons and an awesome Tiger Zord.

She sat in the dining hall of the Citadel, a building on Sky Base, the floating island alien colony discovered by Astral Dynamics, which was the hub of AD operations. Everyone lived and worked mainly in this one building, except the ones that explore the rest of the island.

The food left much to be desired. She, like almost everyone else, preferred to eat in Starkweather Valley, the city below Sky Base. But she was in a hurry. She didn't have a very long lunch break after her shift because she was due at the Arena for group training. A cold turkey on rye and a bag of potato chips was all she had time for.

The Arena is what they called a large domed area about the size of a football field. There were stands for spectators, but the field was enclosed. The layout and even the ground could be manipulated to suit their needs. It was amazing and intimidating. For all his laid back nature, Taylor Hicks was...creative when it came to designing obstacle courses. When you add Gregory Houston into the mix, training could be brutal. At least they found some semblance of common ground.

While her mind was wondering what new horrors the boys had come up with that day, a shadow fell over her tray. She glanced up and suppressed a trace of annoyance. Grace Beauchamp was supposed to have been the test subject for the Yellow Morpher.

Grace was a tall, athletic woman with tight cornrows and a wide face. Tempest wasn't a small woman but she had nothing on Grace. "Can I help you?" she asked pleasantly, using her talking-to-a-rabid-bear voice. Grace wasn't pleased that instead of being a Power Ranger, she'd been reassigned to the Insertion team, dealing with civilians caught up in alien skirmishes. She'd made no bones that she wasn't happy with that arrangement.

"Yeah. I'm tired of seeing your face. Why don't you do me and the world a favor and hand that over," she said, gesturing to the Morpher strapped to Tempest's wrist.

"Haven't we been through this before? I know Doctor Walker is a bit hard to understand at times with her technical talk. Let me simplify it for you," she said, setting aside her sandwich. She pointed to her Morpher. "Morpher no work you. Morpher only work me," she said very slowly.

Grace's prominent nostrils flared even wider and her eyes narrowed. "How well do you think it'd work with all the bones in your hands broken?" she asked darkly.

"That's something we'll never know because you'd never lay a hand on me," she said. "Now if you'll excuse me, I got training to get to," she said and walked away. She could feel the weight of Grace glaring after her. This was going to come to a head one day. That woman had too much resentment for her.

"Don't worry about that," Tay dropped from the crossbeams as she exited the mess hall. She still wasn't used to him appearing out of the air. "Grace Beauchamp was chosen for her record and physical prowess. She's an impressive woman. But she's no Power Ranger," he declared.

"She's not going to be happy until one of us draws blood," Tempest said. "I could probably be a little more gracious but it's not like I chose for this happen," she said moodily.

Tay grinned. "The way I see things, you were where you were supposed to be and so was she. No one ever became a Ranger who didn't deserve to be one. Even when they weren't sure themselves," he said.

"Speaking from experience?" she asked.

He scoffed. "Who me? No way," he denied. "I was always the obvious choice," he said.

Tempest laughed. There was nothing obvious about this guy.

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"You two are late," Gore stated as Taylor and Tempest arrived on the field after changing out of their uniforms. Over the field a torrential rain fell and an obstacle course was set up simulating the one he himself had to complete in boot camp. Dripping and miserable, trying to get over the seven foot wall using a slippery muddy rope was Lark. Sinclair sat at the top of wall trying to encourage her over it.

Taylor didn't feel he had to explain himself to Gore. He simply went to show Lark how to get over the wall. She was having serious trouble letting go and embracing the non-physics of Air Techniques. She was relying on her limited upper body strength instead of what he thought was the easy way. He used to think Kane sucked at Air Techniques. At least Kane's mind was open to the possibilities that he could channel his ki into manipulating the air. Doc was as close-minded as a bank safe.

He waved for Sinclair to go on and took over coaching Lark.

"It was my fault but not really. Grace was at it again," Tempest stated as she moved to the head of the course. The first obstacle was to belly crawl in trenches covered in barbed wire. Gore said the best way for he and Tempe to get through it was to use the earth and mud around them to move. Neither of them had managed it yet. Tempe could sort of feel of the pulse of the dirt all around her but she couldn't quite access it.

One of the things Tay was trying to teach them was how to tap into their Ki. He assured them it took awhile and not to worry that they couldn't right away. Still, one thing she and Gore had in common that it bugged them that they couldn't. At least not without Morphing.

"You have to ignore her," Gore said and joined her at the beginning of the course.

"The same way Taylor ignores you?" she couldn't stop the words from coming. Frustrated she tackled the course.

Gore had to admit, and hated doing it, that she had a point. He followed her through the course.

After they all successfully managed to get through it five times, they reprogrammed the field. The rain stopped and the obstacle course disappeared. They stood in what almost looked like any piece of the California coast. There was a chunk of ocean, beach, and mountain. They Morphed and began practicing use of Power Cards. There was a veritable font of them programmed into the computer. Some where just incomplete.

The newest one was Rock Crush. Yellow was having a bit of trouble with it. Deciding to ignore her earlier jab, Black gestured for her to try it. She took the Card out of her belt. "Rock Crush!" She slid the card through her Morpher. A large chunk of earth glowed yellow and rose out of the ground. She jumped and kicked it, trying to use her own power and momentum to direct a crushing torrent of debris.

The rock broke apart and actually did as it meant to. "Oh, yes!" she crowed.

"Good job," Black said. "Again," he prompted.

"You remind me of my dad," she said but obediently continued to practice.

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Devourer

"You shouldn't be here. If they spot you, questions will be raised that needn't be raised," Sylon snapped when he saw Azula in his quarters. "I've been summoned to the bridge. Another of Drage's men will be sent to attempt to conquer Earth. I'm beginning to think I didn't choose correctly when I contacted these Warstars," he said.

"Let them distract the Power Rangers. They're at least useful for that. Maybe they'll even luck up and defeat them. I have plenty of Ooze now that I've perfected the recipe," she said languidly. She stood on his bed and stretched. She bent over backwards and dropped to the floor on her hands. She straightened her body momentarily before regaining her feet.

"What are you doing?" asked Sylon, raising a brow at her.

"It's this body. It demands to be stretched on a regular basis or it gets...agitated," she said. "I'm not complaining. I couldn't do some of the things this body can even when I had my real body," she said.

"Perhaps you're beginning to prefer being human," Sylon said in a clipped tone, a curl to his lips.

"Perish the thought," she said dismissively.

"You should go," Sylon said and activated his disguise before stepping out of the shadows. "I must go," he said.

Azula sighed. "I hate when you wear that," she said.

"And I hate when you were that. If all goes well, neither of us shall be disgusting soon," he said.

She pouted but vanished in a crack of lighting. Sylon exited his quarters and paused when he nearly ran into Kragar.

"I heard voices," Kragar snarled.

"Yes, I'm sure you do," Sylon said and stalked toward the bridge. Kragar growled but followed him. He didn't entirely trust their new associate.

When they entered the bridge, Captain Drage stood with a tall white crystalline alien with snowflake insect wings. "This is Lieutenant Frizei. He's eager to attempt to take over the Earth. Tell Sylon how you plan to do that," he prompted.

"Yes, Captain," Frizei said in a surprisingly soft, wispy voice. "I'm going to call in the next ice age and freeze these monkeys into lifelessness," he declared delightedly.

"I'll prepare you a force of Oozers," Sylon said in a noncommittal fashion.

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To make up for being jerks to each other, Tempest and Gore decided to treat each other to better early in Starkweather Valley. As they exited the burger joint where they'd been, Tempest grinned wryly. "As a health professional, I am aware that was not good for me," she declared with a twinge of guilt.

"A little red meat's good for everyone," he said with a slight grin.

Tempe raised a brow at him. "I like you a lot better without the stick," she said.

He raised a brow, "What stick?" he asked.

"You know the stick. The one shoved so far up your--"

"Oh, that one," he cut her off. She just grinned at him. He shook his head and chuckled. He paused. "Do you feel that chill?" he asked suddenly,

Tempe frowned and realized that the temperature was falling.

Their Morpher's beeped. Gore answered his. "Gore here," he said.

"There's an alien in your vicinity. We're on our way but you two are close," Doc said.

"Right, we're on it," Gore said. He glanced at Tempe and she nodded. The two ran in the direction the chill was coming from.

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Upon arriving on Earth, Frizei surveyed his surrounding. "This'll do just fine," he declared from a crosswalk over a busy pedestrian hub. His wings began vibrate and glow. "I'll start with this city and then--the world!" He began producing snow and cold air and showering it over the humans below him with blowing orifices at his shoulders. The cold air wasn't localized, however. It met the warm air and overpowered it, spreading like a virus.

"You! What are you Warstars trying to do now?"

Frizei clapped his hands together when he saw Tempe and Gore push their way through the group of frightened people. "Captains orders. Eradicate the humans by any means. Ditto for nosy Power Rangers," he said. He shot laser beams at them. They rolled away in opposite directions.

"Not going to let that happen, Thriller-Chiller," Tempe declared and flipped out her Morph Card. "DynaMorpher. Yellow Ranger Power!" She slid her Card along her Morpher. A crackle of yellow energy enveloped her, forming her yellow and white power suit emblazoned with the Land symbol, her tiger helmet crested by the Scared Face and a blaster at her hip.

"Black Ranger Power!" Gore slid his Morph Card through his Morpher. A crackle of black energy enveloped him, forming his black and white power suit emblazoned with the Land symbol, his snake helmet crested by the Sacred Face and a blaster at his hip.

Dynamic Yellow jumped onto the crosswalk and engaged the enemy, keeping on the balls of her feet for speed. She jabbed and kicked at him, but he was pretty fast as well. He knocked her back.

Dynamic Black ran forward and jumped over her head in a flying kick. Frizei deflected it with a flick of his wrist. Steadying himself he attempted to help her up.

"Thanks, but I got this," she said and charged forward again. He was right behind her.

The others arrived in the area. They found several people suffering from hypothermia. "Damn it's cold," Taylor said as he checked on one man.

"The insertion team is on their way. I don't think anyone is in immediate danger until they arrive," Lark said as she checked the vitals of a small boy.

Sin found one man semi-conscious. He helped him to his feet and sent him on his way. "Then we'd better help," he said, gesturing up to where Black and Yellow engaged the Warstar.

Before they could attempt anything, Oozers seeped out of the ground to surround them.

"These first," Taylor said. They nodded and flipped out their Morph Cards. "DynaMorpher!"

"Red Ranger Power!"

"Pink Ranger Power!"

"Blue Ranger Power!"

Dynamic Rangers Red, Pink and Blue engaged the Oozers. "You guys doing all right up there?" Red asked the two Land Rangers.

"No problem. You guys just handle out little green friends," Yellow assured them.

Red didn't have that much choice as an Oozer hurled itself at his legs. He jumped, bouncing off that Oozer to kick another in the head that was sneaking up behind Pink.

"Pesky, pesky, Power Rangers," Frizei said with an annoyed tone in his breathy voice as he deflected a couple of their hits. He hit Yellow in the chest and rolled her backwards.'

Black jumped over her and grabbed at him. They grappled for a moment.

Yellow regained her feet. "Let's give this a try," she said and pulled a card from her belt.

Black glanced out and quickly broke the Warstar's grip and rolled aside.

"Rock Crush!" She slid the card through her Morpher. A large chunk of earth glowed yellow and rose out of the ground. She jumped and kicked it. It flew toward Frizei.

He was not fazed. He deflected the rock and sent it back on her. It knocked her off the crosswalk. She fell to the street below, landing badly on her leg.

Frizei followed her down as she attempted to get to her feet.

"Tempe!" Red called but immediately had to duck when an Oozer attempted to take off his head.

The pain was nearly blinding and she couldn't get to her feet. She sat in the snow cradling her leg.

"Die!" Frizei said and strode toward her.

He seemed to have forgotten about Black. He jumped off the crosswalk, and swung his axe, shattering part of one the alien's crystalline wings. Screaming shrilly in pain, he stumbled away from them. "You'll regret that Rangers!" he shouted at them and disappeared in a wink of icy blue light.

The Oozers dissolved as well.

Black and the others rushed to check on Yellow and get her to the infirmary.

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Tempest had her leg propped on a bed in the infirmary. She felt both mad and foolish. She went over every detail in her head wondering what she could have done differently.

Lark came in, for once without her tablet. "I've gone over the data from the battle. You did the best you could," she announced.

Tempest smiled, trying not to look too amused at the other girl's attempt at being friendly. "I guess so. Still, makes me wonder if Madame Big-Foot Grace Beauchamp could have done it better. You did choose her for the test, after all," she admitted dryly.

"Not a chance," Gore declared as he came in. "I helped Doc choose Grace and I'll own up to it. I was wrong. No one could do it better," he stated.

"Take it from me. You're spectacular if you've managed to illicit a compliment from this guy," Sin said.

Tempe grinned sheepishly and pushed her hair behind her ears. "Thanks. Maybe that alien will think twice before messing with the Dynamic Land Double Threat again," she said.

Gore nodded. "I imagine he will." he agreed.

Tempe stretched her leg experimentally. Pains till radiated up from her ankle, but not as much as there should be. "Hey, Doc. I want us to get physicals," she said.

Lark raised a brow but swiped a finger over her tablet. "I'll schedule it for next week," she said and tapped around. Tempe half wondered if she was doing it for show.

Ram and Taylor made their way into the Infirmary. "Crowded in here. People would think you were dying or something," Ram commented.

"Then why did you tag along?" Taylor questioned him.

Ram gave a nonchalant shrug. "Just makin' sure she ain't dying," he said with a grin.

"It is crowded in here and you're bothering the other patients," Medic Wilson, a tall lanky guy with ears sticking out of his red hair like umbrellas, told them. The other patients included a lab tech with bandaged hand and an archaeologist suffering from a head cold and currently snoring loud enough to be heard in Starkweather Valley.

Tempe waved them off. "Go, go. I'll be fine with some rest," she assured them.

After the reassurance, they filed out. Gore lingered a moment. "And as for Grace Beauchamp...she doesn't have the chance to see why you're wearing the suit like I do. Next time she makes noise; shut her up," he said. As head of Sky Base security, that suggestion carried some heavy weight.

Tempe smirked as she settled into her bed. She dozed off, dreaming of all the ways to make Grace Beauchamp shut her face.

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Taylor dropped from the crossbeams beside Gore. "I'm growing on you. I knew I would," he declared with a grin.

"Like a fungus," Gore commented.

Tay grinned crookedly. "I'll take it," he said and slouched beside Gore as he walked along.

"Can I help you with something?" he asked.

"Nope," he said.

Gore cut his eyes at Taylor. "Do you need something to do?" he asked. Unlike the other four, Taylor didn't have an actual function at Sky Base. He was a pilot but there was surprisingly little flying for him to do at Sky Base. Cargo planes came and went without any need to permanently establish one.

"Do you want a security shift?"

"Would I get my own side-arm?"

"If you can pass the exam, demonstrating you can properly handle the weapon and understand it completely," he answered.

"Sign me up," Taylor said.

"A manual will be sent to your quarters. Read it. Know it front and back. I'll give you the exam personally in one week," he said and broke off from Taylor and went to his office.

Taylor grinned. It was progress. Personally, Taylor felt the Land powers of the Black suit suited Gore far more than the Sky powers of Red would have. Dude was too grounded and down to earth.

Whistling to himself, Taylor wondered what he could do now to appease his boredom while they waited for the alien to return. They always returned.

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Devourer

Sylon frowned at the damage that had been done to Frizei. "Are you still able to generate cold?" he asked and prodded at the injury.

Frizei whimpered. "Yes, but--"

"No buts. You're such a weak and pathetic thing. The only thing you have going for you is your freezing abilities," Sylon declared, disgusted.

They were in the medical bay of the ship. It had been empty. There was not anything resembling a doctor within the ranks of the Warstars. They didn't care enough about each to bother saving anyone's life. Sylon had taken it over as his lab.

He ignored Frizei's whimpering over his hurt feelings. He filled a syringe with a halogen blue liquid. "This will numb the pain and allow you to get back to work," he said. If Frizei had been a smarter being, he would have terrified by the manic glint in Sylon's eyes.

Sylon slipped the needle between the plates covering Frizei's neck and depressed the plunger. The alien squealed and fainted. He slid to the floor. Sylon scoffed as he disposed of the syringe.

He waited for his concoction to kick in.

Frizei sprang to his feet. "Ohh! I feel great," he breathed and did a couple of dance steps and spun in a circle before striking a pose.

"Then do what you were meant to be doing," Sylon said.

Frizei shuffled and danced out of the medical bay. Sylon covered his face with his hand. A headache was building behind his eyes.

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Frizei scouted a likely location to launch his next attack. It was at an overlook at one of the outlying parks of the city. He could see the city but he was fairly removed from it. It was perfect. "From here I will freeze the Earth," he declared.

His wings began to vibrate and glow. He produced cold winds and snow and began to cover the city at a pace that outstripped his previous attempt.

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Tempest was awakened from her recuperative sleep by the Alarm System sounding. She looked around and got to her feet before she remembered her ankle was hurt. She should have gone down in a ball of agony; instead she just felt an uncomfortable twinge. Oh yes, she would definitely be interested in the results of their physicals.

She drew on her shoes and hoofed it toward the Lab. She ignored Wilson's calls after her that she shouldn't be leaving.

No one was in the Lab except a couple of tech's whose names she didn't know. She knew that the others were on their way, but she didn't wait. Again she ignored the protests of others and teleported. They'd be right behind her. Sky Base was huge but the Infirmary was in the same wing as the Lab.

She appeared in a bright flash of yellow. She was in a veritable blizzard. She Cali girl and had only ever seen snow on TV. It disoriented her at her first. She saw the alien dancing around and she could have sworn she saw him doing the moonwalk.

Still limping slightly she approached him. "Hey! Thriller-Chiller. Me and you, we got something to finish," she called to him.

He spotted her and started. "You? You came here alone?" he asked, seeming surprised. He thought Rangers traveled in packs. This would be easier than he ever thought. "That's hilarious!" He blasted her with a concentration of snow and went.

It crashed into her and sent her flying. She rolled in the snow. She was a little winded but otherwise unharmed. "I'll show you hilarious," she said as she got to her feet. She flipped out her Morph Card. "DynaMorpher! Yellow Ranger Power!"

Frizei began throwing energy blasts her way but it was too late. Dynamic Ranger Yellow rushed toward him. She faked him out. Instead of an actual head-on attack, she hit the ground short of him and rolled under his feet. She grabbed a card from her belt and came up sliding it through her Morpher. "Land Claw!"

They traded blows back and forth but Yellow could feel herself tiring. The strain on her leg was making it hurt again. At one point Frizei knocked her aside. She landed, putting too much weight on her leg. Pain shot through it. It slowed her just enough to give him the advantage. He threw energy blasts at her again, this time hitting her dead on. She crashed backwards.

Frizei stomped on her chest for good measure. "Now we'll finish it," he assured her. Standing over her, he prepared to finish her off.

He was so focused on her; he didn't know that the other Rangers had arrived. Red and Black jumped forward and hit him dead center with the Land Axe and Sky Sword. He stumbled back as the others surrounded her.

"Hey, you ok?" Red asked her and tried to help her to her feet.

"I'm good. I'm good. This is getting personal though," she said as she regained her feet and tried to push forward. "I'm gonna end him once and for all," she growled.

Black put a hand on her shoulder. "Wait. Just calm down. There are five of us, one of him. We'll do it together," he said.

"Plus he seems kinda juiced up," Blue said watching the alien dance around.

"One of you or five of you. It's all the same to me," he declared and did a spin and posed, throwing a gust of snowy wind at them.

Red countered readily, throwing a whirlwind of his own. The two powers collided midair and spun together wildly, vibrating the air around them before dissipating in a small windy explosion.

"Didn't expect that, did ya?" he asked.

"Let's get him," Black suggested. He raised his Land Axe and charged forward. Blue with his Sea Sniper, Pink with her Sky Shooter and Red with his Sky Sword charged forward.

"Aw, you guys," Yellow said before charging in with her Land Claw.

Frizei met them all, deflecting one and then another, feeling no pain or fear. Whatever Sylon had injected him with made him invincible it seemed from his point of view. He swirled on Yellow, knowing she was already injured and knocked her back a ways, then hit Black low, knocking him aside.

"Damn ugly thing. Any ideas?" he barked in Red's general direction.

Red nodded. He jumped up and straight toward Frizei. "Dragon Slash!" He slashed alien with a streak of red energy.

"Shark Snipe!" Blue stood back and fired several times at the alien. Each blast hit with precision as once expected from a professional such as Sinclair Monning.

"Nice assist," Black commented. Blue tipped his head. "Lark, count to three and fire," he instructed. He ran forward. Blue ducked in front of Pink to guard her as she took aim.

She trusted him to know what he was doing so she took careful aim. "Phoenix Shot!" Black slid along the ground as she fired a blast of pink energy at Frizei and striking him.

"Snake Bite!" Black whirled to his feet and hacked at the remainder of his broken wing. It exploded and broke off. He didn't even seem to feel it. He whipped around, grabbed Black and struck him several times, eventually knocking him aside.

"Gore!" Yellow started toward him but he was already back on his feet, crouching and rubbing his chest. "You all right, partner?" she asked him.

"I'm good. Get ready for the knock out," he said and regained his feet. He pulled a Card from his belt. "I'll distract him," he stated.

Grinning beneath her helmet she nodded. She ran toward Frizei.

"Rock Crush Explosion!" He swiped the card through his Morpher. All round her, and in front of her, black energy hefted earthen rocks and exploded them, obscuring her approach and confusing the alien. Unlike

the earlier attack, none of the rock was being directed at him.

He didn't see her until it was too late. As one rock exploded directly in front of him, she jumped through the debris. "Tiger Shock!" She slashed him with her claw several times, spinning around his body. She got clear and turned her back on him as the yellow electric crackles she left behind exploded, sending him flying and frying.

The others rushed toward her.

"Impressive. Told you. You were where you meant to be," Red told him.

"I guess I have to agree," Black admitted with a nod to Red. "I think he's right. You weren't the only one where you were meant to be. We both were," he stated.

She smiled and nodded her acknowledgement of his words. So did Red. They both knew how hard that had to have been for him.

Frizei regained his feet. "You'll all pay for that," he said, his voice becoming shrill with his pique.

"Let's get him. Together," Yellow suggested.

"Yes, let's," Red agreed. The five of them combined their weapons.

"Dynamic Cannon!" They pulled cards from their belts.

"The Shining Power of the Sky!" Pink and Red put the cards into the Cannon.

"The Raging Power of the Land!" Black and Yellow their cards into the Cannon.

"The Serene Power of the Sea!" Blue put his card into the Cannon.

The Cannon charged.

"Take this!" Frizei fired laser blasts at them.

It was too late. "Dynamic Cannon Fire!" The Cannon fired a powerful blast of golden light and electricity that tore through his attacks and into him. He flew into the sky from the force of it and exploded. They turned away from the sight, Red still holding the Cannon.

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Devourer

Sylon sighed. The formula needed more work it seemed.

Drage rounded on him. "Sylon!"

"Firing Ooze," he said in an almost bored tone.

Kragar watched him with distrust. "What is anyway?" he demanded gruffly.

"A special blend of all the poisons and diseases extracted from every life form on this miserable, disgusting planet. But you can just put it all in a pot and boil it. And I'll tell you the recipe," he said, giving the commander a sidelong glance.

Kragar made a sound and stalked off. Sylon smirked at his back.

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Ooze exploded over the area where Frizei bit the dust. It reintegrated him, including his broken wing, and expanded his mass. "Oh! Ah! Now I'll definitely this planet. Starting with you!" he said at the Rangers on the ground. His wings glowed and vibrated and he began to release icy wind and snow.

"Let's show this guy how much size matters," Red suggested and flipped out a Card. The others took the Cards from their belts.

"Dragon DynaZord!" He slid the Card through his Morpher.

"Phoenix DynaZord!" Pink slid the card through her Morpher.

"Snake DynaZord!" Black slid his Card through his Morpher.

"Tiger DynaZord!" Yellow slid her Card though her Morpher.

"Shark DynaZord!" Blue slid his Card though his Morpher.

The Zords appeared and teleported their pilots aboard. "No messing around," Red said and retrieved a different Card and slid it through the reader on his Zord's console.

No one argued and did the same thing. "Dynamic Megazord!"

The Zords combined to form the Dynamic Megazord with wings and a dragon's tail for a sword. They appeared in the combined cockpit. The Megazord walked forward to meet Frizei.

"Big or small, I'll win it all," Frizei declared and blasted snow and ice at them. It distracted them long enough for him to come in close and land a few blows.

In the rocking cockpit, Black glanced at Yellow. "Let's show him some fancy footwork," he suggested.

"Most def," she agreed.

The Megazord jumped and hovered in air while it bicycle-kicked the giant alien concentrating on the shoulder orifices that control his wintry blasts. They landed as he stumbled back, gripping at a shoulder.

"The snow's stopped," Pink observed.

"Way to go," Blue told them.

"Oh, that ain't all we got," Yellow declared. "Land Head-Butt!"

Both feet kicked forward and as each did, the Snake Zord and Tiger Zord's heads flew off and slammed into Frizei, flying around and biting him. He danced around trying to shake them off and avoid them. Tiger Zord gripped a leg while Snake Zord grabbed another ankle and pulled him off balance. He fell backwards as the two Zords reconnected with the Megazord.

Red snickered. "Awesome sauce. Ok, enough fun. Let's end it," he said and pulled out the finisher Card. The other's pulled out the same Card. The Megazord drew the Dragon Sword as they slid the Cards through the readers.

The Dragon Sword caught flame. "Dynamic Astral Strike!" The Megazord zoomed forward and slashed through the alien.

Frizei sparked, did one final spin and pose before exploding. "Oooooooooohhhhhh!"

The Megazord turned its back.

Yellow slapped her hands against her console and got to her. "We got him!" she celebrated and did her own spin and pose.

"We sure did," Black agreed with a grin behind his helmet.

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Tempest suppressed a grimace as she saw Grace Beauchamp heading toward her. She paused and waited. Grace approached her with a mulish expression. Tempe held up a hand. "Girlfriend, listen. I spent most of yesterday fighting an alien freak and kicking his Thriller-Chiller hind-end. I risked everything, life and limb and in the end, I beat him. I'm through trying to prove myself to you and I'm through playing it off.

"I have the Yellow DynaMorpher. I am the Dynamic Yellow Ranger. If you don't like it, tough. Get used to it. Or better yet, get over it and come with me. I'm having a spa day down in the city and I could use the company. Doc looked all kinds of crazy at me when I tried to get her to come. You look like you could use some pampering. And a good weave," she said. She hooked her arm through the other woman's and pulled her along as if she weren't a head taller and twice as wide. "I see you with something red. Sleek and edgy, like Rihanna in her Rated R days" she declared as she dragged the completely flabbergasted and aghast Grace Beauchamp along the halls of the Citadel to the main teleport hub in the courtyard.

Ram watched them pass with his jaw hanging to his knees. "Did I just see that?"

"Kill 'em with kindness," Sin declared with a chuckle.

Gore grinned. "I suggested she shut her up. I guess she succeeded. Grace looked terrified," he said. The three men dissolved in a fit of laughter.

Higher up, Taylor watched. He smiled faintly. He was proud of Tempest. She did the right thing. He dropped to the ground behind the trio making Ram jump. "Stop doing that," he said.

"Make me," Taylor said. He looked at Gore. "Let's go take that test, boss," he said.

"You still have a week," he said.

"Don't need it. Let's go."

Gore tried not to sigh. "This way," he said. He supposed one day he was going to have to quit underestimating Taylor Hicks.

--/End 04\--

5 - Shining Song

Dr. Lark Walker glanced at Taylor Hicks. "I know you aren't entirely interested in the abilities of the Power Cards but I thought this one might interest you," she said and tapped her tablet, which she'd interfaced with the Lab's computer. A black part of the wall lit up; with a schematic of the Power Cards they use to access certain elemental attacks.

Tay raised his brows. "I gotta admit, that looks pretty cool," he commented as he read the name and intended use of the Card. He ignored it when she smirked at him. "Just because I acknowledge the fact that the Power Cards, by tapping power from the Morphing Grid, may be produce more power than I can using my ki doesn't mean I'm going to slack off on your training," he said.

Enrique Ramon ducked his head and pretended he wasn't trying not to laugh.

Lark shrugged it off. "Why would I have thought any differently?" she asked. This was a complete lie. She was just not getting it and they both knew it. The only difference is; he wasn't willing to give up and she was.

Taylor gave her an unbelieving look. "Think outside the box once in awhile," he said. "Anyhow, I have a shift. Don't want the new boss on my back," he said and patted his new sidearm.

Ram did snort with laughter. Considering Gregory Houston was the 'new boss', Taylor really had to mind his P's and Q's for awhile. Whistling, nonchalantly, he left the Lab.

Lark pursed her lips together. "Think outside the box. Like that's so easy," she grumbled under her breath. "What are you snickering at, Ramon? Get back to work," she snapped at him and left the Lab. Ram quickly ducked his head and went back to sorting through the alien programming, looking for bits of code that went together and made sense.

She was in high dudgeon as she passed the Infirmary and almost ran over Tempest Strong. "Oh, pardon me," she said.

Tempest took the opportunity and hooked her arm through Lark's. "No problem. Off to lunch? Let's go together," she suggested.

"I wasn't. I just wanted some air," she said.

"Then we'll grab it and eat outside," Tempest said easily.

Lark realized she had little choice. In a matter of minutes they had an assortment of dining room options spread out on a table made from the same unidentified white substance that made up almost everything on Sky Base. They sat in the Citadel's courtyard. "Is this because I wouldn't go on a 'spa day' with you?" she asked.

Tempest looked at her askew. "Uh, no. I took Grace anyway. Have you seen her lately? Doesn't she look amazing? You missed out," she said with a smile.

Lark nodded politely. She hadn't noticed whatever it was Tempest was talking about. She tended not to observe people too closely. She was also quite inept at social niceties. And forget about small talk.

Tempe surveyed the other girl for a moment. She opened a veggie burrito and dug into it. They were quiet a moment. "Tell me a little about yourself," she prompted.

"Excuse me?" Lark asked, surprised.

"You know everything about me. School, jobs, psychological profile, medical history. The only thing I know about you is that you're name is Lark Walker and you're a doctor. Tell me," she prompted.

"Um, well. I was home schooled and graduated when I was twelve. I got have several degrees in Computer Sciences, Physics and Mathematics. Papa wanted to make sure I had a well rounded education so he also made sure I studied karate and earned a black belt. I started working for Astral Dynamics. I worked mostly with my father. This is the first project I've lead. It was because I figured out how to work the teleport device the archaeologists found on the mountain," she explained.

Tempest reached out and patted her hand. "That explains so much," she said.

Lark frowned. Explained what?

--/\--

Sylon heard the most brain-rending cacophony that had been his displeasure to hear. He left his lab. He had feeling the sound would be debilitating had he not been wearing his genetic disguise. He went to the bridge to find Captain Drage being entertained by one of his men.

A frond headed alien that had string instruments growing out of its chest, which is where the music came from that he was singing along to. He had a high voice that exaggerated long syllables. "Captaaaaaiin Drake! Ow! Heeeeeee's the best Captaaaaaaain ever seeeeeeen!"

"Enough!" Kragar snarled.

The music ceased. "Heeeey, man. Don't raaain on my parade. Yeah! The Captain is my number one faaan!" he declared.

"What is this thing?" Sylon asked, an idea forming. This could just what he needed.

"This is Mutzhart. He's the Captain's fool," Kragar said. "Get off the bridge!" he snarled.

"No wait," Sylon said calmly, "He could be useful," he said thoughtfully. Yes, if all went as he thought it would, he'd have no hindrances in locating Skycrest.

--/\--

That day's training seemed worse than usual for some reason. Lark was majorly frustrated. They sat in a circle attempting to meditate but it was impossible for her mind to shut down unless she was asleep. She cracked an eye and saw Taylor watching her. He shook his head. "That's enough for today," he said finally and got to his feet. "Anyone having any luck?" he asked.

Lark was not surprised to see Sin raise his hand. Of all of them, he was the one most quickly adapting to the changes being molecularly bonded to his Morpher had wrought. He was also most adept at picking up on the Ninja Techniques Taylor was teaching them. She made a face at him. He made one back.

"Children, behave," Gore admonished them. In response Sin made a face at him.

"How about this; you guys need to be in your elements for a while," Taylor said to Tempest and Gore. They'd been given Land Powers. "Sin goes down the ocean every day to meditate. You two need to do something similar," he said.

"I don't have ti--"

"Of course you do," Taylor interrupted. He grinned. "You're the boss. You don't *have* to take as many shifts as you do. You just do. Work less, play in the dirt more. Real dirt, not whatever passes for dirt up here," he added.

Tempest made a face. Taylor stopped her before she could protest. "Yes, real dirt. As in get dirty, muddy, and rocky. At least two hours every day. Don't worry about training or trying to move it with your ki. Just sit in it. Be with it," he instructed. He honestly couldn't believe himself. He'd willfully chosen to go out into the world. He'd never wanted the responsibility of trying to teach anyone Ninja Techniques.

Yet, here he was doing just that. If he was as half-assed a student as he had an inkling he started out as, he was surprised Sensei Shane didn't just chuck him off and cliff and say "Control the air or die". He was tempted to do the same thing with Lark Walker. Except she'd probably end up dying.

Her world was entirely linear. Things fit neatly into their places. That was completely wrong for Wind Ninjas. And like it or not, she was now and air elemental. Changes were being done to her physical make-up to allow a great control of that fact. He

"What about the Doc?" Gore asked. He didn't see anything wrong with the suggestion. It made sense. He supposed he could adjust his shifts.

Taylor already had an idea about that. "That'll be taken care of. What she and I need is less distraction and no ground under our feet," he said.

Lark looked at him uneasily. What did he mean by that?

--/\--

Weddings were truly a wonderful thing. Outdoor wedding receptions were the thing that season. So were wedding bands. The wedding of socialite Matilda Ellis and her groom Gavin Fowler was no exception.

Her wedding guests consisted of the top movers and shakers of Starkweather Valley and some even beyond.

Mutzhart was less than impressed by the wedding band entertaining the guests at a hundred or so white tables that dotted the landscape of Starkweather Valley Center Park. He made a scoffing sound. "Noooo-oo waaaay! Listen to my muuuuusic!" he called out from the elaborate post-modern steel-and-glass architectural arbor Matilda's had built for her to get married under.

He spun in a circle and began playing his wild song.

The sound had a bad effect on the humans. They grabbed at their heads, crying out in pain. Many stumbled around. Some collapsed in pain.

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Gore and Tempe were arguing about when and where they should go to 'meditate in the mud' as they were now referring to it. Sin was trying to mediate but they both snapped at him to stay out of it. He raised his hands and backed away.

"Neither of you are going to bite my head off I hope?" he asked as he approached Lark and Taylor.

Taylor snickered. "They're a deadly pair, huh?" he said.

"You could say that," Sin agreed.

Lark bit her lip. Taylor had just informed her that twice daily for an hour they were going to the very top of Stark Peak. Real air. Real sky.

Lark was surprised by that he realized that air around the colony was oxygen enriched due its altitude. In a sense 'fake' air. Just one more thing about him that surprised her. One day she was going to cease being surprised by Taylor Hicks.

Pain suddenly spread through her head as some strange ringing sounded in her ears. She clapped her hand over them. It took her a moment to realize that Taylor was suffering even more than she was.

Tempe noticed them and rushed over. "What happened?" she demanded.

"I don't know! They just suddenly covered their ears," Sin said.

"Ah! You don't hear that? It's horrible?" Tay said painfully.

The Alien Alarm System began to sound.

"We'd better go," Gore said. "Can you guys make it?" he asked.

Lark nodded. "Let's go," she agreed.

Taylor nodded.

Tempe gave them a concerned look and hovered around them as they made their way back to the Citadel and the Lab.

--/\--

"Let's kick this up a notch!" Mutchart said and spin around, did a guitar kick and faced the people again. The dual instruments on his chest began to vibrate causing a strange sound that swept over the wedding guests in devastating waves.

The Power Rangers arrived and got hit with what the other people were being hit with. Their helmets helped dampen the effect, but they suddenly understood what was wrong with Red and Pink.

"Oh my God. This is awful," Yellow cried loudly.

"Did you guys really hear this all the way from Sky Base?" Black asked.

Pink was busy checking on the people. "If they continue listening to this, they'll die," she shouted over the ringing pain in her own ears.

"Yes, we did," Red answered as he helped Pink move a small child that had fallen near some broken glass.

"Hey! Shut that racket up!" Blue shouted at the Warstar alien.

"Racket?!" Mutchart demanded. "I'm the greaaaaa-aatest muuu-sician in the uuuuniverse!" he crowed. "How dare you insult my tunes? You're all fools not recogniiiiize me truuue geniuius! Ooozers! C'mon doooowwwn!" he cried.

Oozers seeped up from the ground. "Waste those laaaaaamooooos!" Mutchart began playing again. Except really instead of fighting, the Oozers began to dance.

"Whatever, let's just get it over with!" Red shouted and pulled out his Weapon Card. His head was near exploding

"Right!" The other's agreed. They flipped out their Weapon Cards as well.

"Dragon Sword!"

"Phoenix Shooter!"

"Sea Sniper!"

"Land Axe!"

"Land Claw!"

They're weapons appeared and they charged into the Oozers. While the Oozers defended when attacked they truly seemed more interested in dancing to the music.

"What's with these guys?" Yellow wondered.

"They're weirder than usual," Black agreed.

Pink was having difficulty keeping her wits about her. She held her head.

"Lark, watch out!" Blue shouted as some of the Oozers snuck up on her. He fired at them keeping them off of her.

Red was barely standing. An Oozer snuck up behind him and grabbed him. Black appeared out of nowhere and chopped him with his axe. "Hey, what's up with you two?" he asked as he helped Red stay on his feet.

Laughing wildly Mutzhart jumped to the ground. He continued to play and Oozers danced around him. "Yeeeeeeoow!" he cried gleefully.

The Rangers staggered slightly, but Red and Pink experienced it worst of all.

"Let's vaporize him with the Cannon!" Blue suggested.

"Good plan!" Red agreed. Pink nodded weakly. Anything to stop the noise. She dropped her weapon.

"You can do this, Doc!" Black said.

She nodded again and retrieved her Shooter. They combined their weapons.

"Dynamic Cannon!" They pulled cards from their belts.

"The Shining Power of the Sky!" Pink and Red put the cards into the Cannon.

"The Raging Power of the Land!" Black and Yellow their cards into the Cannon.

"The Serene Power of the Sea!" Blue put his card into the Cannon.

The Cannon charged.

Mutzhart continued to play on.

Red clutched at his helmet.

"Dynamic Cannon Fire!" The Cannon fired a powerful blast of golden light that soared over Mutzhart's head because Red's vision went black and he stumbled at the wrong moment.

"Taylor! You can do it, baby," Yellow encouraged him.

He went down to one knee. Pink doubled over. "I don't think so," he denied. Pink shook her head.

Mutzhart finished his song. "Oooh yeah! Now that's what I call an audience slaaaaaayer!" he cried. "Now let me slay ya!" he cried and used his arm to shoot energy discs at them.

Pink and Red were unable to get out of the way. They were hit dead on, their Morphs fizzling out.

"Yayuh! What a rush!" Mutzhart cried. "C'mon boys. Let's get us a better venuuuue!" he said to Oozers and began skipping off and disappeared in a wink of golden light.

Yellow and the others rushed to Taylor and Lark. "Are you guys still with us?" she asked.

"My head hurts," Lark cried.

Taylor on the other hand was completely out.

"Ram! Get us out of here," Gore ordered. The Rangers and their fallen comrades disappeared in multicolored flashes of light

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In the infirmary, Taylor had regain consciousness. Ram had pieced together noise cancelling headphones that would double as communicating devices if they needed them. For the moment, the Warstar was silent.

Tempest had given them complete check-ups. "No permanent damage to your ear drums," she assured them.

"What was that all about?" Gore demanded of them. Worry was making him gruff.

"Air pollution," Taylor said, rubbing his temples. "Literally. The vibrations from his music are toxic. That's what's making people sick. Certain types of sounds at the right frequencies are harmful. Right, Doc?" he asked.

Lark nodded and wish she hadn't as the room began to spin. "That's true. His music must also be broadcasting those frequencies. The longer the exposure the worse the damage," she said.

"The better the hearing, too. I've been able to manipulate air currents to bring sounds to me. I spent many an hour eavesdropping on the girl's locker room in high school by doing that," Taylor said with a grin.

Tempest rolled her eyes. "Why do guys always assume the girl's locker room is some kind of sexy slumber party thing?" she asked with a huff.

Ram snickered but decided not to comment on his envy.

"Anyway, since bonding with the Morpher, I've noticed it happening without conscious thought. If *my* hearing has improved, so has Lark's," he said. "Whether she admits to it or not," he added.

Lark was sullen. She hadn't really noticed any such thing. Or if she had, it hadn't been worth her full attention. Maybe she had even subconsciously denied it. Still, she did hear the sound when the others couldn't.

"This does mean when he reappears, neither of you can get near him. Who knows what a second full dose would do to you," Sin said.

Taylor nodded. He was aware of that.

"For now, rest," Tempest ordered and ushered the boys out.

"We'll have to think of a way to counteract his music or else no one's going to win this one," Taylor told Lark.

"I know. If I could figure out which frequency is causing the problem, perhaps I could find a tone to neutralize it," she said.

"Won't work," he said and closed his eyes. "Think about it Doc. You're a smarty pants but don't rely so much on that. Use your emotions a little, too," he said and rolled over on his side and dropped off to sleep. He healed better in his sleep.

Lark glared at his back but huffed a sigh and turned on her side as well.

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Mutzhart looked out over the city from the top of a tall building. "Mayun! My concert suuuucked!" he complained.

"You just need the right venue.

Mutzhart turned on his heels and saw Sylon loafing nearby. "Oh. Hey, man! You were right about myyy music! It knocked them OWt!"

Sylon nodded. "Yes. Your performance was more than I could have hoped for," he agreed. Stupid loud. Stupid but oh, so useful.

"Yeah, man! I'm a musical geeeenuuus!" Mutzhart loved praise.

"I look forward to your next performance. I even have a venue arranged. If you're interested," Sylon tempted.

"Yayuh! That's wiiiicked!"

"Good. It'll be best performance of your life. A worldwide debut. You'll knock them all dead. Every single stinking human on this planet," Sylon and clenched his hands into fists.

"Yeeeeaaaah, maaaaaan!"

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"It's discord!"

Taylor sprang awake at Lark's sudden shout. She scrambled off her bed and ran out. She back tracked. "Come on. Everyone to the Lab," she told him.

Frowning vaguely, he rolled out of bed and shuffled down to the Lab where Lark was already calling the others.

"Should you be up, Doc?" Ram asked her.

"Just a headache," Lark said and was quickly trying to access personnel records.

"What's going on?" Gore demanded as he rushed in. Sin and Tempe were right on his heels, looking harried and concerned.

"It's discord!" Lark said. "The frequency," she tried to explain at the blank on their faces. "It's discordant note in the harmonies of the Earth. What we need to counter act it is harmony," she said excitedly.

"Slow it down a little, sweetie," Tempest prompted.

Lark ran a hand through her hair. "We need a singer. Just a voice. No recorded .mp3s or anything like that. The voices have been unnaturally altered way too much. I'm trying to see if anyone on the base has a background in singing," she said.

Tempe suddenly noticed she was being glanced at. "What? You think because I'm a black girl I can sing like Beyonce or something?" she demanded. "Sorry to disillusion you boys, but I can't carry a tune. They even kicked me outta the church choir when I was ten," she stated.

Taylor smiled at the thought. He rubbed the back of his neck. "But it can be a recording? Just not processed to the hilt?" he asked Lark.

Lark nodded. "Yes. I will need a recording," she answered.

"Then...I have something," he admitted. They glanced at him curiously. "No, it's not me. I'm in the same boat as Tempe when it comes to singing. But this is...I think it'll work. I get what you're saying, Doc. A pure voice and harmony," he said. He left the Lab to go to his room.

Tempe watched him walk past. "I think he was blushing," she declared in a loud whisper. Her curiosity was seriously peaked.

"And none of you except Doc better be in the Lab when I get back!" Taylor called back down the corridor, his voice reverberating on the walls, making it seem louder.

Taylor needn't have worried. The screen began beeping. "What's that?" she asked.

"Ah, it worked," Ram blinked. "I wrote a program to calculate the next possible appearance of the alien. It, ah, worked more quickly than I thought it would," he said.

"We can check it out," Gore declared. He was beginning to respect Ram's computer skills.

"Taylor and I will work on the device. Once it's operational, we'll join you," she said.

Gore nodded.

"Right, let's go see if Ram's program worked," Sin said.

Tempe ruffled Ram's hair. "I believe in him," she declared. He beamed.

The three of them stepped into the teleport. Gore activated it. They disappeared in multicolored beams of light.

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Sylon had secured an open air concert hall for Mutzhart's performance. Oozers were being preparing it for the concert. To one side sat a large broadcasting dish. Mutzhart didn't know what it for but if it furthered his career, he didn't care.

He was shouting orders at the Oozers to be careful.

Sylon stood nearby, out of sight. He was speaking with Azula. She had specially designed headphones covering her ears. It effectively blocked Mutzhart's music. "I find it hard to believe that the Warstar's greatest key to destruction was working as a fool," she said.

"His music doesn't affect them. They never even realized what a jewel they had," he said.

She scoffed and shook her head. She gasped and directed his attention.

"Hey, careful!" Mutzhart shouted at an Oozer. He paced the stage that would be the location of his greatest concert.

The Rangers appeared at the top of the tiered seats of the concert hall. "They're actually here," Blue declared.

"Ha! I knew Ram could do it," Yellow declared.

"He's pretty good," Black had to admit.

"Well, let's finish him off before he can get started," Blue suggested. Black and Yellow nodded and began to head toward the stage.

Blue energy blasts exploded the stone before them. They stepped back and turned in the direction the blasts came from. They saw an unknown alien standing near the top of the stage.

"Who are you?" Blue called out.

"You, my Rangers, may call me Sylon," he said, spreading his arms. "Not that it matters. As simple humans, you will die soon," he said.

"Yeeeeeah, maaaaan! Well said!" Mutzhart said. "I'll take it from heeere! Yayuh!" He spun around. "This is my muuuuusiiiiic!" He began to play and the Oozers began to dance around him.

"Don't do anything foolish," Azula warned Sylon.

It was too late. He used his staff and tuned into a ball of blue light and appeared in front of the three Rangers. He engaged them, using the staff with incredible skill. He slashed twice at Yellow. He spun low and upper slashed Blue. He whirled; hit blue with the end of the staff in a fluid motion that also slashed twice at Black. He swung the staff in circle and knocked them all down with blue energy.

He turned to the stage where Mutzhart played. "Start the transmission," he called.

An Oozer manning the broadcast dish pressed a red button at its base.

"What is it?" Black said as he attempted to get to his feet.

"Bad," Yellow said from where she lay winded.

It was very bad. The dish began broadcasting the toxic sound around the world, using the Earth's own satellites and receivers.

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In nearby Angel Grove, the unbreakable glass of the Youth center shattered while it's owners, the alien being called Lammy Goldsmith with superhuman hearing screamed in pain as blood trickled from her ears and her fiancé, a human hybrid with hearing nearly as sensitive as hers writhed in pain on the floor.

It was only the first of many instances happening all over the world, the signal spreading from coast to coast. From continent to continent.

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Taylor had brought Doc the recording. It was an .mp3 file he'd saved to his phone but that he'd backed up and made several copies of over the years. He burned it on DC for her.

Ram refused to leave because he reasoned that they needed his help.

"Fine," Taylor said flatly.

Doc had assembled, with Ram's help, a portable transmitter of her own. She took the disc from Taylor. She played it.

"Are you serious?" a girl's voice asked.

"Yes, I already pressed record. Sing," Taylor's voice prompted with a laugh.

"Ok, but don't laugh," the girl said. Then she began to sing. Her voice was rich and full emotion and power. She didn't need a studio to sound amazing. Her song was one of love and life. It was perfect.

Ram's jaw dropped. "Who--?"

"Doesn't matter," Taylor said.

The song finished.

"Wow that was--" Taylor's voice cut off as he apparently stopped recording.

Lark nodded and isolated just the singing and sent it to the broadcaster. "I've put it on an infinity loop. Once I start, it won't stop until I want it to," she explained.

"That's great," Taylor said. "We should join--" he suddenly went to one knee with a cry of pain. Lark gasped and staggered.

Ram immediately started the transmitter. The song helped immensely.

He checked something at the computer. "They're using some sort of device to transmit the music everywhere," he said.

"I don't have time to construct something to counteract that," Lark sputtered.

"It'll be ok, Doc. Come on. We should go help the others," Taylor said.

She hesitated. "It'll work out. You thought outside the box and used your heart. Believe me. It'll be ok," he assured her.

Lark nodded. She grabbed the transmitter.

"Good luck," Ram told them.

Taylor nodded and stepped into the transporter. Lark followed. He activated the teleport.

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Sylon was fighting the three Rangers again. He didn't even give them a chance to summon weapons. He knocked the two men aside and slammed the end of his staff into Yellow's chest.

Mutzhart played on.

Black jumped to his feet. He knocked Sylon away from her.

Blue stepped in and took a few swings that Sylon deflected. Black jumped in again.

Mutzhart played on.

"My head is killing me," Black complained, gripping his helmet.

"Good," Sylon said and slashed at him, sending him flying and crashing into the ground.

"Gore!" Yellow and Blue went to check on him. They helped him to his feet.

"Comet Bombs!" Sylon fired blue balls of energy at them. They exploded all around him and on them. They sparked blue energy and fell to the ground in a heap.

"Don't worry. The music the stop when the world dies," he said in a soothing tones. "But I'll do you a favor. I'll kill you quickly to spare your brains from turning to mush," he said and approached them. He hefted his staff and aimed. "Good-bye," he said. He hesitated when he heard something strange.

A different sound entered the scene. A lone voice. Melodic and powerful.

"What?!" Mutzhart was distracted and stopped playing. "What is that disguuuu-uu-uusting voice?!" he demanded. He grabbed at his head. The Oozers staggered around dizzily.

The Rangers looked around for the source of the voice. Everyone saw at once its source.

Standing at the top tier of the stadium were Lark and Taylor. Lark held the transmitter.

"Doc!" Blue said.

"And Taylor," Yellow said in relief. She was frankly tired of getting her booty kicked.

"What are you doing?! Stoop that!" Mutzhart shrieked.

Sylon growled. He heard a scream. He turned and saw Azula clutching at her head on her knees, hidden from sight except from his angle. He whirled toward Lark and Taylor. "Damn you!" he snarled and started up toward them.

He was hit from behind.

"Give it up."

He swirled around to see Blue, Black and Yellow on their feet and with their weapons in hand. He gave another glance at where Azula. He couldn't get to her. Blue and Black launched an attack against him. They jumped, Black slashing him with his Axe and Blue kicking him in the head. Yellow whirled in with her Claw and upper-cut him.

They began to trade block and blows with him once he regained his staff and but Azula out of his mind.

Taylor flipped out a card. "This'll come in handy," he said with a grin.

"That's the new Card I found!" Lark exclaimed.

"Indeed it is," he agreed. He held up his wrist. "This'll carry the song on the wind," he said. "Explosive Four Winds!" He slid the Card. The sheer amount of red wind energy that swept up the sound and whirled it throughout the world staggered him. He continued to direct it. If he'd attempted this on his own, he'd have already dropped.

"How paaathetic! Destruction is the real muuuusic! Yayuh!" Mutzhart cried, deciding he'd been distracted enough; he began to play in earnest. "Hooooow's that?!" he crowed. The instruments on chest began to vibrate and move again, adding even more concussive power to the music.

"No!" Lark cried out and stood up. She could do this. She would. It seemed to take forever but happen all at once. Her mind went black all except the song. She opened her mouth and began to sing along. The harmonies of the two voices joined. The air fairly shimmered with her power.

Still fighting with Sylon, Blue fired a shot. He glanced at Lark, surprised. His headache was lessening.

Sylon blocked the shot with his staff. He heard Azula scream again. As Black came to engage him, he had to ignore her.

"The singing is cancelling out his noise," Blue said.

"Wow," Yellow said.

Mutzhart was giving his all but the voice on the transmitter and Lark's own voice imbued with her Sky empowered ki was too strong. The alien's transmitter began to spark under the strain. It suddenly blew up.

Without the continued transmission the song's power was more easily spread, especially with Lark's power behind it.

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In nearby Angel Grove, Lammy had nearly lost consciousness. She had not even been able to turn her hearing down. She checked on Winter.

"Did I hear Rena singing?" he asked dazedly.

"I think so," she agreed. As if of one mind, the two of them scrambled to their feet. They knew a place to get answers. Winter looked at his windows and shook his head miserably as they passed them.

The winds carried the music beyond California. From state to state. Coast to coast. Continent to continent. People began stirring, bewildered but most swore they heard angels singing.

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Lark and the voice of Rena Hart continued to sing.

Mutzhart was sparking. "My muusic is the best!" he said and stumbled around in pain. The positive harmonies of the song made his instruments explode. He fell forward. He reached his hand out toward Sylon still fighting with the three Rangers. "Syyyyyylon!" he cried out weakly.

Sylon backed away from the Rangers. "What? Damn Rangers," he growled.

"I'll be damned if Doc and Taylor didn't managed to pull this one outta their--"

"Girl's got lungs," Yellow interrupted.

"Hey, let's try a triple cannon," Blue suggested and nodded toward Sylon. "We owe him," he added wickedly.

"Sweet," Yellow agreed. They three of them combined their weapons quite easily. They pulled their Cards from their belts and placed them on the Cannon. "LandSea Cannon!" The cannon charged. "Fire!" The Cannon fired a blast of golden light that slammed into Sylon and sent him flying.

"We did it!" Yellow cried. She and Black bumped wrists.

"Doc ain't the only smart one," Blue said.

Somehow Taylor felt that the song had been transmitted. It was up to the natural winds now. "All right, Doc," he said.

Lark blinked and stopped singing. She swayed slightly. Taylor supported her. "It's time," he said.

She nodded and stopped the transmitter. They flipped out their Morph Cards. "DynaMorpher!"

"Red Ranger Power!"

"Pink Ranger Power!"

Red and Pink energy enveloped them. It formed their Power suits, helmets and blasters.

They pulled their Weapon Cards.

"Phoenix Shooter!"

"Dragon Sword!"

"Don't just stand there! Geeeet them!" Mutzhart shouted at the Oozers.

The Oozers sprang into action engaging the Red and Pink Ranger. Blue, Yellow and Black started running to meet up with them.

Sylon used the confusion to slip away to Azula. She had stopped screaming and was lying on the ground. "What happened to you?" he demanded and grabbed her arms, giving her a shake.

She looked up at him with deep golden eyes. "Don't you wish you knew," came the answer. She head butted him in the face and he staggered back. She sprang to her feet. She took a fighting stance, electricity sparking from one hand to the other. Before he could process what happened, she flung a bolt at him.

It hit him square in the chest. The flash blinded him momentarily. When he could see again, she was gone. He snarled. The body had control of itself. He knew Azula would regain control, but still. He didn't understand how it happened. Maybe he should paid more attention to the things Azula told him about it. No matter now. Holding his chest, he disappeared in a bright flash of blue light.

Dynamic Rangers Red and Pink, in full fighting form, handled the Oozers surrounding them with aplomb. Striking and slashing and they whirled and turned. All around them, Oozers sparked and went down.

Blue, Black and Yellow joined them. "Looks like you found your center," Blue commented, throwing an arm around Pink's shoulder.

"Girl, that was amazing," Yellow said.

Pink was slightly uncomfortable with the attention.

On stage, Mutzhart finally regained his feet. "Damn you!" he shouted without his usual flamboyance.

"You didn't think it was going be that easy did you?" Red called down to him.

"Don't ever think we're beaten," Blue agreed.

"Prepare yourself," Black called.

"Your concert bombed," Yellow said.

"But don't worry. You're going blow up," Pink added.

"You...yooooouuuuu! Shut uuup!" He shouted and began throwing golden discs at them.

They deflected easily. "Let's pump it up for him," Red said. "Super Sonic!" Their weapons glowed. He slashed a shimmery red streak in the air in front of him and stepped aside. Pink slashed her weapon.

Then Blue, Yellow and Black. The energy combined in a swirling concussive blast that spiraled into Mutzhart. He blowing and sparking with the energy of the good vibes.

"Dynamic Cannon," Red said. They combined their weapons and pulled their Cards.

"The Shining Power of the Sky!" Pink and Red put the cards into the Cannon.

"The Raging Power of the Land!" Black and Yellow their cards into the Cannon.

"The Serene Power of the Sea!" Blue put his card into the Cannon.

The Cannon charged. "Dynamic Cannon Fire!" The Cannon fired a powerful blast of golden light and electricity that tore through him. He exploded onstage with a very appreciative audience.

Sylon apparently made it back to the *Devourer*. A canister of Ooze was launched. It splattered over the pieces of Mutzhart and brought him back together and increased his mass. "Yaaaayuuuuuh! A musical geniuiuuus such as me will live on foreeeeeevah!" he crowed.

"Ah, hell," Red sighed.

"We got him now. Don't worry about it," Black declared.

"Yeah. Let's get this done," Yellow agreed.

"Right," Red and Pink agreed.

They flipped out their Macro DynaZord Cards.

"Dragon DynaZord!" Red slid the Card through his Morpher.

"Phoenix DynaZord!" Pink slid the card through her Morpher.

"Snake DynaZord!" Black slid his Card through his Morpher.

"Tiger DynaZord!" Yellow slid her Card though her Morpher.

"Shark DynaZord!" Blue slid his Card though his Morpher.

The Zords appeared and teleported their pilots aboard.

"Listen uuup! My encore is haaaardcore!" Mutzhart began playing his instruments.

The noise pollution rocked the Zords. The Sky pilots were knocked a bit woozy. The flying Zords didn't much like it either. Especially the Dragon. Red almost lost control of him for a moment and had to jerk hard on the yoke. "Oh, no you don't!" he cried.

"I'll shut him up for a moment," Pink said with grim determination. She may not have been fairing well at

meditation, but she'd learned quickly the basics of flying. She navigated the slightly more docile Phoenix easily. "Phoenix beam!" She pressed a button on her console. A beam of pink light hit Mutzhart square in the chest.

"Thanks," Red said and pulled out another Card. "Megazord time," he said. The others were ready.

"Dynamic Megazord!"

The Zords combined to form the Dynamic Megazord with wings and a dragon's tail for a sword. They appeared in the combined cockpit. The Megazord strode forward.

"Get outta my waaay! If you don't my muusic, get lost!" Mutzhart said and began playing again.

Pink and Red clapped their hands over their helmets. It gave Mutzhart time to rush forward and attack. Luckily, Blue had his wits about him and was able to knock him aside with the right arm.

"I got you guys covered," Ram's voice said just he began broadcasting the song over their comm. system.

"One more tiiii-iii-iiime!" Mutzhart said and began to play in earnest. Shockwaves of noise pollution was directed at them.

"That's enough from this creep," Red growled. "Dragon Sword!" The Megazord drew the Dragon Sword and deflected the shockwaves.

"This reminds me why I hate going to concerts. Never make me go to another one," Pink said to Blue. He raised his hands in surrender.

Deciding to ponder that later, Red went on to the next attack. "Dynamic Head-butt!" Red said and pressed a button before him. The others followed suit.

The Dragon Zord's head detached from the Megazord's chest. Each arm swung forward as the Phoenix and Shark head detached. Each leg kicked out as the Tiger and Snake detached. Each of the Zord head's slammed into the alien's instrument creating a musical tone each time. They swerved back to reattach to the Megazord.

"That wasn't a bad little tune," Yellow commented.

Red grinned under his helmet. "How about this?" he said musingly and pressed another button. The mouth of the Dragon Zord opened and spat fire at Mutzhart.

"You're really ticked at him huh?" Blue asked musingly.

"Yes," Pink and Red answered at the same time. Red flipped out the final card. The others grabbed the same card.

They slid the Cards through the readers. The Dragon Sword caught flame. "Dynamic Astral Strike!" The

Megazord zoomed forward and slashed through the alien.

Mutzhart crackled. "Oh, maaan!" he screamed.

The Megazord zoomed away, hovering a safe distance as the alien exploded.

Pink got to her feet. "Yes!" she cried.

"We did it!" Red said. They shocked everyone by bumping fists. None of the others could possibly understand what the two of them endured at the hands of that musical madman.

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Much to Taylor's chagrin, Ram was playing Rena's song when they returned to the lab. "Turn it off," he demanded.

"No way! This chick rocks. Who is she?" Ram asked.

Without bothering to answer, Taylor killed the music himself. "That's personal," he stated.

Ram held up his hands. "Peace, man," he said, though he was still dying of curiosity. So was everyone else.

"Not that it matters," Tempest said. "We have our own rock star," she declared. "Where'd you get them vocal cords?" she asked Lark.

"Yeah. Where you been hiding that talent?" Sin asked, looking her up and down.

Lark flushed slightly. "I don't know. It was just sort of *there*," she said and flicked him between the eyes, surprising everyone except him. Even Gore was mildly shocked.

He rubbed his forehead. "Ow," he said and pouted.

"You were using your voice to manipulate the air. I'm impressed," Taylor said. "Not many can do that," he said thoughtfully. "Not even Sensei Shane," he said with a grin.

"Oh," she said. She blinked. "You mean I tapped into my ki?" she asked. "Is that what that feeling was?" she asked.

"Yep. You know what that means," he said.

She leaned away from him and the shark grin spreading across his face. "What?" she asked, sure didn't want to know the answer.

"Serious training from now on. First level Wind Ninja Techniques. No more excuses," he clapped her on the shoulder. "Rest up! We start first thing in the morning," he stated and left the Lab with her gaping after him. She looked at the others, silently pleading help. They conveniently weren't looking at her.

She wasn't sure what 'serious' training meant to Taylor Hicks. She was a little afraid to find out.

--/End 05\--

6 - Strange Case

Sinclair Monning sat cross-legged on a cliff in the predawn light of the California Coast. Technically, the cliff was located within the Starkweather Game Preserve. That merely meant less people interrupting him. At the particular spot, the waves crashed rhythmically against the cliff, lulling him deeper into a calm state.

Something intruded. He wasn't completely sure how he knew that. He figured it all had to do with connecting to his ki. He considered this a good sign. He was giving it serious attention. Since molecularly bonding with the Blue Dynamic Morpher, his awareness of water had become pronounced. He was trying to connect with this awareness and his ki using the Ninja Techniques Taylor Hicks was trying to teach them. The more they connect with their elements, the better they could control the elemental powers associated with their Morphs.

Sin was a trained sniper. His eyes were sharp and his hands as steady as his nerves. A ways from where he sat, the cliff face sloped and led to a small secluded beach surrounded by forest. At the beach stood a woman with deep red hair.

A few weeks back, he'd spotted a group of people there. They were practicing martial arts while standing on top of the water. As he'd made his way down to them, he lost sight of them for a moment and in that moment; they disappeared as if they'd never been.

He'd had his suspicions of their origins, but he wasn't sure. He's informed Taylor about them.

"Sounds like it might have been Water Ninjas," Tay had said. "If I remember right, Sissy and her fiancé Kyouzuke were looking for a place to establish a refuge for Water Ninjas who wanted to devote themselves to the art even after their training was finished. They may have settled in the area. I'm not sure. Water stuff," he shrugged vaguely. Taylor Hicks was a Wind Master and hadn't paid much attention to Water Ninja gossip. "I can find out I guess, but truth be told, they probably don't advertise the location. I've worked with Thunder and Fire Ninjas and I still have no idea where their schools are," he'd added.

Sin had absorbed that easily. From what he'd gleaned by observing Taylor, stealth and secrecy was part of the training. The dude was as vague and evasive and mercurial as the wind he'd mastered.

"You're best bet, after throwing my name at them, is to let them come to you," was Taylor's final piece of advice.

Sin had listened. He returned to this patch of coastline every day, twice a day. Not just for the elusive water-walkers, but for his training and meditation. He felt he was close to a breakthrough. The fact that he'd sensed he was no longer alone was a testament to his theory.

He got to his feet and began moving down to the beach. He moved slowly, cautiously. She was still there when he arrived.

"Not bad. You're getting a lot better at the quiet thing. You didn't sound like a mad mama bear tromping through the woods," remarked the girl, obviously waiting for him. "Just a lost cub this time," she grinned.

The first thing Sin noticed about her was that she was pretty. Really pretty. Seriously hot. Her eyes were almond shaped and hazel, neither green nor blue. Her skin was light but slightly olive. He was once again struck by the racial ambiguity of her features. The wavy red hair was wild and untamed in the ocean breeze; the humidity made it completely unruly.

It took him a moment to realize she'd insulted him. "There isn't a need for sneaking in a tree cancer. Just the ability to sit still without moving for several hours at a time," he declared.

"That you have down," she acknowledged. "I'm Nia," she introduced herself.

"I'm--"

"Sinclair Monning. Yes, I know. We were filled in even if you hadn't shouted it at us. Sorry it took so long. I mean, Taylor Hicks has a lot of sway. The Sensei's respect the hell out of him and all, but it's still up to us who we approach if anyone," she explained.

What Sin took from that was that despite what he said, Taylor had been in contact with his Water Ninja friends on his behalf. That did not surprise him at all. "So what did I do to pass muster?" he asked.

"You sat, waited, mediated, trained and didn't press the issue. Sensei Kyou was impressed by that," she said. "We'll let you join us here on the beach for awhile until they decide you're ready to come to the Temple. Masters only and you're still a novice," she explained.

He nodded. "I get that. Thank you," he said.

Nia inclined her head. "I also came for another reason," she said. "We're not monks or anything so it's not like we're living in poverty or something. A lot of us have semi-normal lives and jobs in the city. The Temple is more like a sanctuary/apartment building. I work at a free clinic in a lower class neighborhood," she hesitated.

"Go on," he prompted.

"Well, we know you work for Astral Dynamics on a research base, right?" she didn't really ask in a way that required an answer. He merely nodded to confirm. "There's something strange going on at the clinic. People have been coming in over the past few days with strange symptoms. Kids mainly. The new doctor doesn't seem concerned but I've been around doctors and nurses and hospitals and sick people all my life. Something is not right," she declared.

"And you want us to look into it?"

"If at all possible," she agreed and bit her lip. She pulled a card out of the cross shoulder bag she wore. "This is the clinic's address and my hours are written on the back," she said, giving him the card.

Sin nodded. "I'll do what I can," he promised her.

She smiled, relieved. "Anyway, you can come at your regular hours to train with us," she said. "Oh, and your two Earth friends are over in that direction making more racket than a bull elephant with a toothache," she said and pointed.

Without thinking, Sin followed her finger. Just that fast, she was gone when he looked back. That must be another ninja thing. Taylor had the tendency of just either appearing or disappearing just as quickly. It was frankly annoying.

He couldn't wait to learn how to do it.

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Sinclair returned to Sky Base and was summoned to an early morning briefing in the Lab. This suited him fine since he'd wanted to tell Lark Walker, who was basically in charge of running Sky Base, about the request from Nia.

There was a pronouncement that she and Enrique Ramon were close to finding new Zords for them to use. They weren't clear on what they were but apparently they'd found a block of programming that suggested it was more than one meant to be used in concert.

After that slightly underwhelming announcement, Sin had filled them in on the situation. Lark had looked at him steadily. "Run with it. If it turns out to be something, let me know," she said.

Tempest Strong, who ran Sky Base's Infirmary, volunteered to help him but realized her schedule that day did not coincide with Nia's. He'd assured her he could handle it.

"And if it turns out to be something more than some new super bug, give us a shout," Taylor had said and left the Lab to start his rounds.

That unsettled Sin. He was thinking it over and the implication as he headed toward the clinic around midday.

"You're thinking face is scary."

Sin slanted a glance at Gregory Houston as the two ambled along the streets of Starkweather Valley. The two of them wore plain clothes. They hadn't wanted to upset anyone or draw too much attention by wearing their Astral Dynamics uniforms. People in Starkweather Valley tended to give any AD personnel in the city wide berth. Officials and news people were putting two and two together and realizing they were somehow connected the Power Rangers and the aliens attacking their city.

"No one said you had to come. In fact I distinctly remember telling you personally you didn't have to bother," he remarked.

Gore shrugged. "Consider me back-up," he remarked.

Sin shook his head.

Though they thought themselves inconspicuous, they actually garnered almost as much attention as they would have dressed in full uniform with their sidearms strapped to their thighs. Mostly female attention. Sin wore jeans, sneakers and a button down shirt with the top couple buttons undone, the sleeves rolled up and untucked to hide the firearm tucked in the small of his back. Gore wore worn biker boots; equally worn jeans, a form fitting black shirt and a dark gray duster to hide the shoulder holster he wore.

"I'm perfectly capable of handling myself and ascertaining the situation," he pointed out.

Gore stuffed his hands in his pockets and looked at him. "You know, I've been wondering something," he said.

Sin glanced at him again. "What's that?" he asked.

"After we were discharged why you didn't go back to school," he said.

Sin looked away unsure how to answer that question. Sometimes he wondered the same thing.

Gore wasn't sure Sin would answer. He didn't expect him to run away.

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An alien ran through a series of underpasses. It was bad part of the city and his quarry knew it well. She was fast. He shot a few lasers at her. She moved fluidly, avoiding the blasts. She was beginning to annoy him.

For a moment he thought he had her as she headed straight for a wall. Instead she ran up the wall and flipped, landing, facing her. "Who sent you and why are you after me?" she demanded.

Instead of answering her, from a gaping mouth he fired a giant fireball at her.

Something else moved. A blue flash of light deflected the fireball and the girl and her rescuer rolled out of the way. "Stay out of the way. Don't argue," Dynamic Ranger Blue said to her when she opened her mouth to do just that. She snapped it shut, flattened her lips and gestured for him to continue. He inclined his head and turned to face the alien. "What are trying to do with her, Warstar?" he demanded.

The alien stomped a foot. "That is none of your business, Power Ranger!" Rinovus the alien snarled at him, more annoyed than ever.

"That large mouth of yours must be your weakness," Blue said and lifted his Shark Sniper, aimed and fired in a split second.

The alien's horizontal teeth were hinged on the side of his face and they snapped closed. The blue blast of energy bounced off of them.

"The hell?"

"Don't think I'm dumb enough to give you a clean shot, Blue Ranger," he warned. "Hand the woman over!" he demanded. He began running forward.

Blue continued firing, but the alien was heavily armored and all his shots bounced off harmlessly. He was really beginning to worry.

"Exploding Land Power!" Streaks of black energy cracked the concrete between them. "None of that now," Dynamic Black Ranger said and ran forward. He jumped high, hefting the Land Axe. "Snake Bite!" The alien had turned toward. He brought the Axe crashing against his teeth. It didn't break them, but the force of the blow was enough to send the alien tumbling backwards a few yards.

"Gore," Blue said gratefully walking over to join him.

"Don't just go running off by yourself," he scolded.

"Sorry. It's not like I didn't know you'd be right behind me," Blue pointed out.

"Not the point," Black said. "But a little more understandable now," he added as he spotted the girl the alien had been chasing. A girl with red hair dressed in scrubs.

"Don't let down your guard," Blue warned in a snippy tone that made his friend grin under his helmet.

"I gotcha," he said.

Rinovus regained his feet. "Why you--!" his teeth snapped open and he fired another giant fireball at them. Black stepped in front of Blue and knocked the fireball aside. Another one was already on its way. They both had to jump aside to avoid it.

In tandem the two of them came at the alien from either side. They engaged in close quarters. The teeth were closed again. They'd hit him but nothing was having much effect. He knocked Blue down. He landed but raised the Shark Sniper again. He fired, hitting the alien between the eyes.

That knocked Rinovus flat on his back, smoking wildly where he'd been hit.

Blue regained his feet. Black went to his side. "Not bad," he remarked. Blue took aim again.

"I'll remember this!" Rinovus said and his eyes glowed and small laser blasts were fired at them. They jumped back, distracted. When the smoke cleared the alien was gone.

Black moved around quickly looking for any trace that he might have escaped on foot. "He got away," he said. He quickly contacted the Lab. "The alien's gone. We don't need back-up," he said.

"Acknowledged," Lark answered.

Blue headed toward Nia. "Are you ok?" he asked.

"I'm fine. Thank you, Sinclair. I was trying to head toward water but he was faster than I counted on," she admitted.

Blue wondered if she was taking a guess or if all the Water Masters knew who he was. Either way, he dropped his morph. Black followed suit and joined them.

"I think we can safely say that whatever's happening at your clinic isn't natural," Sin said.

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Taylor replayed the surveillance clip on the big screen. He wasn't sure what types of recoding devices were activated, but it captured the moment the alien appeared behind the red-headed nurse and began to chase her. The way she moved was an obvious tell to him. She was one of the Water Masters, most probably the suspicious one.

"So, she suspects something's up at the clinic where she works. Then an alien tries to kill her," Ram remarked.

"You suspected," Lark informed Taylor.

"Thing's like this happen when you're a Power Ranger. I was hoping it was a new strain of flu or something else mundane like that. I really was," he said with a frown.

Tempest pat him on the back. "Should we go help?" she asked.

Taylor shook his head. "Sin and Gore have it handled for the moment. They'll call when they need us. I have to finish my rounds. You have to finish your shift and Ram and Doc need to work without us bothering them," he said with a smile.

"How correct you are," Lark agreed.

"You ain't bothering me any," Ram said and gave Tempe a wink. She grinned back and ruffled his hair as she left the Lab.

Taylor chuckled and left the Lab behind her.

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Devourer

"Sylon! You're plan, is it going well?" Captain Drage demanded.

Though he didn't appreciate being summoned like errant lackey, Sylon gave a stiff bow. "There is one minor flaw. It would not have happened if your man hadn't gone off half cocked. I should return to my position," he said.

"Don't speak to the Captain that way," Kragar growled.

Captain Drage held up a hand. "Explain to me again your plan?" he prompted Sylon.

"It's quite simple. Humans are weak disgusting creatures susceptible to attack from the smallest of organisms. The right virus can kill them. The right virus can also change them in ways they can't imagine. Soon it would have spread easily even without Rinovus' sneezes," he explained. "That nurse may have suspected that the illness being spread amongst the patients wasn't ordinary but there was no way to prove it until it was too late.

"Now, thanks to Rinovus acting on his own, she'll be doubly suspicious. She'll call undue attention before it's time," he added with thinly veiled ire.

"Then step up your plans," Drage instructed.

Seething silently, Sylon gave an acquiescing bow. He disappeared in a flash of blue light.

"Should I deal with him, Captain?" Kragar asked.

"Hmm?" Drage asked absently. "No. He's useful and he's careful not to get on my bad side," he said and paced out of the bridge.

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Sylon appeared in the Open Hands Free Clinic. He activated the disguise of a human. It made his skin crawl. He was disguised as a tall man in his thirties with dark hair and light blue eyes. He wore a white lab coat and glasses.

"You returned quickly," said his accomplice.

He glanced at Azula. She had regained control of her host fairly quickly but he suspected it was not easy as she claimed. At times he could see her stop moving completely as a great strain crossed her features. She was dressed as a nurse.

He went to the desk he'd taken over when he'd infected the previous doctor. "It's time for the final phase," he said and pulled a controller out of a locked drawer. He pressed the red button, activating a code written into the virus he'd designed.

Azula gasped suddenly. "What are they doing here?"

Sylon frowned and went to the door and looked through the small window. Coming into the clinic was Nia, Sin and Gore. "It's time for us to go. There isn't anything the Rangers can do now. The final stage has begun," he declared.

Sin had spotted the two in the office and touched Gore's arm, a silent signal. The two of them made their way to the office. He figured speaking with the doctor was a good place to start. They arrived too late, he'd looked in the window in time the doctor and a nurse disappear in bright flashes of light.

"What was that?" Nia demanded.

"If I were to hazard a guess, I'd say it was Sylon," Sin said, recognizing the flashing blue light. He glanced at Gore and he nodded his head in confirmation. "I think it's time we take a look at some of you're patients," he said.

Nia nodded. "In the past few days, it's gotten worse. Much worse," she said and led the two of them to a room. Strapped to a hospital bed was a young man. Sweat coated his skin and plastered his hair to his forehead.

"What's with the restraints?" Gore asked.

"When the fever hit, he got a little wild, clawing at his own skin and hallucinating," she said. He laid a hand on his forehead. His eyes were open but glazed. He seemed abnormally calm. "I don't like this," she said.

Sin picked up the man's charts. His eyes widened. "You should have come to us sooner. None of this is normal. Whatever the Warstars were up to, it might be too late," he said. "Gather up whatever blood and tissue samples you've taken," he said.

It was definitely too late. The man suddenly gave a jerk and started shaking. Sin moved Nia away from him. His eyes began glowing; a brilliant, horrific acid green. His skin glowed. He shook harder as green ooze seeped through his pores. He glowed brighter and when he stopped glowing, he was no longer a man.

Nia clapped her hand over her mouth. "He turned into an Oozer," Gore said grimly.

Sin pressed the eyes of his Morpher. "Lark. Send a medical team to the clinic. Full hazmat. Collect everything," he said. "You may have to call him," he added.

"I'll send the team. I won't bother him. Dr. Hollings is still on base," Lark said, referring to the MD that had given them physicals.

"How many people do you think are sick?" Gore asked.

Nia looked at them for a long moment. "Too many. The clinic sees about a hundred patients a day. Around one in five has had these symptoms for the past two weeks," she answered.

Gore and Sin shared a grim look.

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All around the area, people suddenly began to glow and seep green ooze before eventually turning into Oozers.

Taylor, Lark and Tempest had teleported down ahead of the medical team. They arrived in a horde of

Oozers running amok. "Crap," Taylor said and moved in to help a woman.

"No! Wait, he's my son!" she cried.

Taylor stumbled back. "What?" he asked.

"It's the people. They turned into these things," a man shouted.

"If they're people, we can't hurt them," Tempest declared.

That didn't stop the Oozers from hurting them. One knocked Taylor aside and several more rounded on the two girls.

"We'd better get to the clinic fast," Taylor said and threw a blade of air that knocked the Oozers off their feet without really hurting them. The girl's nodded and they tried to get past the Oozers.

"Medical Team. Teleport directly to the clinic," Lark said into her communicator.

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"There has to be a way to reverse this," Gore reasoned.

Sin nodded. "And I think I know a way," he said. He could see that the Oozer was restrained enough not to cause any harm.

"How?" Nia asked.

"That alien. He's part of this. We'll find him and ask him nicely," Sin said but the shark grin on his face was frankly too dangerous to inspire any confidence that he'd be asking nicely. Gore smiled grimly.

"Stay here and wait for the medical team," Sin told her.

She nodded.

The two of them went outside. Oozers were wreaking havoc everywhere. "How are we supposed to find him?" Gore asked Sin.

"I have a feeling it won't be hard now," Sin said, looking into the distance. He began running. Gore glared his back but began running after him.

They skidded to a halt as Rinovus was standing on a car, surveying the destruction around him. The newly created Oozers were destroying everything they could come into contact with. What was worse, the virus seemed to be spreading and progressing at an alarming rate.

"You! What do you know about this virus?" Sin demanded.

Rinovus turned toward them. Rinovus laughed. "I am this virus! Well, its part of me now, thanks to

Sylon," he gloated. "Soon this world of humans will be no more!" He threw a fireball at them. It connected with Sin and sent him flying backwards. He landed with a crash.

"Sin!" Gore exclaimed.

"Hahaha! Soon you too will be no more than slime on rocks," Rinovus gloated. Energy blasts knocked him backwards.

Sin gained his feet. "Little warning. I always carry a gun," he said.

Gore nodded. "That's true," he agreed.

"And the best part is you told me exactly what I need. Just a little piece of you," he said and flashed a smile. "See, I told you all I had to do was ask nicely," he pointed out to Gore.

"A little courtesy goes a long way," Gore said as if repeating something that had been said to him over and over.

"A friendly smile opens more doors than a scowl," Sin intoned. He flipped out his Morph Card. "Ready?"

Gore flipped out his own Morph Card.

"DynaMorpher!"

"Blue Ranger Power!"

"Black Ranger Power!"

Black and blue energy enveloped them, forming power suits, helmets and blasters at their hips. "I'll take him first," Dynamic Ranger Black and pulled out his Weapon Card. He summoned his Land Axe and charged forward.

Dynamic Ranger Blue watched a moment, trying to ascertain the best way to go about getting a hunk of his alien hide.

Black was hacking at the alien but every swipe and slash was avoided as the alien danced away. "Stop running away and fight me you buck toothed ba--" He slashed forward.

Rinovus's arm came up and stocked the blade. "Fight you say? With pleasure," he said and pushed the axe back. He used the mace-like fist to hit him several times, hard enough to cause sparks. His teeth sprung open as Black gripped his middle in pain. A fireball sent him flying and crashing backwards. He dropped the axe and rolled.

"How was that? Fight enough for you?" Rinovus demanded wickedly.

"Not bad," Black said painfully and began getting to his feet. He grinned under his helmet even though he was in serious pain.

Blue energy hit the alien squarely in the back several times. He turned to find Dynamic Blue running toward him with the Sea Sniper. He jumped and rolled over the top of the alien's head. He ran to check on Black. "Never fails," he said.

"Afghani insurgents or alien monsters. They're all the same," Black agreed and made it to his knees. "Now go get a piece of his ugly hide," he said.

Blue nodded and ran forward firing his weapon.

Rinovus turned quickly, the armor of his back easily deflecting the blast. "That doesn't work on my armor," he said as turned back. He was spitting out another fireball.

"I know," he said and jumped over the first fireball. He used the Sea Sniper to disburse the rest of the fireballs as he moved forward. He stooped to grab the Land Axe. He hadn't counted on it weighing a tone. It distracted him long enough for Rinovus to hit him dead on. Only the momentum of the blast allowed him to actually move the Axe.

"Damn," he said. "How the hell do you lift this thing?" he shouted at Black.

"I'm special," Black said and struggled to his feet. "Give it, I'll do whatever it is you need me to do," he said and gritted his teeth in pain but didn't last long.

"Give it a rest, macho guy," Blue said and gripped the Axe. He could do this. He pictured his ocean, and the sound of the waves. He closed his eyes. His mind cleared and then opened his eyes. "It's time the experience the power of the sea," he told the alien. He got to his feet he tossed the Sea Sniper into the air.

"What!" The alien glanced up automatically.

Using not his physical strength but the power of his spirit, Blue hefted the Land Axe. He ran forward. Rinovus opened his mouth again and began spitting fireballs at him. Blue used the Axe to deflect. He made it to the alien and swung. Rinovus used his mace hand to knock it aside. Blue used that his advantage and used to momentum to spin back around and lash the creature through the middle, leaving a deep furrow in the armor.

He tossed the Ax aside and caught the Sniper. He placed the tip against the furrow he'd just made. "Shark Snipe!" He fired. A strong blue blast exploded through the alien and out the back of its grotesque thorax. Green, slimy substance exploded around.

Black was on his feet. He'd spotted Nia nearby. He assumed that meant the medical team arrived at the clinic. He scooped up some of the blood. He ran to her. "Get this back to out team. They should be able to use this formulate a cure," he said and put a blood covered rock in her hands.

She made a face. "Will do. Good luck," she said. She began running and sort of phased away in a blue streak.

Blue watch them. Rinovus got to his feet. He was knocked aside by three multicolored blasts of energy. He crackled energy as he fell. Blue and Black turned to see the three other Rangers with weapons drawn.

"We finally made it," Yellow declared.

"Sorry about the wait," Red said.

"The changed people made it difficult to get passed them without harming them," Pink explained.

Black picked up his Axe as the two of them went to join their comrades.

"We had it handled," Blue assured them.

"What did you do with them?" Black asked.

"We gathered them up. Tempest made a box of earth and we kind of floated them all inside," Pink answered.

"Ram helped. He was handy with a quick code," Yellow demurred. "Now, can we finish him?" she asked, pointing at the alien regaining his feet. He was smoking and angry.

"I'll make you all pay!" he shouted and his mouth sprang open, firing giant fireballs at them.

They jumped and rolled aside. "Everyone! Aim for the stomach wound!" Blue said and did just that. He fired. Pink fired her Sky Shooter.

Yellow and Black rolled to their feet and ran forward just as the Blue and Pink shots hit. Yellow slashed with her Land Claw and Black swung with his Land Axe. The hits connected and the alien was smoking.

Red ran forward and jabbed his Sky Sword directly into the wound. The alien sparked with electricity and fell back.

They came together. "All right. Time to put an end to this," Blue said. The other's nodded and they put their weapons together.

"Dynamic Cannon!" They pulled out their Cards.

"The Shining Power of the Sky!" Pink and Red put the cards into the Cannon.

"The Raging Power of the Land!" Black and Yellow their cards into the Cannon.

"The Serene Power of the Sea!" Blue put his card into the Cannon.

The Cannon Charged.

"Dynamic Victory Charge!" The Cannon fired a powerful blast of golden light and electricity that tore

through Rinovus and his armor. He exploded.

No sooner than it happened than a canister of Ooze was launched. It exploded, spattering the green slime all over his remains. His pieces reintegrated and his mass expanded. "Ah. Nice," he said and stretched.

Red made the Cannon disappear as they flipped out their Macro DynaZord Cards.

"Dragon DynaZord!" Red slid the Card through his Morpher.

"Phoenix DynaZord!" Pink slid the card through her Morpher.

"Snake DynaZord!" Black slid his Card through his Morpher.

"Tiger DynaZord!" Yellow slid her Card through her Morpher.

"Shark DynaZord!" Blue slid his Card through his Morpher.

The Zords appeared and teleported their pilots aboard.

"Dynamic Megazord!"

The Zords combined to form the Dynamic Megazord with wings and a dragon's tail for a sword. They appeared in the combined cockpit. The Megazord walked forward to meet Rinovus drawing the Dragon Sword.

Rinovus charged forward. The Megazord stopped his with the Sword. He knocked it away. The Megazord slashed again. It hit but deflected easily.

"Even the Dragon Sword doesn't work on him," Blue said.

"Don't under estimate my armor!" Rinovus crowed. He spun around and grabbed the Dragon Sword from the Megazord.

"Did that thing really just steal our Sword?" Pink demanded.

"Die, Rangers, die!" Rinovus said and began to slash them with their own Sword. They learned first hand really quickly how powerful that thing was. The cockpit crackled and fizzled as the Megazord was knocked back. "Let's finish it," he said and raised the Sword high and brought it down.

"I don't think so," Blue said and jerked his yoke. The Megazord's right arm shot up, the Shark's teeth closing around the blade before it could make contact.

Rinovus grunted and attempted to free the Sword. "Struggling is pointless," he said even as he struggled to get the Sword free.

"We need a better plan than that," Red said, highly annoyed that the alien had stolen his Dragon Sword.

Blue struggled to keep his Zord steady. "I'm all ears over here," he said through gritted teeth.

"And the great Enrique Ramon comes to the rescue again. Bow down before your god. Check you're belt," Ram said triumphantly through the comm systems.

Blue risked pulling the Card from his belt. "I'd be more impressed if you didn't dramatically leave it to the last minute," he said.

"What is it?" Red asked.

"Macro DynaZords," Blue said and slid the card through the reader. "Summon Deep Sea DynaZords!" he said.

A large gray cloud formed. Thunder rumbled but instead of rain, a whirling blue portal formed. Out from the portal flew three Zords; a Hammerhead, a long nosed Sawfish and Manta Ray. They zoomed toward the alien and blasted him with blue energy beams.

The alien was knocked back and dropped the Dragon Sword. Red got to his feet. "Ha! Ram, can we combine with them?" he asked,

"Naturally," Ram answered.

Blue pulled another Card from his belt and slid it. "Deep Sea Megazord!" The three Zords connected with the Megazord. Sawfish Zord connected to the right arm. Hammerhead Zord connected to the left arm. The Megazord's default flipped back into its chest and the Manta Ray Zord connected to the neck and formed a new head with an eye-patch and a general pirate-y flare. So, Ram had had a little time to play with the schematics coding.

"What is that hideous thing?" Rinovus demanded, pointing a finger at the Megazord.

Blue was perusing his new toys' abilities. "Ah," he said and pressed a button. "Analyzing," he said. The eye-patch was actually useful, scanning the alien and sending him the data. "Let's go get him," he said to the others.

The Megazord pushed forward and began trading blows with the alien. "Hammerhead Punch!" The Hammerhead Zord glowed and the Megazord punched. Rinovus threw up his mace hand as defense. The Hammerhead hit it, nearly shattering it. "Manta Ray Strike!" The Megazord head-butted the alien. "Sawfish Slash!"

The Sawfish Zord powered up. Rinovus turned his heavily armored back. The Megazord struck. The blade-like nose of the Sawfish Zord disintegrated the hard shell.

Rinovus whirled back. "That can't be!" he snarled.

Blue calmly pulled another card out of his belt. "Victory Charge!" He swiped the card. The Deep Sea Zords powered up. "Deep Sea Strike!" The Megazord stepped forward. The Hammerhead Zord slashed

first, leave crackling blue energy. The Sawfish Zord slashed next, leaving a second slash of blue energy. The Megazord turned its back as the energies ignited and the alien exploded.

"You did it," Red told Blue, turning to him.

"Yeah," he agreed with a nod. He certainly did. He just hoped he did some good.

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A distance away from the Open Hands Free Clinic, the five Rangers watched as people came in and out for shots of the antiviral and vaccine for the Oozer Virus. "Dr. Hollings did good work," Tempest remarked.

Lark pursed her lips. "Dr. Hollings didn't do anything. The project was taken out of his hands as soon as he had the blood sample from the alien," she said.

Sin nodded. "By the way," he said to Gore, "that is why. I ran off to the military with you for the same reason I didn't go back and become a doctor. I'd have to work for him," he told Gore and started to go toward the clinic. He'd decided to volunteer twice a week, remember the calling he'd once felt.

"You already work for him!" Gore called, pointing out.

"Not as a doctor!" Sin called back.

"Uh, who are you guys talking about?" Tempest asked, thoroughly confused.

"My guess is the big boss. The man whose name is on your checks," Taylor said.

Lark turned and walked a way.

Gore grinned. "Dr. Grayson Walker, President and CEO of Astral Dynamics," he answered.

Tempest still looked confused. Taylor shrugged. "Who's up for food and games at Steve and Bucko's?" he asked them.

"Ooh! Me!" Tempest said and raised her hand.

"I'm in," Gore agreed. The three of them caught up with Lark and dragged her with them.

"Let's call Ram. He deserves some fun too!" Tempest suggested. That was met with approval all around.

--/End 06\--

7 - Indomitable Will

Taylor Hicks hadn't been sleeping well lately. He was up early one day due to lack of sleep. It was an ungodly hour. After his morning routine, he decided to nip down to the city for some breakfast before he had to drag Lark to the top of Stark Peak for meditation and training. He was surprised find Enrique Ramon at this time of day. "Ram," he said.

Slightly bleary eyed, the other man nodded to him. He rubbed his face. "Fell asleep in the Lab," he muttered.

"I was going down to the city for coffee and breakfast. Come with," Taylor invited.

"It's too damn early to jump off the floating island," Ram remarked with a wry grin.

"Ha-ha. I was going to take the teleport," Tay said dryly. Grinning Ram decided to join him.

"So why'd you fall asleep in the Lab?" Taylor asked later while they eating at an outside table of an early morning bakery.

"Chasing phantoms," Ram said which made no sense to Taylor. Ram didn't elaborate. "Then I found coding for more Zords," he added the last in a quiet tone. Just by wearing their Astral Dynamics uniforms, they drew wary interest from the city folk.

Taylor raised a brow. "Really? What kind?" he asked.

Ram shook his head. "Dunno yet. I'm still trying to get all the pieces in order."

Taylor nodded. He saw something over Ram's shoulder. Before Ram could react, he was on the move. "I'll pay then. My treat," Ram grumbled and sipped at his coffee. He was a bit worried though, but that guy could move. He quickly paid and tried to see if he could catch up.

Taylor skidded to a halt at the mouth of an alley. Why had she gone into an alley? He approached warily. A near blinding flash of lightning streaked toward him. Had he been anyone else, that probably would have killed him. He threw his arms up in front of his body. His arm caught the brunt of the unexpected attack. He flew backwards and crashed dizzily into the ground. It took him a moment to realize his flesh and clothes were scorched.

He blinked as she approached him. Dressed in white with a wild black ponytail, a girl stood over him. She gripped a staff that crackled with electricity. "Why did you follow me?" she demanded.

"I'm the one that should be ticked. You were supposed to meet me when you were through with your training," he said. Finally when the spots before his eyes cleared, he saw that she wasn't quite right somehow. Her eyes were wrong. He frowned and jumped to his feet.

Azula stumbled back. She gripped her staff fully intending to use it on him again. Her body wouldn't cooperate.

Taylor saw her go still and her eyes go wide. They changed color, burning a deep gold. "Get...her...out," she raged with great difficulty, total recognition and pain on her face. She closed her eyes and her body jerked. When she opened her eyes again, they were pale as ever. She smiled cruelly. "How sweet. You two have history," she said.

"Who are you?" Taylor demanded. "You're working with Sylon, but who are you?" he asked, a rare dark expression crossing his features.

"Wouldn't you like to know, lover," Azula shrugged. She smiled and blew him a kiss before disappearing in a crack of lightning.

Of all the things Ram had seen of Taylor Hicks, shaking in rage was not one of them. The wind suddenly whistling down the street was ominous. He whistled. "Hey, bro, calm down a little," he shouted as people began to get buffeted by the sudden gusts raging down the street.

Taylor blinked. He took a deep breath and the wind died down. "Sorry," he said. "Looks like I'll benefit more from meditation today than Lark," he said. He gripped his arm, only just now becoming aware of the pain.

"We'd better have Tempe take a look at that. Don't tear me a new one or anything, but who was that?" he asked.

Taylor looked at the spot where the girl had disappeared. "That used to be Rena Hart. I don't know what the hell she is now. Whatever it is its living on borrowed time," Taylor said. He activated his teleport without another word. Ram followed along silently. He wondered who Rena Hart was and why she affected Taylor so much.

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Devourer

Commander Kragar stomped up to Captain Drage. He pointed at Sylon. "He's failed his last attempt miserably. Allow me a chance to rid this planet of humans the Power Rangers," he demanded.

"My plan was going along just fine until your Lieutenant went off on his own," Sylon said calmly. Something occurred to him. "Did you order him to attack the nurse?" he demanded. Rage simmered deep inside him. How dare that oversized bug dare interfere with his plans!

"Something needed to be done. Just like now," Kragar said without an ounce of remorse.

Drage looked between the two. "You seem fairly confident, Kragar," he said idly.

Kragar straightened. "Yes," he looked beyond the bridge. "Lieutenant, come here," he called.

"Yes, sir!" a squeaky, overly youthful voice called. There was a blur of movement all around the bridge before a large dragonfly-like alien stopped moving. "Lieutenant Swirrun at your service, sir!" he piped and bowed before the Captain.

"Ah, Swirrun. In top form as usual I see," Captain Drage said.

"We will team up to demonstrate how things are accomplished in the Warstars," Kragar said and gave Sylon a smug look.

"I'll leave you to it. I look forward to being shown up," Sylon remarked calmly. He bowed to the captain before walking past the two aliens to leave the bridge.

He entered his quarters silently and took a moment to throw around anything that wasn't bolted down. Finally, shaking in yet more unexpressed rage, he gripped his desk and bowed his head.

"I know the feeling."

Sylon whirled and approached Azula, grabbing her by the neck. "What are you doing here again?" he demanded in a snarl.

"Something happened. You aren't going to like it," she said.

Sylon released her and turned his back to her. "If you're referring to the incident with the Red Ranger, I am aware. If you can keep your hold over your body for a while longer, I'll have something that should help you stabilize your control over it," he said.

Azula rubbed her neck. "She's not strong enough to be rid of me," she assured him.

"Then leave me," he said.

She nodded and disappeared in a crack of lightning.

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Lark Walker called a meeting in the Lab to inform the Rangers of the discovery of a new set of DynaZords. She frowned when after fifteen minutes or so, only three of the four other Rangers appeared. "Where's Hicks?" she asked.

"He's yelling at someone in his room," Sin answered.

Lark frowned. She'd noticed he was uncharacteristically quiet and impatient that morning.

"He already knows about the Zords anyway," Ram said.

"Zords?" Gore asked.

"Who's he yelling at?" Tempest asked Sin. He didn't say anything about what happened to his arm when

she treated it this morning.

"I didn't stick around long enough to eavesdrop. I was just doing my rounds and heard him. It was unusual enough to warrant investigation," Sin answered.

"Taylor will be fine. He's a big boy now," Gore said, trying not to sound dismissive but he honestly felt that whatever was happening with Taylor was his business until he chose to share it. "What about these Zords?"

"Yes, have we discovered anything more?" Taylor surprised everyone by slouching into the room. "Sorry I'm late. I was yelling at people," he said, a faint grin crossing his face.

Sin stacked his hands behind his back and tried to look innocent.

"Yes," Lark answered. She tapped her tablet and a schematic appeared on the flat screen. "We believe them to be Land Zords," she answered. "We're still compiling the data. Cards should be ready soon," she said.

"Those're ours, huh?" Tempest asked and winked at Gore.

Gore nodded approvingly. "Can't wait to try them out," he said.

"In the meantime; training," Taylor said.

"With that arm?" Tempest asked. "That's more than a sprain, hon. It is not going to heal near as quickly as my leg did," she pointed out.

Taylor rubbed his arm. "It'll be fine. I've had worse," he said easily. She obviously didn't believe him. He didn't really believe himself. Aside from the burn, the ache was bone deep despite the pain meds he'd been given.

Still not quite believing him, Tempest relented. Gore was right, he was a grown man. They began leaving the Lab.

"Hey, can I come?" Ram asked.

Taylor was taking up the rear and glanced back at him. "Sure. You're supposed to be a part of this anyway," he said.

"Yeah, if I can ever get that Morpher fixed," Ram said. He wasn't sure if it was possible. When it'd exploded, the insides became a mess. It was taking ages just to sort it all out.

Taylor tilted his head. "I was just yelling at someone who knows someone that may be able to help with that," he said.

Ram looked hopeful. Taylor just hoped he could clear it with Lark. Together the two of them caught up with the others.

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It soon became obvious that Taylor's arm was bothering him much more than he let on. Much to everyone's shock, he even fell. He'd jumped to grab hold of a horizontal pole to swing himself across a mud pit, yet as soon as he put weight on his arms, his left one gave out and he fell to the ground, splashing mud all over himself.

Tempest ran over to see to him, but he jerked his hand away. "I'm fine," he said. He sighed through his nose. "Thanks for the concern," he added since there was no need to be a hole to her.

He tried again, and compensated by only using his right arm that time. When he finished the course he watched the others complete it. They'd all improved. Part of it was training; part of it was the molecular changes when bonding to the Morphers and part of it was each of them were now able to tap their ki. Except Ram. He was the straggler. Taylor didn't fault him, he was doing exceptionally well. He was physically fit and naturally athletic. He just wasn't a Power Ranger.

At the end of the course, Ram dramatically fell over. "And you guys do this every day?" he demanded.

"Every other day. And we did an easy set-up because you were joining us," Sin answered.

Ram grunted and got to his feet. "That ain't even right," he declared sourly.

Taylor snickered. "Even with a bum arm I still beat all your times. Go again," he said. They groaned but complied, even Ram.

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Awhile later, Taylor was in his room. He'd showered and dressed but was now bandaging his arm. It wasn't healing at the accelerated rate they'd all previously experienced for minor cuts and abrasions; or a serious one in Tempests' case. He flexed his fingers experimentally. He winced. He had to block the pain if he was going to be in any way useful.

He'd stayed behind in the Arena when the others had finished. They were going down to the city for lunch but he'd declined to join them. He'd changed the layout of the arena to a series of uneven bars. His arm had refused to support him every time. Now it hurt like the fires of Hell.

He went to the mini-fridge he'd put in his room and pulled out an energy shake. He was due to start his rounds soon and he wouldn't have time to eat a big lunch.

He glanced at the laptop he'd used to yell at people. He'd actually only yelled at Kane in frustration. But seriously, how could no one think to tell him Rena had been missing for almost three months now? True, no one knew about their plans to meet after her training finished, which is when anyone last saw her. Someone could have at least mentioned it though. He'd been in contact with various people for various reasons.

He'd been a little more restrained when he'd spoke to Xavier Hart, Rena's older brother and a Space

Patrol Delta officer. He'd been immensely relieved to find out where she was. He was not happy about hearing she'd been possessed by something.

"I'm going to leave it in your hands, since it's all involved in your commotion. I'm going to warn you now, there'd better be results soon or you'll be seeing me," Rex had warned.

Taylor did not scare easily. While he was working in Angel Grove, Rex had given him pause. There was something about him that told Taylor immediately he was not someone to cross. Frankly, two years and service with SPD made him even scarier.

"If there aren't results soon, I'll look forward to it," Taylor had responded.

They left it at that. He didn't know if Rex would actually crash the party so to speak. A brother's worry might override professional courtesy. He was right; it was involved in his commotion. That meant it was his problem to deal with. He wasn't sure he'd let Rex interfere even if he tried.

The Alien Alert System began to sound. He left his half finished drink behind and headed to the Lab, using every mental technique he knew to block the pain in his arm.

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Something was crashing through the tall building around Starkweather Valley. Everywhere it went, it left explosions. Running across the top of building, Dynamic Rangers Blue, Pink, Black and Yellow watched but never seeing what the cause was.

"What is this?" Black muttered.

"What in the blue blazes?" Blue demanded and watched another seemingly random explosion.

Faster than they could blink part of the building behind them exploded. They saw a blur of movement before whatever it was barreled into them. The momentous force sent them flying and crashing into the ground.

Swirrun stopped moving and turned toward the Rangers. "What an entrance! Don't you guys agree?" he squeaked.

The Rangers regained their feet.

"I came here to devastate you humans! How am I doing so far?" he asked, as if eager for praise. He began running again.

The Rangers went back to back. "Where is he?" Yellow asked.

"He's too fast to be seen," Black said.

"I can't keep track of him," Blue said. That was not a good sign if he couldn't even keep him in sight.

Dynamic Ranger Red arrived, running toward them.

"Watch out! There's an alien that moves so fast he can't be seen," Pink called to him.

Red skidded to a halt. The other four remained at each other's backs as they tried to perceive the enemy.

Red went completely still and expanded his senses. He was already too late. The alien ran by him, knocking him aside before he could react. Swirrun stopped and turned giving a jaunty wave. "Just my way of saying 'Hi!'" he called and began running again.

From where Kragar stayed out of sight, he saw the Rangers approach the Red Ranger. "That little push put him down that hard?" he mused. That didn't seem right.

Red rolled to his feet and summoned his Sky Sword. He gave a hop and cleared his mind trying to block the pain again. He gripped his Sword blade in one hand and let out a long breath. He closed his eyes and let his breathing slow even more.

Pink glanced at him. "What are you doing?" she asked.

"Sssh. I'm looking for him," he said and closed his eyes and evened out his breathing again. He expanded his senses into the air around him.

He could feel the disturbance by the alien and tracked him. "There we go," he slid himself across the roof and slashed his Sword right into the alien's knee. The alien's own momentum sent him flying and crashing and rolling. His knee crackled where he'd been struck. He clutched his leg.

"You did it!" Yellow crowed and ran over to Red. "Way to go!" The others joined him as well.

"How did you do that?" Sin said and gave a low whistle.

Swirrun got to his feet. "How dare you damage my leg," he bleated pathetically.

"I should have known he wouldn't be that easy," Kragar remarked to himself and decided it was time to join the fray.

The Rangers' attention was on Swirrun. "He's hurt. Now's our chance," Blue said.

"Yes! Let's finish it," Yellow agreed.

As they started toward the injured alien, Kragar made his move. He was almost as swift as Swirrun, but a lot stronger. He knocked them over as he ran past. He stopped and turned back to them and began throwing flashes of explosive energy at them.

The energy hit them all and the rooftop seemed to explode around them. They went hurtling nearby over the edge. Red clenched his hand. "Oh, it's you again," he said and got to his feet. "You still owe me a plane, Kragar," he pointed out and raised his Sword.

Kragar scoffed. "You intend to fight me, Red Ranger?" he asked. "Come at me!"

Red gripped his Sword and gritted his teeth. He ran forward and jumped, using the wind to propel himself forward. He gripped the Sword with both hands. Kragar threw up one of his arm blades to block. They strained against other. Red wobbled a little and felt his arm weaken.

"Why, Red Ranger, whatever is wrong with your arm?" Kragar wondered out load. He knocked the Sword aside and hit Red across the middle, sending crashing backwards into the ground.

Red gripped his arm but got to his feet. "Don't count me out, you gas guzzling freak of un-nature," he ground out.

Kragar scoffed again. He was suddenly jerked back as multicolored blasts hit him.

Behind Red, the other Rangers had summoned their Micro DynaZords and used their blasters. They got to their feet.

Kragar snarled. "Prepare yourself, Red Ranger," he said. He and Swirrun disappeared.

Red lost his morph and fell to the ground, clutching his arm as the pain he'd been trying to block overwhelmed him. The others ran to him, calling his name but at that moment, he was unable to answer.

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Tempest shook her head as she bandaged Taylor's arm. "This is not getting better," she said. She was treating him in the Lab because he'd refused to go to the Infirmary.

"It will, probably at the normal rate. I was hit by a bolt of lightning. I'm lucky there's still an arm," he said and gave a wry smile. He flexed his fingers and tried not to wince.

"Don't overdo it," Lark stated. "For now just let yourself rest," she added.

"She's right," Tempest said, though she suspected the admonishments were falling on deaf ears.

"I don't see how you managed to fight with that," Sin said, baffled. He'd known Taylor had gotten hurt but he hadn't realized the extent of the injury.

"The same way I kept half a plane in the air," Taylor said. "My ki and sheer willpower," he said.

"No wonder you look exhausted. Rest for now," Gore said. "We're going to do some special training to defeat that alien," he said.

Taylor's brow winged up. "Special training?" he asked.

Tempest nodded. "We're going to use what you taught us," she said.

"We're going to use our ki to sense him. We've all gotten better at it. We might not be able to control our elements just yet, but we should all be able to sense his energy. That's what you did, right?" Sin asked.

Taylor nodded. "Good guess," he said.

"Rest up, Hicks. If you're going to go toe to toe with Kragar, you'll need all the energy you can spare," Gore said.

Taylor wasn't surprised that Gore knew his intentions to face the alien Commander again. "Here's what I suggest for your practice. Gore and Tempe should split up. One of you go to the beach with Sin; the other to the mountain with Lark. Take turns meditating and sensing the other doing various things," he said.

They nodded. "Let's go," Gore said. The others nodded and left.

Taylor rubbed his arm.

"You aren't going to rest, are you?" Ram asked him.

"I might meditate," Taylor said evasively. "How's the programming coming?" he asked.

"Slowly but surely," Ram said with a grumpy sigh.

Taylor clapped a hand on his shoulder as he got it to leave. "We'll figure the Morpher thing out. While I'm resting I'll see how Nodroz Corp. and Astral Dynamics feel about each other," he said mysteriously and left the Lab.

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Gore and Lark appeared on Stark Peak. They took turns meditating and sensing each other.

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Sin and Tempest appeared at his beach. They also took turns meditating and sensing each other.

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Ram was not surprised to find Taylor in the Arena. He was bored because he was finally minting Power Cards, but they took ages to mint for something as complex as Zords. He was going to get in a bit of training of his own. He was not surprised to find a series of uneven bars set up around the center.

Taylor tried not to rely on his good arm so much, putting as much weight on his bad arm. If he didn't push past the injury, he was never going to defeat Kragar. He kept losing his grip and even falling. He'd made the ground soft but it still winded and annoyed him every time.

Ram decided to leave him to it. He could get in some extra training later.

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Lark held a side-arm set on its lowest setting. She wore a blind fold. She cocked her head slightly and expanded her senses. She could feel the wind shift, hear the almost imperceptible. She whirled and fired the gun. Gore grunted and rubbed his side. "You got me. Not bad," he said.

Lark nodded. "Thank you," she said as she took off her blind fold. He was several feet away. "You mastered it more quickly than I did," she said.

Gore shook his head. "I'm a trained soldier. I don't think I've gotten to the point where I'm actually sensing anything," he said. It was true, while he knew the other three had breakthrough moments of being able to actually use their Ki, he had not. He was relying on the tricks of a hunter, tracker and soldier.

"Well, it appears to be working," she said. She knew that she wasn't making a sound when she moved. He was feeling something, but that was Gore. He'd always been that way.

"I hope we're ready," he said. "My turn," he said and began binding his eyes and un-holstered his side arm.

Lark made a face and rubbed her side. She wasn't looking forward to this. He'd gotten her every single time before she could ever get close to him. She took off a distance and began to silently stalk him.

Until her Morpher began beeping in tandem with the Base's Alien Alarm System.

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Tempest planted her feet firmly in the sand. She felt a vibration. She sensed something. Even blindfolded, she crouched and fired the gun she held.

"Ouch! My leg. How did you get my leg?" Sin demanded and rubbed his shin.

Tempest smirked and removed her blindfold. "I felt it when you took a step. It helped me aim.

"Not bad, grasshopper," he said.

"Not as good as you," she said.

"I wouldn't be so sure about that. I've relied on my eyesight much over years to steady my aim," Sin said.

"You still got me more than I got you," she pointed out.

Sin shrugged. "Still, best to continue," he said and began to blind himself.

Tempe nodded and prepared to be the hunter.

Their training came to an end when their Morpher's began beeping.

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Exploding buildings were causing panic amongst the citizens of Starkweather Valley. They began running away as a skyscraper exploded downward, floor by floor.

Gore, Lark, Tempest and Sin met up nearby and began running against the crowd until there was no more crowd. "We'd be better hurry up," Lark said.

They came to an abrupt halt when Taylor appeared.

"Can you make it?" Sin asked him.

"Either I can or I can't. I'm going to find out," Taylor answered.

Gore nodded. He turned toward the path of destruction the Warstar alien was leaving behind. "Hey you mangled freak! Come out so we can end it!"

"He has a knack for ticking people off," Sin remarked dryly.

Swirrun appeared in front of them. "You again! Don't think you can try the same thing again!" he warned them.

"That's what you think, Buzz," Tempest said. "Let's go, guys," she said.

"Yeah," Taylor agreed and flipped out his Morph Card. "DynaMorpher! Red Ranger Power!"

The others flipped out their Morph Cards as well.

"Pink Ranger Power!"

"Blue Ranger Power!"

"Yellow Ranger Power!"

"Black Ranger Power!"

They morphed. Red summoned his Sky Sword.

"Oh yeah? C'mon then!" Swirrun cried in a cracking voice and began running until he was no longer visible.

Trusting the others to do what they had to, Red let his senses expand. He cocked his head and began running away from them. He jumped and swung his sword.

Kragar blocked the blow. "Not bad, but I'm not Swirrun," he said cockily.

"I know who you are," Red assured him and steadied his grip on his Sword. Luckily he was right handed, but Kragar had a lot of strength behind him and he needed both hands. His eyes widened and knew that the other alien was about to take a try at him. There wasn't much he could do.

Swirrun was hit by four multicolored blasts. The other Rangers held their Zord Blasters.

"Bet you didn't think we could do that," Black remarked.

"Taylor. Leave this alien to us," Blue said.

The four Rangers ran forward toward the alien.

Red nodded and began to engage Kragar.

"Don't underestimate me either!" Swirrun squawked and began to run again.

Dynamic Red and Kragar began a series of swings and blocks. Red managed to catch the big alien just right and pushed him backwards and away from where the other Rangers were. He didn't need them distracted by his fight.

Kragar spun them and managed to break away. He slashed Red across the middle. He flew back and landed on a car. He realized they must be in a parking complex. He jumped to his feet on the hood of the car, narrowly missing a blow from Kragar. As he ran over the top of the car, they traded blows, but the alien was horrendously strong and cunning. Kragar swept him off his feet and he fell into a stack of barrel and boxes.

He managed to get out and defend himself, but Kragar was right on him. He fell over again and managed to bring his Sword up to block another blow.

"I told them you Rangers were a minor nuisance. I was right," Kragar gloated. "The Warstars will eliminate you humans and strip this planet!" he boasted.

"Not while I'm alive. Not while any Power Ranger lives, but especially not me," Red said and risked dropping his right hand to his blaster. He fired without bothering to try to un-holster it.

Kragar stumbled back as the blasts hit him, electricity momentarily crackling around him.

Red scrambled to his feet. "You will never, ever get this planet. There will always be resistance. You are wrong. Power Rangers are the defenders of good and you will never defeat us. If I fall, if my team falls, another will take our place. There is nothing you can do but give up," he said and went on the offensive, attacking with renewed vigor.

Kragar knocked him aside. Red kept trying. "This planet and you humans, in the vastness of space, are nothing. Easily crushed," Kragar said as they fought. Red was not doing well but he was not giving up.

"What did you say?" Red demanded.

Kragar slashed him again. "No more than intergalactic flotsam. Garbage!" he declared and slashed Red several times. He crossed his arm blades and opened them, slashing into Red, sending him flying through a parking lot wall and into a completely different sort of complex. Construction on a new parking garage seemed to be under way.

He rolled, wounded. Kragar came after him with a cocky strut.

Red clenched his fist and began climbing to his feet. "If there's one thing you should know about humans, it's that our will is indomitable. You may kill one of us or a few of us, but you will never break our spirit. Kragar paused, watching him climb to his feet. "We may be savages that kill each other over petty things like land and religion, but that's just family business. We will never be dominated by damn dirty aliens," he said and began stumbling toward the creep. He had to support himself with his Sword like a cane.

"I will finish you off and shut that mouth for good!" Kragar said and began zooming toward him.

Red saw him coming. "I'll show you who's right and who's not!" he said. He noticed he was standing under some scaffolding. He summoned every ounce of strength and willpower he had. He tossed his Sword up then he jumped. He grabbed hold of a crossbar and pulled himself up pushing aside the pain in his arm. He flipped his legs over the bar just as Kragar passed harmlessly beneath him. He continued the turn until he held himself upright with only his arms.

Kragar stopped and began to turn. Red turned and let go of the bar. His body continued the twist and he caught his Sword as it fell back down. He used his downward momentum to add power to his swing. His Sword slashed across Kragar, throwing up a shower of sparks.

"That is the indomitable will of a human being protecting his home," he said.

Kragar snarled. "You scum!" he cried.

Red smirked. "Sky Sword!" He held his Sword and it glowed. "Dragon Blast!" He moved forward and slashed Kragar twice, leaving streaks of red energy that ignited. Kragar stumbled back, smoking and charred slightly.

"So I see. The indomitable will of a human being," he scoffed. "We will meet again, Red Ranger," he warned and ran away, disappearing.

Red collapsed against some scaffolding. His body was wracked with pain radiating from his arm. "And that is what we call bluffing," he muttered to himself. He wasn't sure he'd have actually had the strength to defeat the alien right then. He flexed his fingers and clenched his first. His arm still hurt but he could withstand it. He thought to catch his breath then go help the others. He just hoped they were holding their own against the alien.

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Rangers Yellow and Black were sent flying as Swirrun pushed past them. They landed hard but rolled to their feet. Pink and Blue went over to them and they all stood with their backs against each other. They

used the protection to their advantage. They held their Blasters at the ready and let their senses expand.

They heard the alien give a pitchy laugh. "Did you think you n00bs could actually take me?" he demanded, his voice never coming from the same place twice.

As one they turned and fired. Four multicolored shots hit Swirrun dead on. He flew backwards and crashed into a cement column. "How did you do that?!" he demanded.

The Rangers rushed forward. "We did it!" Yellow said.

"Can we finish him now?" Pink asked.

"I have an idea," Blue said and pulled a card out of his belt. "Micro Deep Sea DynaZords!" he slid the Card through his Morpher. The Card disappeared and the three Zords in Micro form appeared. They flew around a moment before settling themselves. Hammerhead Zord flew to Yellow. Sawfish Zord flew to Black. Manta Ray Zord flew to Pink. They opened their hands to catch them.

"How did you know this was possible?" Pink asked.

"So boss," Yellow declared quietly.

"I researched. It's possible," Blue declared.

"Let's switch them out," Black said. The Snake Zord disappeared from his Blaster and he replaced it. "Sawfish Blaster!"

The Tiger Zord disappeared from Yellow's Blaster and she replaced it. "Hammerhead Blaster!"

The Phoenix Zord disappeared from Pink's Blaster and she replaced it. "Manta Ray Blaster!"

"Shark Blaster!" The four of them aimed at the alien and the Blasters charged each glowing bright blue.

"Deep Sea Bullet!" They fired. The four bright blue shots combined into one massive shot of watery energy. It crashed into Swirrun and exploded him.

The Rangers turned their backs on the explosion.

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Devourer

Sylon scoffed silently. "I warned that fool," he said as he launched a canister of Ooze.

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Red stumbled to where the others were. He clutched his aching side. "You guys win or what?" he called out.

Putting away their Blasters they ran to him. "Taylor!"

"Well, I'm alive," he said painfully. Black put a hand up to support him, but he didn't fall. He rested his hands on his knees.

A canister of Ooze exploded over the still fiery remains of Swirrun. The slime reconstituted him and increased his mass.

Red let out a sharp breath. "Naturally," he muttered. He straightened and pulled out his Macro DynaZord Card. The others did the same.

"Dragon DynaZord!"

"Phoenix DynaZord!"

"Shark DynaZord!"

"Tiger DynaZord!"

"Snake DynaZord!"

The Zords appeared and teleported their pilots aboard.

"Dynamic Megazord!"

The Zords combined to form the Dynamic Megazord with wings and a dragon's tail for a sword. They appeared in the combined cockpit. Red slumped a bit but at least he was sitting down.

"Watch out," Swirrun said in a voice even higher and squeakier than before. "I'm faster than ever now!" he said and began running around the streets. He would blow past the Megazord sending up sparks each time.

He stopped a little ways ahead of them. "How was that? Don't think it's going to be like before," he warned them. He began running again.

"We'll catch up to him by flying," Red said. Before he could get the Megazord to take off, though, a spasm of pain rocked through him. He went black for a moment. His Morph failed.

Yellow got up and went to him. "Taylor?" she asked and attempted to take his pulse.

He brushed her hand away. "Sorry," he said and managed to sit up.

"Don't worry about it, baby. You just rest. Me and Gore have this," she declared and moved back to her seat. "If we can't fly, we'll run," she said and gripped her yoke.

Black nodded. "An old fashioned foot race it is," he agreed and gripped his yoke as well.

Taylor gave a wry smile. "This should be interesting," he mused thoughtfully. The cockpit lurched slightly as the Black and Yellow team went to work.

The Megazord began running after the alien with everything it had.

Swirrun was chortling to himself as he imagined victory. He started to gloat until he noticed the Megazord behind him, gaining. "What!" he squelched. He began running in earnest.

The Megazord stayed on him. "How about we take out one of his legs again," Yellow said.

"I'm on it! Snake Head-Butt!" Black launched the Snake Zord's head. It flew toward the alien and clamped onto one of its pumping legs.

He stumbled to a halt. "Stubborn little leeches," he said and grabbed the Zord and threw it at them. It reattached easily. Swirrun began running again, legs pumping harder than ever.

"It didn't work!" Pink gasped. "He's getting away!"

"Don't worry. Now is about the time Ram decides to hand us a miracle," Black declared.

"Until then, let's keep after him," Yellow said. They gave the Megazord all the power they could muster.

Swirrun was really beginning to sweat. He glanced back at them and fired lasers from his eyes, directly at the Megazord's feet.

The Megazord stumbled. Yellow and Black righted the Megazord.

"Hmm, did someone mention Ram and miracle?" Ram's voice declared. "Sorry it took so long. Gore, Tempe, you have a go," he said.

"About time," Black said and the two of them reached into their belts and pulled out new cards.

"I knew you wouldn't let us down," Yellow declared to Ram as she looked at the Card. "Ready?" she asked Black.

He nodded. "Let's do it," he agreed.

"Macros DynaZords!" The two of them swiped their cards. "Summon Core Earth DynaZords!"

The ground rumbled and a large blackish-yellowish-orangey portal formed in the center of the park. Three Zords emerged. One was an orange bear head, one was a black beetle head with antler-like pincers and the other was a yellow rhinoceros head with a long drill for a nose.

"Wow, here they come!" Yellow said, trying to get a better look.

"Nice," Black said. In tandem they took out another Card and swiped them. "Core Earth Megazord!" The

three Zords sped in front of the Megazord. The Snake Zord's head slid up to the knee to be replaced by the Rhinoceros Zord. The Tiger Zord's head slid up to the knee to be replaced with the Bear Zord. The Megazord's default flipped back into its chest and the Beetle Zord attached to the neck and formed a new helmeted head.

Swirrun almost stumbled when he looked back at them. "Wh-wh-what!" he squalled. He began picking up speed.

The newly wheeled Megazord began gaining speed as if skating. Closing in on him. "You're mine," Black said quietly and depressed a button on his yoke. "Beetle Head-Butt!" The Megazord reared back its head and banged it forward, the Beetle's pincers widened. The Megazord banged its head into the alien and the pincers closed.

Swirrun sparked and fell over. "Ha! That was the stuff right there!" Yellow cried.

"I'm the fastest being in the Warstars! How did you catch me!" Swirrun demanded as he managed to get to his feet.

"We didn't just catch you, sweetie. We're ending you," she said pleasantly. "Bear Kick!" She jerked her yoke and the Megazord kicked out, the Bear Zord opening and closing its jaws, grabbing a nice hunk of alien.

"Ok, enough playing around," Black said as if weren't guilty of the same thing. He pulled another Card from his belt.

Yellow nodded and pulled the same Card from her belt.

"Victory Charge!" They swiped the cards. The Core Earth Zords powered up. "Core Earth Crush!" They Megazord went into a flying kick. The nose of the Rhino Zord began spinning as it led the jump. It crashed into the alien.

The Megazord landed with its back to Swirrun. The alien crackled with energy. He felt over and exploded.

Yellow jumped to her feet again. "All right," she said and clenched her fists in victory.

"You still with us?" Black asked Taylor.

"I wouldn't have missed it for the world," Tay answered with his usual crooked grin.

Black nodded then he was pounced on by Yellow hugging him. He laughed. Taylor chuckled. Nope. He wouldn't have missed this at all.

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Tempest checked Taylor's arm. "It looking good," she declared. "Looks like the accelerated healing is finally beginning to take effect," she declared with a smile.

Taylor nodded.

"When are you going to tell us about that?" Sin asked him.

Taylor sighed. He rubbed his arm. "There were a few times I thought someone I knew. It was slightly jarring at first. We were supposed to meet three months ago at certain date. She didn't show, so I thought that meant she didn't want anything to do with me any more." he shook his head.

"I know, I probably should have followed up but, eh, you guys get it," he said, glancing at the other guys in the Lab. They nodded.

Tempest rolled her eyes. She patted his arm though. "Even invincible ninja masters can be hurt," she said. He smiled briefly.

"So, then what?" Sin asked.

"It was when we dealing with that crazed musician that something really strange happened. I somewhat noticed her then. When Sylon ran from the fight, he didn't disappear immediately. He went to someone. I saw a flash of lightning. I didn't get it. I was quite confused," he admitted. "I couldn't be sure it was her. Why would she be here now?"

He rubbed his face. "I saw her again this morning. I followed her, except when I caught up to her, she attacked me using the Thunder Ninja Techniques she'd been studying the past couple of years," he said. "Except I realized it wasn't her," he said. "She's been taken over by something. Whatever it is, I think it's working with Sylon," he said. "She matches the description Gore and Sin gave me for the nurse that was with him at the clinic."

"Who is she?" Lark asked.

"Rena Hart," he answered. "And she's one of us. She was a Power Ranger. I have to figure out a way to save her," he said. He gave a wry grin. "If I don't her brother may kill me," he added.

"We'll help however we can," Tempest said. "Right guys?" she asked, looking around at them.

"We don't need you prompting us. It's a given," Gore said.

"Absolutely," Lark and Sin agreed.

"You know it, brother," Ram agreed.

Taylor smiled. "Thanks," he told them. "Oh, Lark. You'll be getting a call soon from Dr. Billie. She wants to help repair the Green Morpher," he said and slipped out of the Lab.

Lark watched him go with a frown. "Dr. Billie? Who--wait! Do you mean Dr. Wilhemina Davis-Doyle?" she demanded and ran after him. He was already gone. "I hate when you do that!" she called out, receiving strange looks from passing staff. "Get back to work!" she snapped and went back to the Lab,

ignoring the snickering foursome within it.

-/End 07\-

8 - Dirty Works

Dr. Lark Walker paced around in the Lab. She watched as her team mates filed in. Once they were settled, they looked at her expectantly.

"Is this about new Zords?" Gregory Houston asked and glanced between her and Enrique Ramon. Lark was surprised by how much she had come to rely on his presence in the Lab. He seemed to work the Caervinian computer systems much better than she could.

Ram held up his hands. He had no idea what the subject of today's meeting was about.

Lark shook her head. She glanced around. "I'm going to be away from the Base for three days this weekend. My father has acquired a property nearby and my presence is required for a visit," she announced.

"You sound a lot less enthusiastic than I would be about visiting my daddy for a long weekend," Tempest Strong said.

"That's because you haven't had the pleasure," Gore remarked.

"Funny you should say that," Lark said and pulled an envelope out of her pocket. "Your presence is required as well," she said and it handed it to him.

Gore was floored. He tried not to grimace when he saw his name scrawled on the front of envelope in a familiar script. He slipped it into a pocket without opening it.

"Wait a minute," Sinclair Monning said and raised his hand slightly, "I don't have to go, right?" he asked.

"You were not mentioned," Lark answered.

"Yes!" he said quietly and did a minute fist pump.

"Don't rub it in," Gore said and reached over, whacking him on the back of the head.

Tempest watched the three of them and rubbed her forehead. "I've missed something major along the way," she declared.

"I missed it too. Don't worry," Ram assured her.

Taylor Hicks snickered. "So what do we do while you two are off on a fabulous vacation?" he asked.

"I'm putting Sin in charge of security. You'll probably pick up extra shifts while I'm gone," Gore answered.

"Fun," Taylor drawled.

"When do we have to leave?" Gore asked Lark.

"This afternoon. The new property is just outside Starkweather Valley. We won't be unable to join the fight if an alien appears," Lark assured the others.

Gore silently wished there would be an alien attack soon. It may be bad form but he was not looking forward to this trip. "I'll go pack," he said and left the Lab.

"I'll help," Sin said and ran after him.

Lark sighed and gave Taylor, Tempest and Ram a wan smile. "I suppose I'd better go as well," she said awkwardly and hustled out of the Lab.

Once alone, Tempe rounded on Taylor. "Do you know what's going on?" she demanded.

"Particulars? Nope. I just know when people have known each other a long time," Taylor answered. "I'll tell you what, though. I'm not sure I ever want to meet the boss," he added.

"Amen, brother," Ram agreed and got back to work on the computer.

Tempest sighed. She checked the time. "Guess I'd better get to work," she said.

Ram glanced at Taylor. "Don't you have a shift coming up?" he asked.

"Naw, I traded off with Samson. Wanna go to the city and do anything other than work?" he asked.

"Absolutely," Ram agreed.

"Sweet," Tay declared and the two of them crept to the teleporter together.

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Devourer

Sylon had thus far resisted holding Kragar's failure over his head. He found he could only be altruistic for so long. "I told you not to underestimate the Rangers," he finally said. Kragar growled and approached Sylon.

"Enough," Drage said. "I am not underestimating them. I found someone within our ranks who will give the matter of dealing the Rangers and destroying the humans due consideration. Sygy is a meticulous researcher. You should appreciate that, Sylon," he said.

Sylon was surprised there was actually a member of the Warstars with a brain larger than a marble. "Color me intrigued. Where can I find this Sygy?" he asked.

"He has taken over a cargo bay on Level V-13," Drage answered.

Sylon nodded. "If you'll excuse me," he said and left the bridge.

Kragar growled. "If he knew how close he was to death--"

"The truth of the matter is that he's correct. You did not succeed," Drage reminded him. Kragar bowed, properly chastened. "I have faith in both of you," Drage assured him. His level-headed shrewdness was what made him such a powerful leader able to control the powerful beings that comprised the Warstars.

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Sylon found the Warstar known as Sygy in the appropriate area. He had very sophisticated equipment strewn everywhere. He stood in front of a computer analyzing everything they knew about Earth.

Sygy was a tall mantis-like six-eyed alien. He was also quite meticulous in his research. "So this is Earth," he remarked thoughtfully.

"Yes, it is," Sylon agreed as he approached. "What are your thoughts?" he asked.

Sygy glanced at him. "I need to conduct some firsthand research before formulating a hypothesis," he answered.

"I understand. I wish you luck," Sylon said.

"There is no such thing as luck. You are Sylon, correct? The invention of the Ooze is to your credit. If I could have a sample--"

"Nice try," Sylon said and clapped him on what passed for a shoulder. "Drage and Kragar will never get the formula even from my cold dead body," he remarked as he strode out of the cargo area.

"It was worth a try," Sygy remarked and went back to his analyses.

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The newest property acquired by Dr. G. Walker was as ostentatious as Lark had expected. The main house was a glass and steel monstrosity with rolling grounds that abutted against the Starkweather Game Preserve. "I'll leave you to it," Gore said and adjusted his duffel bag. He nodded brusquely and headed away from the main house toward a smaller building that looked somewhat like an oversized doll's house. It was hidden amongst a few trees on the property.

An older man was waiting for him. He had once been a large fit man and still showed traces of it. He was slightly stooped from years of hard work. His near-white hair was cut in a military style. He wore a gray-green coverall and a belt with various garden tools hanging from it. "Bout time you got here," he said.

"Gramps," Gore greeted.

The old man snorted. "What're you wearing? You expect to be able to work in that? Go change. There's an extra coverall in my closet," he ordered in a tone that expected and used to being obeyed.

Gore didn't bother to argue. He went into the garden house and changed into the coverall. He went back out and was immediately ordered around. It was almost like being back in the army. He didn't argue. Arguing with Private Jedidiah Houston was forever an exercise in futility.

"Dang it, boy, you forget everything I ever taught you? Use your whole body!" the old man snapped while Gore was breaking up new ground for a row of multicolored tulips. Dr. Walker wanted around a high wall curving at a downward slope surrounding the large drive of the home.

"What're trying to do? We ain't washing clothes. Gently dunk the bulbs in the water. And don't just plop 'em in the dirt. Place them with care and cover 'em like you're tuckin' in a baby," he ordered.

Closing his eyes for patience, Gore made a big demonstration of doing exactly as he was ordered. Finally, Jed harrumphed and left him to the task.

"Looks like you're having more fun than I am."

Gore glanced up to find Lark sitting on the wall. "Things not going well with your father?" he asked as he plopped a tulip bulb in the dirt and covered it up.

"He hasn't even bothered to show up. How's it going with Jed?" she asked.

"He needs a staff. He's over seventy and intends to garden for your father until he keels over one day planting tulips," he declared.

"You know better than anyone that's how he prefers it," Lark pointed out. "I think he's lonely since Annaleigh passed away. That's probably why he wanted you here," she pointed out.

Gore grunted. "I know that," he said. "Don't need you telling me how much Gramps misses Granny," he said. "How'd you get up there?" he asked. At its highest point, the wall was over fourteen feet, four at its lowest. She sat somewhere near the top.

"I jumped," she beamed.

"What the devil are you doin' to those tulips!" Gore closed his eyes as his Gramps strode up.

"Hi, Jed," Lark called.

"Howdy, Miss Lark. Best you get running along now. Don't need you hearing the chewing out I'm about to deliver to this young'un," Jed said calmly enough.

Their Morphers began to beep. Gore glanced up at Lark.

"If you please, Jed, Gore still works for me and I need to steal him away for a time," Lark said and bounced off the wall.

"Sorry, Gramps. You'll have to chew me a new one later," Gore said as he stood up.

Jed put his arms on bony hips and glared at him, but didn't protest. "I'll be back," his grandson promised as he rounded the wall. Together he and Lark tapped their Morphers.

"There's a Warstar alien the city. Everyone's on their way," Ram told them.

"On our way," Gore said. Another tap activated the teleport.

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"You're looking for her, aren't you?" Ram asked finally, watching Taylor scan the people around them for the bajillionth time since they'd been in the city. Wherever they went, his eyes had never been still. A while ago, Tay had even said that Ram could go back in he wanted and he was going to take a walk. Ram had chosen not to go. But he couldn't stand the silence anymore.

It felt like they'd been wondering aimlessly for an hour or more. Taylor stopped in his tracks and sighed. "I can't help it. I know she's in the city somewhere," he said. "This is why I said you should go back," he added. Ever since he'd found out about Rena being possessed by whatever she was possessed by and in Starkweather Valley, he'd spent every moment he could looking for her.

"What will you do when you find her?" Ram dared to asked. "She kinda does this whole, electric sizzle disappearing thing," he said.

"I know. I don't know. I just can't do *nothing* though," Tay declared, rubbing the bridge of his nose in and gritting his teeth in frustration. He took off his cap and scratched his hand through his hair.

Ram clapped him on the shoulder. "I get it. I'm going to book. Don't drive yourself to crazy. We'll all figure it out. We're in this together," he said.

"Thanks," Taylor said. "I'll head back soon," he said.

Ram gave him a little salute. Though he didn't have a Morpher, he'd been able to rig up a wrist device that connected to the teleport system. He activated it to leave Taylor to his quest.

Taylor appreciated his friend's support, but somethings were just better done alone. He'd been trying to formulate a plan. But, Ram was right. It wasn't something he was going to be able to do alone. He had some people to contact and plans to make. It would, however, be helpful if he could start keeping tabs on her.

His Morpher began beeping. He tapped it. "Go for Taylor," he said.

"We have great timing. There's a Warstar alien near you. Sending coordinates and back-up," Ram said.

"I'm on it," Taylor said. He began running, eventually leaving a streak of red in his wake.

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Sygy appeared in the busiest part of the city. It was Friday afternoon and people were getting off work and preparing for the weekend. It was the perfect mix of people for a thorough researcher such as him. When he appeared, people panicked and began running. He grabbed the suit jacket of some poor Joe Everyman. "Hmm, so these are Earth's rulers, hmm? Humans?" he said as he analyzed the hapless man and the other humans around him.

He picked the man up by the tie. "How absurdly frail," he said dispassionately.

"Warstar! Stop right there!" He whipped around as the five Dynamic Power Rangers arrived on the scene.

Tempe blinked at Gore. "Hon, what are you wearing?" she asked, taking in his scruffy coveralls and dirty hands.

Gore gave a faint smile. "What, it doesn't work on me?" he asked.

Sygy tossed aside the man in the suit. "Ah, finally. The undefined factor has arrived," he said. "I am Sygy and with my research, I will quickly bring ruin to the Earth."

"Yeah, no. That's not going to happen," Taylor denied. He flipped out his Morph Card. The others followed suit. "DynaMorpher!"

"Black Ranger Power!"

"Yellow Ranger Power!"

"Blue Ranger Power!"

"Pink Ranger Power!"

"Red Ranger Power!"

They slid their cards and multicolored energy surrounded them forming their power suits, helmets and side-arms.

Black stepped forward. "I've been dealing with the crotchiest old man in the world. I've got a bit of pent up stress," he said and pulled a card from his belt. "I think I'll take it out on you. Land Axe!" He swiped his card and his weapon appeared. The others summoned their weapons as well and charged forward.

Unfazed, Sygy stood quietly. "Very well. This will give me a chance at some firsthand research," he agreed.

Blue jumped up from behind the Red and Pink Rangers. "Shark Snipe!" and fired on the alien several times.

Red charged forward next. "Dragon Slash!" he slashed the alien with a streak of red energy. Sygy sparked and stumbled back.

Pink was already in position, coming directly on Red's heels. "Phoenix Shot!" Several pink energy blasts sent up more sparks.

Black and Yellow had held back but now they rushed forward. "Tiger Shock!" Land Claws took crackling swipes at him.

"Snake Bite!" Black slashed him once, then whirled around, gaining momentum to slash him a second time, sending him flying in a shower of sparks and smoke. "Not seeing any ruin yet. I think this guy was all talk," Black declared as the others came up behind him.

"My defeat was not total waste," Sygy said as he got to his feet. Smoke still wafted off of him.

"I don't like the sound of that," Red said.

"Power Rangers, I will use the data I have just gathered to do research. The next time we meet will be your last!" He whirled around, his arms in the air as he faded away.

"Hey, stop!" But it was too late, the alien was gone.

They dropped their morphs. "I want to think that guy was a pushover. Thankfully I'm too cynical for that," Gore said.

"I didn't like all his talk about research. Science can be a dangerous thing in the wrong hands," Lark said. "Unfortunately, this does not mean I get to go back to the Lab to do research of my own," she said, and flattened her lips.

Gore sighed and looked up at the sky. "Back to the tulips," he grumbled.

"Have fun with that. Still glad I didn't have to show up," Sin said. He teleported before either of them could retort.

"We'll be on guard. You guys get back to whatever it was you were having to do," Taylor said.

Lark and Gore nodded. They teleported.

"That's not a happy face. What're you thinking? Tempe asked Taylor when they were alone.

"I'm thinking we'd better get back to base," he said and gave her his usually unconcerned smile. She didn't buy into it for a second but they went back to Sky Base together.

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A day of work for the old man, left Gore feeling like he'd pummeled by twenty aliens the next day. But he was up with the sun and back at it. After a while, though, he had to admit, it was somewhat therapeutic.

Just him and the dirt in his hands as he planted bulb after bulb of tulips.

It became almost automatic. He was so caught up in this feeling of oneness with the earth, that if he hadn't been quite so connected, he'd have missed the shuffling footsteps of his grandfather coming up behind him. "Take a break, young'un. You been at it for hours. Come on over here and get you some water and a sammich," the old man instructed.

Gore got his feet and stretched his muscles. He marveled at the connected feeling that lingered. He joined his grandfather under the shade of a tree and took a healthy swallow of water and bit into a dry turkey sandwich. Jed's culinary skills left much to be desired. But Gore didn't care he, was ravenous.

Jed was quiet for the longest time. "Tulips was your Granny's favorite, you know," he finally said finally as he gazed over the rows of tulips Gore had planted.

Gore looked over the rows as he chewed. He swallowed and nodded. "Yes, sir. She did love her tulips," he agreed finally.

Jed glanced around for a moment. "Let me ask you, boy. What's with Miss Lark? She's been bouncin' around the main house like a fart in a mitten," he said.

Gore snickered. "Taylor Hicks is what's with Doc. Not like that. More like he's her drill instructor," he answered.

Jed made a thoughtful face. "Sounds like a man to meet if he can make Miss Lark do anything besides lookin' at that glow book without havin' to be there breathing down her neck," he declared and gave a cackle.

"Then I suppose I'll have to take these cookies Cookie baked back if you two aren't doing anything besides talking sass behind my back," Lark declared as she approached them with a plastic container of goodies.

Gore was mildly impressed with her light feet. She almost snuck up on them. "Now, Miss Lark, ain't nobody talkin' sass. Best be a good girl and bring them cookies over here," Jed cajoled. Lark smiled and joined the two of them on the ground and passed over the cookies.

"I haven't paid enough attention to how you've been doing under Hicks. I am impressed with the progress you've made," he said.

Lark's expression was bemused. "I'm not often wrong, but I think we were all wrong about him," she said.

Jed harrumphed. "It's the ones that fly under the radar you gotta keep your eye on," he declared between the cookies he was devouring.

"Slow down Gramps, before you choke," Gore said. "And I'm pretty sure we're the only ones who were wrong though," he said to Lark.

"Bitter medicine, but takes a strong person to take it," Jed interjected.

Lark suppressed a giggle behind her hand. Gore merely took a cookie and munched on it.

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Sin was hanging out with Ram for a change. They were settled on the beach where he usually meditated. "So, let me get this straight; I just sit, close my eyes and listen to the sea?" Ram asked. It was his idea. Though he enjoyed his job plundering the Base's computer system for more tech, he was on base as a test subject. He was tired of sitting around doing nothing.

From what they knew of the Green power set, it was a partner set for the Blue power set, and therefore water based. So Ram had asked to join Sin when he did his watery business, if he didn't mind. Sin didn't mind. He thought it was a good idea.

"That's what I do when I meditate," Sin answered.

"When do I get to meet the Water Masters?" Ram asked.

"He hasn't even been able to meet the Water Masters; why would you be any different?" a feminine voice said as Nia came up behind them. She gave Sin a disgruntled expression. "What's with the newb?" she asked.

"Aren't you a Water Master?" Ram asked her.

"Technically," she answered and plopped down in the sand.

Sin grinned. "Ram here is my new pupil," he answered.

Nia snorted. "You're still a Padawan yourself. You can't have pupils," she declared sagely.

Ram grinned. "I think I just met my soul mate," he declared.

"Hey," Sin said and gave him a shove. Ram shoved back.

Nia snorted. "Neither one of you could handle me," she declared. "Didn't you come here to meditate. Stop horse-playing and settled down. Close your eyes and listen to the gentle sound of the waves lapping at the shoreline," she said, settling herself into a cross-legged position.

Sin and Ram stopped goofing around and settled into meditative positions. They listened to the sound of the ocean, the gentle lapping of the waves.

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Tempe stuck her face into the Lab and grinned slightly when she saw Taylor standing by himself looking intently at various surveillance scenes from around the city. "Doc will mad if she finds out you hijacked the Lab for your hunt," she said as she sauntered in.

Taylor shrugged. "Doc ain't here at the moment. Ram hooked me up before he and Sin went to play at the beach," he said.

"It's weird to be in here without someone science-y roaming around spouting off stuff I can't half understand," she stated.

Taylor grinned. "I know. It's like playing in your parents' bedroom when they aren't home," he said.

Tempe laughed. "Any sign of her?" she asked, sobering slightly.

Taylor shook his head. "I didn't really expect there to be. I doubt she's walking down the street buying groceries," he answered.

"She means a lot to you, huh?" Tempe asked.

He gave a ghost of a smile. "More than I realized," he answered. Not exactly the answer Tempe was after, but Tay wasn't chatty about that kind of thing. Well, not now anyway. Not when he was this worried, annoyed and angry.

"We'll figure it out, sweetie," she assured him with a smile.

"So everyone keeps saying," Taylor muttered. He turned off the monitors. "I need to change my headspace," he said. "Where's Kane when I need someone to wind crush?" he said himself. His best friend Kane was a powerful Earth Ninja and samurai master; one of the few people Taylor didn't have to hold back with. His new team was coming along nicely, but he didn't any of them where advanced enough to spar with him no holds barred.

"Don't know about wind crushing, but I could use some food," Tempe said.

"Food is always good," he said. He juttet an elbow out. "Fine dining at the mess?" he asked.

Tempe laughed and took his arm. "You can't even jokingly call it fine dining," she said as the two of them left the Lab.

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Devourer

Sylon and Drage approached Sygy in his make-shift lab. "How is your research coming along?" Drage asked.

Sylon watched information, data streams and images, fly over various monitors as Sygy took them in with his six red eyes. He turned toward the captain as the screens went blank. "I think you will be pleased with my research," he stated.

"We'll see if this approach of yours works. I have my doubts," Kragar stated as he sauntered in.

"That's because Sygy's approach actually requires thinking. Something you aren't good at," Sylon declared.

Kragar took an aggressive step toward the blue alien. Sylon squared off. "Enough," Drage said in a tone that made both creatures immediately back off from each other. "Sygy, if you are finished, then do your job," he ordered.

"Yes, my captain," Sygy said and faded from view. Kragar gave Sylon one last glare and trudged away. Sylon gave Drage a slight bow and exited the lab as well. Drage was ready to kill everyone for being general nuisances.

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Jed got to his feet tiredly, bones creaking and popping with every movement. "Back to work young'un. Tulips ain't gonna plant themselves," he barked at Gore. "You best be getting back to your father, Miss Lark. He's a busy man and he can't see you as much as he'd like," he said to her kindlier.

Lark sighed as Gore helped her to her feet. "So true, Jed. I just brought the cookies from Cookie," she said. Her head suddenly snapped around. "Do you hear that?" she asked Gore.

Gore shook his head and Lark left the shade tree and scanned the sky. "There!" she said, pointing. Gore followed her finger and spotted the alien flying through the sky.

"Gramps, go back inside," he said in a tone that brooked no argument even from the argumentative old man. "I'll finish the rest of the tulips when I get back," he said as he and Lark began running toward the direction the alien was headed. He tapped his communicator on the fly. "Alien's back," he said on the fly.

Sygy zoomed over the game preserve. The trees were green and lush beneath him. "I'll start here," he said and shot a powerful red laser beam from his mandibles. As he landed, several acres of trees and other plant-life turned to dust around him.

"A success," he declared, looking around with pride. "Now to carry through the rest of my plan."

"Warstar! Stop right there!" Gore and Lark caught up to him.

"What's the meaning of destroying these trees?" Lark demanded, trying to make sense of it.

Sygy turned to face them. "Oh, it's really simple you see," he said in conversational tones, "from my research, I have ascertained that the dominant species on this planet need trees in order to breath. Therefore, I easily save a lot of time and energy by destroying all the trees and plants and letting you humans die off naturally," he explained as if discussing the theory of relatively, rather than the mass destruction of an entire planets life.

The others arrived in time to hear his rational explanation.

"Sorry, guy, but your research has a fatal flaw," Gore pointed out.

Sygy reacted. "Impossible. My research is meticulous. What flaw?" he demanded, fisting his hands.

"The part where you think we're just going to let you do that." Gore said and flipped out his Morph Card. "DynaMorpher! Black Ranger Power!"

"Yellow Ranger Power!"

"Blue Ranger Power!"

"Pink Ranger Power!"

"Red Ranger Power!"

The Rangers morphed, but Sygy was waiting for that. His hand lengthened and changed, turning into a broad blade. "Weapon Card!" The Rangers summoned their weapons. "Let's go!" Black Ranger said.

The Rangers began running toward the alien. Sygy stood calmly as they came at him. "See the results of my research for yourselves. There is no flaw," he said menacingly. He rushed forward just as Blue jumped took aim. "First take out the sniper that watched out for the others," he said and slashed him across the chest several times. He cried out and fell to the side, sparking.

He rounded on Pink and Red just as they were coming up behind him. "Them immobilize the fleet footed light weights," he said and slashed Pink. Red put himself more in the way of the attacks to shield her as the alien continued his attack. I was all he could do at the moment. The two of them sparked and stumbled back.

"That just leave the power hitters," Sygy added as Yellow and Black came up on him. He jumped into the sky as they intended to strike him at the same time. They lost balance with their momentum and the effort not to hurt each other. He landed with a smirk. "Flaws?" he scoffed. He rounded on them slashed, sending them to the ground.

Black grit his teeth. "He's moving completely differently from last time," he said. "I knew I shouldn't have underestimated him," he declared.

"You think," Blue said as he regained his feet. The five of them came together again. A little worse for wear.

"I told you guys, science can be dangerous," Pink said.

"Listen to your little pink friend. I researched you all thoroughly," he said. He began throwing powerful energy blasts at them. "In other words, you Power Rangers are no threat at all!" he said as they were knocked off their feet again. "Now that you know your place, I shall continue with my work," he said. He turned his back and his wings folded out and jumped into the sky.

Black got to his feet. "Gramps' tulips are that way," he said. He planted his feet firmly in the ground. He pulled a card out of his belt. "Micro DynaZord! Snake!" He slid the card through the reader. A tiny

SnakeZord head appeared and he drew his Blaster and the head bonded to it.

He wasn't the crack shot that Blue was, but he'd had the right kind of training. Besides, the Blaster had a targeting screen on it. He took careful aim. "Snake Bullet!" He pulled the trigger. The Micro disengaged from the Blaster and zoomed toward the flying alien, leaving a trail of energy behind it. It whipped around the alien, the energy forming the body of the snake. The jaws of the Snake but into the alien's wing, causing the alien to fall from the sky.

Black holstered his side-arm and took up his axe as he rushed forward. "I told you, there are flaws in your research! Humans are the most adaptable beings on the planet. Especially when they have something to protect," he stated, thinking of his Gramps and the tulips his Granny had loved so much.

"Fine. I see I'll have to finish you off first," Sygy declared.

"Oh, really. Good luck with that," Black said and charged forward. Sygy began flinging energy blasts at him. He knocked them aside with the Land Axe as he ran forward, the Earth around him seeming to encourage and give him strength. He tossed the Axe into the sky as he dove to the ground. He grabbed Sygy's leg and tossed him backwards into the ground. Dirt rose around him and covered him. Black patted the dirt. "Like tuckin' in a baby," he declared as stood over the confused and resisting alien. He flipped back a few feet and caught the Axe with one hand. Sygy wriggled his way to his feet.

"Now I'll put my whole body into it," he said. He jumped, the earth pushing him to a height he wouldn't have been capable of before. He somersaulted a few times. "Snake Bite!" With his power, his whole body, and his momentum he slashed the alien. Sygy sparked wildly and flew backward in an arc of smoke.

The other Rangers ran to Black. "Gore!" Blue said.

Sygy groaned. "Why?" he demanded and tried to move around to glare at them with his six eyes. "My research was meticulous. It should have gone off without a hitch!"

"You can thank Private Jedidiah Houston and his special training for that," Pink declared.

"Why is he better at it than I am?" Yellow asked, putting a fist on her hip.

Red clapped Black on the shoulder. "You earthy types are stubborn, but sometime, when you have it, you have it," he said.

"That and there was no freaking way I was going to let that thing screw up the tulips I'd been busting my butt planting for the past two days," Black said. Of course not quite the truth, but he wasn't one for emotional speeches. "Do you know how many tulips I had to plant! There's no way in the blackest pits of Tartarus was I starting over!"

A capsule of Ooze splattered over Sygy. "I won't let you interfere any further!" he shouted as he grew to large size.

"Let's do this, guys," Red said.

"Right!" they agreed. They all flipped cards from their belts.

"Dragon DynaZord!" Red slid the Card through his Morpher.

"Phoenix DynaZord!" Pink slid the card through her Morpher.

"Snake DynaZord!" Black slid his Card through his Morpher.

"Tiger DynaZord!" Yellow slid her Card through her Morpher.

"Shark DynaZord!" Blue slid his Card through his Morpher.

The Zords appeared and teleported their pilots aboard.

Sygy was already analyzing them. "So the snake is the legs. If I take that out, they won't be able to combine," he said and tossed several blasts of energy.

Blast banked a hard left, jerking on his steering apparatus hard.

"Gore!" Yellow called.

He was a little too busy to answer. Sygy stomped on the Zord. "You can't get away so easily. I'll crush you like the insect you are," he said. He was no longer dispassionate in his dealings with the Rangers, this one in particular.

The SnakeZord sparked as it thrashed, attempting to get away. "Here's another bit of research you missed," Black declared and pulled a card from his belt. "Macro DynaZords!" He swiped the card. "Summon Core Earth DynaZords!"

The ground rumbled and a large blackish-yellowish-orangey portal formed in the center of the park. Three Zords emerged. One was an orange bear head, one was a black beetle head with antler-like pincers and the other was a yellow rhinoceros head with a long drill for a nose. They sped toward the alien.

"What? How did I miss this in my research!"

"Told you! Core Attack!"

BeetleZord attacked first, opening pincers and snapping around the alien. RhinoZord attacked next, its horn/drill spinning into the alien's middle. Finally, BearZord opened its jaws and spat several missiles. The attacked landed and the alien stumbled back, freeing the SnakeZord.

"Phew! You pulled that one off, sweetie," Yellow declared.

"Naturally. All right people, let's get this done," he said.

"Right! They agreed, pulling another card from their belts and swiped them. "Core Earth Megazord!"

The MacroZords and Earth Zords combined to form their new Megazord. It walked to where Sygy was getting to his feet, his arm bladed once again.

"If that's how you want it," he seethed and stomped toward them purposefully. He jump-slashed them and they smoked and sparked. The Megazord retaliated with a solid kick. The cockpit sparked slightly from the earlier attack, but they landed another devastating kick.

"It's time to be done this guy and his dangerous science once and for all," he said and pulled a card from his belt.

"He gives researchers a bad name," Pink agreed.

"Victory Charge!" Black swiped his card. The Core Earth Zords powered up. "Core Earth Crush!" The Megazord went into a flying kick. The nose of the Rhino Zord began spinning as it led the jump. It crashed into the alien.

Sygy sparked wildly as energy arced around him. "No. How was my research so flawed?" he said and exploded.

The Megazord landed with its back to the explosion.

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Devourer

Kragar gloated quietly. "I had a bad feeling about that one," he said smugly.

"I beg to differ. I think we learned quite a lot from Sygy's research. Well, at least I did. Not sure your brain can do more than fart," he said.

Kragar growled and stepped toward him.

"Enough!" Drage shouted. "Kragar. You almost sound happy we failed once again," he growled, glowering at his second.

Kragar deflated, chastened. "No, my captain. That's not true. I would happily admit my faults if I had been proven wrong," he said.

Drage shook his head. "Just leave the bridge. Both of you. I don't want to see either of you right now," he said.

Sylon and Kragar gave salutes left the bridge, glaring at each other until they parted ways.

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An initiative to replant the destroyed forest had been quickly put into place by the now absent Dr. G. Walker. Instead, Lark led the replanting along with her team and local volunteers. She actually let Jedidiah be in charge of supervising the volunteers. Taking a break, they gathered around a table set up with drinks while others worked.

Tempe looked at Gore, then Sin and Lark in turn. The mystery of their origins had been solved, somewhat. "I should have seen it sooner. You two have similar eyes," she declared, pointing two fingers at Sinclair and Lark.

"Walker eyes. The gray runs in the family," Sin answered. In truth, he and Lark were cousins. His father had died when he was young and he and his mother lived with her older brother, Lark's father, from then on. Gore was the grandson of the family gardener and housekeeper. They'd all grown-up together. And truth be told, Jedidiah and his wife Annaleigh had more of hand in raising Sin and Lark than the socialite mother, or busy scientist father.

"I told you they were people who knew each for a long time," Tay said and took a drink of water. "I knew you were meant for Earth; this just proves it. You've been playing in the dirt all your life," he told Gore.

Gore nodded, defeated. "I can't argue with that. I don't think I'd've been cut out for all that twinkle-toes airy-fairy stuff," he said, referring to Tay's Wind Techniques.

Far from offended, Tay grinned. "Though it makes me happy. You get to be my new Kane," he said ominously.

Gore froze with his own cup of water half-way to his mouth. "What does that mean?" he asked.

"That means you're strong with the Earth and the only people who can ever stand to be battered around by his Wind-Fu are Earth Ninjas," a peppy voice spoke up from behind him.

The group turned to see a slight, Asian-featured girl with slightly purple eyes. She had dirt on her clothes, marking her as a volunteer. Tay broke into a grin. "Sissy!" he said and enveloped her in a hug that lifted her feet off the ground.

Sissy Singuji nee Elliot laughed and hugged him back. She kissed his cheek. "Okay, put me down before Kyou gets jealous," she said.

Taylor snickered as he released her. "Kyou should know by now you aren't into lanky white guys," he said. "You two decided to come out of hiding?" he asked.

"Well, this got a little bit too close to home, if you catch my drift," she said.

He nodded. He glanced over his shoulder when Tempe cleared her throat meaningfully. He grinned again. He introduced Sissy to everyone. "Everyone, this is Sissy. We were comrades back in the day. Now she's a Water Master," he explained.

"Speaking of which," Sissy said. "You," she pointed at Sin then glanced at Ram. "You, too. Come with me to meet Kyou," she said.

"Yes!" Sin said quietly. Ram beamed a huge grin as they followed Sissy toward the tall Japanese guy with longish hair, pulled away from his temples.

"Gregory! Get your bum over here. These trees ain't gonna plant themselves!" Jed shouted at his Grandson.

Gore sighed. "Guess my break is over," he said and finished off his water.

"Come on, partner. Let's get a little dirt under our fingernails," she said as she headed back to the fray.

"I have so much dirt under my nails, I don't think it'll ever come out," Gore grouched as he followed her.

Lark was smiling, but it slowly faded. "Taylor. Behind you, seven o'clock," she said.

Taylor turned, curiously. That's when he saw her standing among the trees that were still standing. Warm gold eyes met his briefly before fading to paleness again. Disturbed and outraged, Azula disappeared in a bright crack of lightning that had the other volunteers confused. Taylor let out a deep breath. Rena was fighting hard. He had to find a way to free her. He drained his cup. "I need to go play in the dirt for a while," he said and went to join the others. Lark quietly joined him. Her heart went out to him. She couldn't even begin to imagine how he must be feeling.

Shaking off unpleasant thoughts, Tay turned his mind to the task at hand. No matter what was thrown at them, people would always come together to rebuild what was destroyed, regain what was lost. The Warstars didn't stand a chance.

--/-End-\--

9 - Feminine Mystique

Dr. Lark Walker led several workers to a large ornate greenhouse not far from the Citadel. It hadn't been maintained in several millennia, so what few plants still thrived were running wild. The dirt was dry and inhospitable to anything that wasn't some alien weed. Gardening was low on the list of things to do on Sky Base. But Gore had decided this one, at least, he and Tempest would maintain themselves as part of their Earth training.

He'd ordered supplies, soil and seeds and it all came in today. He, however, was nowhere to be seen. Tempest was the only one in the greenhouse when she entered. They'd started with a small section with what they could quickly buy from a store in the city. "Where's Gore?" she asked, looking around.

Tempest stood and brushed her hands off. "Good question. This was his idea," she declared. Though she had to admit it was kind of fun and she understood how working with the soil helped them.

"I'm here," Gore said as he jogged. He rubbed his shoulder, but the truth of the matter was that everything hurt. "I knew that hitting the surface of water at high speeds could be like hitting concrete. I even kind of get how that happens. I had no idea that an invisible wall of air could feel the same way," he complained. He'd discovered what it meant to be Taylor's "new Kane". For Gore it basically meant trying to defend himself with dirt against the crazy things Taylor could do with wind.

"Did you somehow forget the part where Taylor landed half an airplane?" Tempest asked with a slight giggle. It was still a horrifying memory of being in that airplane at the time. She could now laugh at it a little bit. A very little bit.

"That should have been my first warning," he said. "I'll take over here," he said.

Lark gave him the tablet with the list of supplies. "Fine by me. I have better things to do anyway," she said.

"You sure? I can stay," Tempest said to Gore.

"Thanks, but I got it," he assured her.

Tempe shrugged. She and the Doc left the green house. She stretched her muscles She'd been working on her little patch of garden for a while. "Hey, why don't I wash up and we'll go down to the city and get a treat," she suggested. "You can't say no, I don't care what else is going on," she warned the other girl.

Lark nodded slightly. "Fine. I won't refuse a treat. Especially if it's of the frozen and sweet variety," she agreed. "I'll wait for you in the lab," she said.

"It's a date," Tempest said with a grin. They entered the Citadel and split up.

Ram was working in the Lab while Taylor was once again watching surveillance footage from around the

city. "What's going on?" she asked as she removed her lab coat. "Any luck?" she asked both of them.

"None here. Not sure why I'm still bothering," Taylor said and flicked off the screens. "He's been quiet for a while," he said jutting his chin toward where Ram was pensively and quickly typing on a keyboard.

Sin popped into the Lab. "Yo. Ram. Nia called, she said we can meet with the Masters if we have time," he said. "I got the time. You?" he asked.

That was the first time Ram glanced up from his station since Taylor had come into the Lab. He blinked several times. "No. I don't. I have a lead and if I lose this trail--"

"Say no more. If you're chasing something that'll help us, keep at it. I'll make sure the Masters know you aren't just blowing them off," he said as he headed for the teleporter.

"Thanks," Ram said absently, his fingers already flying over the keys again.

By now, Lark knew better than to ask what he looking for or if he needed help. He'd tell her when he had something concrete.

"Looks like everyone is doing their own thing today," Taylor said. "What're you up to, Doc?" he asked.

"She and I are going for something ice creamy," Tempest announced coming into the Lab.

"Is this a girls only thing or can anyone join?" Taylor asked.

Tempe and Lark shared a look. "I guess you're pretty enough to join us," Tempe assured him. Lark suppressed a laugh. Taylor's expression was priceless.

He rubbed jaw thoughtfully. "Really? I don't at least a need a powder before you guys let me be seen in public with you?" he asked. "Maybe a little eyeliner surely? Lip gloss?"

"Come on before the joke starts wearing thin," Tempe said and turned him toward the teleporter. She and Lark each hooked one of his arms and pulled him along with them. They left Ram alone to chase down his quarry.

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Devourer

Sylon was in his quarters and glaring daggers at the body housing Azula. Azula was at the helm at the moment, but her control slips were becoming a nuisance. "Do you know how difficult it is to find a compatible body to house your spirit? Why can't you keep control of it?" he demanded with a snarl.

Azula pouted, unafraid of his bluster. "I don't know. I just know it has something to do with the Red Ranger," she said sullenly. "Plus I'm so bored. All I get to do anymore is sit around making Ooze for you to give to these hideous Warstar creatures," she added.

Sylon banged his fist into a wall. Not hard, just out of frustration. "Because when you aren't, the host fights her way to consciousness," he reminded her patiently.

"You said you were working on something to help me keep control of her but all I've seen you do is the bidding of your dear Captain Drage. Careful, love, I'm beginning to think you're going native in this hideous blue exoskeleton," she said and patted what seemed to be a cheek.

Sylon slapped her hand away. "I told you not to touch me with that filthy human hand," he warned her.

Electricity crackled in the air as her temper flared. "At least humans bathe," she spat.

They glared at each other for a long tense moment. "The Power Rangers keep disrupting my plans to help you," he finally said. "And I am not going native. The sooner we find the island, the sooner we can be rid of the humans and the Warstars once and for all," he said in a placating tone. "Then I will reproduce your beautiful body and you'll be yourself once again," he added.

Azula twirled a strand of hair around her finger. "From what I recall, this body isn't far removed from how I used to look. Are you sure you can't just pretend for a while?" she asked him and attempted to touch him again.

He reeled back out of her reach. "Which of us is going native?" he sneered and walked to the door. "The Captain has been idle too long," he said. "You should leave before you're discovered," he added, slightly less abrasive than before.

"I am not afraid of these aliens. If one were to find me, he might find himself, I don't know. Fried. Atomized. It would depend on my mood," she said flippantly.

Sylon gave her another piercing look and left his quarters to go to the bridge. He was rather surprised to find the captain entertaining what appeared to be a lady friend. He recoiled in disgust at the creature pressing herself against the captain. "What the devil is that?" he asked Kragar, who also appeared more green than his usual red.

The creature turned toward him. She was a very feminine bee-like creature complete with a silvery tiara and black leather corset. She had a whip-like stinger attached to one hand a flogger attached to the other. "Captain Drage, these two are your right hand men?" she asked in a dusky voice. She left his side and trailed the tip of her stinger across Kragar's chest. "A violet fool," Kragar growled and knocked her away. She ignored him and sashayed over to Sylon and touched his face with her actual hand. "And a sullen man of mystery," she declared and let out a throaty laugh.

"Who are you calling a fool, you tarted up--"

"Silence!" she shouted, cutting off Kragar's insult. She sprayed a purple liquid out of her stinger that Kragar just managed to dodge. "I am Mistress B and men do my bidding. Even violent fools if I so wish," she added with a warning purr.

"Mistress B has kindly offered to use her unique talents to help us with the Ranger problem." Drage explained.

"I see," Sylon said, barely able to keep his composure. His skin was crawling and he felt like he needed to upheave his last meal.

"Yes. She has quite the way with the opposite sex," Drage said, nodding.

Mistress B sauntered back to him. "If you keep complimenting me like that, it'll make me so joyous that my poisons will shoot out on their own," she said and stroked the end of her poisonous stinger down his face and neck.

"First, I will take the males of Earth and make them my slaves," she explained thoughtfully and moved away from him. She gravitated toward Sylon again. "Please watch," she added on a purr.

Sylon was so disgusted, Kragar was too busy hiding, and Captain Drage was too captivated to notice the electric crackle that crept through the computer systems a moment before a bright flash of light. If Mistress B noticed, she dismissed it as nothing to be concerned about, after all she currently had a captive audience of male admirers.

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There was a lot more involved in a girl's day than Taylor realized. It wasn't just stopping by the gourmet gelato shop they liked so much. Before he actually knew what was happening he was whisked off for to be the bag holder at a few boutiques before it all culminated in going for a mani-pedi and a facial. The girls seemed to be bonding over laughing at him, so he actually didn't mind that much.

"No pictures. I do have a reputation to uphold," he warned them. He never realized how uncomfortable it was to do this kind of thing. The spacers between his toes were a new form of torture he'd never experienced before and the green stuff on his face his face was starting to itch. Even the lady finishing up the work on his hands was having a hard time keeping her expression neutral.

"Quit being a big baby. Just think. Women go through this kind of thing all the time just to look good for their men. Maybe if you experience it, you'll appreciate it more," Tempe told him.

"Also, it's becoming less taboo for men to do this type of thing for themselves," Lark added.

Taylor attempted to scratch at the paste on his face. He got scolded for it by one of the workers and she roughly decided to take it off. Afterwards, his face shiny and raw, he shook his head. "First of all, Tempe, don't do this for some guy. We're not worth it," he said. "Second of all, I don't think I'm progressive enough to make this a regular thing," he added.

Lark and Tempest shared another look and fell out laughing. Even the spa ladies couldn't hold back their laughter.

Their Morphers began to beep. "Okay, ladies. Time to the settle the tab and go," he said.

"Right," they agreed.

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An afternoon amateur soccer match in Starkweather was heating up. The league was mostly comprised of young professional men. They didn't have a care in the world at the moment except to beat the other team and the celebratory trip to the bar afterward. Losers had to treat and neither team wanted to be the losers.

They never expected the Oozers that seeped up from the ground to join the game. One of them swooped in and stole the ball and kicked it to another one. Other attacked and neutralized the players as they tried to get away.

Mistress B appeared in front some of the men trying to get away. She knocked them back. "Round them up, boys. These pretties are all mine," she said. She whipped her stinger through the air and purple poison flew out, landing on the men.

"You guys get to be my servants. You'll do my bidding until you die. Doesn't that sound fun?" she asked with a throaty laugh. Oozers began gathering up the now unconscious men.

Oblivious of their boss's arrival, the Oozer with the ball and another rushed forward and did a crazy acrobatic kick and sent the ball flying into the goal.

"I can't even...that Oozer just bent it like Beckham," Gore said to Sin as they were the first to arrive.

"Maybe if Oozers played, America might actually start watching soccer," Sin suggested.

Gore shook his head. "If Beckham couldn't, walking green snot can't," he disagreed. "But, um, what is that?" he gestured toward Mistress B.

The alien femme fatale turned toward them. "Oh my, what fine specimens we have here," she cooed delightedly. "Allow me to introduce myself. I am Mistress B. You will end up as my pets as well!" she said and snapped her flog toward them. Tails of purple energy whipped toward them and they rolled out of the way.

They flipped out their Morph cards. "DynaMorpher!"

"Blue Ranger Power!"

"Black ranger Power!"

They morphed and rushed toward her. In synchronous movements they attacked her. She evaded and blocked them with surprising ease.

"She's tougher than she looks," Blue complained. He was rewarded for his observation with a slash to the middle that sent up a shower of sparks and sent him stumbling back.

She blocked a punch from Black, kicked him in the middle and slashed at him as well. He fell back smoking. "Gore!" Blue stumbled over and helped him to his feet. Mistress B didn't give them anytime to

formulate a new attack. She sprayed them with her purple poison. The poison shorted their suits, sending electricity arcing over them. "What is this?" Blue demanded as he basically lost control of his own body.

"Augh! I'm going numb," Black complained. Their Morphs failed and they crumpled to the ground. They were unable to do much more than twitch.

Mistress B smirked. "I've kindly allowed you remain conscious so that you can continue to admire my wondrous beauty," she said. "You should be grateful," she told them severely.

Blasts of energy knocked her back as Dynamic Rangers Red, Pink and Yellow arrived on the scene. They ran to check on their fallen members. "Gore?" Yellow said.

"Sin?" Pink tried to check on him.

"Oh. Women. How utterly disgusting," Mistress B said with a shudder. She spat a blast of purple-ish energy at them.

"Sky Sword!" Red jumped through the flames. "I might have been enjoying a girl's day out, but I'm no woman," he declared as he charged her. He fenced with her for a few moments.

"Oh, a man, eh? All men will bow to me and be my servants," Mistress B stated aggressively.

"No, thanks. I'm not an M," he denied as his sword strained against her stinger. He kicked out and she stumbled back and twirled as he slashed again. He slashed again. She whirled once more and managed to skim him with the tip of her stinger. He jumped, preparing a downward slash, but she tossed her poison at him.

It hit him full on and he dropped like a stone, his morph failing as he lost feeling and control of his body.

Pink and Yellow had shielded their defenseless comrades from the earlier energy attack, but they rushed forward when Taylor fell to the ground. "Taylor!" Yellow cried out.

Pink flipped a card from her belt. "Sky Shooter!" She swiped the card and her weapon appeared.

"Land Claw!" Yellow summoned her weapon as well.

They rushed forward.

"Phoenix Shot!"

"Tiger Shock!"

Each strike hit home. causing some sparks but Mistress B was relatively unharmed. "Can we put them together?" Yellow asked as she held her weapon towards Pink's.

"It doesn't appear to be the case," Pink said and they spent a few moments attempting to ascertain

whether it was possible to combine their weapons.

"Oh, well. Let's just go for it the usual way," Yellow said.

"Right!" Pink agreed and the two of them charged again, but Mistress B was prepared. She deflected their jabs and strikes and knocked them back. She used her whip on them, then spun around and kicked toward them with a streak of devastating energy that send them flying across the soccer pitch. They crashed into the ground, their Morphs failing them.

"Oozers, take these lovely boys away with the rest of them," Mistress B said. The girls could only watch helplessly as Oozers grabbed the immobilized boys before they lost consciousness.

It wasn't a long blackness as Tempe came to as someone called her name and shook her urgently. "Tempest. Wake up," the voice drew her out of the blackness that had overcome her. She blinked and glanced up into the deep golden eyes of a girl she'd only seen in brief snatches.

"Rena Hart?" she asked. She suddenly gasped and scrambled to her feet, looking around for the boys or any sign of the alien.

"For the moment anyway," Rena answered grimly as she turned her attention to shaking Lark. She tapped her on the cheek. "Come on. The boys need you," she said.

Lark came awake with a gasp. She rolled away from Rena and sprang lightly to her feet, ready to protect herself if need be.

"I guess I shouldn't have expected the red carpet treatment," Rena said wryly. "At the moment I am me. She let he have control so I can help you take out that alien. She is not a fan. Call your tech guy. Ram, right? He should be able to help us find her. She didn't go back to the Devourer. Azula's sure of that much," she said urgently.

The other girls were looking at her with a mixture of amazement and apprehension. "You're you, right now. How do we know that?" Tempest asked.

"This could be some sort of elaborate hoax intended to lure us into a false sense of security," Lark agreed.

Rena sighed and nodded. "Yes, it could. There's nothing I can say to convince you, but that freaky alien has Taylor and your friends. I'm going to do what I can to get him back while I'm at the wheel. The two of you can either help me or get out of my way," she stated.

Lark took a deep breath. "Okay. We'll chance it. Anything to free the guys and those other poor men," she finally agreed.

Tempest nodded. "Right," she said. She tapped her Morpher. "Ram, sweetie, we have a problem down here," she said.

"I know. I'm already working on a way to see if I can't track the alien," Ram answered. "This might be the

only time I'm glad my Morpher blew up," he added.

While the others were talking to Ram, Rena was exploring the area where she last saw them before they faded away. "You'd think giant green slime balls would leave some sort of trail. Like slugs. Big ugly green slugs," she said and made a face.

"How much are you aware of things while you're being controlled?" Lark asked. Scientifically she didn't know how someone could be possessed by a spirit. She was beginning to realize that science wasn't the only truth in the world after all.

"Not much. It wasn't until you and Taylor used my voice to fight off that weird musical alien that I woke up and realized that several months of my life had just disappeared. I can't even imagine what Rex has been telling our parents," she said thoughtfully, a slight catch in her voice. She cleared her throat. "Azula hasn't been able to fully put me back to sleep since," she grinned at that.

"What do you know about her and the alien known as Sylon?" Lark asked.

"Azula keeps herself as separate from me as I do from her. The only things I can glean are when she gets to emotional and things seep through or I wake enough to be aware of my surroundings even if I can't fully regain control. Azula makes the Ooze. She and Sylon are a thing but he hates humans. They disgust him. I've never been so grateful to be human in my entire life," she said.

Tempest shuddered at the implications of that statement. "How are you in control now?" she asked.

"I think she let me. She doesn't seem to like this alien. I think she's jealous and is afraid it'll use its poison on Sylon. Frankly, if she didn't have Taylor and innocent humans, I'd say let her at him," she added, a faint smile, some of her usual humor surfacing.

"All right! I've remotely reprogrammed your Morphers to follow a pheromone trail the alien left behind. Just follow the beeps and good luck," Ram finally said.

The communicators began to emit low beeps, rather like sonar. "Let's go," Rena said. Lark and Tempest fell in with her as they headed into the mysterious Starkweather Game Reserve.

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Somewhere deep in the forest, Mistress B had found a nice cave and furnished it with pretty men. Under her direction, they either singularly or joined with others, formed lamps, tables, chairs and whatever else she could think of. Since she had absolute control of them, they stood in these positions no matter how their bodies might protest.

She strode around her living room appreciatively. "What a lovely vase," she said, referring to one guy bent over backwards with a bouquet of flowers in his mouth. She hummed to herself in satisfaction and sat in her arm chair. Taylor made up one arm of the chair. Even though she'd "allowed" them keep their consciousness, he couldn't feel his body and was thankful. "Arm rest, compliment me on my beauty," she cooed and ran her fingers through the hair of the man who comprised the other armrest.

"You are very beautiful, Mistress," the man intoned monotonously.

"You remind me of the bugs I clean off my helmet visor after I get through riding around on my bike," Tay said in a pleasant tone.

He was rewarded for his cheek by a sharp tug of his hair. "I can always take away what allowed you to keep," she warned him. He grunted in reply.

Gore and Sin were bent over as part of a table. "Given the get-up, this isn't really what I'd expected us to be doing," Sin stated conversationally.

"And never complain. Thank God, Buddha, Allah, Zeus and Bo Jackson," Gore said.

"Amen," Sin agreed.

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The three women followed the beeps through the forests. Rena suddenly gave a light laugh. "Billie would have had that alien pinpointed and teleported us there ages ago," she said. She wasn't complaining, just remembering better times.

"You really know her? Dr. Davis-Doyle?" Lark asked.

Rena laughed again at the awe and admiration in the other girl's voice. "Oh, yes. Billie is...one of a kind," she said.

"I still don't know who that's supposed to be," Tempest said. "What's the deal with you and Taylor?" she asked.

Rena wasn't surprised by this sudden question. They were probably dying of curiosity. She was only surprised it'd taken this long to be asked. "Our relationship can be summed up in two words: bad timing," she answered. "Bad timing the first time we met. Bad timing the second time. Bad timing this time," she said with a sigh. "I'm tired of letting bad timing get me down. Once I get rid of this witch, I'm not wasting any more time," she said firmly.

Tempest smiled. "I don't think you'll get an argument out of him. He's been going crazy looking for you," she said. "He even yelled at a few people from what I understand," she said.

"Probably just Kane. I can't imagine even Taylor yelling at Tai or Rex," she said, knowing they would be first two contacts he'd have made when he found out about her. "It's not their fault. No one else really knew about our plans to meet up after I finished my training," she said.

"Training?" Lark asked.

"Thunder training. I'm a ninja, too," she said. "Since I was able to electronically use MojiKara to control light and lightning, I was recruited by a Thunder Ninja after we saved the world from being flooded by the Sanzu River," she explained as if that wasn't some big deal.

Tempe and Lark shared another look and smothered laughs. Of course, Taylor Hicks wouldn't have some ordinary girl.

The beeping of the Morphers intensified, sobering them. "We're close. Let's go," Rena said. She began rushing in the direction the beeps indicated. Plus, she could just sense the lingering presence of the Oozers. She really hoped that would go away with the witch.

Tempe and Lark ran to catch up with her, but they didn't have nearly the kind of training she had.

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Mistress B sat a glass of blood red wine on her "table" after taking a dainty sip. She stroked a finger down Sin's cheek. He fought back a gag reflex. "Hmm. Aren't I most amazing queen you could ask for?" she asked and twirled slightly.

"I thought Widow Repulsa was the reigning queen of evil space bugs," Taylor said.

Mistress B sucked in a hissing breath. "Don't even mention that eight-legged witch to me," she spat. "You are an irritating man," she said scathingly.

"Try working with him," Gore interjected.

Sin snorted.

"You three don't seem to grasp the situation you currently find yourselves in. Are all human males as senseless?" she demanded.

"We're not the ones who don't grasp the situation," Sin said. "You see, you think because you saw the girls go down that once, you've won," he said.

"The fact is, you just made them kind of peeved," Gore added.

"Now they're coming for you," Tay finished up.

"How insulting! My poisons are coming out with rage!" she cried dramatically. She raised her arm to take it out on Taylor, the major irritant.

A crack of gold and blue electricity erupted between them before she could. She stumbled back and turned toward the entrance of the cave.

"Don't even think about, Missy," Rena said. Arcs of electricity thrummed around her.

"I recognize you. You were on the Devourer," Mistress B said slowly.

"Technically. But you aren't dealing with Azula right now. And that," she pointed toward Taylor, who bemusedly waved at her since the poison was wearing off a little, "is *my* future boyfriend. So back off!"

she said, crossing her arms over her chest with index and pinky finger of each hand sticking out.

"Close your eyes!" Taylor warned his friends just in the nick of time.

Lightning crackled around the girl and static raised her hair. "Supreme Lightning!" She uncrossed her arms and spun, tossing a giant ball of lightning at the alien. The lightning storm was blinding. The men were nearly blinded even through their eyelids.

Mistress B screeched, smoking and sparking. She retaliated by flinging her flog toward the mouth of the cave, causing part of the opening to cave in.

Rena back flipped out of the way. "You're lucky. A similar attack took out one of the most powerful creatures I'd ever seen," she said.

"I'll show you lucky, you little brat," Mistress B said. Rena ran forward and jump kicked her. The alien stumbled back, but Rena was already attacking again. Kicking out and throwing fists. The alien managed to block those. She stopped a punch and pushed back, striking back with her whip, catching Rena and sending her tumbling backwards.

"So that's the girl for Taylor Hicks, huh?" Gore said musingly.

Tay grinned. "Yeah. Isn't she great?"

"They have a spark," Sin told Gore deadpan. Gore couldn't help but laugh at that ridiculously bad joke.

The Dynamic Pink and Yellow Rangers ran up behind Rena as she sprang to her feet. "We'll handle this now," Yellow said and pulled a card from her belt. "Micro DynaZords!" She swiped her card. "Summon Core Earth DynaZords!"

Three miniature versions of the BearZord, RhinoZord and BeetleZord appeared and zoomed through the air and crashed into the alien and circled back to hover around Yellow. She drew her Blaster and grabbed the BeetleZord and attached it to the muzzle. "Beetle Bullet!"

She fired beams of yellow energy at Mistress B who fended them off by whipping out with her energy flogs. "Oh, you think you bad, huh?" Yellow muttered and replaced BeetleZord with RhinoZord and took to her knee. "Rhino Bullet!" She fired again. This time a stronger blast of yellow energy hit the alien knocking her back.

She and Pink started to rush forward and engaged but Pink was stopped. "Don't move!" Ram said. "Just give me a few minutes," he warned.

"What are you doing?" Rena asked. She had a rather nasty looking welt across the ghost image of wings that wrapped around her upper chest. She knew it was time for her step back but why wasn't the other girl moving forward?

Yellow was fighting with Mistress B alone. At one point the alien got the upper hand and wrapped her lashes around the Ranger and lifted her off the ground.

Pink clenched her fist. "It'll be okay. Tempe can handle this. Ram is about to perform a miracle," she said. "For some reason he likes to dramatically wait 'til the last moment," she added.

"I do not appreciate that. But you're right. Miracle achieved," Ram said somewhat smugly.

Pink flipped a new Card out of her belt. "Micro DynaZords!" she swiped her newly minted card. "Summon Sky High DynaZords!" Three red, gold and white miniature DynaZords appeared. One resembled the head of a crane, one resembled the head of a hawk, and the other the head of a raven. They hovered around her.

She drew her sidearm and snatched at the RavenZord and connected it to the Blaster. "Raven Bullet!" She fired. Red-pink energy shot forward and multiplied, hitting each lash. Mistress B cried out in pain and gripped her arm as Yellow was released.

Pink didn't waste time switching things up. She replaced RavenZord with HawkZord. "Hawk Bullet!" She took careful aim and fired. The HawkZord shot upward, gaining momentum, size and energy before correcting and nosediving into the alien and exploding in an impressive and devastating mass of energy that send her flying and crashing into the ground like a meteorite.

Yellow rolled to her feet and ran over to Pink. "Dang, girl, that was kind of amazing," she said approvingly.

Mistress B got to her feet, pulling fretfully on her flog. "You, complete and utterly worthless little--"

"Don't finish that sentence," Yellow said as she and Pink rushed in together and teamed up against her, dodging her attempts to hot them while they connected with theirs. They stood side-by-side and kicked her in the middle.

"That's our girls," Gore said approvingly.

"Well, we did warn her," Sin said.

"I always knew they had it in them," Taylor said. He was trying to keep an eye on Rena as well, who was on the other side of the battle unable to help much further. As if feeling his gaze, she turned her head. She gave him a sad smile as her deep golden gaze began to turn pale again.

Azula smirked in satisfaction. The alien skank was going down and she had plausible deniability. Her job was done. She disappeared in a crack of lightning.

Pink and Yellow stood with their six Micros floating around them. "Let's do this, Tempest," Pink said.

Yellow nodded. "I'm with you, babe," she said.

Pink grabbed the CraneZord and put it on her Blaster. Yellow grabbed the BearZord and put it on her Blaster.

Mistress B scrambled to her feet.

The Rangers took aim. "Ultimate Opposite Trick!" They fired. Beams of powerful pink and yellow energy swirled around each other and exploded into Mistress B. She sparked and smoked. They turned away from her, standing back to back as the alien fell over and exploded.

With the defeat of the alien her poison immediately wore off the men she held captive and many of them fell over as exhaustion caught up with their strained bodies. Taylor, Gore and Sin got to their feet and stretched their aches and pains. "Ram send an extraction team to help the victims," Gore ordered over his communicator.

"Those two are pretty good together," Sin said with a smile.

"Yep. But it's not over yet," Taylor said, flipping out his Morph Card. "You guys ready?"

"Yes!" they agreed and flipped out their Morph Cards.

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Devourer

Captain Drage was furious. "They defeated Mistress B! How did this happen? That woman who helped them! Who was she! Someone is going to pay for this!" he raged.

"I can't imagine what just happened, Captain," Sylon said thinly. Of course he knew exactly who the Rangers' mysterious helper was and she had a lot to answer for.

Kragar watched him suspiciously. "Doesn't her defeat bother you?" he asked.

Sylon banged a fist on the button to launch the Ooze and didn't bother to answer.

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Ooze splattered over Mistress B and revived her and she grew to giant size. "Let me show the terror that occurs when you anger a beauty!"

Rangers Red, Blue, and Black joined Pink and Yellow. "I'm pretty tired of her at this point. "Let's finish it now," Red said and flipped out his Macro DragonZord Card.

"Right!" The other flipped out their Macro DynaZord Cards as well. In unison they swiped their Cards.

"Dragon DynaZord!"

"Phoenix DynaZord!"

"Snake DynaZord!"

"Tiger DynaZord!"

"Shark DynaZord!"

The Zords appeared and teleported their pilots aboard where they each flipped out new Cards and swiped them.

"Dynamic Megazord!"

The Zords combined to form the Dynamic Megazord with wings and a dragon's tail for a sword. They appeared in the combined cockpit. The Megazord strode forward.

Mistress B's poisonous had turned into a rigid spear and she ran toward the Megazord and jabbed at it, hitting it several times. The Megazord finally knocked her weapon away and hit her with the other arm. She staggered back. "Relying on power for the win will be your undoing," she said and whipped her flog forward. The energy lashes expanded outward and wrapped around the Megazord. "Drown in my poisons and die!" She thrust out her stinger and sprayed the Megazord.

The Megazord did not react well to this. It sparked and smoked and shuddered. The cockpit sparked wildly in places. "We're not going down for you," Red declared grimly. He flipped a Card out of his belt. "Let's use another Ram miracle," he declared and swiped the cards. "Summon Sky High DynaZords!"

The three full-sized DynaZord heads appeared in the sky and zoomed around, crashing into the alien and using their beaks to break her lashes, freeing the Megazord from her grip. The HawkZord opened into three pieces and each one opened its beak and fired it at Mistress B. She sparked and stumbled back.

"All right! Let's go!" Red flipped out another Card and swiped it. The Megazord jumped into the sky and its head flipped under to be replaced by the HawkZord with its three parts fanned out. CraneZord and RavenZord settled on its shoulders. "Sky High Megazord!" It spread its wings.

Pink accelerated making everyone jerk unexpectedly. Mistress B kept trying to spray her poison at them, but quick reactions from Red and Pink kept them from getting hit.

Yellow gripped at her mouthpiece. "I still don't like flying," she said, beginning to feel a bit nauseated.

"I never used to have a problem with it," Black said, holding his middle as the Megazord banked hard again.

"Going in," Red warned them.

The Megazord zoomed into Mistress B, using the SharkZord as a fist as they settled their feet on the ground again. Then began an onslaught of blows that Mistress B had a hard time blocking. She tried to jab them with her stinger but it broke. She was knocked back.

Pink flipped a card out of her belt. "Bird Call Boom!" she swiped it and the three Sky High DynaZords blasted her with sonic energy.

"That was pretty awesome. How about we finish her now?" Blue suggested.

"Right!" The others agreed and flipped cards out of their belts. "Victory Charge!" They swiped the cards. The Megazord lifted off the ground again and did a loop-de-loop and headed toward the alien again. The three parts of the HawkZord closed up. "Sky High Crash!" The Megazord seemed to catch fire and crash through the alien. It landed and returned to normal as she sparked wildly.

"Oh, my Captain. Love no other but me!" Mistress B called out dramatically just before she exploded.

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Sylon gripped Azula by her frail human throat and lifted her off the ground. "What did you do?" he demanded.

"It wasn't me," she gasped. "It was the host. She fought to save the Red Ranger," she explained and pulled at his fingers. It wasn't that he could kill *her* but the host could die and she'd be formless and powerless again until she could find a suitable match.

Sylon growled and released her. "It was a ridiculous plan anyway," he conceded. "Drage obviously wasn't thinking with his brain to let his lover play her little games on Earth," he said. He made a face and wiped his hand on his clothes. "Disgusting," he complained.

Azula rubbed her neck. The injuries she'd sustained earlier were already beginning to heal, but now the bruises on her neck would be glaring for a while. She glared at his back and pouted. "I don't know what else I can do to maintain my control of her," she said.

"Just do your best. I have to go back before these idiotic aliens realized I'm gone. They've seen you now. You cannot come back to the Devourer. You'll be in danger," he warned her.

"I'm not afraid, but I'll keep my distance to protect you," she assured him.

He nodded and disappeared, leaving her alone. Again.

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The Rangers sat around the Lab. "So how did it feel being the damsels in distress?" Tempest asked the guys.

"It kinda sucked," Sin said.

"But we knew our princesses would rescue us. Especially with the help of their randomly talking non-human sidekick," Taylor said.

"I suppose I'm the randomly talking, non-human sidekick?" Ram asked. "I can dig that," he agreed, nodding.

Lark and Tempest laughed. "It does make one wonder, however, what we'll do once you're able to be

out in the field. No one else can get around the Caervinian systems quite like you," Lark said thoughtfully.

"Yeah, who'll save us just as the timer counts down to one?" Gore asked.

Ram tried not to grin too much. He was pleased to be able to help however he could. "May not have to worry about that if the Morpher never gets fixed," he said.

"Well, I'll just have to see what I can do about that, won't I?" a stranger had entered the Lab. A tall blond woman in a navy pantsuit and a lab coat. Her hair was pulled back into a sloppily braided bun. She carried a tablet in her lab coat pocket, held a large silver case in one hand, and a cup of coffee in the other. Blue eyes returned their flabbergasted stares through silver-rimmed glasses.

"How did you get here?" Gore asked, coming to his feet. Base security was his gig and somehow this woman slipped through.

"Was it supposed to be difficult?" she asked, genuinely unsure. "It's quite simple really. Monitoring the air traffic through the Nodroz satellites gave me the approximate location of the island. Then it was merely a matter of recording the area with the correct filters. Analyzing the heat signatures over several days told me this was the central area. Not only did it have the highest concentration of computer equipment but also the most body signatures. From there it was only a matter of calculating the exact longitudinal, latitudinal, and altitudinal minutes and imputing them into my teleport network and activating it to arrive now." she explained easily.

"But I had to do it quickly. Things have been hectic. My husband is pregnant and making sure that was going well has been taking up a considerable amount of my time lately. I did send a drone first to make sure the coordinates were correct. Nothing worse than teleported into a wall or something."

Holding back a laugh, Taylor cleared his throat. "Everyone, this is Dr. Billie," he said.

"Of course it is," Lark stated in awe. She scrambled toward the woman. "It is amazing to meet you," she said. "I'm--"

"Lark Walker. I know who you are. I know who all of you are. Don't blame Taylor. I have my own ways. Your father and I came to an agreement for my help here. From now on, Sky Base will be jointly an Astral Dynamics and Nodroz Corporation enterprise," she announced, leaving everyone surprised and unsure what that would mean for their futures.

--/-End 09-\--

10 - Fathomless Depths

Sky Base has been flipped, turned upside down by the arrival of a very special guest who announced that the project was now a joint venture between Astral Dynamics and Nodroz Corporation. At first Lark had been taken aback. Even if Dr. Wilhelmina Davis-Doyle was someone she admired, it'd didn't mean she would willing give up control of her first project. That, however, was not what she'd meant.

"Relax. No one's taking the project away from you. I don't have the time or inclination to relocate. I wouldn't trust it to anyone else. I'm just going to help spruce the place up a bit. The Caervinians were Eltar's allies. That makes this place not just a relic of a bygone alien species. I'm just going to help fill in the ranks a bit. Get a few non-essentials up and running," Dr. Billie informed her.

And that's exactly what had been happening. New personnel were coming along to study, work, and revitalize the island. Lark hadn't lost her job, it meant it was going to be busier. She felt it was a good direction. Something she'd have liked to do herself eventually, but her father's interest had only been in the technology. Not only the experimental Morph Tech but also the everyday technology the island utilized.

Dr. Billie seemed to have different ideas. Or, perhaps, Lark partially suspected, she was merely the conduit for the will of someone else. Perhaps the White Wizard. He seemed to speak for Eltar.

Meanwhile, Billie had taken over a smaller lab in the citadel to work on the broken Morpher. She didn't like being interrupted either. She scowled at Taylor through lenses that magnified her eyes to about fifty times their normal size. "I cannot science a way to unpossess Rena. I told you already, according to the experts, only *you* can do it and none of them would elaborate any further than that," she told him for the umpteenth time.

"That's not why I'm here. I swear," Taylor said, holding up his hands in surrender. "You're a computer nerd, though, right?"

"Yes, I am highly intelligent and know how to do more on my computer than stream cat videos on YouTube," she answered.

"So you know other nerds?" he asked, ignoring her corrective jibe.

"Yes, I do know other highly intelligent people," she answered. "What are you trying to ask?"

He leaned against the wall, and crossed his arms over his chest. "I'm trying to figure out the phrasing. I don't have the gift of speechifying like Tai. Man, that guy can make you want to run naked into the flames of Hell if it was the right thing to do," he said with admiration.

Billie snorted in amusement. "He is an artist," she agreed. "Take your time and don't hurt your brain," she permitted and went back to her minute work on the Morpher.

Taylor waited until she seemed to pause before he spoke again. "When you get that fixed, I'm going to need someone to replace Ram," he said.

"You needed that long to think that up?" she asked.

He shrugged. "I was trying to figure out a way to be less blunt," he answered. "Ram won't be able to do both. He can't be in the field and on the computers chasing bits of code to save our skins at the same time," he said.

"You sound as though you'd rather he be stuck in the Lab," Billie mused.

"No," he said immediately then seemed to think it over. He shook his head. "No. Ram was chosen as a potential Ranger for good reason. As good as he is in the Lab on computers, he's that good at the field stuff. He deserves his chance," he said.

Billie nodded thoughtfully. "What do the others think?" she asked.

"I haven't broached the subject with them yet. They're already about to blow fuses over the additional personnel being brought in. Talking about bringing a stranger into the Lab might, I don't know," he mimed a head exploding gesture.

Billie blinked and took off her magnifiers. She rubbed her eyes and reached for her coffee cup. She sniffed it, made a face, and drank it anyway. "Are you sure it's because you think they won't respect your thought on the subject?" she asked. "You led a large and diverse team to victory. Why the sudden attack of the insecurities?" she asked.

"It's not *all* of them," he said and propped the back of his head against the wall as he glanced up at the ceiling. The ceilings were always moderately low in functional areas like the labs. He grinned. "Tempe's pretty much solidly in my corner after the plane ride from the nightmare realm. Ram would probably agree, too. Sin's a wildcard but his loyalties are usually with Doc and Gore. They run the base. It's their show. I try to respect that," he said.

"Well, there's your problem right there," she said.

He raised a brow at her. She slipped her glasses on. "All teams have their growing pains. It's true, just because you're wearing the red suit doesn't mean you're the boss," she said and stood up with her mug. She walked over to the single-cup coffee maker she had set-up in here. "Although aside from Dr. O taking charge after Jason left the original team...or Dr. O when he was working in Reefside...okay so I can't think of any instance besides Dr. O where the Red Ranger wasn't the leader. Crumbs, what was I saying?" she made a face and scratched at her haphazard bun.

"Fudge it. You have the training, the experience, and the instincts. No matter what plans were put into place, *you* are the one who ended up as the Red Ranger here. Not Lark. Not Gore. You," she pointed at him. "If you think what this team needs to keep protecting this city and the world from these Warstar aliens is new tech support, then that's what you need," she said. "Now, leave. I need to recaffeinate and get back to work. I'll have Danny look into someone suitable to replace Ram. He has his limits. You need someone that can not only find source codes already existing in the system, but someone who can build

them from scratch depending on the situation," she said and made a shooing motion with her hand.

Taylor had remained in a state shocked muteness while she went on her tirade. "The world would have fallen apart already if you didn't exist," he declared.

"Of course it would have. Don't try to flatter me, I'm married," she said but she managed a somewhat pleased smile.

Taylor chuckled and left her to it. The door slid closed behind him. "She's right, you know," Ram said from beside the door, nearly scaring him into an early grave.

"You're taking to ninja training a little too well," he said and patted his chest to get his heart working again. "What is she right about and how much did you hear?" he asked.

"New tech support. I approve. I've been thinking about it myself. And pretty much the rest of it. She's right and I knew that from the beginning. Why do you think I made sure you got the Red Ranger Card? I didn't even know about your past experiences. I just knew you. Doc and Gore have gotten to know you, too," he pointed out. "I think you can put things out there without immediately being shot down."

"I was kind of hoping to have a suitable candidate before I broached the subject," Taylor said. They entered the Lab and were surprised to see everyone already there. "What's up?" he asked.

"That's what we were wondering. Dr. Cranky-pants said you wanted to talk to us about something," Tempe answered.

"I wouldn't recommend letting her hear you call her that. She's scarier than anything I've ever faced," Taylor said thinly. Mainly he was talking about her maneuverings to call a team meeting.

"So what is this about?" Lark asked.

"I've asked Dr. Billie to help us find someone to take over for Ram when he becomes active," he stated in a rush.

"Okay. Good plan," Gore said.

Lark nodded. "It makes practical sense, though I will have to vet any potential replacements," she warned.

Taylor blinked at them. "That's it?" he asked.

"What do you mean? Mr. Ramon can't be in two places at once. Given Dr. Billie's experience and network, she's more likely to find someone suitable than I would be able to. From amongst Astral Dynamics' best and brightest, they are here," she said and fanned her hands to encompass them and the base itself.

Sin chuckled. "I think he was expecting more resistance," he stated.

Gore rubbed his jaw and looked chagrined. "Yeah, I can see where in the past we hadn't been quite so accepting of...suggestions," he said.

"You mean in the past you and Doc balked at everything he said on principle," Tempe said. She crossed her arms over her chest and gave them a look daring them to argue with her.

"It wasn't on principle," Gore grumbled.

"It was because he was an unknown variable. We have since been proven wrong. On many occasions," Lark stated. "If that was all you needed," she glanced at her tablet, "more personnel are coming in and I need to assign them to their quadrants," she said even as she was already drifting out of the lab.

"That's Doc speak for 'sorry about being mule headed,'" Gore said and gave a brief smile. He clapped Taylor on the shoulder. "Don't be late for your shift," he said as he walked out behind Doc.

Sin gave him two thumbs up and scurried after the other two. He was actually in the middle of his shift and needed to get back to it.

Taylor sat down at a workstation and ran a hand through his hair. "The only people I never had to prove myself to were Kane and Alex," he declared drily.

"And us. Don't forget us, sweetie," Tempest said and draped her arm over Ram's shoulders. Ram nodded.

Taylor smiled and laughed. "Okay. Point made. Now I just have to figure out how I'm supposed to exorcise Rena's demon," he said, sobering again.

Tempest ruffled his hair. "You'll figure it out, hon. I got the faith," she said and left the Lab to return to the clinic.

Ram cracked his knuckles. "I think I found more snippets of code, so go away and leave me to it," he said. He put on a pair of headphones to block out the world. He didn't even know when Taylor actually left the Lab.

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"It has occurred to me that Doc needs to update her record gathering software," Sinclair remarked. He was on the beach with Nia and Ram. With swift practiced movements, he watched Ram run through what was basically a barrage of water based attacks as Nia used the sea and her training to try and put him down. It was a demonstration that she wanted the both of them to understand. But Ram was flipping, rolling and bouncing off things like he was made of springs. Sin was rather impressed. "Is that Parkour?" he asked when Ram came through the end of that only minimally moisturized.

Sin himself hadn't fared so well. Though he'd been able to either been able to block or turn back her attack, he still wasn't near her level. At all.

"Doc just needs to dig deeper. Sure all my military stuff is listed out in the open, but it's when you crack

open the sealed records that all the good stuff comes pouring out. My sister and I ran with a bad crowd when we were kids," he answered with a shrug. He never hid from his past. It was part of what made him who he was today.

Nia nodded in understanding. "I know that feeling. Luckily, my mentor had turned cop after his training and set me on the right path," she said with a small smile.

"So I'm palling around with a couple of delinquents?" Sin asked, mocking outraged shock.

"Reformed. We're the good guys now," Ram said.

"I even helped save the world," Nia said smugly. "In a small way that if someone were to write about it I'd merely be one of the many Ninja who fought against escaping Gedoushu and not even worth mentioning by name," she added.

"That doesn't diminish anything you did. Every soldier counts in a warzone," Sin assured her. From what he understood about what happened in Angel Grove, it was a warzone at the time. She gave him a small smile.

Ram nodded. He wiped his forehead with the back of his hand. "Is it hot to anyone else?" he asked and glanced up at the sky. The sun was hidden behind clouds.

"It's rather warm. Kind of strange for this time of year this far north," Sin said.

"It's not the weather!" Nia exclaimed and turned toward the ocean. It was red-hot and boiling as something moved through the water.

"You two get back," Sin ordered as the thing came up from the water. The alien was weevil-like, white, and seemingly porous. But the pores were giving off a devastating heat.

"Ah. Are you a Power Ranger? Ahaha! Away with you little man. I, Hervi the Dehydrator, have no interest in your petty squabbles. I have work to do," he said.

Sin flipped his Morph Card while Ram and Nia scurried out of the way. "No, I don't think I'll be awaying," he denied. "DynaMorpher! Blue Ranger Power!" He slid his Card and morphed. He ran toward the alien and attacked.

The two splashed around in the water, trading a series of punches and slashes, each trying to get the upper hand on the other. Hervi finally managed to knock the Ranger back. "Don't get angry, Ranger. I did warn ya," he said. His pores began glowing a fiery red. The energy concentrated and was blasted at Blue, hitting him several times in the chest and knocking him backwards into the sand.

Blue rolled to his knee as the alien continued toward him. "It's nothing personal. Just m'job," he said. "Augh!" He stumbled back as laser blasts hit him. Rangers Red, Pink, Yellow and Black had arrived. With their blasters out, they aimed at the monster and checked on Blue.

"You all right?" Red asked.

"I've been better," Blue answered, pulling a card from his belt as he came to his feet. "Sea Sniper!" he summoned his weapon and rushed forward, firing on the creature.

The alien returned fire even as Blue kept running forward. He hit the alien with the Sniper and they grappled.

The other four attempted to take care with their blasters while he distracted the alien. "He keeps getting in the way," Black said.

There wasn't much Blue could do about that as the alien wasn't letting him move aside. Finally, a devastating blow hit in the chest, shooting up sparks and sending him crashing into the others. They all collapsed into the sand, except Red who'd managed to light foot it out of the way. "You all right?" he asked Blue and tried to help him up while the other three were staggering to their feet.

"I honestly don't have time to play with you guys," Hervi sighed. He glowed again and sent a ball of superheated plasma at them. The ball crashed into the ground, sending them all flying into a heap again, even Red. "TTFN," he said and turned away from them, walking off until he disappeared.

Black had come to his feet and started after the alien, but it was too late. He kicked at the sand. "He got away," he complained. He glanced at Blue, struggling to get up while clutching his left shoulder. "You sure you're okay?" he asked.

"No sweat. Tempe will fix me up," he said and got to his feet.

"Sure will sweetie," Yellow agreed, coming up to him.

He glanced up and saw Nia waving at him from his cliff. He gave her brief wave back and the Rangers teleported away.

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Ram watched as Tempest took care of Sin's arm. "This is why I need to be able to do something besides just get out of the way. Maybe we could have got the upper hand sooner," he commented.

"It was my fault. I jumped the gun, so to speak, and he managed to use me as a human shield," Sin said.

"As long as you know," Gore said drily. Taylor nodded to agree. Sin grimaced. If they were agreeing, he'd done real bad.

"Hush. Don't rag on him too much," Tempe scolded them.

Lark rushed into the clinic. "Dr. Billie wants our Morphers," she said.

"Any particular reason why?" Taylor asked as he removed his Morpher and handed it over.

"She just said something cryptic about upgrades," Lark answered as she gathered them up. "Guess that means she's almost done with yours, Mr. Ramon," she said to Ram.

"Doc, you can just call me Ram like everyone else," he said.

Lark cleared her throat and hurried out.

Taylor snickered. "Don't take it personally. She still calls me Mr. Hicks more often than not," he assured him.

"And me Miss Strong," Tempe added. She patted Sin's arm. "Okay, sweetie. All done. Just take it easy for a while and you'll be fine," she said.

"Taylor will cover your next shift," Gore said. "Come on, let's go see if there's anything suitable for recuperation to eat in the mess," he said.

"Good luck with that," Tempe said.

"It might be okay. Nodroz Corp. sent over some people who know what salt and pepper are," Taylor remarked. He checked the time. "Guess I better start Sin's next shift," he remarked drily.

"Thanks, guy. I really appreciate it," Sin said as he and Gore left the clinic.

"It's my shift, too. We'd better go," Ram said. The two boys bid Tempe farewell as they, too, left the clinic.

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Devourer

Sylon watched warily as the porous alien explained to Captain Drage his plans to extinguish the humans. "It's simple really, boss. I superheat the oceans. First the polar ice caps melt and flood everything. Then, if there are still humans who somehow managed to survive. I keep at it 'til everything evaporates. Without water, humans are dead dum-dums," he said.

"That's an ambitious project," he said. "One of your brothers in arms thought destroying the forests was the way to go. Guess what happened to him," he said smoothly.

Kragar stepped toward him. "You sound as though you want him fail," he snarled. Sylon stared through him, unfazed.

"No, guy. It's all good. I know it all. While on recon I tussled with those Rangers. They were kind of annoying but I ain't worried 'bout it. I got this. Trust me, boss," Hervi said to Drage.

"Very well. But I am getting tired of failures," Drage said. He'd been a bad mood since Mistress B went and got herself blown up. "Do. Not. Fail," he warned menacingly.

"Better start warming up, then," Hervi said and left the bridge.

Drage clinched his fist hard enough to shake. Kragar sneered at Sylon and stalked off.

Sylon ignored them both while he wondered if he should be concerned about the boiling oceans or not. He had a lot of work he didn't want to be destroyed. There was also Azula. Perhaps he might secretly root for those infuriating Rangers this time. Only this time, however.

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Although everyone was on guard and prepared for the worst, the alien didn't reappear that day. No one let down their guards. It was perhaps a good thing that they weren't needed because Dr. Billie had their Morphers and she was ensconced in the lab she'd taken over and wasn't responding to anyone except to say, "Go away! I'll be done when I get done!" People stopped pestering her after that.

"All I wanted to know is if she heard anything from Danny yet," Taylor muttered. He'd known when she'd taken their Morphers, it was almost go time for Ram.

Ram, himself, began to suspect, even when the alien failed to trip the AAS the following days, that he was around. The temperature around the city was climbing. What was supposed to be pleasant, slightly cloudy 70-degree weather, had been rising and was now in the 90s, but still cloudy. He didn't know how the alien was cloaking himself, but he wanted to find out.

Everyone was busy, but he'd informed them of his plans. No one saw a problem with his intention to go back to the beach where the alien had first appeared. He wanted to scan the area and take water and dirt samples to see if there was something that could help him track the alien like he had managed to do with Mistress B when he detected her pheromone trail.

The aliens were either getting smarter, or the AAS was designed to detect only certain kinds of biochemical signatures. He needed to take a look at how it actually worked. When he had help in Lab, that would be one of the first things he did. Someone else could chase code.

He teleported to the beach and began taking the samples he needed with the CSI worthy field kit he'd brought along. He was sweating within minutes and had to shed the jacket of his uniform. While he was working, Nia appeared. "Where's the other one?" she asked, looking around.

"Doing his day job. Although he has the night shift sometimes," he said with a wry smile. "It's nice to know where I stand though," he joked. He chuckled when Nia colored.

She pouted and looked away. "I was just asking a question," she finally grumbled. "What are you doing?" she asked. She was dressed in the lightweight yoga wear she often wore for training, but she was already sweating.

"Trying to figure out a way to track that alien. It's obvious he's around," he said, wiping the sweat from his neck for emphasis. "It seems like it's even hotter than it was earlier," he complained.

Nia nodded. "The other Masters can feel it. Something is wrong with the oceans. The waters aren't right.

Kyousuke is, of all things, a marine biologist. He was on about the fish the other day. There are too many some kinds and not enough of others. Something is disrupting the natural flow of things," she said.

"A Water Ninja who is a marine biologist. It's mind boggling," he said as he packed up his gear. Nia scrunched up her nose and made a face at him. He grinned back in return.

"Is being sassy a requirement for wearing the shiny suit? I swear, I've never met a more sarcastic bunch of people in my life," she declared.

"It's unwritten but I think it's in the rules somewhere," he answered. He pulled his phone out. Dr. Billie had taken his wrist teleporter/communicator "for reference" so he had to make due activating the teleporter with a cell signal. If he could get one. "You should probably go back to the other Masters and stay away from the beaches. I don't think it's safe," he said and began making his way to higher ground.

"Says the man who can't even sense the water," she said and followed him. "You shouldn't be down here alone," she informed him. "Not sure how much good Parkour is out here," she said.

"I know, that's why I'm going back as soon as I get a strong enough signal," he said, holding his phone up, watching as a second bar finally appeared. "Why does service suck out here?" he complained.

"It's a game reserve. Feds aren't so big with the cell towers being put up willy-nilly," she pointed out.

"Who was just complaining about sassy people again?" he asked.

She shrugged innocently. She gasped suddenly. "Oh, hurry and get a signal. Something is really wrong," she said. She began sweating so profusely, she started to shake. Ram went to her as she went down to her knees. He helped her stand up and they hurried up to where he and Sin usually meditate.

Hervi stood on that cliff, firing a red energy blast from his body into the ocean. The water boiled. At that moment Ram didn't even think that he had no Morpher, nor did he have any cool Water Techniques. He just reacted. He threw his kit at the creature.

Ram put his phone in Nia's hands. "Press 5 three times when you get a signal," he said as the alien turned toward them.

"Dude. Rude much, yeah? I'm kind of busy here and you start throwing things?" Hervi asked, offended.

"Ram!" Nia gasped, but whatever the alien been doing to the ocean left her feeling weird and feverish. She couldn't stop him when he ran forward. He tumbled and used the momentum to bounce off the ground with his arms and hit the alien in the chest with both feet. Nia began to frantically press the 5 button on his phone.

Hervi stumbled back under the attack. "Look, little man, you asked for it. Can't say I started this, but I will finish it," he said and lashed out. Ram dodged, flipping back. Hervi began firing heat blasts at him, but like his earlier training with Nia, he pulled off some interesting moves to avoid that. "Stay still so I can blast the heck out of ya!" he said, becoming more and more irritated.

He suddenly ran forward at a speed that was unexpected. He hit Ram square in the chest, kicked his feet out of under him, but before he could go down, blasted him in the chest again. Ram went sailing off the cliff.

The other Rangers arrived just as that happened and Nia disappeared at the same instant. "Ram!" Taylor shouted as he watched his friend disappear toward the sea. He tried to run forward, but Hervi whirled around and blasted him in the chest. Taylor barely managed to put up a blade of air and knock the blast off course, but the impact sent him flying backwards. Sin and Gore caught him before he could fall.

"Oh, sweetie, you done gone and done it now," Tempest said, anger coated her words in acid. The ground beneath her feet began to shake.

"Look, people, guy came at me first. Back off or, you know, you can join him and be people soup, too," Hervi said reasonably.

Hot winds whipped around the cliff. "The only thing that's going to be soup is you," Taylor said. Bright lights glowed around their wrists as their Morphers appeared. They flipped out their Morph Cards. "DynaMorphers! Red Ranger Power!"

"Pink Ranger Power!"

"Blue Ranger Power!"

"Yellow Ranger Power!"

"Black Ranger Power!"

They swiped their Cards and morphed.

Hervi clapped his hands together. "Guess I got to do some pest control first," he complained with a disgruntled sigh.

The Rangers drew their Blasters and fired on him. He generated a shield of heat that made them ineffectual.

Pink and Yellow summoned their weapons and ran forward. They jumped and activated them. "Opposite Trick!" Crescents of pink and yellow energy shot toward the alien, but he countered with another heat shield and retaliated by shooting a beam of heat at them, knocking them off course and sending them flying in the opposite direction.

"Tempe!"

"Lark!"

Black and Red ran forward with their own weapons, but Hervi just clapped his hands together again. "Spin Crisis!" and spun around, creating a large tornado of plasma fire that caught them up in it and sent

them flying and crashing hard, even Red.

"Shark Snipe!" Blue ran forward and jumped, firing his weapon. The watery blue bolt hit the alien with a sizzle like a drop of water dancing around in a hot pan. Hervi send an energy blast that knocked him out of the air as well.

The Rangers regrouped, checking on each other. "That's it, huh? I told those guys this was no sweat," he said. "Corona Crisis!" From his pores he glowed and suddenly plasma blasts flew into the air as he seemed to explode. Like a meteor shower, the balls of plasma rained down around the Rangers. There was no escaping it. They just had to protect themselves from it as best they could.

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As Ram was plunging to his death he could have sworn he heard he heard his sister voice calling him a dunderhead. Strange that he'd never see her again. He hadn't talked to her nearly enough these past couple months. Sky Base was top secret, after all. Plus, whole fighting off an alien invasion thing kept him kind of busy.

Even as he hit the water and sake into its depths, he could still hear her talking him, but he didn't know what she was saying. The water was enveloping him. It felt nice. Comfortable even. His chest didn't even hurt anymore. Stranger and stranger. He could feel himself sinking into her warm embrace and hallucinations of his sister's voice were getting further and further away as the sea whispered its secrets to him.

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After the crazy meteor shower attack, the Rangers seemed to rally. They were weakened, but the thought of their lost friend kept them going.

Red rushed in to jab with his Sword, Black slashed with his Axe, Pink and Blue shot at him, Yellow swiped at him. He countered them all. He retaliated with a slashing of fire that had them staggering back.

"This guy is worse than a Fire Ninja on steroids," Red complained.

"I hope I never get that reference," Yellow said.

"Sounds bad," Blue said.

"I'm with Tempe on this one," Black said.

"This is no time for quips," Pink said.

"Okay, guys. I'm going to finish it now, mm'kay?" Hervi said and began to catch fire again. "Corona Crisis!" the plasma balls shot into the air.

They fizzled out as a torrent of water crashed into the monster, putting out the fire. A Ranger in a Green suit landed after the water receded. He had the water wings on his chest, a blaster at his hip, and a

crocodile motif on his helmet.

Hervi spluttered, shocked. "Wh-what?!"

The Dynamic Green Ranger stood from crouch in which he landed. "Nice seeing you again," he said.

"Ram!" the other exclaimed, coming to their feet.

"Sweetie, I'm so glad you ain't dead," Yellow said as she sagged against Black in relief.

"Well, I have something of a problem with it," Hervi said flatly. He flung a hand toward the Green Ranger and shot a blast of energy at him.

Green jumped, avoiding the blast. He punched the alien in the face with his momentum. The alien stumbled back. Green didn't stop his assault. The two sparred for a few moments. Finally, Hervi was able to knock him away. "Spin Crisis!" He heated up again started to spin.

Green was already taking countermeasures. "Sea Spin!" He began spinning, water forming a whirlpool around him. The two twisters met several times, bounced off each other and finally, Green's energy overpowered the alien and he went flying. Green stopped spinning calmly even though he swore his head kept spinning a bit.

"Sorry about the scare, you guys. You'll never believe what happened after that," Green said to the others as they ran to him.

"You'll have to fill us in later," Red said.

"You guys are really just major drags. Oozers!" Hervi summoned as he got to his feet. The green monsters seeped out the ground around him. "Go!" They rushed forward.

Green flipped a Card from his belt. "Sea Staff!" He slid the Card through a Morpher with green eyes. Magnetic bands appeared around both wrists and a short, ornate staff appeared in his hand. "You guys handle that, I got this," he said and ran, jumping over the Oozers, and using some of them as jumping off points.

"Lark, Sin, get ready to fire. Gore, Tempe, back me up," Red ordered. He ran into the Oozers, slashing and cutting with his Sword. Black and Yellow came in behind him. They cut down the numbers. Blue stood still and Pink took a knee as they aimed their weapons. When their friends made a path, they fired. Pink and blue energy tore through the Oozers, hitting them as they went.

Green landed in a grouch. He spun his Staff in one hand and flicked it forward. It extended and a green blade of energy collided with the alien. Almost immediately afterward, a blue bolt flew over Green's head and exploded into the alien, severely weakening him. Green spun his staff to his other hand, where it rested in its smaller state on his wrist. He did a one handed back flip from his crouch, and rejoined the others.

"Wow. I sometimes forget why we chose you for this," Black said appreciatively.

"Yes. I apologize for relying on you so heavily in the Lab," Pink said.

"No biggy, but this ain't over," Green said. He flipped a Card out of his belt. " Micro DinaZords! Summon Deep Sea DynaZords!" he summoned the three miniature Zords. In response to their summoning, they zoomed out and crashed into the alien and circled back to hover around Green and Blue.

"Micro DynaZords! Shark DynaZord!"

"Crocodile DynaZord!"

"Dragon DynaZord!"

These three DynaZords appeared and took their turn crashing into the alien before returning to their Rangers. The Rangers drew their Blasters as the Deep Sea DynaZords flew to Yellow, Pink and Black. Yellow attached HammerZord to her Blaster. Black attached MantaZord to his Blaster. Pink attached SawZord to her Blaster. Blue attached SharkZord to his blaster. Green attacked the crocodile headed Zord to his blaster.

Red attached DragonZord to his Blaster. Hervi had recovered enough to shoot fire at them. "Dragon Bullet!" he fired. The dragon energy spread its wings and fire met fire, exploding midair and sending them both staggering back. Red ducked and rolled out of the way.

"Fathomless Sea Bullet!" The other five Rangers fire their blasters. The energy came together to form a swirling torrent of watery teal energy that crashed into the alien and exploded him in a fiery display he would have been proud of.

Red came to his feet and stood with the others as they turned away, holstering their blasters.

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Devourer

Captain Drage was shaking in rage. Sylon thought it best not to say a word. Even that idiot Kragar seemed to grasp the situation. It was with mixed feelings that Sylon pressed the button to launch the Ooze.

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The ooze splattered over Hervi and he grew to giant size. He put his hands on his hips. "I have to say, I think that was totally uncalled for," he declared. "Well, I suppose there are some perks. Now instead of hopping around, I can just boil the ocean in one fell swoop!" he said reasonably.

"You guys got this? I haven't been able to find my Macro codes yet," Green said.

"Leave it to us," Red assured him. He flipped out a Card. "Been wanting to use this. Summon Dynamic Megazord!" he swiped the Card.

The Macro DynaZords appeared and teleported their pilots aboard. The Zords combined to form the Dynamic Megazord with wings and a dragon's tail for a sword. They appeared in the combined cockpit.

"Let's do this," Red said.

"Right!"

The Megazord stood a stance and strode forward. Hervi came out to match it. The grappled back and forth, splashing around in a large tide pool. The Megazord hit the alien and he staggered back. "There's no use for it. I'll just have to fry you guys," he said. His pores heated up and he clanged his fists together and blasted them with a steady radiant energy.

The inside of the Megazord heated up immediately. "It's too hot," Yellow moaned.

The heat was making sparks fly as circuits overheated. It was an energy sapping kind of hot. "We have to do some something," Pink said weakly.

Green appeared in the cockpit much to his own surprise. "Oh, this is bad," he said. He flipped a Card out of his belt. He reached over Red's shoulder and swiped it on his console. "Macro DynaZords. Summon Deep Sea DynaZords!" The Zords appeared in full-size and flew toward the alien, shooting him with blue energy beams, disrupting his heat beam and making him fall over.

"Good one, Ram," Black said appreciatively.

The effect was almost immediate. "Sin does not like it hot," Blue complained.

"It's a water thing. If you're stowing away, brace yourself," Red warned, flipping another Card out of his belt. "Deep Sea Megazord!" he swiped the card. The three Zords connected with the Megazord. SawZord connected to the right arm. HammerZord connected to the left arm. The Megazord's default flipped back into its chest and the MantaZord connected to the neck and formed a new head with an eye-patch and a general pirate-y flare.

Hervi got to his feet. "This ain't even right. A guy was just try'in'a do his job," he said. The Megazord came toward him.

The Rangers flipped cards from their belts. "Victory Charge!" and swiped them. The Deep Sea Zords powered up. "Deep Sea Strike!" The Megazord stepped forward. HammerZord slashed first, leaving crackling blue energy. SawZord slashed next, leaving a second slash of blue energy. The Megazord turned its back as the energies ignited and the alien exploded.

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Devourer

Sylon and Kragar wisely left the bridge of the ship as Drage flew into a rage. Sylon paused. He took pity on the alien captain and summoned a few Oozers for him to rip to shreds. Kragar snarled at him, but

didn't beleaguer the point. The split into opposite directions. After, Sylon slipped into his room, he decided to see how Azula faired through the boiling oceans.

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The Rangers appeared on the teleport platform while Ram was explaining what happened. "I don't know what it was. It was all muddled. The sea was wrapping me up in it. I could feel it all around me and for a while there I could have sworn it was talking to me in my sister's voice," he said.

"That wasn't the sea, blockhead. That was me telling you the wake the heck up and morph before you drown and I became not only an orphan, but an only child as well," said a voice that also sounded suspiciously like his sister's.

All the Rangers turned as one. In the Lab, where Ram was usually saving their skins, was a girl Ram. A shorter, curvier, and more highly feminine Ram. She wore an AD coverall that was the same base color as the usual AD uniforms, but the front had large sweeps of color. Hers was purple. Short dark hair was streaked with purple and slightly cat-like glasses covered her dark eyes. "Mars?" Ram asked, stepping off the platform.

"As fate would have it, the only person who was capable of replacing one Ramon was another Ramon. And the first person to make a clone joke will need one." Billie declared from where she stood nearby. She had her silver case in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other. "From today onward, Marisol Ramon will be in charge of the Central Codex. She's been working in Zord Bay with Holly Fairweather for almost three years now, so she's familiar with everything she needs to be familiar with. She's also as skilled a hacker as Mr. Ramon himself, so with his guidance, she should be able quickly grasp the way the Codex works and will, no doubt, be able to do it better since that is her only job and she learns quickly."

Billie took a drink of her coffee before continuing. "You're Morphers can now be used non-verbally, as demonstrated by the underwater Morph. I've also expanded your teleport network and hooked it into the Nodroz Network. You should now be able to site to site teleport. I found several moderately skilled techs to replicate the device Ram clabbered together so that everyone on base will be able to use one to communicate with the base and teleport without having to use the platforms, but the platforms are best for large groups and items.

"I will continue to keep an eye on things here and may even contribute to the cause if I can. As for now, it's time for the sonogram and I admit to being strangely excited for my first glance at my baby," she said. She twisted her wrist and a device that hadn't previously been there appeared. She tapped it and disappeared in a bright flash of light.

"I want to be her when I grow up," Lark said.

"She's only like a year older than you," Taylor said.

"Then I have a lot to do in a year," Lark said suddenly. "Miss Ramon. Welcome to Sky Base. I am Dr. Lark Walker, the Director of the project. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have work piled up to my eyeballs," she said and skirted out.

Marisol, better known as Mars, grinned. "Not the outgoing type, is she?" she commented.

"She'll grow on you. Are you really this boy's sister?" Tempest asked.

Ram finally came out of his stupor and hugged his sister, picking her feet off the ground and making her laugh. "For a minute there I thought I was never going to see you again. Thank you for being here," he said.

"Hey, no sweat, bro. I got your back, like always," she said and returned his hug.

"Uh, not to break up the reunion and the warm and fuzzies, but how do I leave?" Nia had been lurking in the room. When things had gotten hairy, Mars had teleported her to the Lab for her own safety. She was dying of curiosity, but a security officer at the door had asked her not to leave. She could have easily taken him, but she had no reason to start trouble.

"I didn't know what else to do with her," Mars said when Ram put her down.

"It's okay. I'll take her back. Nice to meet you. I'm Sin," he said politely. He held out a hand and gestured for Nia to join him. She scooted to him. They stepped onto the teleport and disappeared. Those who remained behind were introduced to Mars, the other Ramon.

--/-End 10-\--