

Power Rangers Alpha Season Beta

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When Widow and Roki return to the Moon after acquiring new powers, they are stronger than ever. The Power Rangers must band together with new allies and discover new abilities to face the new threat and more powerful enemies.

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1 - The Grid Awakens

Angel Grove, 2006

The sun sparkled brightly off the sea in Angel Grove Bay. The beach was quiet because it was a private beach belonging to a beach house that had been rented for the weekend for the exclusive use of the renter and his guests. His guests had not arrived yet, but that was okay.

Tai Stapleton had had a busy summer. Instead of waiting to start his college classes at Angel Grove University in the fall, he'd taken a few classes that summer. Eight weeks later, he had a two week break before his fall classes really started. He also had a competition coming up for a national Kendo title. It would be his first in the college-aged division.

He was also keeping on top of preparations for an impending alien invasion. Tai Stapleton wasn't just the run of the mill overachiever. He was also a Power Ranger, though at the moment not on active duty. He was the male half of the Red Tyrannosaurus-Rex Ranger team. His partner was currently playing tag with the waves splashing up on the beach and laughing.

Lokelani Lyong wore a red bikini with large white Hawaiian flower print, the bottom half covered by a semi-sheer sarong. She laughed as the water splashed her feet. Her long dark hair bounced around her shoulders. She glanced over at him with a little grin and noticed he was grinning at her. "Are you laughing at me?" she demanded playfully.

"I would never," he denied with a straight face. She put her hands on her hips and raised a brow, not believing him. Of Korean and Hawaiian descent, Lani was about average height, but lithe and graceful. A consummate martial artist thanks to her father, and a fondness for yoga tempered her with steel. With three overbearing older brothers, she was also tough as nails and spunky with patience enough to handle whatever was thrown at her. She was also the most beautiful girl he'd ever seen in his life.

"I don't believe you," she said. She dashed toward him, tackling him and tackling him against the sand he'd been sitting on, watching her frolic. She pinned his shoulders and grinned down at him. "I'm going to make you confess," she declared.

"How do you plan to do that?" he asked her.

Her dark eyes danced and leaned down and whispered her strategy in his ear.

Tai cleared his throat. "If I keep denying, will you keep doing that?" he asked.

Lani laughed and pinched his side, making him grunt in pain. She kissed him. He reluctantly turned his head away and sat up with her pouting at him when he realized that the first of his guess were arriving. He kissed her temple and stood up. He was a good deal taller than she was, and long. Full of lean, wiry muscle with a chest and arms that had seen many years inside a forge making blades with his grandfather. His hair was dark and spikey, his face a pleasing mix of his Irish and Japanese ancestry. If

she were the type to swoon over a boy, he'd be the one. He helped her to her feet. "What's up?" she asked.

He jutted his chin toward the beach house. A small group of people were heading toward them. A cute bi-racial girl was leading the charge. Warm skin, small and compact, with light aquamarine eyes, Victoria Williams had medium length dark hair that shimmered with red and gold highlights when the sun hit it. She wore a large brimmed summer hat and white rimmed movie-star shades. She had been the female half of the Pink Pterodactyl Ranger team.

Accompanying her, also looking like she just walked out of a teen magazine beach-edition, was her best friend, Chloe Kennedy. Chloe was lightly tanned with brown-gold hair pulled into cute short pigtails. Her black beach wear was chic and her brown eyes were also covered by shades. She was the tiny but mighty female half of the Black Mastodon Ranger team.

Escorting the two lovelies were two young black guys. Wood Johnson was slighter, with freckles, an easy smile, and an afro ruthlessly pulled into a stubby ponytail. He'd recently had a growth spurt and wasn't quite used to himself yet. Not only was he Tori's boyfriend, but also the male half of the Yellow Smilodon Ranger team.

Nyo Kotze was a couple of years older, darker than Wood. His hair was cut close to his head and he sported a short neat goatee. He was never a Power Ranger. He'd come to Angel Grove from Africa to visit his Johnson cousins. He'd ended up arriving in the middle of a battle with alien monsters. Since he was a practitioner of Pai Zhua, a Chameleon Master at that, he'd decided to help out. He'd been in Angel Grove since, lending whichever of his skills was needed at the time.

Nyo and Wood were toting coolers and beach bags. "My, what obedient pets you guys have," Lani said to the two younger girls.

"We're still trying to teach them not to piddle on the floor," Chloe remarked. She was a small spitfire that just oozed attitude and sarcasm. She and her brother were technically still visiting their father in New York, but she'd been allowed to teleport back to Angel Grove for a few hours. She and her brother Danny were champion martial artists, and their father was a professional fighter. Their parents were divorced, and they had a few weekends a year and most of the summer to spend with him.

"I should have stayed in the Lab with Danny," Nyo said in a clipped accent as he put his bundles down. "Now I see why he sent me ahead," he grumbled.

Tori giggled. She was cute and bubbly. Deceptively so. Tori had a lot going on. Not only was she a competitive cheerleader, but she'd started out as a competitive gymnast. Aside from that, she had a varied martial arts training regimen. Before becoming a Pink Ranger, she'd been on a team of space heroes who worked for the avatar of the Sun; the White Reaver. She'd practically been raised on the spaceship that orbited the sun. She'd lived in Angel Grove most of her life, however, when not on the ship. First with her parents then with her guardian, Dawn Feather, a former Reaver. "That's exactly why he sent you ahead," she told Nyo.

Wood gave a grin. "It's not so bad," he said. He didn't mind doing for Tori at all. Of course he got special rewards for good behavior. "I kind of missed being a lackey," he said. He and his friend Nathan had

been gone for several weeks, attending a workshop at the California Performing Arts College. They'd been home only a little over a week. Wood had something of a pedigree when it came to Power Rangers. He was the younger brother of TJ Johnson, former Red Turbo and Blue Astro Ranger. Wood had been over the moon to become a Power Ranger himself.

The other teens began setting up beach towels and getting ready to enjoy the beach. Tai saw more activity near the house. A tall man with brown hair wearing green and his redheaded sister were setting up a barbeque pit. Winter Baker waved at them. He was the oldest of the Power Rangers at twenty-two. He and his grandmother owned the Youth Center. His sister Autumn helped him run. The two of them were the Green Stygimoloch Ranger team.

Coming down from the house carrying what looked like meat was a somewhat statuesque blond woman who in actuality was an alien, dimension-hopping bounty hunter. Or she had been before she became the Electrum Velociraptor Ranger. She and Winter were an item and she went by Lammy Goldsmith.

Trudging down to the beach carrying loads of what looked like firewood were two more friends. With gleaming blond hair, Taran Goldsmith was the oldest of the children of Goldarr and Scorpina. Lammy was his younger sister. As a child, while training, he'd been caught in the Z-wave. His parents had sent him to Earth to live as a normal human. Instead, he'd eventually become the Red Reaver thanks to Tori, and later on, the Gold Stegosaurus Ranger. He was also a powerful sorcerer.

The other was Sora O'Keefe, a half Triforian man whose mother had been a human woman of Japanese ancestry. He had dark hair and eyes. He'd only recently learned that his father had been Triforian. His stepfather was a white Irishman. His family had gone on the first Terra Venture, later he found himself on KO-35 with his cousin Cassie Chan and learned the Kovarian style martial arts from Zhane Rahl. He'd returned to Earth to attend college, but he'd been put under a curse by Zita Repulsa. As the Skeleton Ranger, he'd faced his friends. Once he'd been freed of the curse by Rei Repulsa, he joined them as the Silver Ceratosaurus Ranger.

They found a good spot to put down the firewood. "What are you guys doing?" Tai asked.

"Can't have a birthday beach party without a bonfire. Even I know that," Taran answered with a farm boy drawl that spoke his early years living on a farm in Kansas.

"This isn't a birthday party," Tai said flatly.

"So, let me get this straight. You invited all your mates to a beach rental on the weekend of your birthday, but it's not a birthday party?" Sora asked, his voice tinged with his step-father's lilt.

Tai nodded. "Yes," he said.

Taran and Sora shared a look but decided not to argue. "Well, Rei asked Moriko and Griff t'come. That all right?" Sora asked.

"The more the merrier," Lani answered before Tai could. Not that Tai would have disagreed. Moriko and Griff weren't their enemies. At least he didn't think they were. Not really.

"Well, we need more firewood for the un-birthday bonfire," Taran said and Sora agreed and they hurried off.

Lani grabbed Tai's hand and linked their fingers. "Birthday or not, this was a good idea. Even if some of us are missing, the ones who can make it needed it. We've all been so busy not trying to worry, that it will be good to actually not worry for a change," she said.

Tai nodded. "Manny couldn't swing it?" he asked.

Emmanuelle Diaz was one of Lani's two best friends. She'd been the female Yellow Smilodon Ranger and Wood's partner. She'd moved to Paris to live with her mother. Lani shook her head. "The time difference was too much to be able to swing it," she said with a sigh. "What about Fox?" she asked.

Fox Oliver was the younger cousin of Winter and Autumn. He'd been Chloe's second partner, the male Black Ranger. "Autumn said he was unreachable. He and his parents are somewhere in the Congo and that's all anyone knows," he answered.

"And what about your boyfriend?" she asked teasingly.

Tai's best friend Xavier Hart had been the first male Black Ranger. He'd been in space for several months with Zhane Rahl looking for some lost Power Coins. He was supposed to be home before the semester started. Rex had managed to graduate early before the trip, but he had to show up to start attending Angel Grove University.

"He and Zhane are on the way," he said with a smile. Lani wrapped her arms around his waist. "Don't worry, I like you way more than I like Rex," he assured her.

Lani snorted. "I'm not sure I believe that, but thank you for saying it," she said, grinning up at him. He smiled back, layered his head and kissed her to prove his point.

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The Command Center

Within the Command Center, there was the Power Chamber, which was the central hub of activity. There were other rooms as well, such as the Blue Lab, the Medi-Lab, the Zord Lab, and other such rooms that were needed by the Power Rangers. The Command Center was overseen by an android called Beta Z. She was a supercomputer capable of artificial intelligence and multitasking. Aside from her physical body, she could interface through computer monitors and tactile holographic imagery. She had been built by Danny Kennedy, his partner Billie Davis and Billy Cranston.

She was overseeing the Power Chamber when Holly Fairweather came out of the Zord Lab, practically dragging a blond youth behind her. Holly was a spacey sort of girl with deep red hair straight from a bottle and light colored eyes. She hadn't been a Power Ranger, technically. Instead she worked on Zords. Despite her pretty appearance and often vapid expression, she was actually a mechanical engineer.

The young man was Danny Kennedy, Chloe's brother and male Blue Triceratops Ranger. He was also a mechanical mad genius, often designing useful weaponry for the Rangers. He was in the middle of a project when Holly had wrangled him. "We're going to be late. I'm sure everyone's already there," she told him.

"Billie ain't," Danny said immediately.

Holly pursed her lips together and sighed through her nose. "Nathan is handling Billie," she said.

"I just had a few more tweaks," he defended.

So did I, but I also really want to go hang out with our friends," she said.

Danny scraped a hand through his short blond hair. He was tall and blue eyed and wore glasses. Few people would even know that he and Chloe were siblings at first blush. Unless started talking and if the New York in their voices didn't give it away, the sarcasm gene did. "You're right," he agreed. Holly nodded firmly.

"Have fun," Beta Z told them.

"Why don't you come, Beez? You haven't been out of the Center for a while," Holly suggested.

Beez gave a serene smile. "Thank you, but no. I have a few of my own projects. I also do not require the same mental break that the rest of you do," she assured them.

Danny stuffed his hands in the pockets of his shorts. "You know you're always welcome," he told her. She merely nodded at his words. They gave her brief waves as they teleported.

In the Blue Lab that Danny usually shared with his partner, she was busily soldering something together. Wilhelmina Davis, better known as Billie, and Glitch to some, was a socially dysfunctional caffeine-addicted computer nerd. She was on the tall side, with blue eyes, long honey blond pigtails and slim glasses. She was on the tall side and slightly klutzy. Her clumsiness was getting better. She'd been the female Blue Ranger. She wore a tee-shirt, shorts and flip-flops and goggles over her eyes.

Leaning against the counter she was working at was Nathan Doyle. Nathan was a gymnast with a sweet tooth and a love of music. He was male half of the Pink Pterodactyl Ranger team. He was fit and had black hair and blue eyes. Along with his friend Wood, he'd been away from Angel Grove attending a workshop at CPAC. "I'm not leaving, so you might as well stop sending me those grumpy glances, stop doing what you're doing and come with me," he said. He was dressed for the beach.

"I'm not going. There's no way I'm wearing this thing front of other people," she said. Billie had gone into space for a few weeks with the Phantom Ranger. She'd gone to the planet Eltar to learn more about Morphing Technology. Ever since she got back, she'd been putting what she learned to practical use but she always felt like time was running out. However, that wasn't exactly what her hang-up was at the moment.

Nathan chuckled. "It's okay. You can just wear your tee shirt and shorts," he said.

She blew out a breath and looked up at him. The goggles she wore distorted her eyes and made them look huge. She blinked and took them off. "Then why did you force me to buy a new swim suit?" she demanded.

He gave her a mischievous grin. "Well, the last time you bought one, you were twelve. I also just wanted to watch you try on swim suits," he told her.

Unable to respond to that, she just gave him a disgruntled look. She picked up what she was working one and put it with the others that were completed. Unfortunately, there were still too many that weren't ready yet.

Nathan sighed and went to her. "C'mon. I know you think you need to work yourself to death so you can finish, but you aren't going to do it today, so take a break. Come to Tai's not-birthday party," he said.

Billie nodded. "Why does Tai hate his birthday so much?" she asked.

Although Nathan had gone to school with Tai and Rex from kindergarten to the fourth grade, he'd been held back a year and ended up in the same grade as Billie, Wood, and Danny who became his friends. "He never did. Not even when we were kids," he said with a shrug.

Billie shrugged, too. "Okay. let's go to the beach but I am absolutely not swimming," she warned him.

"That's okay. I don't think I want anyone else seeing you in the swim suit I picked out anyway," he said and gave her another mischievous grin. While she was floundering around wondering what had gotten into him lately, he grabbed her around the waist and teleported with her.

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Perhaps the worst thing they could done was try and relax and forget about their worries for a time. Not only the Power Rangers had arrived at the beach rental, but so had a few of their other friends and allies. Randi and AJ Scott, who were the younger siblings of Jason Scott, worked at his Dojo and had been helpful during their hardest battle yet. Damien Henderson was a good friend of AJ's and was working with him. The Scott siblings were good friends of the Baker siblings.

Melody Robinson was a girl who'd lived on Terra Venture until recently when she was sent back to earth to live with her batty cat-lady grandmother. Zara Rahl was a Kovarian girl, the younger sister of Zhane. She'd come to Earth while Zhane was space adventuring with Rex and because of civil unrest in the Kovarian community. The two younger girls had been instrumental in helping solve the crisis the Rangers had been facing.

Rei Repulsa and her sister Moriko were two of a set of three triplets. They had long ago been cursed to exist within the body of their sister Zita until the curse was somehow broken. While Zita and their brother Roki had been trying to conquer Earth, Rei had been working with the Rangers, Moriko had been trying to convince Zita that their greater destiny existed only if they came together. Eventually Zita had joined forces with them to defeat a greater power. Then she disappeared. Neither of her sisters knew what became of her.

Grifforzer, better known as Griff, was Lammy's twin brother. He was a stocky warrior of great skill. His tracking abilities combined with Lammy's abilities had made them a formidable team while they dimension hopped, trying to find home. When they finally did, Griff stayed somewhat neutral at first between the struggles of siblings, but when he met Moriko after she freed herself from the curse that combined her with Zita, his loyalty had been given to her over everyone else, except perhaps Lammy.

Though he didn't do it for any altruistic desire to help the Power Rangers, he lent a hand when it was needed and helped them win the day. He was only at this gathering at Moriko's behest and to antagonize Winter a little bit. Not because he disliked his sister's lover, but because it was fun.

He was one of the first to realize something was wrong. He was eating a rather large portion of cooked meat and drinking something pink and fizzy when he felt a prickle of unease. Goosebumps raised on his skin. He automatically sought out Lammy with his eyes. She was rubbing her arms and looked at him. They both turned to look at Taran.

Taran had, and Griff and Lammy to a lesser extent, had what the others termed "spidey senses" that usually alerted him to personal danger in time to take evasive action. Right now, he had a feeling like that, but more so. In order to repair the bridges between the physical universe and the Morphing Grid, he'd recently connected with Zordon's Staff and unlocked all sorts of mystical-magical things within himself. He was trying to get used to his new reality.

He'd stopped abruptly his conversation with Autumn and looked toward the sky. All he could see was blue sky, puffy white clouds and sunshine. "Taran?" Autumn asked. He was walking away from her now. Frowning, she watched him. She blinked and activated her genetic ability to read auras and energy. He was emitting a shiny white energy but that wasn't unusual.

Darkness was creeping through the edges of her vision. She gasped. Just a few moments behind her vision, the actual sky itself began to darken. The others were beginning to become alert now.

"Take cover!" Taran shouted. The sky lit up with what could almost be described as lightning. Arcs of power that only attacked their little beach, exploding sand and surf around them. Doing what they could, Taran, Lammy, Rei, and Moriko tried to protect those could by throwing up magical shields.

Danny had the genetic ability to generate force-fields from his hands. He threw up what he could to protect himself and those nearest to him, but he couldn't keep it up for long.

Just as suddenly as it started, the energy storm stopped. Two people were now standing on the beach facing them calmly. A man who was tall and dark eyed, his facial features resembles the somewhat Asian features that were also shared by Moriko and Rei. Dressed in red, silver and black silks that combined the aesthetics of several Asian cultures, his dark hair was pulled into a top-knot decorated in gold as if he were an ancient king. He held a staff topped in a crescent. A pulsing ball of darkness floated in the crescent.

Beside him was a woman. She had pale skin tinged with gold. Her eyes were black, and her inky black hair was elaborately wrapped around her head in swirls and braids. She wore black silks with lush slightly metallic patterns. The style was more ancient Korean rather than a mix. She had the same sort

of features as Lammy, Griff, and Taran. She held a slightly shorter but nearly identical staff as the man.

She smirked at them. "Thank you Rangers, for throwing this lovely welcome home party. You made us feel special," Widow said.

The man smirked as well. "It was rather nice of you to gather all in one spot for us," Roki Repulsa added.

Tai and Lani stepped forward. "You weren't on the guest list. You should leave," Tai said in a strangely polite tone.

Lani scowled at Widow. "Are you making fun of me?"

"Yes," Widow answered. Her gaze landed on her older brother. She ignored Lani and walked toward him. He tensed up. "I warned you about staying on your farm, Tarantules. Now I hear you fancy yourself the next Zordon?" she scoffed. "Over my dead body," she snarled.

"Only if you make it come to that," he said.

She growled and lifted a hand where a dark swirl of energy began to appear. It was Roki who grabbed her arm and pulled her away. "Not now, my dear," he said. "There will be time to deal with traitors," he said and directed his gaze his sisters.

"Technically I was never on your side," Rei pointed out rationally.

Moriko held her hands up helplessly. "There's nothing to be done. We have our destiny and you have yours," she said.

Roki acknowledged this statement with a small nod. "Let's go home, my love," he told Widow.

"Watch out for Rio," Moriko said.

Roki scowled at the mention of their cousin. "She will be dealt with," he said.

Widow was still glaring death daggers at Taran. "We'll leave you with our welcome home gift. I sincerely hope you like it," she said pleasantly. With cracks of dark lightning, Widow and Roki disappeared. At the same a mass of strange creatures appeared on the beach.

They were Putty Patrollers, but not any that they had ever seen before. They were used to dealing with Z-Putties. These new Putties were black and rather than Zs on their chests, they had silver crescents on their foreheads.

"Nega-Moon Putties?" Nathan wondered out loud. Before they could voice any further speculations about the creatures, they attacked. He barely dodged and jumped into the sky. He hovered for a moment and dropped, falling on top of two of them. They threw him off.

Two of the Putties came toward Tori. She opened her mouth and shrieked at them. They were knocked off their feet and went tumbling. They got up, disoriented and knocked into each other. Unfortunately,

more were coming toward her.

Wood sprang up high and flipped backward, kicking one Puttie in the chest and bouncing back, hissing with pain. "Tough. Tough," he complained. He sprang up, landing several yards away when the Puttie came after him with a few friends.

Autumn's aura reading power wasn't handy in a battle, but she was pretty good at karate and she made a great team with her brother. Win had the ability to become intangible. By doing so when a Puttie attacked, confusing it, it gave Autumn the opportunity to knock it back.

Sora was able to split himself into three beings for a time. That with his inhuman strength was the only thing that kept him on his feet as he duked it out with the Putties.

Lammy and Taran use using everything they had against them. They were tough, even against their magic attacks.

Chloe had the genetic ability to make herself dense, like rock or steel and still be able to move around. She struck out with her fists and feet, but it seems no matter how much damage they sustained, they kept coming for her.

Melody didn't have powers. She was just fast and agile and skilled. Her skill set was making it easy for her to get away, because she wasn't having any luck against the Putties otherwise. Zara on the other hand, was telekinetic. Aside from throwing things at them with her mind, she could also throw them against themselves, but that was taxing after a while.

Danny's force-fields and his martial arts skills were the only way he was staying a step ahead of these new and improved Putties.

Billie's strong suit wasn't martial arts. She was getting better with training. But she could turn herself invisible and if they couldn't see her, they couldn't pummel her. But invisibility only lasted a few minutes at a time.

AJ, Damien, and Nyo were Pai Zhua masters. Aside from being a skillful martial artist, they could unleash their animal spirits. A lion belonging to Damien, a tiger belonging to Damien and chameleon belonging to Nyo were as large as SUVs and were doing what they could to keep the Putties under control.

Randi went in a different direction. She was a master Thunder Ninja. Aside from martial skills, being able to control and direct electric flashes was actually quite useful for a while, until the clay the Putties were made of kept regenerating to heal the creatures.

Lani had the ability to bend, twist, and stretch herself beyond what should be humanly possible. When an attack proved to not be effective, then simply getting out of the way drew on all of her abilities. "Is it my imagination or are these guys extra tough?" she asked no one in particular.

Tai was going toe to toe with the Putties. He had genetically enhanced strength. He could only use it in short bursts. Aside from that, he was high trained in martial arts; karate, kendo, and even his own

fusions incorporating other styles as he learned them. He was able to hold his own, but they kept coming after him. "It's not your imagination. Billie!" he shouted. "Go to the Command Center. Analyze and take some of the excess with you. If you aren't a Power Ranger, leave," he ordered.

A bit reluctantly Billie, Holly, Melody, Zara, AJ, Randi, Damien and Nyo retreated from the scene by teleport.

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Palace on the Moon

Widow and Roki appeared in the throne room of the palace. It was their home. Usually, Putty Patrollers roamed the hallways. However, there were none to be found. Instead there were Bone Drones. "Who let these vermin in?" Widow asked.

"Go for a little trip and all sorts of things happen," Roki muttered. He held out a hand and all the Drones disintegrated with a flash of black light. Furious footsteps approached.

"How dare you!" demanded the woman stomping toward them. She was tall and strong looking. Curly purple hair fell around her shoulders and she wore a semblance of a black leather police-like uniform with tall boots. Yellow-lenses glasses framed her eyes. She held up a wicked looking laser pistol.

Roki's response was swift. Holding out a hand again, the laser blaster exploded in her hands, and she was suddenly jerked into the air. She hung there, struggling against an invisible force. "How dare I? This is my home!" Roki snarled. "You and your mother invaded and dared to violate the blood rites!" he reminded her. He began to close his fist.

Rio Revile wheezed. "And your sisters killed her," she snarled back as best she could.

Widow shook her head. "That's not how I heard it," she said. "You didn't harm Finster while you hiding out here did you?" she asked. "No, even you wouldn't have been that stupid to cross Moriko on that issue," she said. She leaned up and kissed Roki's cheek. "I'll leave her fate up to you. I'll start Finster on a new monster," she said.

"Have fun, love. Make it something interesting," he said. He and Rio were glaring daggers at each other.

Widow left them to it. She went to Finster's lab where the Monster-Matic was. The door was bolted from the inside with everything he could think of to keep Rio out. Widow waved a hand and all of it became undone. The door swung open and she found the ratty little alien man cowering in fright. "Mistress Widow!" he almost sobbed in relief.

Widow smiled and patted him on the head. "It's all right now. Roki and I are home. We brought you a present," she said.

"A present for me, Mistress?" he asked.

Widow waved her staff. A beam of black energy suffused his pile of clay and it turned black. "We already

experimented with making new Putties out of it, but I'm sure you'll do a much better job," she said.

Finster approached the clay and put his hands on it. "Oh, yes Mistress. It's delightful. May make a monster?" he asked.

Widow smiled. "Yes, you may. We're welcoming ourselves home," she said and left the lab, where Finster was already working on his newest masterpiece. He'd been making molds in anticipation of their return.

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"Why did he send us away? Those things were tough. Will they really be okay?" A.J. demanded of Billie as soon as they arrived in the Command Center.

"You'll have to take that up with him. Nyo, help Beez analyze the Putties for a weakness we can exploit," Billie instructed. She dashed off to the Blue Lab. She slid to a stop at her terminal. She opened up a command and typed something in, finishing a code she'd been working on when she could.

She gave a quick glance over at her work station and shook her head. "Almost half are still incomplete," she said. "What about your end, Beez?" she asked.

The visage of Beta Z appeared on one of the monitors in the Lab. "The process is delicate. It is almost complete but not before the inevitable escalation sure to follow this attack," she answered. "My analysis of the Dark Putties are nearly complete," she announced.

Billie nodded. She imputed the code and her communicator beeped. One of the first things she had done when she returned from Eltar was redesign them for the Rangers. They still looked like the ones other's used but there were a few extra bells and whistles now. Aside from communicating and teleporting and the panic button, they would now summon weapons without being Morphed. They will also summon the new Morphers she'd been building.

When Taran and the Repulsas had fixed the access to the Morphing Grid, the old ones had over powered and shorted out. Billie was building new ones that could handle the power of the Power Coins with unhindered access to the Morphing Grid. What Widow and Roki didn't realize is that while they might be stronger than ever before, so to would the Power Rangers.

Billie opened a communications channel. "We're still analyzing the Putties, but I have good news. You should now be able to access your weapons," she announced.

"Analysis complete! Go for the foreheads!" Nyo's voice said over the line.

Billie let out a slow breath. She closed the wide channel and connected with Tai privately. "Aside from you, Taran, Lammy, and Sora, half the teams won't Morphers yet," she said.

"We'll cross that bridge when we come to it," Tai answered. He cut communication. Billie rubbed her eyes under her glasses.

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"Weapons and forehead. Check!" Nathan jumped into the air. "Power Bow!" he summoned. Appearing in a pink digital matrix, the classic weapon of the Pink Ranger appeared. He began firing, aiming for the foreheads of the nearest Putties.

"Power Fans!" Tori summoned two large white and pink bladed fans.

"Power Staff!"

"Stygian Blade!"

Autumn summoned a spear-like staff, and Winter summoned a dark triple-bladed sword.

"Power Daggers!"

"Power Lance!"

"Power Axe!"

Wood summoned a set of small silver daggers. Danny summoned a lance with three spikes on each end. Chloe summoned a large double-bladed axe.

"VelociRapier!"

"CeratoSword!"

"StegoMace!"

Lammy's rapier was a long flexible blade. Sora's sword was almost as tall and wide as he was. Taran's mace was a large spoked ball on the end of a club.

"Power Sword!"

"Tyranno Sword!"

Lani's Power Sword was a slightly smaller version used by the original Red Tyrannosaurus-Rex Ranger. It was more suited to her smaller stature. Tai's Tyranno Sword was a sleek katana with a slightly curved blade.

Finally, able to make headway with the Putties, they were getting close to a victory. That was until the monster showed up. Reminiscent of a googly eyed grasshopper in a top hat, tail-coat and spats, he cut a dashing figure as he hopped around slamming into the Rangers almost faster than they could see. "Here's Johnny!" he announced with a mouth full of razor sharp teeth. "Actually my name is Hophazard, but I know how much you Rangers like old movie quotes," he said conversationally, bouncing on his powerful legs.

He clapped his hands together. "C'mon now, dazzle me!" he entreated.

The Rangers got to their feet. This may not work for everyone. If It doesn't retreat to the Command Center," Tai told them. "It's Morphin' Time!" he passed his hand over his communicator. A device digitized on his upper left arm. Inside a slot sat his Tyrannosaurus-Rex Power Coin. In a single motion of passing over the communicator and the appearance of the Power Morpher, he spun the slot the coin sat in. "Tyrannosaurus-Rex!"

A ghost image of the Power Coin appeared and wrapped around, a digital matrix making a red power suit appear with white stripes and diamond shapes. White boots and gloves were both crowned by red diamonds. A side arm blaster appeared along with a gold belt. The last thing to appear was a T-Rex themed helmet.

Lani made her Power Morpher appear and spun her Power Coin. Her power suit was nearly identical to her partner's, but the color skewed slightly lighter.

Danny spun his Power Coin. "Triceratops!" A blue power suit appeared with a blue triceratops themed helmet.

Chloe spun her Power Coin. "Mastodon!" A black power suit appeared with a black mastodon themed helmet.

Nathan spun his Power Coin. "Pterodactyl!" A deep pink power suit appeared with a pink and white pterodactyl themed helmet. Tori's morpher didn't appear and she teleported instead.

Wood spun his Power Coin. "Smilodon!" A yellow power suit appeared with a yellow saber-toothed tiger themed helmet.

Winter spun his Power Coin but Autumn's Power Morpher didn't appear. "Stygimoloch!" A green power suit appeared with a toothy dinosaur theme.

Taran spun his Power Coin. "Stegosaurus!" A shiny gold power suit formed with a gleaming stegosaurus themed helmet.

Lammy Spun her Power Coin. "Velociraptor!" A shiny pale-pinkish gold power suit formed with a gleaming raptor themed helmet.

Sora spun his Power Coin. "Ceratosaurus!" A shiny silver power suit formed with a gleaming buck toothed and horned dino themed helmet appeared.

"Oooh-hoo. I'll admit it. I am dazzled!" Hophazard declared. He bounced on his powerful legs and sprung through them again, knocking them down. "But it's all showmanship, no substance," he said with a disappointed air.

"This guy is tough," Blue complained, rubbing his side where he was evidently kicked by such powerful legs.

"Taran, Lammy, Sora, Win, with me, the rest of you ready the Power Cannon," male Red said.

"Right!" They agreed.

The foursome ran at the monster and he began to hop away, but Gold and Electrum put on bursts of speed that outpaced him and got ahead of him. He tried to change directions, but his hop was abbreviated as Red and Green grabbed hold of his legs and pulled back. Silver gave him a resounding smack with his Sword.

Hophazard stumbled around dizzily. "That's not playing fair," he slurred.

"Power Cannon!" female Red, and the others combined the Power Sword, Power Lance, Power Axe, Power Daggers and Power Bow into one weapon and fired.

A powerful blast hit the monster. He sparked and smoked and stumbled even more, dramatically moaning and groaning and complaining about his fate until he realized he was still alive. "I'll give it an A for effort!" he said, giving them two thumbs up.

"Don't worry. I got this," male Blue said. "Brontosaurus!" he summoned, holding out his hand. Digitizing before them was a small Zord-like machine about the size of a large dog. It had a long neck and tail. It was a rusty sort of red and brown. "BrontoCannon Mode!" The dinosaur began to shift into a cannon with two barrels. It hovered on its own power so there wasn't a need to hold it up.

"Ohoh. What's that now?" Hophazard wandered.

Female Red stood behind the cannon and put her hands on it to aim. The others stood behind her. "Bronto Blast!" She fired and hit the monster once again, this time with a greater amount of energy than ever before. The monster exploded.

While Roki was dealing with Rio, Widow was keeping an eye on the monster. She threw her staff to the earth where it stuck in the ground. "Make my monster grow!" A ball of black energy was emitted from it and the monster grew to enormous proportions. "Haha! I'm the hoppin' hostest with the mostest. Angel Grove here I come," he declared and began to hop away.

"Oh, no you don't!" male Red said.

"TyrannoZord!" female Pink summoned.

"TriceraZord!" male Blue summoned.

"MastoZord!" female Black summoned.

"PteroZord!" male pink summoned.

"SmiloZord!" male Yellow summoned.

"StygiZord!" male Green summoned.

The large mechas began appearing from digital matrixes. Each of the Zords was a dinosaur in a corresponding color as its pilots. The pilots teleported into the cockpit of each Zord.

"Let's do this! Alpha Megazord!" The six Zord came together to form a humanoid robot.

"StegoZord!" Gold summoned.

"VelociZord!" Electrum summoned.

"CeratoZord!" Silver summoned.

These large mechs began appearing as well. The pilots teleported to their cockpits. "Legend Megazord!" They combined another humanoid robot.

The Megazords began to chase after the robot. Being smaller, lighter, and made from the Velociraptor Zord, the Legend Megazord was faster. They put on a burst of speed, jumped and grabbed the monster by his jutting thorax.

"Any bright ideas now, Danny? Didn't you blow up the Alphamax Cannon?" Pink asked.

"I always got bright ideas. Sharp-tooth Bazooka," he told female Red.

"Sharp-tooth Bazooka!" she immediately summoned it. Digitizing propped on their shoulders was indeed what seemed to be a bazooka/or a grenade launcher. Its face was that of a tyrannosaurus-rex. "Aim!" She carefully aimed at the monster attempting to get away from the Legend Megazord. The T-Rex's mouth opened up. "Fire!" She fired. Six-multicolored projectiles hit the monster in a circular pattern, exploding through him.

"Hophazard, out!" The monster cried as he exploded into nothing but hunks of dark colored clay that vaporized itself.

The two Megazords face away from the explosion.

-x-

The beach had been ruined. "I have no idea how to explain this to the rental agent guy," Tai said, surveying the damage. "I am not getting my security deposit back," he lamented quietly.

"Don't worry. We've got this," Rei said. Moriko nodded. The two women joined hands, and used a bit of magic to repair the beach.

"Thank you," he said.

"No sweat," Moriko said. Rei beamed at him.

He nodded and turned to face his team. Billie was trying to hide behind Nathan, who was puffing his chest out to appear bigger. Tai snorted. "No one's mad at you," he said.

Billie made a face. "Yeah, but if it weren't for Danny, we'd have been toast," she said.

"Ey, if it weren't for you, we wouldn't have been able to Morph at all," Danny said. "I certainly don't got no clue how to make a Morpher," he said. "Plus my stuff wouldn't have worked without your stuff," he added, tapping his communicator.

"That's right," Lani said. "Don't beat yourself up for not being a miracle worker," she added.

Tai nodded. "Get back to work first thing in the morning. Today, we aren't going to let Widow ruin my un-birthday party," he said. "Sora, Taran, how about that bonfire?" he asked.

The Rangers and their friends cheered at those sentiments. Sure Widow and Roki had returned to the Moon and were tougher than ever, but they'd do what they always did. They'd face this new threat as team. Together there was nothing they couldn't face and eventually win over.

They were Power Rangers.

-x-The End-x-

2 - Black and Yellow

Command Center

Tai Stapleton nearly tripped over several small, mechanical dinosaurs that decided to run around his feet in a cat-like manner. "What the--?" he yelped. He looked around and realized there were several more mechanical creatures. A long-necked mechanical dinosaur about the size of a dog was wiping the floor with a rag in its mouth. Another one with a duck-bill was running through with a toolbox in its tiny arms and disappeared into the Zord lab where Holly was no doubt working on something.

"Sorry about that," Danny said. He held something that was like a notebook computer but actually opened like a book. "I was trying to test the recon R.A.D.s," he said.

"The what now?" Tai asked. What had his other geniuses been up to while he was in school?

Nyo's head popped up over a console. "Ranger Assistant Droids," he answered. "You should be able to interface them now, Danny," he said.

Tai was nodding slightly, then he shook his head. "No, I need more," he said.

Danny grinned slightly. He plugged the sideways laptop into the console. "Ranger Assistant Droids. I been working on them all summer with Nyo. Glad he decided to stick around. There are nine of them in total. Little Foot does a variety of cleaning chores," he motioned toward the long-necked dinosaur. "He is also the team 1 cannon that took out the monster yesterday," he explained.

"Duckie passed you earlier. It fetches and carries. It's the Team 2 cannon," Nyo supplied.

"The three miscreants that zoomed by earlier are Ed, Double-D, and Eddy. They're three of the recon Zords," Danny finally finished what he was doing and several of the screens on the Power Chamber lit up with split screen views. Three were moving quickly through the desert. Another three were aerial views of Angel Grove. "Petrie, Peewee, and Percy are pterodons that fly around."

"We figured we could use them for filling any holes in the viewing globe network," Nyo added.

Tai was nodding for real now. "Keep up the good work," he said and continued on to the Blue Lab where he knew Billie was holed up.

She didn't bother to glance up when he entered. "We have a problem," she declared.

Tai rubbed the back of his neck and glanced up at the ceiling. "That sounds ominous," he said.

Billie smirked slightly. "I finished," she said. "But we're still at a disadvantage for when they launch their next attack," she said.

Tai crossed his arms over his chest. "Ah, the Black and Yellow problem. Has anyone heard from Fox?" he asked.

"Autumn and Winter received a letter stating he didn't know when he'd be able to return. However, I am unable to locate him," Beez's voice informed them.

Tai let out a breath. "From now on, anyone leaving the country for parts unknown is getting chipped," he declared. Billie snorted. "Where's Taran?" he asked.

"He's at the Youth Center. Should I ask him to come?" Beez asked.

"Yes. Tell him to come to Red One," Tai answered. He walked out of the Blue Lab and continued down the hallway. Across from the Blue Lab was the Zord Lab, where Holly and Danny worked on their larger projects. Past them were two more rooms. One was used as Beta Z's personal space, and the other had been inhabited by Billy Cranston, who had to return to his home on Aquitar before he could begin a rapid aging process that would lead to his death within a week.

He came to another door that slid open across from the Medical Lab. It'd been mostly used for storage, more of Alpha 5's junk collection, but at some point, someone had decided that Tai and Lani needed an office. So they cleared it out and dubbed it Red One. Tai actually found himself using the space, which he hadn't intended to do. He wasn't sure how he felt about being somehow separate or above the rest of the team. He had to admit though, it was useful to have a place where he could think and make plans quietly, even if constant interruptions were expected.

The room itself was barren, except for a large, round boardroom table that accommodated everyone and more. He liked the round table. That way he didn't feel like he was trying to be the "boss" of everyone by sitting at the head of the table or something.

No sooner had he sat down in one of the chairs than Taran was walking through the doors. "It's like you were waiting," Tai said.

Taran sat down in one of the chairs. "It's obvious we have a gaping problem," he said.

"Can you or Lammy or Rei find Fox?" Tai asked.

"Even if we could, he won't make it back in time. Now we don't even have Griff keeping an eye on the Moon. We're flying blind when it comes to Widow and Roki. They're stronger than ever. We can't really wait for Fox," he said.

Tai sighed. "What do you suggest?" he asked.

Taran cleared his throat. "Beez didn't tell you?" he asked.

Tai raised a brow. "Tell me what?" he asked.

"Black and Yellow will sort themselves out. They're missing," Taran said.

Tai scrubbed a hand through his hair, messing his spikes up. "No, she didn't mention it. Jason said the same thing happened when we ended up with our Power Coins. I guess there's nothing to do except wait it out," he said. Though he had to admit he was patently curious about who'd be joining the team. "You can go back to playing with Autumn, now," he said, dismissing Taran.

"Yeah, I ain't gonna argue with that," Taran said and disappeared as quickly as he arrived.

Tai decided that going out to play was a good idea. Taking advantage of the quiet days was the only way to stay sane. He sent Lani a text message and left the room as soon as he got a reply.

--X--

A few days later Tori, Chloe (who was officially back in Angel Grove), Zara and Melody were doing some school shopping at the mall. Zara was complaining about her increased workload at Think Pink! Dance and Gymnastics. A studio run by former pink Power Rangers Kimberly Hart, Kat Hilliard, and Cassie Chan. Zara worked there as part receptionist, part janitor.

"Is something special happening?" Melody asked.

Zara shrugged. "I don't know. There's some special guest that Kim's advertising to get more sign-ups for gymnastics. She's dying to say but she won't actually say," she said. She dug around in her purse and fished out a flyer. It didn't say who the special guest was, the Olympic Rings were ghosted into the background of the flyer.

Tori gasped and looked at Chloe. "You don't think...do you?" she asked.

"Think what?" Melody asked.

Chloe sniffed. "Who else would it be?" she said with a sour expression.

"Who?" Zara demanded.

Tori grinned. "I forget you two weren't around for the last Olympics and the amazing fifteen-year-old who took the men's gold medal in gymnastics. He happens to be a hometown hero," she said.

Zara glanced at Melody. "That tell you anything useful?" she asked.

Melody shook her head. "Not really," she answered. "Olympics aren't broadcast on Terra Venture," she explained. "Instead we have our own version of the games."

Chloe sighed. "It's obvious who it is, whether Kim's telling or not. Seriously, in a gymnastics studio owned by Kimberly Hart, she's advertising an Olympic athlete without saying his name? There's only one person that would be. And his name is Mason Hart," she said with a chilling edge to her voice.

"Ooh," Zara and Mel said.

"So, why do we dislike him?" Zara asked.

Tori snickered. "We don't. He's every bit as loveable as Rex. I don't really know what her problem with him is," she said, looking at her best friend questioningly. She didn't know there was a problem. Her phone chimed and she checked her text message. "I got to go. DF says there's something of the utmost importance that she has to tell me," she said.

"Let's all head out together then," Chloe suggested. They agreed.

--X--

Palace on the Moon

Widow walked into the laboratory she shared with her husband. He was there, hard at work, hunched over a lump of Dark Clay with a loupe on one eye and sculpting tools in hand. An intense look of concentration was on his face as he worked.

"Isn't that Finster's job?" she asked, placing her hands on his shoulders and rubbing slightly.

The corner of Roki's mouth lifted slightly. "You know what they say, if you want something done right, you do it yourself," he declared.

She peered over as the blob of clay and narrowed her eyes. "What exactly are you working on, dear husband?" she asked.

His slight smirk turned into a full-on grin. "That, my dear, is going to be a surprise," he said.

Widow crinkled her nose. "I shall have to think of creative ways for you to tell me. In meantime, why don't I have Finster cook up a nice playmate for the Power Rangers? Silly things don't seem to have things together. It' be a shame to waste this opportunity," she declared.

"I shall leave you to do your worst," Roki said. "Perhaps I'll see how they're faring soon," he said but went back to his sculpting.

--X--

Tori and the three other girls went in different directions after leaving the mall. She was headed home with several bags. She jumped when she heard a jaunty toot-toot behind her. She turned and smiled when Wood pulled up on his yellow scooter. "Need a lift?" he asked.

"Why thank you. If you don't mind," she agreed.

"What are boyfriends for?" He hopped off his scooter, pulled his extra helmet out from under the seat, and placed her bags neatly inside.

Tori grinned and kissed his cheek. "They do come in handy at times. Although I'm still not sure you got this pink helmet for me and not Nathan," she said. He chuckled without answering. Tori lifted the helmet to put it on her head but it slid through her fingers and hit the pavement. It took a Wood a moment to

process what was happening.

Tori was staring at a girl who'd come upon them. Dressed in a designer artistically ripped jeans, a white tank, and yellow plaid shirt, the girl froze with the mp3 player she fiddling with dropped to the pavement. Her hair was a mix of reds, browns, blacks, and blonds, pulled into a high ponytail that cascaded in curls on one side. Her skin was a similar mochaccino color to Tori's, but the most striking thing about her was her bright aquamarine eyes.

Her shocked expression went from Tori to some point beyond them. "Look out!" she shouted. Tori and Wood spun around and there was a patrol of Dark Putties behind them. Tori opened her mouth and screamed. Waves of sonic energy knocked them off their feet. Several of them crashed into each other and merged into one monster-sized, hulking Puttie.

"Well, that's new," Wood breathed. He pushed the panic button on his comm and grabbed each girl, springing backward with them, just as the Hulk Puttie swung a large fist and crashed into his scooter, sending it flying through the air.

Tori helped steady the other girl when she stumbled on the landing. "Run," she said. The girl didn't need telling twice as the three of them took off down the street. They skidded to a stop when they just ran into more Putties. "We're being surrounded."

"Well, I haven't been here long enough to tick off the locals," the other girl said, her voice had a slight accent. "These guys must be wanting to meet you two," she added.

"Unfortunately, they don't discriminate," Wood said. Multicolored laser blasts had the Putties scattering slightly. The female Red and Green Rangers, the male Blue Ranger, the Gold and Electrum Rangers had arrived.

"Sweet as! Power Rangers are really a real thing," the girl gaped.

"Get to cover," Red told them as they faced down the Putties.

"Let's go," Wood said and tried to lead the girls away, but more Putties popped up in front of them. "What is this?" he demanded. He had separate to defend himself when a Puttie lunged at him. He sprang up without really meaning to, and he landed hard on a Puttie's face when he came back down. "Whoa," he said.

"Watch out!" The girl pushed Tori out of harm's way when one of the Putties turned his arm into a long blade and slashed at them. She stumbled back and they both landed hard on their backsides. A Power Dagger to the forehead had it turning to black dust. Wood ran to them. "Are you two all right?" he asked.

Tori sprang to her feet. The other girl bounced up almost as agilely. She was staring at something in her hand. "What the devil? Where'd this come from?" she asked. "You reckon they want this thing?" she asked and held up the metallic power coin emblazoned with a saber-toothed tiger. Wood and Tori gaped at her a moment. Then Wood grinned. "Awesome! New partner," he crowed.

"Come again?"

"Smilodon. Say it now!" Wood said urgently as more Putties combined to make another Puttie hulk behind her

"Smilodon?" she repeated dumbly. The Power Coin dissolved into her hand. A metallic yellow communicator formed on her wrist. A Morpher appeared on her forehead.

"It's Morphin' Time!" Wood said. In a single motion, he passed his hand over his communicator and spun his Power Coin. "Smilodon!" A yellow digital matrix formed a power suit with a yellow saber-toothed tiger themed helmet.

Tori passed her hand over her communicator and her Morpher appeared on her upper arm. She spun her Power Coin. "Pterodactyl!" A light pink power suit appeared with a pink and white pterodactyl themed helmet.

Confused but not sure what else to do, the other girl spun her Power Coin. "Smilodon!" A slightly lighter yellow power suit appeared with a yellow saber-toothed tiger themed helmet. "This is so awesome!" she said, looking at what she could see of herself. "I'm a Power Ranger," she said.

"Yes, and Power Rangers fight Putties and monsters," Pink stated. "Power Fans!" She summoned, her weapons appearing in her hands.

"Power Daggers!" male Yellow summoned.

"Power Grips!" female Yellow summoned.

--X--

Chloe lived closest to the mall. She also didn't buy very much, as much as she wanted to. She was saving up for an even better camera than the one that'd turned evil. She never could bring herself to look at it the same way again. She also thought it didn't work quite right either, but Danny had taken it apart and put it back together several times for her and he never found anything wrong with it.

Even if it was all in her head, she was getting a new one. She thought about selling that one to help her fund, but then she'd be camera-less and that was even worse. She was also in a grumpy mood and stupidly not paying that much attention to her surroundings. She literally ran right into the Putties that were waiting for her.

"Ey! Watch it!" she scolded and looked up. "Youse know what? My bad. I wasn't watchin' were I was goin'," she said, backing up a few paces. She dropped her mall bag, pressed her panic button. She fisted her hands and took a stance.

"You've got to be kidding me. Run, idiot!"

Someone ran past her, grabbing her arm on the way, dragging her behind him. She glanced back and saw the Putties merging together. "Faster!" She said and put on as much speed as her short legs would allow her and they ducked into an alleyway.

However, it appeared to be too much for her would-be rescuer. As if his leg suddenly stopped working, he went down, almost bringing her with him, but he let go of her arm. She skidded to a stop. "What's with youse? We gotta move," she said. She took stock of her wannabe hero.

Although his face was contorted in pain as he kneaded his leg, it was easily recognizable. He had a messily stylish mop of black hair, and his golden eyes were dim with the pain he was feeling. His face had the unmistakable stamp of a Hart. So much so, he was nearly identical to his older cousin, Rex. "Don't hang around here. Run away. That thing is right behind us," Mason Hart said through gritted teeth.

"The Power Rangers are on their way. Looks like I gotta rescue youse," she said drily.

He blew out a frustrated breath and used the wall of a building behind him to push himself to his feet. "Why are you so stubborn?" he demanded.

"That's my charm," Chloe said. The Puttie hulk pushed itself into the ally. Chloe took a calculated risk and stepped out to face it. Mason didn't seem to be able to run anymore.

"What are you doing?" he demanded.

Before Chloe could answer him, a blast of energy exploded the Puttie hulk into a cloud of black dust. When the dust dissipated they could see the male Red Ranger holding the BrontoCannon while the female Blue Ranger, the male Pink and Green Rangers, and the Silver Ranger were engaging other Putties beyond him. "Everyone all right here?" Red asked.

"Thanks to the Power Rangers," Chloe said.

Red cocked his head. "Whatcha holding there, kid?" he asked Mason.

Chloe glanced at Mason. He seemed puzzled to find himself holding a metal coin with a Mastodon emblazoned on it. "Uh...does it belong to you?" he asked.

Chloe groaned. "Really? Him?" she asked.

Red chuckled. "Are you really that surprised? He's a Hart," he said. She made a sour face. "It belongs to you," Red said to Mason.

"We got another big one!" Pink shouted, hovering and firing at another hulk with his Power Bow.

"I hope Little Foot has another blast in him. Grab your partner and let's go," Red said to Chloe and ran out of the alley.

"What's...happening...? Was that...Tai?" Mason asked slowly.

"Say Mastodon and let's go help," Chloe told him.

"Mastodon?" The word activated the Power Coin. It dissolved into him. A communicator and Morpher appeared.

"Do what I do and don't ask a bunch of questions. It's Morphin' time!" She waved her hand over her communicator and spun her Power Coin. "Mastodon!" A black power suit appeared with a black mastodon themed helmet that had pink eyes.

Mason, still confused and unsure what he could do with his nearly useless leg, followed suit. He spun his Power Coin. "Mastodon!" A black power suit appeared with a black mastodon themed helmet that had yellow eyes. He was startled when the pain in his leg had disappeared.

"Let's go, new guy," female Black said. "Power Axe!" she summoned the large axe and ran out of the alley in order to help the other Rangers.

"Power Flail!" The new male Black Ranger summoned a spikey black ball that connected to a shovel handle by a retractable chain. He followed her into battle because...that's what he did now?

--X--

Palace on the Moon

"Was there any use in this?" Rio scoffed, watching the proceeding through the telescope on the balcony overlooking the earth.

"Finster wanted to test something, so I let him. If it took out a couple of Rangers off by themselves, then it would be all the better," Widow said.

Rio smirked slightly. "But that's not what happened, is it? Instead, they filled in their missing pieces," she said.

Widow looked at Rio steadily. "I only tolerate you because Roki allowed you to serve us. Do not test my patience. You aren't *my* cousin," she warned and followed her warning with a cold smile. She quietly walked away.

Rio made a face and silently mocked her behind her back. She turned her attention back to the action on Earth. She'd get her revenge one day. On all of them. Power Rangers and Repulsas alike.

--X--

The new female Yellow Ranger was handling herself pretty well. She seemed to have the fundamentals of karate and a few other things thrown into the mix. She was also extremely agile, and light on her feet, almost seeming to react before the enemy could make a move. She turned a handless flip and landed gracefully in a crouch when a Puttie tried to pummel her with a hand that formed into a large heavy club. She struck out with the Power Grips before headbutting it in the forehead making it disappear.

"How are you doing that?" male Yellow asked his new partner.

"Dunno, bro. Just kinna happens," she answered.

"Not quite as impressive as sweep kicking the Skeleton Ranger without a power suit, but I approve of the new girl," Blue stated. While he was fighting with one Puttie, he threw out a hand toward Green, and a force-field protected her back.

She dispatched the first Puttie, and swung around and got rid of him. "Thanks," she said.

"Did yours and Wood's Powers evolve?" Pink asked, taking out another Puttie.

"Looks like it," Red said as she stretched herself further than ever before in a bid to slip around behind a Puttie to lop off its head with her Power Sword. There was a beat as everyone sort of watched it fly through the air as it crumbled away.

"Beheading works, too!" Electrum announced. She forgot about accuracy and used her VelociRapier to whip heads off left and right.

As the strongest member of the team, Gold was holding off the Puttie Hulk. He used his StegoMace to block blows, but he never could get the upper hand. Regular Dark Putties kept trying to distract him. "Knocking them off also seems to work," he said and crashed the weapon into one's head and watched it roll. "I'm not sure how it's going to work out with our friend here," he ducked out of the way of a massive swing.

"Let's give Duckie a test drive, then," Blue said.

"You mean the new Team 2 Cannon?" Red asked.

"That's the one."

"Let's get on with it. Not sure how much longer Taran can hold him off," Electrum said.

Red held out a hand. "Saurolophus!" she called. The duck-billed dinobot digitized before them.

"SauroCannon Mode!" The R.A.D. shifted into a single barrel team cannon that seemed to hover on its own power but Red aimed it. "Spidey senses working?" she asked Gold.

"Go!" he assured.

"Sauro Blast!" She fired the weapon. There was a slight recoil with the amount of energy released from its single barrel. Gold kept the hulk distracted until the last possible moment when he disappeared in a cloud of white smoke. The energy plowed into the hulk and it exploded.

There was quiet for a moment, then the remaining Putties began merging together, creating more hulks, then the hulks merged together creating a giant Puttie the size of a building. "Um, Tai, sweetheart, trade you Wood for Sora," Red said into her communicator.

"Send Danny along, too, and it's a deal," he responded.

"Deal," she agreed. Blue and male Yellow teleported.

--X--

As it turned out, the BrontoCannon took awhile to recharge, so male Red let it go back to the Command Center. Instead, he summoned his Tyranno Sword. "Sora! Split up, bring the big sword, and help me out," he said.

Silver gave a jaunty wave and triplicated. The one still holding the CeratoSword ran toward Red.

Going on pure instinct, because his rational mind was still trying to process everything, the new male Black Ranger grabbed the chain of the Flail, spun it, holding the handle end, whipped the ball toward one of the Putties. The chain expanded, smacked the Puttie right in the forehead, and contracted back to him.

Male Green summoned his Stygian Blade. The triangular bladed sword was handier than for combat than his Stygian Dagger by far. The Flail seemed to take out Dark Putties creeping up on either side of him as he plunged the Blade through one's forehead. "Whoa. Thanks. Nice...flail-ing," he said.

Male Black gave the head of the Flail a little spin. "Mrs. Manahan's fifth-grade yo-yo champ," he stated.

Female Black gagged. "Stop showing off," she said. She axed a Puttie, Cleaving off a leg. Even though it grew back, she already moved beyond it. "Billie, watch out!" She sprang forward to help out the female Blue Ranger, densing herself, but the Puttie that was about to strike Blue was behind, knocked her off balance. She fell into the Blue and they both hit the ground like a ton of bricks.

"Did you just dense me?" Blue demanded.

Female Black let it go. "Kinda felt like it," she agreed as they got to their feet.

"We'll come back to that later," Blue said and winked out of sight. One thing she's always had on her side is a dead-aim. And also the capacity to create Grid generated duplicates of her Power Sais. Which then seemed to appear out of nowhere and stick into the foreheads of the Dark Putties. She fizzled back into sight in the middle of several Putties. They turned on her. "Inconvenient," she said.

The Putties were too close to stab. Instead, pink energy bolts opened up their foreheads. Male Pink landed gracefully in a crouch as they disintegrated. "Thanks. How long were you," she made a hand movement indicating to his levitation.

He shrugged. "I didn't keep track. Awhile," he said. He quickly raised his Bow and took out a couple of Putties coming up behind her just as she tossed a couple of Sais that were coming up behind him. They separated to go back to working independently.

The hulk swung a big fist to swat at Red, but he ducked. The other came to try to crush him. He brought his arms up to take the blow. He groaned and used every bit of his strength to push up.

The CeratoSword cleaved the arm in half. The Puttie hulk made a muffled roaring sound. The arm

disintegrated but another Puttie joined the hulk and helped reform the arm.

"Is Little Foot ready for another blast?" Red asked into his helmet.

"Afraid not. Sora should be able to use the Pterodon recon Rads," Nyo answer answered him since he'd had a hand in designing the R.A.D.s. Red gestured for Silver to get one with it.

The other two Silver Rangers were using their smaller swords to take out what they could as they covered the other Silver and Red. Since they shared one mind, they began closing in. "Pterodon! Petrie!"

"Percy!"

"Peewee!"

Swooping in after digitizing, three small flying dinobots flew to each of the Silver Rangers. They transformed from dinosaur-shaped robots to handheld blasters. "PteroCannon!" The three Rangers assimilated as the PteroBlasters stuck together to create a long barreled rifle cannon that Silver rested on his shoulder like a rocket launcher. "PteroBlast!" He fired the Cannon at the hulk.

A powerful blast of energy ran through each of the R.A.Ds and gathered at the opening of the last one. Once enough energy had built up, it blasted into the hulk and exploded it into black dust.

"Brilliant," Silver declared.

"Let's not celebrate too soon," Blue said when the Putties they'd been engaging suddenly abandoned the fight and ran toward each other. They joined together and began growing, surpassing even hulk status, and going on to giant size.

"Uh-oh, I think we need a bigger gun," male Black said.

"Uh-huh." his partner agreed.

"Um, Tai, sweetheart, trade you Wood for Sora," female Red said to her partner through his communicator.

"Send Danny along, too, and it's a deal," he responded.

"Deal," she agreed.

"Good call," female Blue said giving two thumbs up. Silver teleported and within moments male Yellow and Blue arrived.

"It's Zord time. TyrannoZord!" red summoned.

"TriceraZord!" male Blue summoned.

"MastoZord!" female Black summoned.

"PteroZord!" male Pink summoned.

"SmiloZord!" male Yellow summoned.

"StygiZord!" male Green summoned.

"Alpha Megazord!"

The large mechas began appearing from digital matrixes. Each of the Zords was a dinosaur in a corresponding color as its pilots. The pilots teleported into the cockpit of each Zord. The six Zords came together to form a humanoid robot. They

"Okay, that's kind of cool," male Black said. "So are there designated pilots or..." he left his question hanging.

"We usually let whichever team needs it have it, but some of us are much more skilled than others. My partner for example. Ok, new guy. Let's get out of the way," she said. She reached over and activated his teleport and he disappeared in a glow of energy. She followed suit almost immediately.

--X--

When Silver arrived on the scene to join Gold and Electrum he looked up at the giant Puttie. "I met his twin," he declared.

"Let's not keep yakking," Electrum said.

Gold nodded. "StegoZord!"

"VelociZord!"

"CeratoZord!"

Three large mechs began digitizing into existence. The pilots teleported to their cockpits. "Legend Megazord!" They combine into a vaguely humanoid robot.

"Sweet. As," female Yellow said succinctly. "But where did the Silver one come from? Where'd the other two go?" she asked, confused by the teleporting.

Green draped an arm around her shoulders. "All in due time," she said.

"We should get out of the way," Red stated.

Pink hesitated. "I'm...going to speak with DF. Now. See you at the CC," she said and teleported away.

"That was very un-Tori-like," Green said.

"She'll fill us in when she's ready," Red said. "Let's go." She teleported in a burst of red energy.

"Choice," Yellow said.

"Our turn," Green activated the other girl's teleport before following herself.

--X--

The giant Putties had the ability to mold weapons out of their own clay. The Alpha Megazord discovered this when they sliced off one of the hands. Not only did the hand grow back, but the Giant Puttie pulled a glob of clay from its own body and formed a wicked looking scimitar with it.

"Well, that's..." Pink put up his hands, unable to accurately articulate what he was thinking.

"Balls. I think the word you're looking for is balls," Black stated.

"Mad balls," Blue said, agreeing with his sister.

"Yeah, well, let's see how much he likes getting blasted into nothing," Red stated. "Sharp-tooth Bazooka!" The weapon appeared on the Megazord's shoulder. "Aim," he lined up his shot.

"Here goes," Green said hopefully.

The bazooka's mouth opened up. "Fire!" Six-multicolored projectiles hit the Giant Puttie in a circular pattern, exploding through him. individual Puttie Patrollers exploded from the creature and dissipated into dust as they fell to the ground, leaving nothing in its wake.

--X--

The Legend Megazord had a spikey lance that wasn't doing much against the Giant Puttie. It was having fun trying out different weapons against them. Their trio wasn't as large or powerful as the Alpha Megazord, but they still should have had some impact.

"Let's stick it to him," Electrum suggested.

"Right," Gold agreed. The Megazord dropped the lance as if to joust. "Legendary Lance!" The lance began to glow and the Megazord zoomed forward, crashing through the Giant Puttie. Appearing on the other side of it, the Megazord rested the Lance against its shoulder. Energy from the lance exploded a hole through it's middle but wasn't powerful enough to destroy it completely.

"That's not good," Silver stated.

"No, it's not," Electrum agreed grimly.

"You don't think we left you guys out of our new upgrades do you?" Holly's voice asked. "Just summon the Spike-Tail Silo," she instructed.

"Spike-Tail Silo!" Gold immediately summoned as the Megazord spun around. A stego-saurus faced rocket-launcher looking cannon digitized onto their shoulder. "Aim!" The stego's mouth opened. "Fire!" Three balls of metallic light were launched from the Silo in quick succession. Each hit the Giant Puttie, blowing it into smaller Putties in chunks before they disintegrated into black dust.

--X--

Palace on the Moon

Rio thought about rubbing Widow's nose in the fact that her pitiful creature's creations had failed, but Widow was too calm. Though Rio didn't know the girl that well, her calmness was more frightening than a rage she was known for. "You don't seem...disappointed that your plan failed," she said hesitantly.

Widow raised her brows. "Who said anything failed?" she asked and walked away from the observation post, leaving Rio even more uneasy. She really needed to get off this rock.

--X--

Back in the Command Center, everyone gathered after the battle. Not only was the debrief of Widow and Roki's upgraded Putties, but also their newest team members.

"I know we all miss Rex, but don't you think cloning him was a bit much?" Autumn asked pointedly, eyeing Billie suspiciously.

"And poor Tori hasn't even gone anywhere. Why her?" Lammy agreed.

Billie pursed her lips and put her fists on her hips. "First of all, that's not a clone of Rex. That's his little cousin, Mason," she said. "As for Tori's clone, not my doing," she said.

"She's not a clone either. She's LaKeisha Woods. She's an actress from New Zealand that I always thought looked a lot like Tori," Wood stated excitedly.

"Thus, you're a big fan, huh?" Win teased.

Nathan snapped his fingers. "Yes, she's been in all those movies and TV shows that film down there," he said.

"I didn't think I was that famous," the new female Yellow Ranger said. "I go by Kiki, bro," she said. "I cannot believe that I'm a Power Ranger," she said, looking around in amazement. It was going to take some time to get used to everything and learn who was who.

"Same here. Gee, I know a lot of people in this room," Mason said, crossing his arms over his chest. "For those that don't know me, I'm Mason Hart, Olympic Gold Medalist, teen heartthrob," he said and gave a winning smile.

"Are you sure *somebody* didn't clone Rex?" Autumn asked.

"I can't vouch for that," Billie stated.

"So, Kiki, tell us a bit about yourself," Lani suggested.

"Not much to tell. I've been acting since I was a kid. I have been in almost every American film and programme that films down there as a guest or an extra. I recently finished as a series main about mermaids when my dad and mum decided to come to California for their jobs," she said.

"So..." Nathan tried to find the right way to ask how she looked so much like Tori.

"You look like Tori. Any idea why?" Chloe asked bluntly. Tori was her best friend and delicacy wasn't her forte anyway.

"Because she's my sister. My...twin sister. We were Parent Trapped when we were little," Tori said, making her entrance moments after teleporting. "DF learned through mutuals that our father moved to Angel Grove, and with him, my sister," she said and gestured to the other girl.

Kiki blinked. "I need to go home. We'll do this whole thing later, eh?" she said. She fiddled with her communicator for a moment before teleporting away.

"This is going to take time to sort out," Tori said. "I need to go, too."

"Totally understood," Tai assured her.

"You need some moral support?" Wood said.

Tori nodded and held out a hand. He took her hand and they teleported out.

In the quiet that followed, Mason cleared his throat. "So...who can tell me why my leg doesn't feel like it'll fall off at any given minute anymore?" he asked.

"I got this. Come with me to the Medi-Lab," Billie told him. He nodded and they walked out of the Power Chamber.

"If anyone needs me, I'll be in Red One," Tai said, effectively dismissing everyone to do their own thing.

Sure Widow and Roki had upped their game, but so had the Power Rangers. With a full and capable team, he had confidence that whatever was thrown at them, they'd rise to occasion.

-x-End 02-x-

3 - That's a Raptor

Command Center

Rei eased into Red One where Tai was sitting at the round table, looking at something on a laptop. He glanced up at her to acknowledge that he knew she was there. She smiled nervously and sat down at one of the chairs. He glanced at her again when she was silent for too long. Finally, he closed his computer and gave her his full attention.

She let out a short sigh. "So...Zita's back," she declared.

"I know," he said and began to open his computer again.

She blinked. "You know? How do you know? / just found out," she said.

Tai rubbed the bridge of his nose. "Before she left, Grandpa apparently told her that if she ever needed a place to stay and sort things out, she was welcome at our place. So, she took him up on it," he said. He honestly still couldn't believe it. When someone knocked on his door at the crack of dawn that morning, the last person he expected to see was a downtrodden, bedraggled Zita Repulsa.

Rei was silent a moment. "Oh, dear. We were wondering why she didn't even contact Mori," she said. Then something occurred to her. "How did Lani take that?" she asked.

Tai sighed again. "However, you think she took it is pretty much how she took it. Then I reminded her that I was going to be sharing an apartment with Rex near campus."

Rei snickered but she sobered again and got to her feet. "We should go talk to her," she said more to herself than to him.

Tai got to his feet as well. "Leave her be. She'll reach out when she's ready. Pass that on to Moriko, please. One Repulsa crashing my home is more than enough," he said.

She nodded. "I'll do that. Sorry if I interrupted you," she said, glancing at his computer.

"You didn't," he said. He didn't elaborate that he was hiding out at the Command Center because of her sister. She nodded and scurried out. Whether to find Sora or her other sister, he wasn't sure. He wasn't sure if even wanted to know. He started to sit back down and play another round of solitaire when Beez asked him to go to the Medi-Lab.

The Medi-Lab wasn't large, and there were several people crowded into it. Mason Hart, one of their two newest members, was laying on one of the beds. Several screens were displaying medical images, charts, and information. "Do I even want to know how you people got my medical files?"

"Beez is a supercomputer. She hacks better than I do," Billie answered.

"What exactly are we looking at here?" Kimberly Hart asked. Kim was Mason's cousin, former Pink Ranger, owner of Think Pink, and currently in charge of Mason.

Kat Hilliard, who co-owned Think Pink, was also a former Pink Ranger, and having a nursing degree with some med-school under her belt, was the closest thing they had to an actual doctor since Billy Cranston had to return to Aquitar. "An unheard-of regeneration of bones, nerves, and muscles," she stated.

Beez smiled at Tai when he walked in. "What's going on?" he queried.

"Did you know Mace was in a serious car accident a few months ago?" Kim asked him testily, as if he should have. It was while Rex was still around, so she figured maybe he knew and let Tai know.

"No one else knew, Kim. Mom didn't tell anybody because she didn't want reporters bothering me," Mason said and sat up. His leg had been wrecked. It was the end of his career. It was a miracle, and months of intensive rehab, that he could even walk.

Kim pursed her lips and crossed her arms over her chest. "I didn't know. I was preparing to have you put on a demonstration at the studio," she said with a grimace.

Tai was looking at all the medical charts. "If I'm understanding what I'm seeing, you might be able to after all," he said. "Billie?"

Billie nodded. "I compared his DNA to the rest of ours. He has the same genetic anomalies that the rest of us have. After Kat drew his blood, the puncture healed almost immediately," she said.

Kat nodded. "The extensive damage to his leg is taking longer to heal, but it is healing," she said.

"How are we going to explain that one? It may have been a well-guarded secret, but his mom, doctors, and nurses know about his injury," Billie said.

Tai sighed. He turned to look at Mace. He grimaced. "Lose his files. We'll make sure the hardcopies are lost as well," he said.

Billie nodded. "Beez and I can take care of the digital footprints," she said.

"So... I can...compete again?" Mason asked.

"No," Beta Z said before Tai could. "I am sorry, but you can never compete again. We can lose records, but we can't make people forget. No one can find out about your ability," she said.

Mace rubbed the back of his neck. "I was afraid of that," he said. He understood that, but he didn't have to like it. "Are we done here? Can I go now?" he asked.

Tai nodded. Mace stood up dejectedly and teleported out. Kim and Kat excused themselves as well. "Take care of the online records. I finally found something useful for Griff and Moriko to do," Tai told

Billie. She nodded. He was about to leave but hesitated. "What about Kiki?" he asked.

"Wood brought her by this morning. She has the same markers. We haven't quite pinpointed her ability yet, but she couldn't stay long. Family stuff I guess?" she said.

Tai nodded. "Keep me posted," he said and walked out. When he got back to Red One, he sent Lani a text inviting her for an outing when she was available. Within minutes he got an affirmative reply and he left to prepare.

--X--

Palace on the Moon

Widow found Roki pensively staring at the Earth from the overlook. He wasn't looking through the telescope. He wasn't looking at anything in particular. She knew what was on his mind. She slipped her arms around one of his and rested her cheek against him. "You and Zita went through a lot together. I can't even imagine how hard her betrayal is on you, husband," she said.

"After we were sent away, it was only the two of us. Thrax was...well, he was a monster and we weren't. He never let us forget we were different from him. We looked out for each other. Uncle Rito isn't exactly a responsible guardian," he said.

He took a deep breath. "Besides, I don't think she betrayed me. Moriko, yes, but she was never fully with us. I always figured that. Zita only joined the other two to stop our Aunt. I understand that she probably won't be back here, but I don't think she'll ever actively fight against us and with the Rangers," he said.

Widow nodded. "I hope you're right, my love. I really do. But, unfortunately, my siblings *are* Power Rangers. I will do everything in my power to destroy them," she said.

He smiled and kissed the top of her head. "I'll help you, always," he assured her.

"Do quit sulking, husband. I must go find Finster," she said. She stood on her toes and kissed his cheek and walked away. She'd been plotting a delightfully wicked scheme and wanted to put it into motion to cheer him up.

Not far away, Rio watched. She sneered. So, Zita was back. She clenched her fist. She'd avenge her mother and leave this place as ashes if it was the last thing she ever did.

--X--

Command Center

The Power Chamber was quiet. Not even Nyo or Danny were piddling around. Only A hologram of Beta Z was there to welcome Fox Oliver when he arrived in the Command Center. "Welcome home, Fox," she greeted with a smile.

"Beez. Where is everyone?" he asked.

"Do you need me to give you everyone's exact locations?" she asked.

He held up his hands. "Nah. Is anyone here?" He had his luggage with him, and he'd come straight from the airport without anyone knowing. He'd managed to catch an earlier flight. He was eager to find out what was happening while he was lost in a jungle with his parents.

"Billie is in the Blue Lab. I believe Nyo and Danny are in the Zord Lab," she answered.

It wasn't quite the welcome he was expecting, or hoping for, but it'd do. He was headed for the Zord Lab when alarms began going off. Several screens lit up showing Dark Putties in various places in the city. "What the deuce are those?" he asked.

"You've missed a lot," Billie declared sourly when she came out of the Lab. "And you aren't like all of it," she added.

"Why?" Fox asked warily.

Danny clapped Fox on the back. "You get to help Nyo quarterback for us," he said. Still confused, Fox returned Nyo's grin almost automatically when Danny and Billie teleported away. "Wha-wait! Where's my Morph--who the devil is that?" he demanded when a male Black Ranger showed up on one of the view screens.

"Billie did say you wouldn't like all it, friend," Nyo said apologetically. He wondered if the two Blues left him here to explain what happened on purpose.

"Yeah, I'm getting that," Fox said. He sighed. He'd been in this position before. He knew how to handle it.

--X--

When Tai stopped by his house to change for his outing with Lani, Zita ambushed him at the bottom of the stairs. She was a shell of former self. Her long dark hair was flat and lifeless, no longer done up in her big fluffy, curly pigtails. Her face was bare of her usual dark make-up, making her resemblance to Rei even more pronounced. She was engulfed in what looked like an old sweatshirt of his, with a pair of leggings, and fuzzy socks. Her Victorian-esque Gothic Lolita look was nowhere to be seen.

He crossed his arms over his chest and leaned away from her slightly. She rolled her eyes. "I'm not going to bite you," she said. "I'm here because Grandpa invited me," she reminded him.

He nodded. "But that doesn't mean I have to like it," he said.

"No one said you did," she retorted pulling a slight pout. She cleared her throat. She held out a hand and something appeared in it in a puff of smoke. "I found this while I was...away," she said without looking at him. She glanced when he didn't immediately take it. She scoffed. "Look, you know this symbol, right?" she asked, and waggled it magically.

The object in question appeared to be made of amber. It was slightly shaped like a flattened ball, and no larger than his hands. Emblazoned in the amber was a three clawed lizard footprint inside a circle. He took the object and looked at it in detail. He could faintly make out darker spots within the blob. "Where did you get this?" he asked.

She looked around a moment. "My grandfather's treasure planet," she all but mumbled. He stared at her and she fidgeted. Then she put her hands on her hips and straightened her back, looking a little more like the Zita that had attempted to conquer Earth for nearly a year. "If Roki and Widow can go to M-51 Galaxy and get super powers, why can't I?" she demanded.

"Did you get any?" he asked.

She made a scoffing sound. "That's not the point. Point is, I found that. I can't use it, might as well give it to someone who can," she said, and gave him a smile that was about as far as gracious as possible.

"Someone you'll be mooching off of for the foreseeable future?"

She huffed. "There's that," she said. She turned and stretched. "I'm going to watch my shows," she declared and headed for the den.

Tai rubbed the bridge of his nose. "Instead of watching TV all day, go talk to your sisters," he called after her.

"Can't. I need to see if Romana has amnesia or if it's secretly Romana's twin brother, Reggie who had surgery to become Regina, and is pretending to be Romana because he's in love with Romana's fiancée Todd," she said.

Tai wiped a hand down his face. He just did not know how to deal with situation at all. He went upstairs to change. He studied the object in hands. He went to a window and held it up to the sunlight and there were definitely six distinct darker spots within it. He sent Lani a message to let her know that he may be a little late because he wanted to drop it off at the Command Center, but then his communicator sounded.

"Putties are appearing around Angel Grove," Beez informed him.

"How many?" he asked.

"At least four."

"Send the Pinks and Yellows. Blues and Blacks. Lani and I will meet up with Autumn and Win, and the Legends will be together," he instructed. "There's a thing on my bed. Teleport it to the Command Center for study," he added and tossed the amber on his bed. It disappeared in a flash and he teleported as well.

--X--

Kiki and Tori had been with their father and step-mother, and Dawn Feather for a quiet, awkward. There

were so many things wrong with the situation neither of them knew how to start. For one, Tori never knew her father. The only father she ever knew was the Reaver her mother her mother was married to. He'd been from the Bahamas. The opposite was true for Kiki. She never she had a white mother. She also figured her eyes were recessive or something. Dawn Feather, Tori's foster mother, who'd raised Tori after the parents she knew died in action, was just as unsettled and disquieted by the entire situation.

She hadn't known Tori had a twin. Their mother had stayed on Earth, in New Zealand while she was pregnant, and when she came back to work, she'd divorced and only had the one child. As for their father, she hadn't known him well, but from what she knew, her friend's career as a Sol Reaver was the main reason for the split.

Finally, the awkward meal was concluded, and Kiki and Tori could leave and let the grown-ups chat amongst themselves. For her part, despite whatever circumstances surrounded it, Tori was thrilled to have a sister and wanted to show her everything and all at once. Kiki was a little more reserved.

"They can hash out the who's, why's and how's all they want. It's done, you're here and omigosh!" Tori said, practically bouncing. She wrapped an arm around Kiki's.

Kiki gave a short laugh. "Yeah. It's bit choice," she agreed. "So, what do in Angel Grove?" she asked.

"All sorts of things. You definitely need to check out the Youth Center first. Not only does it have some of the best shakes and smoothies in town, but you can do all sorts of things there. Lani, that's the cute one in red, leads a yoga class every Sunday morning with Holly. You can *occasionally* get Tai to do a kendo demonstration. Gymnasts sometimes practice there as well. Like I said, all sorts of things," she said excited. "Plus, Autumn and Winter are the best. Although I dunno what you're into, it always has cute guys and girls in and out," she said.

"Aren't you with Wood?" Kiki asked.

Tori giggled. "I was letting *you* know," she said.

Kiki giggled as well. "Well, thanks for that," she said. "And besides the Youth Center where all sorts of thing, happen?"

"The mall. Chloe and I are almost always at the mall. There's Pink, it's a gymnastics and dance studio. There's just always something happening, despite the frequent giant monster attacks. How do you feel about cheerleading?" she asked. "Since Manny left, we have a huge hole on the team that's going to be hard to fill," she said.

"I played a cheerleader once. Cheerleader Number Two," Kiki said. "I ain't thought much about it as a thing to do," she admitted.

"No pressure," Tori assured her. During their trek toward the Youth Center, their communicators went off.

"What's that?" Kiki asked, looking at her wrist.

"Trouble. Let's go," she said and teleported. Kiki teleported right behind her.

--X--

Command Center

While the Rangers confronted the Putties, Nyo and Holly were studying the object Tai sent while Fox kept an eye on the action. He was still a bit confused about the two replacement Rangers, but he knew it wasn't the time to ask his questions.

Nyo and Holly were in the Blue Lab scanning the amber object. "Where on Earth did he even get this?" Nyo wondered aloud.

Holly shook her head. "There's machinery inside and this stuff isn't amber," she said, looking at the readouts on a screen. "If I'm reading this right...it's some sort of polymer that..." she squinted, scrunched her nose, and made a face. "Compressive compound," she concluded finally.

Nyo rubbed his goatee thoughtfully. "You mean, whatever's inside has been miniaturized?" he asked.

"Highly probable," Holly said. Still the thing was perplexing.

Holographic Beez appeared. "I've finished searching my father's memory banks. If he helped Zordon create whatever is encased in the compound, it was done after my creation," she said.

"Any idea how to get whatever is inside out?" Nyo asked.

"Only exposure to a massive blast of a certain type of energy," Beez answered.

"What kind of energy would that be?" Holly asked.

"Grid energy. The Rangers will have to combine their powers to open it," she answered. "But they're a bit busy at the moment.

As if on cue, Fox saw something strange on the monitors. "Guys, those Putties are acting weird. A bunch of them are appearing where Wood and Tori are," he said. "Bloody--since when can they do that?!" he exclaimed as the Putties began combing to create a Giant Putty.

"We told you, you missed a lot," Danny informed him.

"I was only gone like a month!"

--X--

"Danny, Mace, Win, head to the Giant Putty," Male Red instructed.

His partner nodded at him. "Autumn and I'll finish up here," she assured him.

He nodded. He and the male Green Ranger teleported to the scene where the Giant Putty was.
"Megazord time! TyrannoZord!"

"TriceraZord!"

"MastoZord!"

"PteroZord!"

"SmiloZord!"

"StygiZord!"

"Alpha Megazord!"

The large mechas began appearing from digital matrixes. Each of the Zords was a dinosaur in a corresponding color as its pilots. The pilots teleported into the cockpit of each Zord. The six Zords came together to form a humanoid robot and began fighting the Giant Putty.

The Megazord swung the MegaSword at the Giant Putty. The Putty's arm morphed into a club and swung it at the Megazord. It was deflected by the shield, but the Megazord shuddered.

"These things are strong," Blue grunted.

"Let's finish it quickly," Yellow suggested.

"Whoa, what!" Pink exclaimed when another mass of Putties formed another Giant Putties.

"We need back-up," Red declared and the Megazord began defending itself from the two Giants.

--X--

"We're on our way," Gold said. "Sora, can you handle the rest?" he asked.

The Silver Ranger split into three and nodded. He was suddenly hit by a dark blast and his three selves were forced into one being again. "Augh!" he exclaimed and went to his knees.

"You're not going anywhere," Widow declared as more Putties surrounded them. "Oh, I'm sorry, did that hurt?" she asked Silver without even pretending to be sincere. "Good," she added with a little smile. She was dressed for battle in a black on black combat suit.

"Widow," Electrum said.

"What are you up to?" Gold demanded.

Nonchalantly, Widow studied her fingernails. "Where would the fun be if I went around telling all my

plans?" she asked. "Putties. Attack," she said. The Putties converged in the Rangers. Silver, recovered from the shock of being forcefully reunited, was able to hold his own against them, but it was impossible to get free enough for even one of them summon the Legend Megazord and help the other Rangers.

--X--

"Those guys are bogged down. So are everyone else. Those Putties just keep coming," Fox stated to the Megazord that was getting it from both sides.

"Then we'd better do something. Danny, can we also use the Silo?" Red asked.

Blue nodded. "Yeh."

Red nodded. "Sh--" he didn't even begin to summon the Sharp-tooth Bazooka when one of the Giant Putties attacked the other with a beam from its moon shaped forehead crest. The other Giant shuddered, gurgled, and suddenly liquified, falling over the Megazord in a wave of a tar-like substance.

"We can't move!" Green stated as he attempted to swing the Sword again. Even the attempt jarred the entire Megazord and the cockpit sparked and smoked. Unhealthy mechanical and electrical sounds shuddered the Megazord again. The remaining Giant began to hammer it with an arm that had been turned into a club. More sparking and smoking.

"Abandon Megazord!" Red shouted.

--X--

Widow smirked. "Aww. Looks like you're all a Megazord down," she said tauntingly.

Gold gritted his teeth and blew a breath through his nose. "Widow!" He suddenly crashed his StegoMace into the ground, causing a blast of concussive energy around him to blow the Putties off their feet. He ran toward Widow while. She held out a hand with dark energy gathering around it.

He was faster and thrust out a hand with a massive explosion of white energy. It crashed into her, then seemed to absorb into her middle, while knocking her off her feet, flying for several yards before landing with a crash.

"Get the Megazord!" Gold told Electrum and Silver. They didn't argue.

Widow staggered to her feet, holding her middle, Roki appeared in an angry crack of red lightning. "What did you think you were doing in your condition?" he demanded. He scooped her up despite her protests and they disappeared.

Gold froze. "Condition?" he wondered out loud even as the Legend Megazord destroyed the Giant Putty in the distance behind him.

--X--

Palace on the Moon

Widow tried to placate Roki. "I'm fine. It was Tarantules. He's so *good*," she spat the word, "that he'd never actually hurt his sister, not even me," she said soothingly. "I was the best distraction," she added.

Roki wasn't easily placated. "You can't know what kind of adverse effects his magic would have on the children," he said.

Widow pouted and rubbed her middle. "I didn't even think about that. What if his goody-goody magic made something weird happen?" she said. "Can you handle the monster? I think I'm going to lay down for a while," she said in an uncharacteristically quiet tone.

Roki kissed her forehead. "Of course. Rest well, my dear. We'll make sure everything is fine after you've rested," he assured her. She smiled at him and headed toward her room. Roki went to Finster's workshop to unleash a monster on the Rangers since they'd been dealt a critical blow.

--X--

Command Center

Holly abandoned Nyo to check on the damage to her Zords. Nyo briefed Tai and the others about how to get into the object. "Hopefully there's something inside that'll be helpful. We're a Megazord down and a seemingly endless supply of Putties that can combine into Giants," Tai said.

"Did you really get that from Zita?" Rei asked. She'd arrived when they left the battle. She'd wanted check on Sora. Luckily, from what she could tell, there were no lingering adverse effects. To make him permanently unable to triplicate would take a spell so much more complex.

"We decided to consider it rent. She said she found it on your grandfather's treasure planet in the M-51 galaxy," Tai answered.

"That's not surprising. He collects objects of power to keep others from using them," Rei said.

Meanwhile, Fox got to meet Mace. "Sorry for replacing you," Mace said a little unsurely when he realized that Fox was the Black Ranger before him.

Fox shook his head. "It was only temporary anyway. We both replaced Rex," he said. But he knew that wasn't exactly true. Rex had chosen him, but the coin had chosen Mace. Still, he chose to believe what he said. He'd never really expected to become a Power Ranger in the first place when he found out about everything.

Billie and Danny had their heads together figuring out how to use their power energy to open the compression compound.

Taran and Lammy had something else on their minds. "Roki actually said 'in your condition'?" Lammy asked her brother.

Taran nodded. "Since I know my magic and her magic are incompatible, I only sent a blast to knock her back, so I don't think I hurt her," he said rubbing the back of his neck uncomfortably.

Lammy rubbed her chin. "Maybe Finster knows something. I'll see if Moriko and Griff will investigate," she said. She was a little less sympathetic. If Widow was pregnant and still chose to combat Taran, then she deserved whatever happened. She was tactful enough not to say anything to him, however, because he seemed genuinely worried.

The alarms went off.

"A monster has appeared in downtown Angel Grove," Beta Z announced.

"They certainly aren't missing their opportunity," Lani declared.

"Did youse expect 'em to?" Chloe asked.

"As if that could happen," Nathan sighed.

"Let's go," Tai said. The Rangers teleported to where the monster was in downtown Angel Grove.

--X--

A fat cat on a peg-leg appeared in downtown Angel Grove. The Giant Puttie attack was still fresh, so there weren't that many people to attack, the ones who were about found themselves caught up in smoky prisons created by the oversized cigar the fat cat puffed on. He'd take a long drag and blow it out.

"Didn't anyone ever tell you smoking was bad for you?"

The monster whirled around toward the sound of the voice talking to him. He suddenly realized he was surrounded by Power Rangers. Very unhappy Power Rangers. He grinned and laughed in a deep guttural way. "Well, ain't that cute," he said. He took a drag on the cigar and then blew out a willow of toxic smelling smoke. "But you're wrong!" he laughed again.

The Rangers coughed and stumbled away from toxic cloud. The male Pink Ranger floated above it. "Power Bow!" he summoned and began to fire arrows at the monster. Despite the wooden leg, he was surprisingly agile. The male Yellow Ranger braved the cloud and sprang forward with his Power Daggers, but the monster swung his leg like a baseball bat and knocked him away.

"Power Flail!" Through the cloud came the spiked ball and bashed the monster in the face, making him stagger back. "That ain't cute!" he spat. He held up the fake leg and it turned into a wicked looking laser gun, and he began firing it like a machine gun, hopping around in erratic circles. "They don't call me Machine Gun Willy for no reason!" he laughed again.

The Rangers took cover. "I got an idea," the male blue ranger said.

"We're listening," male Red declared.

He hands his Power Lance to his partner. "Get the Mega Power Cannon ready," he said. If he was right, it would be enough. He wrapped a forcefield around himself and ran forward. "Teleport the object to me on my mark," he told the Command Center. He ran into the Cloud.

"You heard the man. Mega Power Cannon!" Red said. The Rangers began combing their weapons.

Machine Gun Willy was firing on the Blue Ranger as he approached even though the energy bullets bounced off. He grunted, stopped firing and put his leg down. "Well, you ain't cute at all," he declared.

"Mark," Blue said and lowered his force-field. The amber-esque object appeared his hands. "Hey, buddy, catch!" he said and tossed it at him. When, surprised, the monster caught the object, the Ranger dove out of the way.

The male Red Ranger aimed the Mega Power Cannon with the other Rangers behind him. "Fire!" his partner called out, and he fired. Six points of energy swirled at the monster, through the compression compound and into the monster. He staggered but didn't go down. As for the objects within the compression compound, six of them went flying, looking like some sort of tiny dinosaur figures.

"Pterodon! Petrie!"

"Percie!"

"PeeWee!"

Swooping in after digitizing, three small flying dinobots flew to the Gold, Electrum, and Silver Rangers. They transformed from dinosaur-shaped robots to handheld blasters. "PteroCannon!" The three Rangers assimilated as the PteroBlasters stuck together to create a long-barreled rifle cannon that Gold rested on his shoulder like a rocket launcher. "PteroBlast!" He fired the Cannon at the monster.

A powerful blast of energy ran through each of the R.A.Ds and gathered at the opening of the last one. Once enough energy had built up, it blasted into the monster and it exploded with arcs of electricity and toxic smoke.

Roki threw down his scepter. "Make my monster grow!"

Machine Gun Willy grew to an enormous size.

"StegoZord!"

"VelociZord!"

"CeratoZord!"

"Legend Megazord!"

While the trio battled the monster, the other Rangers retrieved the tiny mechanical dinosaur figures. They were tiny color-coded raptors. "Okay, what do we do with them?" male Pink wondered.

Female Blue took the blue one. "It looks like a Dakotaraptor. There's something written along the body," she said. She tapped her helmet, and a digital display flashed before her eyes. She magnified the writing. She quickly handed it to her partner. "RptoZord 2," she said.

She quickly took the others. "RptoZord 1," she tossed the red one that looked like a utahsaurus to the Red team. "RptoZord 3," she tossed the even tinier microraptor to the black team. "RptoZord 4," the pink ventosaurus to the pink team. "RptoZord 5," a green hesperonychus for the yellow team. "And finally, RptoZord 6," was a green dromaeosaurus for the green team.

"And to activate?" male Red asked.

"Just give it a shot?"

He nodded. "RptoZord One! Activate!" he said and tossed it in the air. The small zord began to grow and grow until it was the size of a regular zord. He teleported into the Zord's cockpit.

"RptoZord--Activate!" male Blue, female black, female Pink, male Yellow, and female Green activated their Zords and they grew to full size, some larger than others. Red's RptoZord was the largest, Black's RptoZord was the smallest. "Rptormax Megazord!"

The Red RptoZord changed into a lithe humanoid figure base, its long tail becoming a sword. The Pink RptoZord broke and formed leg armor. The somewhat winged Blue RptoZord transformed into chest armor. The little Yellow RptoZord became almost spiny gauntlets. The four-winged Black RptoZord became a helmet with side flares. Finally, the Green RptoZord transformed into a smaller sword.

The female Red Ranger sighed. "I guess we owe Zita one."

--X--

The monster was even more free with his machine gun leg at giant size. He was also freer with his smoke. He drew a large puff of smoke and blew it at the Legend Megazord. He was obscured in a cloud of noxious smoke. "Where did he go?" Gold demanded.

The Megazord rocked when he began firing at them. They threw up the CeratoSword to block the shots.

The Rptormax appeared behind the monster while it was distracted by the Legend Megazord. It slashed him with the Rptormax Sword and the reverse slashed with the Dromaeomax Sword. Willy cried out and whipped around, firing as he went. The chest shield threw up a crackling forcefield of its own and deflected the blasts.

"That was fabulously awesome," Pink declared.

Willy tried once again to throw up an obscuring cloud, but the wings of the helmet expanded and flapped, blowing the cloud, dissipating it harmlessly.

"Now to finished," Red said and the Megazord hooked the swords behind it's back. "Sharp-tooth

Bazooka!"

"Spike-tail Silo!"

The two large cannons digitized into existence and were aimed at the monster. "Fire!" Six-multicolored projectiles hit the monster in a circular pattern, exploding through him from the Bazooka. "Fire!" Three balls of metallic light were launched from the Silo in quick succession. The monster exploded into a dark dust cloud that blew away in the breeze.

"A bit overkill but satisfying," Black stated.

"Extremely so," Yellow agreed.

--X--

Palace on the Moon

Against her own best interest, Rio couldn't help pointing out the obvious in front of Roki. "Well, that was a lot of trouble for only the Rangers to get new toys."

Roki didn't even look at her. He just held up a hand and flicked it, tossing her into one of the thrones. He whirled around and stalked past her to check on Widow. He was very worried about her.

Rio sulked as he walked past her. She clenched her fist again. She had to find a way to surpass them and get her vengeance for her mother.

--X--

Command Center

Tai, Lani, Billie, Danny, Nyo, and Holly sat in Red One. Holly was briefing everyone on the status of the Alpha Zords. "Out of commission until we can figure out how to remove the gunk. It's everywhere in the machinery. We haven't even been able to disassemble the Megazord," she explained.

"It certainly was convenient that we had back up Zords," Danny said.

"I'm not convinced that Zita would have given them to us if she knew what they were," Lani said.

"Only she knows. I doubt she'd say one way or another," Tai said. He sat back with a sigh. "Okay. Don't drive yourself crazy over it. Danny, take her out," he said.

Danny grinned. "No prob," he said. "C'mon, babe. Let's get some fresh air," he said and helped her out of her chair. She nodded. They left Red One.

Billie stood up. "I'm going to go, too," she said.

"Not to the Lab," Tai said. She made a disgruntled face and tromped out. Tai snickered and shook his

head. He leaned toward Lani. "Weren't we going to do a thing before all this happened?" he asked her.

She smiled. "Mm. It's kind of late for the plans we had," she said.

"Then let's skip the end. Pizza and soda at the new apartment?" he asked.

"Through in some frozen yogurt and you got yourself a date," she agreed.

"Deal."

She grinned and hopped up. She gave him a quick kiss before he stood up, so she didn't have to find a way get tall enough. He chuckled as he stood. He pulled her close and kissed her again. "Let's go," he said. She nodded, and they left the Command Center.

--X--

Somewhere in Outer Space

A small craft traveled through space, heading toward Earth. They were still awhile away. A blond man and a younger man with dark hair manned the craft. The craft was pretty well on auto pilot, so they sat around a tiny recreational area just behind the cockpit playing a card game. Something on the main console began to beep.

Zhane Rahl stood and went to check it. "What is it?" Rex Hart asked him.

Zhane frowned, scratching the back of his blonde head. "I'm not sure. There's a phantom ion trail that seems to be following us," he said.

Rex got up and looked at the read out. "How far away?" he asked.

"A few parsecs, but it seems to be taking our exact path. I'll try randomizing our energy output energy, see if that helps lose it," he said.

Rex nodded. "We'll keep an eye on it," he said. He went back to his hand. Zhane followed. They settled in to their cards again as they hurtled through space faster than light toward Earth.

And, it seemed, something was following them.

-xEnd 03x-

4 - From Outer Space .1

Rena Hart opened her front door when someone knocked on it. On her front entrance was Tai, Mace, and Nathan. "Hey, Re--" She blinked and slammed the door in their faces before Mace could finish his greeting. Tai held back a laugh at his confusion. "Er...wha--?" the door opened again, and it was if Rena had morphed into a different person. Her messy Saturday morning self with no make-up and lounge pants had been magically replaced with her usual fluffy hair, skinny-jeans, impeccable cat-eye make-up.

"Hey, guys. Hi, Nathan. What's up?" she asked with a forced nonchalance and brushed a piece of hair behind her ear.

"We came to pack up Rex's stuff," Tai answered after Nathan waved awkwardly, and Mace moved her out of the way so they could get in. She sent him an annoyed look before wiping her face and putting on a smile again.

"Oh, was that today. You guys are early," she said.

"It's almost noon," Mace said.

"Oh," again, she sent him a dark look. "In that case, I have things. You where know his room and his crap is," she said. "See ya," she said. Then she smiled again. "Bye, Nathan," she said. Again, Nathan waved awkwardly. She waved back and slipped out the front door.

Mace pointed to Nathan, then pointed to the door a few times. "Does she have a little thing for Nathan?" he asked.

Tai couldn't hold his laughter back anymore.

Nathan cleared his throat. "What can I say, I'm big with emos and the scene kids," he said.

"And the ultra-nerds," Mace drawled as he headed upstairs to his cousin's room.

Instead of being offended, Nathan grinned at that. "Them, too," he agreed.

"Let's go, lover boy. We have work to do and I can almost guarantee that Rex probably has more clothes than Tori and Chloe combined," Tai said.

"I believe that," Mace declared. The three of them headed up to the room of the still space bound Rex Hart.

--x--

Griff and Moriko were living in a warehouse near the bay. It had been old and rundown. It may or may not have been victimized by monsters in the past. But now, they had, and have been working on it. Now

it looked like some trendy bohemian, semi-industrial apartment that people through the nose for in downtown. They were giving Taran, Lammy, and Rei the tour since it was finally presentable to company.

There were also aspects that clearly showed they weren't quite normal. An entire corner of the building was devoted to weapons and training, while another area was clearly devoted to magic with weird things in apothecary jars on shelves with books and weird plants. Moriko instructed them to sit in the "living room" area with oversized chairs and sofas strewn with brightly colored throws. She served the Goldsmith siblings some black as death coffee and Rei some tea. "So, what do you think?" she asked.

Lammy grinned. "I like it," she declared.

Taran nodded. "I see you even let Griff have a hand at decorating," he drawled and looked toward the training area.

Griff smirked. "Best looking part of the whole place," he said. Moriko huffed and pushed him playfully.

Taran nodded seriously. "Yes, your sense of aesthetics really shines through with how you arranged all the sharp force objects on one side and blunt force objects on another with the combination weapons in the middle," he praised.

Griff stopped grinning and glanced at his brother then his sister. "Is he messin' with me?" he asked her.

Lammy took a drink of her black sludge before answering. "Yes," she answered. Taran barely constrained his laughter.

Griff leaned forward. "Okay, Pretty. You and me," he said and pointed toward the area.

Moriko patted his arm. "It's okay, sweetie. That's just what big brothers do. Don't pay any attention to him. Your collection has some of the rarest weapons in the galaxy," she said.

Still giving Taran a warning glance, Griff leaned back, but he realized he really would enjoy sparring with him one day. "I'll let it go today," he said. Something tickled at the edge of his senses and he suddenly stood. He glanced at Lammy, who was also getting to her feet. The two of them turned their heads to glance upwards in to the distance.

Rei and Moriko looked confused, then Taran got to his feet as well. "What is that?" he asked them.

His younger siblings shared a look then glanced at him. Before they could answer, his communicator beeped. "There's a monster in downtown. Tai want you to join team two," Fox informed him.

"On it," he said.

"We'll explain it later," Lammy assured him. Griff nodded.

"Sorry to leave so abruptly," Taran said to Mori.

"Go," she ushered.

He nodded and teleported out.

--X--

Palace on the Moon

Widow was feeling so much better after resting for a while. They couldn't find any ill affects so far from Tarantules' magic. She was forbidden from directly confronting him again or going into battle at all. Not that she'd allow herself to be constrained by her husband's rules if she didn't agree with them. It was too risky.

Still, she had to make him, and the other Rangers pay. She checked on Roki. He was working on his project in the lab. She decided not to interrupt him. She paused, wondering where Rio was skulking around. She didn't say so, but she felt that Roki had a little too much sympathy for his family. She supposed that had to do with him being born after his parents had been purified by Zordon's energy. Still, it was his weaknesses that made him adorable. She'd just have to take care of Rio herself if that wretch decided to cross them.

Deciding to leave that matter for another time, she went to Finster's lab. "Mistress," he greeted cheerfully, and bowed to her when she appeared.

She raised an eyebrow. "You're in a good mood, Finster. Do you have something interesting to show me?"

"Oh yes, Mistress. Look at these. Which one do you like better?" he asked, showing her several partially completed clay sculptures.

She studied each one thoughtfully. "This one looks interesting. Finish it quickly and send it to Earth," she instructed with a small smirk.

"Oh, yes, Mistress," he said and picked up the lay figure. He added the final touch and put it on the conveyer belt of the Monster-Matic.

Though she was intent on supervising him, something else caught her attention. Something strange. She went to the look-out and stuck her eye to the telescope and looked around in space as far it could. "Roki," she called out.

He appeared almost immediately. "What's wrong?" he asked.

"Can you see anything?" she asked, moving away from the telescope.

He went to the telescope and looked around. "Hmm. I think I do, but we're facing the wrong direction," he said. What few knew what was that the Palace moved around the moon so that it was always able to watch over the Earth. He took the telescope from its stand. He grabbed her hand and they disappeared on the reappear on another part of the moon. He held the telescope up and looked through it. "There's a

small shuttle coming through the solar system," he said and handed her the telescope.

She looked through it and finally sighted the shuttle. "That's not what I was looking for," she said. Then she saw it. Something rippled the space beyond the small shuttle and fired on it. The shuttle narrowly managed to avoid being hit. She gasped.

"What is it?" Roki asked.

She handed him the telescope and drew a circle in front of her. "I spy with my little eye...that shuttle and whatever's behind it," she said. A shimmery image of magnified space lit up front of them as the shuttle of Kovarian design hurtled toward the Earth. Whatever was behind them only rippled when it fired.

Roki cocked his head. "Should we interfere?" he asked.

"Whose side would you be on?" Rio asked. Their flurry of activity had garnered her interest. She'd kept low the past while. Maybe they were over their moodiness by now.

Widow glanced back at her. "Neither. There's something coming. I don't like it. There's another hybrid on the hidden vessel. And that's impossible," she said, clenching her fist. She whirled around and looked in the distance. "Lammy and Griff felt it as well," she said and disappeared. She reappeared in front of her younger siblings, who'd come to the moon to better see what was happening. "What is it?" she demanded.

Griff crossed his arms over his chest. He gave Lammy a questioning look. She shrugged. "Speak. I'll patch Taran in," she said.

"Titus," Griff said, as if that explained everything.

Widow rubbed her forehead. "Well, that clarified everything," she said. Griff just shrugged.

Lammy sighed. "While we were lost in dimensions, we quickly gained reputations, even at an early age. We were hired to hunt down a fugitive named Dr. Lee Keflen. He was wanted in thirteen dimensions and 3 galaxies," she explained. "Mostly his crimes are related to his mad science experiments on sentient species. We were careless. We got captured and he managed to get samples of our blood. Not much, but enough to create one clone by combining our samples. We didn't realize until after we escaped. T-909 came after us for Dr. Lee," she explained. "We managed to get through the neural programming and let T-909 make his own choices. In the end he helped us eliminate Dr. Lee and collect the bounty. We gave him a name and offered to let him travel with us. He refused and said he wanted to find his own way. We haven't seen him since," she said.

"It sounds like you left on," Widow made a face, "good terms. Why are you so worried now?" she asked.

"Because that's Dr. Lee's Dimensionally Intangible Traveling Science Station," Lammy said with a pale face. Even as she spoke, the shuttle finally managed to make into the relative safety of Earth's orbit, but the thing behind them wasn't giving up. It rippled into existence for a moment. It was a large and spherical. It was rippling because several assault crafts were launched from it, intent on going after the shuttle.

"Rex and Zhane are coming in hot with bogeys on their tail!" she said into her communicator before disappearing in a puff of smoke.

Widow jerked. There was a Power Ranger on that dinky little shuttle. Maybe they should have interfered after all.

"Don't think of this as a good thing," Griff told her. He had no specific ill will toward his older sister. It's just that Moriko had a destiny that put her at odds with Roki, and Griff was going to protect her. If that meant being at odds with Widow, so be it.

Widow pursed her lips. "Trust me. I have nothing but a bad feeling about this. The last thing I need is some lawless outsider interfering with my plans for this planet," she said.

"Don't underestimate Dr. Lee either," he said. "Never let your guard down when dealing with him and whatever's he brought with him." He gave her a respectful, if shallow bow and disappeared.

Roki came up behind her and put a hand on the small of her back. "So, you have another little brother?"

"It seems so. And, he brought a big problem with him," she said. He moved his hand to her shoulder and pulled her close. "Let's go back and see what's happening," he said, holding up the telescope. She nodded and they transported to the look-out to see what was happening on Earth.

--X--

Tai, Mace, and Nathan were amid moving boxes full of Rex's things to the apartment he'll share with Tai near the AGU campus. Luckily the building had an elevator. Nathan finally had enough. "Is there even room for all his stuff in this apartment?" he asked and kicked a box full of clothes lightly.

Tai sighed. "Might have to rent the apartment next door just for all this," he said. His communicator beeped. "Tai here. Go," he said.

"A monster appeared in downtown," Fox said.

"Send Taran and Team 2," Tai said. "Keep an eye on the situation and keep me updated," he said.

"Right," Fox said.

"That means me, right? I get to go fight a monster?" Nathan asked.

Tai nodded. "Go fight the monster," he said.

"Good luck with all this," Nathan said and teleported away.

Mace shook his head. "I think he got the better deal," he said with a sigh. "There are more boxes in the car," he said with a grimace. He cleared his throat. "Um, so Fox...I mean I don't know him, but is he really okay with...everything?" he asked.

Tai sighed. "After he found out about everything, this is pretty much what he did. As for being okay, I can't say for sure," he said. "But, don't let it bother you. There's something we, and yes, even Fox, have learned, it's that things happen for a reason. If he were meant to continue being the male half of the Black Team, he would be," he said. "You should worry more about your partner. I don't know what you did to her but being on Chloe Kennedy's hit list is probably not the best place to be," he said.

Mace rubbed the back of his neck. "Yeah. If she ever deigns to talk to me again, I do intend to clear things up," he said.

Tai nodded. "C'mon. There are more boxes," he said. Mace nodded and followed him out.

--X--

The monster that appeared in downtown Angel Grove was a pirate captain with a luxurious frock coat and a sumptuous feather in his hat. Well, he thought he was stylish. He didn't realize the massive rotting teeth, the empty eye socket swirling with darkness, and the arm that was in fact a hook ended sword made people afraid of him. He swirled the end of a ridiculously large and thin mustache. "Why are running from Captain Crook?" he asked in a very forced sounding accent. He whirled around and thrust out his arm. Watery energy whirled out from him to capture the people and drag them toward him.

They were an ace up his impeccable sleeve when the Rangers arrive. He didn't have to wait long. Seven Power Rangers arrived. "Stop right there!" female Red said.

"Oh, boy. Power Rangers," Crook crowed. He jerked up his good hand and several civilians trapped in watery pods hovered in the air. "Do you dare?" he asked. He grinned a manic, rotten toothed grin. "Putties!" he called.

"Taran, Nathan, Danny. See if you can figure out how to free the people. We'll handle the Putties and the monster," Red said.

Gold, Blue, and Pink broke off from the others.

"So, I get to stay in the girl power group?" Green asked. "That works for me," he said. "Stygian Blade!" he summoned.

"Power Grips!" Yellow summoned.

"Power Axe!" Black summoned.

"Power Sword!" Red summoned.

They met the Putties that were summoned.

Pink tried to levitate to the trapped people, while Blue consulted with Billie and other minds of the Command Center. Gold, however, got distracted before he could try anything when Lammy suddenly tapped into some sort of psycho-magical communication among the siblings.

"Taran!" Blue held out a hand and projected a forcefield just as his own danger sense kicked in, and he reacted automatically when a Puttie hulk formed and tried to smash him with an oversized fist.

"StegoMace!" he summoned the spiked weapon and jumped, using his own strength and momentum to smash it into and send it flying.

"What's wrong?" Red demanded.

"Team One will handle it. Let's concentrate on this problem," he answered her.

She nodded. "Do you need back-up?" she asked, noting the Hulk was coming at him again even as she sent the head of Puttie flying with the flick of her Sword.

"I'll help him," Green said, and broke off from the girls and went to help Gold with the hulk.

--x--

Finally, the last box was brought into the apartment. "Is it really okay to be moving boxes right now?" Mace asked.

"Lani and Taran will let us know if they need help," Tai answered.

"Rex has really been in space all this time? I thought he was doing some kind of work-study thing in Europe," he said.

"That was the point," Tai said. He closed the door to Rex's room. He was done with that. It'd be up to Rex to unpack everything to his own satisfaction. His communicator beeped again, and he got Lammy's message. "Let's get to the Command Center," he said. Mace nodded and they teleported.

When they arrived Nyo was already tracking the shuttle. Even in the atmosphere, the small assault crafts were trying to fire on it. Suddenly it took direct hit. "Teleport them, now!" Tai said. Right before their eyes the shuttle exploded. There was a pregnant pause, but Zhane and Rex suddenly appeared in bright flashes.

Zhane blew out a breath and patted himself down. "I'm alive. Good, Karone would have killed me if I'd died," he said.

Rex was clutching a small box, but otherwise stood stone still. Tai sighed. He went over to his friend and hugged him. "Don't you ever scare me like that again," he said.

"Once was plenty," Rex finally said. "My legs aren't quite working," he said. As bad as it was for those watching, it was even worse for the ones inside the ship. He actually saw, felt, and heard the explosion the split second before he teleported. Not fun.

"You still have legs?" Zhane asked dumbly.

"Let's get them to the medi-lab," Lammy said, and helped walk Zhane while Tai took charge of Rex.

They sat the two men on two beds.

"We're okay, just..." Zhane didn't have words.

"Was it the explosion or did I see Mason in there?" Rex asked. Were his relatives haunting him now since he had a near death experience? Hopefully not. Surely the Rat would give him peace in his final moments.

"It wasn't the explosion. It really was Mason. He's your replacement's replacement," Tai answered.

"But I saw Fox."

"It's a long story," Tai said. "Why don't you loosen your grip on this and relax while getting scanned." He tried to get the box from him.

Rex blinked and seemed surprised he was clutching the box. "Oh. Right. That's for Beez," he said, relinquishing his hold on it. When he relaxed his grip, his hands began to ache.

"They gonna be okay?" Fox asked.

"You almost die in a spaceship explosion and see how you react," Billie said absently as she attempted to analyze how Widow's monster had trapped his hostages.

"Good point," he said. "Oh! Tai! Those deadly little spaceships landed," he called. "Things are coming out of them," he added.

"Well, that can't be good," Tai said.

Beta Z came into the Medi-Lab. She took the box from Tai. "I'll make sure Rex and Zhane rest," she assured him.

"Team 1, Lammy, Sora, with me. Billie, let Holly take over for you," he said. Holly appeared almost immediately in the Command Center. She didn't even ask what the situation was when she took over the console Billie was using.

Tai, Billie, Mason, and Lammy teleported out.

--x--

Red-skinned, insectoid creatures disembarked from the small crafts that had landed in the Park. They spilled out more than should have theoretically been able to fit inside. They looked around their new surrounding and saw people. Mandibles clicked together excitedly, and they walked toward the species in a mantis like fashion.

People screamed and began to run away but creatures were able to spit sticky nets that captured people. "TyrannoSword!" the male Red Ranger cut free several people who were caught up in the nets.

"These things are like, super gross," Pink stated.

"Super gross," Black agreed.

She gave him a quick thumbs up. "Power Fans!" she summoned and used both to deflect the nets and to slice through them when necessary.

"Power Flail!" he summoned and began to use the weapon against the creatures.

"Power Daggers!" Yellow summoned his weapons. He used them at close quarters, and his ability to spring around like a bouncy ball to dodge when the creature tried to trap him.

"Power Staff!"

"Velocirapier!"

"CeratoSword!"

Green, Electrum, and Silver also summoned their weapons. The creatures were almost as tough to deal with as Dark Putties. "Oh, no. This isn't good," Electrum said when she finally realized why.

"What's wrong?" Green asked her.

"They have Rachnaemance exoskeletons," she said.

"Like Win's?"

"But permanent. This is really not good," she said almost as if to herself. "That means Dr. Lee really does have Titus again," she said.

Silver headed off an attack on her from one of the creatures. He slashed him in half with his huge sword. "Well, at least it ain't as tough as an actual Rachnaemance's," he said as someone who regularly sparred against the Goldsmiths and Win.

"Thanks," she said.

"Keep your head in the game," Red warned her.

She gritted her teeth. "Won't happen again," she said and attacked the creatures with a renewed determination.

--X--

Command Center

A very pregnant Karone arrived in the Medi-Lab with Kat and Kim. "You boys are going to give me a nervous breakdown," Kim declared to her other younger cousin, Rex even as she gave him a big hug.

"Us boys?" he asked.

"Long story," she said.

Karone was nearly sobbing as she hugged, kissed, and fussed over Zhane. Kat was consulting with Beez about their scans. "I'm beginning to think I should go back to med school," she declared with a sigh.

Rex was still confused. "Everybody keeps saying it's a long story. What's the story?" he asked. He really was starting to feel normal again. "What's the deal with Mason? Why is he running around in the Black suit?" he asked.

Kim sighed. She briefly explained to him about Mason returning due to his injury while Fox was lost in the jungle with his parents.

"We weren't lost," Fox interjected.

Rex managed to chuckle. "So, it's actually a pretty short story," he said. "So, if he was injured so badly how is he Power Rangering?" he asked.

"Coin finally worked on him," Fox interjected again.

Rex got to his feet. Kim tried to sit him down again, but he shook her off. "I'm okay," he assured her as he walked to the Power Chamber. He looked at the screens. "So, Widow and Roki returned?" he asked.

"Yeah. Worse than ever. See that thing?" Fox pointed to the Puttie hulk. "They can get even bigger," he said. "But that's old news. What we need to know is what those are and why they were chasing you and Zhane," he said, pointing a different screen.

"Trust me, I'd like to know that too," Rex said, clenching his fist. He turned around as there was another commotion. Melody and Zara arrived. Zara made a bee-line to her older brother, but Mel glanced up at Rex. Their eyes met and he smiled at her. She smiled back.

Fox coughed loudly. "Is this really the time for that, Shifu?" he asked.

Melody blushed and ducked into the medi-lab.

Rex smacked the back of Fox's head. "You embarrassed her, Grasshopper," he scolded.

Fox grumbled and rubbed his head.

"Oh! I have an idea," Holly finally said.

"We're all ears, babe," male Blue told her.

"It needs Taran and Winter though, and there's no one else to engage the hulk," she said.

"Not necessarily," Beta Z said and opened the box finally, revealing three metallic Power Coins. A shiny, almost white coin had an armored dinosaur embossed on it. A more brushed, blueish-toned silvery coin had a flying dinosaur embossed on it. Finally, a bronze coin had a many-toothed shark embossed on it. "I'd like more time for analysis, but we're under constraints," she said.

"Okay, but who--" Fox didn't get to finish his question when without hesitation, Rex reached out and took the bronze coin and put it in Fox's hand. The coin disappeared and reappeared as a morpher digitized onto his upper arm. Rex took the brushed silver coin and put it in Holly's hand, even as she tried to jerk away.

"I'm not a--" but the Coin bonded with her right away, shocking her to her toes.

"Hey, anybody there? What's going on?" Blue demanded.

"You're about to get some reinforcements," Nyo stated watching in fascination as Rex picked up the final Coin and it bonded with him.

"Huh?"

"It's Morphin Time! Ankylosaur!" Rex activated his Morpher. A suit began digitizing around him. Black where the other suits were white, lined in gold. Where the other suits were usually brightly colored, his was a super shiny Platinum. A helmet formed around his head, resembling an ankylosaur.

"Nyctosaurus!" Holly activated her Morpher, knowing there was no use fighting it. The suit that digitized around her was black and a brushed silver-blue tone. The helmet that formed was a little back but mostly Titanium with a tall crest resembling the nyctosaurus.

"Megalodon!" Fox eagerly activated his Morpher. A black and bronze suit digitized around him. His helmet was a fierce shark complete with protrusion resembling fins.

"Let's go," Platinum said, and the trio teleported.

--X--

Female Red was getting impatient. She finally broke through the Putties to be able to spar with the monster personally, but he was an exceptional swordsman himself. She strained against his bladed arm. "Aren't you a cute little Ranger, but you can't beat me. Maybe you should get your boyfriend to do it instead," he taunted and kicked her in the middle. She cried out and crashed into the ground.

"Don't listen to that jerk, Lani," Black said and helped her to her feet.

"Yeah. We don't need no bros to rescue us," Yellow agreed.

"Don't worry. It wasn't his kick that knocked me over. It was his breath," Red said with a snarl.

"Anyone else feel that chill go down their spines?" Pink asked. He wasn't having any luck getting the

civilians free, so he lay down cover for the girls. Maybe if they defeated the monster, they'd be okay.

"All the way to my toes," Blue agreed. "Whoa," he said because Holly had her sudden epiphany. "Holly has an idea," he said. "But we need Taran and Winter," he said.

"We're a little tied up," Green said as he rolled out of the way of the Putty hulk's smashing fist.

"Well, what is it?" Gold asked.

Blue shook his head. "Hey, anybody there? What's going on?" he demanded of the Command center.

"You're about to get some reinforcements," Nyo said.

"Huh?" Blue wondered. "I thought Team was busy doing something else," he said.

"They are. What's wrong now?" Gold asked.

"Nyo said we're getting reinforcements," Blue said.

"What reinforcements?" Red asked as she once again volleyed with the monster.

Three unfamiliar Power Rangers teleported to the scene. "Reinforcements at your service," Bronze called out. "Whoa, those things are way bigger in person," he declared.

"Fox!" Black said in surprise.

"Taran, help Winter. Only he can phase into the pods. Now that he's able to phase other people, he should also be able to phase them out again," Titanium instructed.

"Holly!" Blue was equally surprised.

"Go. We'll handle this big boy," Platinum said.

"Rex!" everyone on Team 2 except Yellow exclaimed.

"We'll have the welcome home party later. Let's get this done," he said. He cracked his neck. "I think I've missed this," he said. He held out his hands. "Platinum Kama!" he summoned. Hand-held weapons with wicked-looking scythe-like blades appeared in his hands. He spun them experimentally and grinned beneath his helmet. He ran headlong into the creature, dodging its fists as it tried to smash into him. Instead he hacked into the middle of it.

"I don't think I missed this. I know I did," Bronze said. "Bronze Blades!" he summoned. Familiar yet new single edged swords appeared in his hands. The blades were slightly curved like the swords he'd trained with since he started training. Their weight and length were perfect for him. He didn't hesitate for a moment. He ran, almost passing up Platinum, but choosing to making things easier for him instead, swing the sword, hacking off a fist anytime it lashed out or grew back.

"Titanium Bolt!" Titanium summoned a crossbow that was attached to her arm. It fired metal bolts automatically when she pressed a trigger with her thumb. She didn't have quite the aim as Billie, but she wasn't bad at it. She fired several bolts into the side of the hulk and used them as steps to get to its head. Once she was there, she began firing directly into its cranium. The hulk roared and began breaking apart faster than it could regroup as bolts hit the vulnerable parts of the Putties it was made of.

"Just when I thought she couldn't get more perfect," Blue declared.

"Quit slacking off, lover boy," Pink scolded him.

Gold and Green had finally figured out how to rescue the civilians, and Red had finally had enough of the bad breath monster. "I'm over this so much," she said. "Saurolophus!" she called. The duck-billed R.A.D. digitized into existence.

"What a cute little dinosaur. Is it supposed to be scary?" Captain Crook asked with an odious laugh.

"Yes," She answered. "SauroCannon!" The little robot transformed itself into a single barrel team cannon that seemed to hover on its own power. Red aimed it. Knowing how the cannon reacted, her team helped her steady it. "Sauro Blast!" She fired the weapon. The energy plowed into the monster and he exploded.

A staff was thrown down from the Moon. "Make my monster grow!" Widow shouted.

Captain Crook regrouped with a giant laugh. "Was that it. Now I'm even stronger!" he crowed. He began to fling his arm, capturing whole buildings.

"Let's go," Red said. "RptoZord One!"

"RptoZord Two!"

"RptoZord Three!"

"RptoZord Four!"

"RptoZord Five!"

"RptoZord Six!"

The Raptor Zords began to digitize into existence and teleported their pilots to their cockpits.

"RaptorMax Megazord!" The Red RptoZord changed into a lithe humanoid figure base, its long tail becoming a sword. The Pink RptoZord broke and formed leg armor. The somewhat winged Blue RptoZord transformed into chest armor. The little Yellow RptoZord became almost spiny gauntlets. The four-winged Black RptoZord became a helmet with side flares. Finally, the Green RptoZord transformed into a smaller sword.

"Huh. I have a lot of catching up to do," Platinum said.

"Yep. Go help Tai and the others. I'll stay in case they need back-up," Gold said.

The new trio of Rangers agreed and teleported away.

--X--

Team One, Electrum, and Silver found that the creatures just kept coming from the crafts. "There's no end to them," Silver said in frustration.

"Looks like we need to do something about those crafts," Blue said. "If my readings are right, there's some sort of dimensional anomaly located just inside," she said.

"We'll use the cannons," Red said.

"There's two cannons and three crafts," Black said.

"You can use the Eds," Nyo said.

"Eds?" Black asked.

"The ground recon rads," Titanium explained when she and her teammates arrived. "That's a great idea, Nyo," she said.

"Holly?" Pink asked.

"And me," Bronze said, waving.

"We're not doing this again. Yes, Holly, Fox, Rex. Let's go," Platinum said. "Do your rad thing, whatever that means. I'll just fight weird looking insect things and pretend I know what's going on," he said.

"Good call," Silver said. "Because I don't know most of time m'self," he said and split into three as he engaged the creatures.

"Platinum Kama!" he summoned again.

"Bronze Blades!"

The two of them joined the battle while Electrum and Titanium joined up with Red. "Brontosaurus!" he summoned.

"Petrie! Percie! Peewee!" Electrum summoned.

"Ed! Double D! Eddy!" Titanium summoned.

The dog-sized brontosaurus robot digitized into existence. The three tiny bird-like robots zoomed threw the air and circled around Electrum. Three tiny-cat sized raptors zoomed around Titanium's feet.

"BrontoCannon!"

"PteroBlaster!"

"CompyBlaster!"

Littlefoot transformed into a double-barreled cannon. The pterodon droids connected to form a long-barreled blaster cannon that Electrum rested on her shoulder like a rocket launcher. The three ground recon droids formed a triple-barreled blaster that Titanium had to balance on her raised forearm to aim.

"Fire!"

The three cannons blasted into the crafts and they exploded.

--X--

"Sharp-tooth Bazooka!" After a not so easy battle with the monster, Red finally was able to summon the powerful cannon. The weapon appeared on the Megazord's shoulder. "Aim," she lined up her shot.

The bazooka's mouth opened. "Fire!" Six-multicolored projectiles hit the monster in a circular pattern, exploding through him. The monster cried out as he arced electricity and exploded in a cloud of black clay that dissipated as the Megazord turned away from the scene.

--X--

Palace on the Moon

Widow was very annoyed by her monster being exploded, but she was even more troubled by what may be a rival. The Station rippled into existence once again, as a larger, more sinister looking ship left it. She narrowed her eyes. "Come with me, husband. I want a firsthand look at what's happening," she said.

Roki nodded. The two of them disappeared.

--X--

They reappeared on Earth in time to see the other team of Rangers arrive to help their comrades take care of the creatures that still lingered even after their source was destroyed. They weren't too surprised to see that Rei, Moriko, and Griff were also nearby. What did surprise them was Zita. Hiding from even her sister and draped in what could only be a decorative throw she lifted from someone's couch. Roki made as if to call out or approach, but Widow stayed him and shook her head. He pursed his lips but nodded. It was obvious she would not be receptive to speaking with anyone on either side of the conflict.

The Rangers finally finished off the stragglers, but Electrum stopped them from being very happy. "Something's about to happen," she said and dropped her Morph.

The others dropped their morphs as well. A sleek, sinister black craft landed near them. A bay door opened like a ramp. There was darkness within, and finally movement. Three tiny animals frolicked out. One animal was a puffy white cat with gleaming blue eyes, and three regal tails that flicked around with regal flair independently from each other. Following the cat was a yappy little dog similar to a papillon dog, but it was blue and had a majestic main. Its mouth was full of fangs. Still oddly cute. The third animal was a dainty miniature gray-striped zebra that had a lovely pair of wings.

"Somehow not what I was expecting," Danny admitted.

"Don't be fooled by the cuteness. Those are probably the most dangerous animals you'll ever meet," Lammy warned. She sucked in a breath. Two figures disembarked from the craft. One was a man and one was a woman. They both wore blue-ish steel upper body armor, belts, gauntlets and boots over black combat suits. The woman had dark skin and wore headgear with black braids falling out of it. A whip was coiled on her belt. The man had an eerie familiarity about him. His skin was kissed with gold, and he had bright sky-blue eyes. His hair was dark, short, styled, with a widow's peak. Some sort of electronic implant around his right eye occasionally had lights going on and off. He had two weapons on his back. A long-handled battle-axe and a long-handled flail.

"It really is Titus," Lammy said. She clenched her teeth and her fist.

He turned his head and a smile tilted his mouth. "Fancy meeting you here. Dr. Lee looks forward to getting reacquainted with you and Grifforzer. Of course, he'd also love to meet the rest of the family," he said, looking first at Taran then tilting his head and looking off to where Roki and Widow were standing.

"Why are you ruining my entrance!" A feminine voice asked in a pique. "On your knees! Both of you!"

Titus and the other woman went to their knees as if jerked down. They bowed their heads as a final figure stepped off the ship. A tall, slender woman was dressed in a black body suit with tall black boots. Over that was a metal bodice and gauntlets. Unnatural red hair spilled over one shoulder with a silver band around her head. An implant of some sort also wrapped around the right one of her blue eyes.

"Oh--"

"My--"

"Astronema," Wood, Nathan, and Billie gaped.

"So, you've heard of me," she said with a wicked smile and began to laugh as everyone looked upon the Princess of Evil was standing before them.

x-- End 04 --x-- TBC--x

5 - From Outer Space .2

Command Center

Once Zhane was finally feeling better, he in turn began fussing over Karone. "I'm sorry for worrying you, but I'm fine. I'm more worried about you. It's almost time, isn't it?" he asked and put a hand on her tummy.

"Any day now," she said, so relieved that he was back safe and sound even though their shuttle wasn't.

Word was beginning to get out that Rex and Zhane had returned. Cassie and Jason arrived. Cassie went to greet Zhane while Jason went to view screens where Mel and Nyo were watching with rapt attention. "What's going on?" he asked, mildly concerned.

Mel put a hand over her mouth and looked toward the Medi-lab just to make sure she wasn't seeing things. "It's Astronema," she whispered. The last thing she wanted to do was upset Karone in her condition. "How's that possible?" she asked.

It was Lammy who answered even though Mel was sure even the Goldsmiths couldn't hear her from the Command Center.

--X--

"You're not Astronema. You're just a clone of a woman named Karone," Lammy stated bluntly.

Astronema's face turned red. "I am not! I am Astronema, Princess of Evil!" she shouted. "Nubia! Teach her her place!" she said.

The dark woman got to her feet and gripped her whip. She flicked her wrist, intending to lash Lammy with it, but she held up her arm covered in exoskeleton, and caught it. She wrapped it around her wrist and pulled, pulling the woman off balance. Titus smirked somewhat. Nubia steadied herself and smirked as well. Suddenly the whip was no longer a whip, but a long snake who snapped at Lammy's face with poisonous fangs. Only Taran's quick actions to grab the snake's head saved her. The snake turned into sand and fell harmlessly to the ground.

"That's enough," Astronema said. She looked at them all. "I've greeted these peasants. They'll learn to worship me. Or they'll perish," she said as if it didn't matter which they chose. "That goes for everyone," she called out loudly so that those from the Moon were included. "Zebbo, Nebbo, Gebbo," she called out. Her little creatures came running back and boarded the ship. "Titus, Nubia," she said and entered the ship.

"Titus," Lammy said. "We freed you from Dr. Lee before. We can do it again," she vowed.

Titus looked at her for a long moment. "I believe you," he said. Nubia scowled and pushed him back into

the ship. The hatch closed and the ship rose up and exited Earth's atmosphere, leaving everyone watching.

Widow took Roki's hand and they transported back to the Moon. Zita, too, returned to Tai's house in a puff of smoke.

Rei joined the Rangers, but Moriko and Griff left on their own.

Tai blew out a breath. "There's a lot to cover, we'll debrief in Red One in an hour," he said and looked pointedly at Lammy. She nodded, knowing she had a lot to explain to them.

--X--

Palace on the Moon

Roki lounged in his throne and watched his wife pace back in forth in something akin to a fury. "Are you okay, my love?" he asked.

"No! It's so outrageous it's laughable," she answered.

"You aren't laughing," he pointed out.

"It's so ridiculous I can't even laugh. Astronema? Seriously? She's a washed-up dreg about to give birth to some goody-goody, mealy mouthed offspring. I don't know what that thing is, but it's not Astronema," she said, and pointed in vicinity she guessed the Station was hiding. "If it gets in my way it won't even have a chance to become a washed-up dreg dropping mealy mouthed offspring," she vowed.

Roki had a smile a little at her tirade. "Expectant motherhood has made you even more vicious. I like it," he said.

She whirled around and narrowed her eyes at him. "Why are you smiling like that?" she asked, raising a brow at him.

"Come over here and find out," he said. He leaned back in his throne and patted his lap.

She huffed. "Men. Always only thinking about one thing," she accused. She sighed and went to him. "But who can blame you when you're married to me," she said. She wrapped her arms around him and kissed him, letting him have his way in calming her ire.

--X--

The Station

As her pets frolicked and played, Astronema's bodyguards were on their knees in front of her. "Are you thinking of escaping Dr. Lee, Titus?" she asked.

"Always," he answered. His implant lit up, and his face tensed. He gritted his teeth and endured the pain.

"Never," she denied. "Who are you and who is Dr. Lee? You're my bodyguard. Why can't you just accept that be obedient like Nubia?" she asked him.

"Because I don't want to f--"

"Insolent!" Nubia barked, cutting off whatever he was about to say. "Please, ignore him, my princess," she pleaded.

Astronema squatted down until she was eye level with him. "Because you don't want to what?" she asked suspiciously.

"My princess, shouldn't the pod almost be ready?" Nubia asked, quickly trying to divert her attention.

Astronema frowned and stood. "Don't forget your place again, Titus," she warned and went to a console of the area of the station she used. "It won't be long now," she said. "Nubia, why don't you oversee the operation. Take Titus with you. Make sure he behaves himself," she said.

Nubia got her feet and bowed. "As you command, my princess," she said.

Titus got to his feet. "Never fear, my princess. My sense of self-preservation will always overrule my rebellion," he drawled lazily. The slapdash bow he gave her was far from respectful.

"See that it does," she said. "Go," she said, waving a dismissive hand at them.

They left her command center.

--X--

Command Center

Though not entirely time for the debriefing, Rex was still catching up with the team changes. "Okay, so Mace joined Chloe for team Mastodon and Billie cloned Tori after Manny moved to France with her mom," he asked, sorting it all out in his head.

"I didn't clone anyone. I don't even have an interest in biochemistry!" Billie snapped. Usually, she took that kind of thing in stride. Grouchily, but mostly saw the humor. "I'm going to the Lab," she grumbled and shuffled off.

Rex raised an eyebrow and pointed to where she disappeared.

Danny cleared his throat. "We overheard your sister at the Youth Center bragging to her friends that Nathan came to her house. There was a conversation I ain't goin' into. She's been like that ever since," he explained.

Rex rubbed the bridge of his nose. Mention of his sister reminded him that his family didn't know he was back yet. So much had happened in a short span of time. He decided he wouldn't reappear until after the

debrief, however. "Wait. Why was Nathan at my house?" he asked.

"Tai asked to borrow my mom's SUV," Nathan said. "You have way too many clothes. And that's me saying this," he declared. He glanced toward the Lab. Finally, he decided not to bother Billie right then. She'd probably take his head off.

"Is there such a thing?" Rex wondered.

"I've never thought so," Chloe answered.

"See? No such thing," Rex said.

"It's super convenient how you didn't show up until after we finished moving you," Mace said.

"What can I say? Sometimes things just work out," Rex said and grinned.

"Lucky for you, I'm a super awesome guy and volunteered to help or else Nathan and Tai would have given up," Mason said and added his own smile.

Tori held a hand in front of her eyes. "I think I need sunglasses. It's blinding. Put your dimmers on, boys," she said.

Kiki cocked her head. Though they were smiling at each other it didn't seem all that friendly. "What's going on?" she asked her sister.

"They're trying to out Hart each other. It can get a bit much," Chloe declared. "Now that you're back, since you worked some kind of miracle with Fox, you need to do something about him. He can't fight his way out of paper bag," she said to Rex while gesturing in Mace's general direction.

"What are you talking about, sharp-tooth? I am a naturally athletic genius," Fox stated.

Chloe slow blinked at him. "Did you really say that with a straight face?"

Fox started laughing. "Yeah, I don't know how I managed that either," he admitted.

Rex shook his head. "A lot of the credit goes to Karone and Tai for making sure Fox doesn't get himself killed on a regular basis," he said. He glanced at his younger cousin. His good mood had slipped as he'd watched Fox and Chloe's easy banter. "From my brief observations, he was doing pretty well. But it's true, he needs work," he agreed, nodding thoughtfully.

"He's standing, like, right here," Mace said.

Rex ignored him. "I'm surprised Tai's let it go this long," he said.

"Dude. I've been a Power Ranger for, like, a week."

"Now, I'm even more surprised."

"If you didn't make it back before it became a problem, I would've dealt with it. AJ actually mentioned to me that there was a type of Pai Zhuq that focused on working with a flail like the one he has," Tai spoke up. He'd come out of Red One in time to hear the latter part of the conversation.

Rex nodded slightly. "We'll discuss it later. I think I just remembered something," he said.

"I guess I don't get a say?" Mace asked.

Fox shook his head. "No, not at all," he said. He wondered if it was bad thing that he was glad they had a new person to send to boot camp.

"What did you remember?" Tai asked as Rex went and pulled up footage of the insectoid things that they'd faced.

Rex blew out a breath. "A couple months back, Zhane and I answered a distress call on a desert planet. Although when we arrived to answer the call, the planet was deserted. We located the source of the distress call. We found the spaceship equivalent of a junkyard. The signal was coming from a junked out old shuttle. Creatures suddenly attacked us."

Danny looked at the footage as well. "If it'd been those things, wouldn't you have recognized them sooner?" he asked.

"It wasn't those things, but they kinda were, now that I think about it. Not as strong. Not as insect-like, and definitely no exoskeleton," he said. He frowned, rubbing his forehead. "I guess it was a while after that Zhane realized some of Karone's things were gone. Like innocuous things you don't think about unless you just happen to. Hairbrush, toothbrush, clothes he thought she left behind because they didn't fit anymore, that type of thing," he shrugged.

"Some old hair, skin cells, and spit would be enough. Titus was created from a couple drops of blood," Lammy said. "We should head to Red One so that I can tell you everything I know about Dr. Lee Keflen," she said.

"Okay, I've been wondering for a while now," Rex said. There was a pause as they waited for his question. "What exactly is Red One?"

--X--

Titus and Nubia appeared on Earth. The Station was teleport capable, but Astronema liked making an entrance in her ship. Each had a hand-held tracking device. Nubia was barely able to contain her ire at him. "How dare you!" she snarled and pushed him.

He didn't move. "What, like it's a secret? Even she's not stupid enough not to notice. She's using it to control you the same way she uses this to control me," he said, pointing to his implant.

"You stay out of my face and out of trouble. I'll find the pod and activate it myself," she warned him and stalked off.

He watched her go and put his tracking device in a holster on his belt since he wouldn't be needing it. He could do with a nap. He checked his surroundings. They'd appeared in the wilderness it seemed. He knew better than to seek out Grifforzer or Lammy. The punishment he'd receive for that wasn't worth it.

He began walking, looking for someplace he wouldn't be bothered. He suddenly stopped near a couple of trees whose branches grew to form a natural arch. The whole thing made his senses tingle. A girl walked down a well-trodden trail beyond the trees. She paused when she saw him standing there. Then she continued toward the trees. "If you're here to cause trouble you've come to the wrong place. It's better for you to go play with the Power Rangers," she stated.

"I'm just looking for a place to take a nap," he said.

"You've come to the wrong place for that, too. Me crashing at Tai's house is bad enough. Can't imagine how he'd feel if I brought you over," Zita said drily. Though she had to smile in amusement at the thought of the Red Ranger's house becoming a haven for alien villains. It was too comical. She almost laughed out loud.

Titus frowned at her. "You know who I am," he said. He assessed her again. Dressed in jeans and an oversized Angel Grove High tee-shirt, she wore sneakers and had her dark hair pulled into two low-hanging pigtails that curled slightly at the ends.

She grinned. "You don't know who I am? Did I lose my notoriety that quickly? Not sure I like that," she said. She held out her hands towards the trunk of each tree and pulses of energy moved from her palms into each tree that momentarily lit up the barrier surrounding the property as the pulse rippled along.

She nodded in satisfaction. It was strong and stable. She dusted her hands off.

The pulse really made his senses go crazy and the implant lit up like a Christmas tree, and the pain drove him to his knees. Zita turned to introduce herself after her dramatic demonstration when she noticed his predicament. She bent, a pulse of magic in her hand as she reached for the implant, but he grabbed her wrist. "Don't touch it. It thought I was trying shapeshift," he managed to explain. The pain finally ebbed away, and he wiped a drop of blood from his nose. "What is that thing?" he demanded, looking at the trees.

"A protective barrier. Unless invited in by someone with the proper bloodlines, evildoers aren't allowed in," she said. "Me being the exception," she added.

"I don't like it," he said.

Zita tore a piece of her stolen tee-shirt and pressed it where his nose was still bleeding. "That's the point I presume. It doesn't like your tech," she said.

"I'm not generally a good person without the tech," he said, regaining his feet and wiping the blood off his face with the piece of cloth. "You must be Zita. You look different than how you were depicted in the briefings," he said.

"I'm trying something new. Sloppy high school chic. It's not working?" she asked.

The way he crossed his arms over his chest reminded her a lot Griff just then. He was definitely one of them. She crossed her arms over her chest and returned his look with the added addition of a sassily cocked hip. "This isn't helping me get a nap any sooner," he said. "Thanks for this," he said and put the bloody piece of cloth in her hand and started walking away.

She wrinkled her nose and burnt it with a quick spell. "What are you going to do about your tech?" she asked him.

He paused and glanced back at her. "Whatever I'm told. Tamper and magic proof. Not that I have any magic, but it was made quite clear that it was magic proof," he said. He pulled his device out of hip. Since he didn't have any magic, he had to teleport the old-fashioned way. Since a nap was out of the question, he'd pretend to help Nubia.

Zita watched him disappear. "We'll see about that," she said. She needed a project. Since defeating the Power Rangers was more or less off the table, finding out more about the new bad in the neighborhood and foiling its plans might just be the answer. She wasn't looking forward to it, but maybe it was time to reach out to Moriko. Thoughts whirling in her head, she started walking back up the house. She promised Grandpa tea and a game of Go.

--X--

Nubia found what she was looking for near a camping area. She could hear the inhabitants of this planet in the distance and smell the smoke of cookfires. It actually made her a bit hungry. The pod looked like a bunch of fish eggs in a sack. It was stuck to the side of tree and pulsated. Electrical discharges occasionally lit up the membrane. Those things were so disgusting.

She pressed a button on her screen. The pod began to pulsate frenetically, and arc with electricity. It grew at an exponential rate, sucking all the life from the tree it was attached to. It became a monster. Pinkish, it was an elephantine creature with a mouth for a head open over a brain, a face as it's middle and a long trunk in front. Extraneous trunks sprouted out of him as well. "Trunketeer at your service!" he trumpeted.

"Gather specimens for Dr. Lee," Nubia instructed. She used her newly reformed whip to point him in the direction of the indigenous species were frolicking. He let out a loud trumpet and began crashing through the trees toward the sounds.

--X--

The Rangers listened to everything Lammy knew about Dr. Lee. Including the more or less happy ending she and Griff thought things had wrapped up on. "Except, now I fear nothing turned out how we thought it did. Not only did he reclaim Titus, but it looks as though he sought vengeance against our client," she said.

"What do you mean by that?" Taran asked her.

"Prince Wakheem of the royal family of Adisvaar. It's a tiny but rich little kingdom tucked into a pocket dimension. Dr. Lee had been doing experiments on the people of Adisvaar. Because some of the elite families have the ability to transmogrify," she said.

"Trans-whatsit?" Nathan asked.

"Turn one thing into a different thing," Billie stated. "Like that woman," she said.

Lammy nodded. "The royal family being the most gifted," she said.

The monster alert began going off. "Some kind of creature appeared near the campgrounds by Grover Lake," Nyo told them.

"Team one will go, the rest of you on standby," Tai said as he got to his feet with the rest of his team. They teleported out of the command center.

--X--

Trunketeer was no ordinary deformed elephant thing. He had the ability to throw energy blasts from his main frontal trunk. Ordinary campers, enjoying the last vestiges of summer were going about their business. Some were grilling, some were setting up camps, others were splashing around in the lake. It all changed when a loud earsplitting trumpet was followed by an energy blast blowing a crater in the middle of the campgrounds. People screamed, first at the sudden attack, and then the creature that caused it.

Trunketeer sucked in a deep breath and fired from his trunk again, this time, instead of an energy blast, an energy net was launched and trapped people that were trying to get away. "You are not going anywhere," he said and gave a toot-toot from his trunk. Spotting more fleeing campers, he launched another energy net.

Multi-colored energy blasts knocked him back a few steps. "What was that?" he demanded. He found himself surrounded by Power Rangers. "Who called for party clowns?" he asked and sucked in a breath and let out a trumpet blast, that had the Rangers scrambling.

"Okay, that's a tough one," male Black said.

"Understatement," female Green said.

"What's wrong? I thought Power Rangers were supposed to be tough. Are you scared already?" Nubia asked. She pressed another button on her device. "If you don't want to play with the Chimera, how about a playdate with more Skoria?" she taunted.

A craft landed nearby and opened. The insectoid foot soldiers began spilling out.

"Those things again," Yellow groused.

Red looked around. "Billie, Tori try to get those people free. The rest of you handle those things," he

instructed. "Tyranno Sword!" he summoned and dashed out of his hiding place toward the monster.

Blue and Pink nodded and ran to the trapped campers. "Power Fans!"

"Power Sai!"

Pink tried to slash at the net, but it was like hitting something incredibly hard and her fans rebounded. "Ack!" she cried out.

"Hang on a minute," Blue said and tapped her helmet, beginning to analyze the nets.

Green, Black, and Yellow were left to take on the Skoria.

"Power Staff!" Green summoned her long weapon and whipped it around her body as she attacked the insectoids.

Yellow sprinted forward and jumped. "Power Daggers!" he summoned as he landed and shredded the Skoria that were in his landing zone.

Black back flipped several times as Skoria converged on him. "Power Flail!" he summoned and launched the wicked ball forward, bursting through the creatures before retracting it.

Red battled many trunks, each time he'd slash one off, another would take its place. He surmised the weak point maybe its brain-filled mouth, but it was definitely not giving him a chance to get to it. Trumpeteer trumpeted gleefully and jumped back and blasted him with full force.

With a cry he was launched several yards and crashed into the ground. He gritted his teeth.

"I really hoped the Power Rangers would be better than this," Titus drawled from above him, crossing his arms over his chest.

Red grunted and got to his feet. He dusted his chest off. They eyed each other for a long tense moment. When Titus made no moves to engage, Red dismissed him and turned his attention back to the monster. Summoning his strength, he threw his sword like a spear. It may have whistled as it flew through the air. It cut through everything in its path.

-x-

Command Center

Lani gasped from where she was watching the fight. "That did not look fun," Fox said with a grimace.

"Yeah, but it's Tai," Chloe said and patted Lani's arm.

Lani nodded. Suddenly there was a commotion from the Medi-Lab. "What's going on?" she asked.

"It seems as though Karone is in labor and was ignoring the early contractions," Monitor Beez answered.

"Don't worry. Myself, my hologram, and Kat have everything in hand," she assured everyone.

It seemed the commotion was hologram Beez shooping everyone but Zhane and Kat out of the Medi-Lab.

Rex rubbed his neck. "Man, what a day," he said, but he grinned when they saw Tai single-handedly defeat the monster. He draped an arm around Lani's shoulders. "I know you're thinking how sexy that man is," he said, and she elbowed him in the side. He grunted but noted that she didn't deny it even as her cheeks flamed.

-x-

"Found the weak spot! Aim your fans at the thicker bits of energy!" Blue told Pink as she began to toss her Sais.

"Right!" Pink declared and complied. They began freeing the campers.

"Hey those are my pris--" Trumpeteer didn't get to finish his tirade against Pink and Blue because the flying TyrannoSword impaled him to the hilt. The point of the blade poked out the other side of his body. He began to arc electricity, and stumble around. "What! What happ--" he exploded. The TyrannoSword flew through the air again and landed in the ground in front of Red as the others regrouped.

Titus nodded, looking slightly impressed. Nubia seethed. She pressed a button on her device. The remnants of the Chimera bubbled and boiled and soon exploded into a giant-sized version.

"Come, Titus. I'm sure Astronema will want words with you," Nubia growled and the two teleported out of the path of destruction.

"RaptoZord One!"

"RaptoZord Two!"

"RaptoZord Three!"

"RaptoZord Four!"

"RaptoZord Five!"

"RaptoZord Six!"

The Raptor Zords began to digitize into existence and teleported their pilots to their cockpits. "Raptormax Megazord!" The Red RaptoZord changed into a lithe humanoid figure base, its long tail becoming a sword. The Pink RaptoZord broke and formed leg armor. The somewhat winged Blue RaptoZord transformed into chest armor. The little Yellow RaptoZord became almost spiny gauntlets. The four-winged Black RaptoZord became a helmet with side flares. Finally, the Green RaptoZord transformed into a smaller sword.

"We have to be careful of it's trunk," Blue said.

"Trust me, I know," Red said.

Trumpeteer fired aid trunk at them. The Megazord put up its long sword to absorb the blow, and it was pushed back. The sword was charred. They tried to slash at the monster with the smaller sword, but its trunks were in the way.

"We need the Legends," Pink said.

"Indeed, we do," Blue agreed.

"We're on it," Taran said over the comms.

While the Raptormax battled trunks and tried to minimize damage from its blasts, Gold, Electrum, and Silver appeared. "Legend Megazord!" They summoned as one. The StegoZord, VelociZord, and CeratoZord digitized into existence and began to combine, forming the Megazord. The Rangers teleported on board. "Spike-Tail Silo!" Gold summoned. A stegosaurus faced rocket-launcher looking cannon digitized onto their shoulder. "Aim!" The stego's mouth opened. "Fire!" Three balls of metallic light were launched from the Silo in quick succession. Each hit the monster in the back. The Raptormax took cover as it exploded into squishy looking egg-like things that shriveled up and disappeared when exposed to the atmosphere.

"Thanks for the save," Red said.

"Thanks for the distraction," Gold assured them.

-x-

After the battle Rex finally managed to go home and tell his parents and sister that he'd returned. After a feast in his honor, he retired to the apartment Tai had picked out for him to share. When he opened the door to the room, he'd been told was his, he was almost crushed by falling boxes. Tai snapped a picture of him. "This should make Nathan and Mace feel a lot better," he said,

"Maybe I do have to many clothes," Rex said as he extricated himself from the mess.

Tai grinned. "Man, it's good to have you home," he said.

"It's good to be home and suited up again." he said.

Tai's phone beeped, and he flipped it open. "Karone and Zhane are now the proud parents of a bouncing baby boy named Zeke," he said.

Rex groaned. "He was insufferable when she was expecting. I cannot even imagine how he's going be with an actual baby," he said, but he was smiling.

Tai chuckled. "C'mon, let me help you clear a path to your bed," he said. Rex nodded. He was so glad to

be home.

-x-

Command Center

Even at night, with the celebration of a new legacy amongst them, Billie could be found in the Blue Lab, tinkering with something or other. Nathan knocked on the doorframe before walking in. She peered over her glasses at him. "What?" she said flatly.

"You should go home. Or come over to my place for My Little Pony and Care Bears," he suggested. She didn't answer him. With a sigh he walked over to her workstation and put his hands on hers to stop her tinkering. She glanced up at him. "I don't know what Danny said to put his foot in his mouth and make you mad at me, but if it's about Rena Hart, then there's no reason to be mad," he said firmly.

"I know," she muttered.

He sighed again. "Aside from agreeing not to talk about it, we haven't talked about it. It's time, Billie. Come over to my place," he said.

Billie blushed slightly, much to her consternation. "We don't need to talk about any--" Nathan cut her denial off swiftly by pressing his lips against hers. Well, she supposed, maybe he was right. It was time. Perhaps even well past. She kissed him back.

-x-

The Station

Titus and Nubia were on their knees again. Astronema crossed her arms as she paced back and forth in front of them. "Well, that was an unmitigated disaster. Why didn't either of you engage the Rangers?" she asked.

"I was told to stay out of way," Titus drawled in answer.

Nubia glared at him. "It was just a test case, my princess," she said. "The Power Rangers have no idea what's to come," she said hastily.

Astronema nodded. "True," she said thoughtfully. She sat down in a chair and the three-tailed cat jumped in her lap. She scratched it behind the ears. It began to purr, but sounded discordant and overly loud, making Titus's ears hurt.

Astronema looked up and seemed surprised that they were still kneeling before her. "You can go now," she dismissed. "Run along," she shooed them with her hand.

They got to their feet and bowed.

When they left, Astronema absently reached up and rubbed her temple near her implant. The constant

throbbing in her head seemed to be much worse than usual. "No matter," she muttered. "We'll show them the true Princess of Evil next time," she said in a cutesy voice as she talked to the creature in her lap.

Next time.

-xEnd 05x-

6 - Roundtable Rivals

Scott Dojo, Angel Grove

Although the dojo was usually pretty busy, today was a unique day. One of the training rooms there was occupied by a small gathering of present and former Power Rangers as they eyed three of their newest recruits.

KiKi, Mason, and Holly stood on blue mats dressed in gis while they were eyeballed by Tai, Rex, Jason, and AJ. Also, in the room were several of their friends. KiKi fidgeted and that brought her Tai's attention. Although she wasn't afraid of him, she shrank back a little. She'd been around long enough to be wary of his scrutiny. She offered him a slight smile. "I heard you were trained to use a sword," he said.

"Yeah. Epic fantasy adventure movies are always lookin' for folk that know how to swing a medieval looking sword without looking like a moron," she answered.

He nodded slightly. "Anything else?" he asked. He'd noted that Tori's long-lost sister was pretty competent in a fight.

"A bit of self-defense me and mum took a while back, and some boxing for another movie I was an extra in. Mermaid Kung Fu. Couple of ninja-looking moves when I played a minion once," she answered.

"Take a stance," Jason instructed.

She hastily complied, spreading her legs, bending her knees, and holding her fists up. He cocked his head and glanced at Tai. Tai shook his head. He didn't recognize it. "Boxing or self-defense?" he asked.

"Self-defense," Kiki answered. Jason grimaced. She switched her feet up and brought her fists close to her face. "Boxing," she said and bounced on the balls of her feet.

"Let me have her. You're both too karate for her," Rex said.

Kiki blinked in confusion. What was that supposed to mean? But Jason and Tai seemed to understand what he meant. "Okay. Martial arts with you, sparring with Tori and Chloe, weapons with Wood," Tai decided.

Tori and Wood were among the peanut gallery. Tori knew several different martial arts, so she grinned. Wood sent her an encouraging smile. She nodded, accepting whatever they thought best. Fox was watching with interest. "That means she's the new grasshopper?" he asked.

Rex shook his head and sent Fox an evil grin. "You'll always be Grasshopper," he said.

Fox made a face. "What about the spare tyre?" he asked, pointing his chin toward Mace.

Having been quietly observing the intense scrutiny on Kiki, Mace was startled when he was suddenly the center of attention. "Spare tire?" he asked, mildly offended.

"Ignore him," Tai said and slanted Fox a hard glance. Fox gave him a very respectful bow. While Rex was Shifu, Karone was da jie, AJ was san ge, to Fox Tai was Dashi, his great master. "Mace is a blank slate. The only thing he's ever done is gymnastics," he said breezily.

Mace crossed his arms over his chest and frowned. "You make me sound like a weakling," he said.

"Not weak. Unskilled. AJ's going to change that. He's seems to want to have you as a student," Tai said.

Mace still felt he was being insulted. He had an Olympic Gold medal for Pete's sake. He glanced at AJ. He'd seen him a few times on the periphery of things, but he'd never really talked to him.

AJ smiled. "That's right. When Damien gets back, he can confirm a few things for me, but we will definitely shape him into a Pai Zhuq master," he said enthusiastically.

"That means you get to be playmates with Fox and Danny," Tai said. Danny had been dabbling Pai Zhuq recently.

"Speaking of the lethal siblings Kennedy, why aren't they around?" Fox wondered. "I'm feeling too secure in myself and there doesn't seem to be anyone around to deflate my ego," he said.

"An invitational in Turtle Cove," Tori answered.

"Yeah, because they need more trophies," Fox said rolling his eyes.

Mason frowned a bit. It seemed like Chloe was still unavailable. "Whatever you guys say," he said, holding up his hands and acquiescing to their martial expertise.

Holly winced when it was her turn. "Um, I've just been around martial artists and Power Rangers for years, I picked up a few things," she said sheepishly.

Lani bounded into the room, slightly out of breath. "Sorry," she said. "Family free for all went on longer than I expected," she said, still suited up for a family tae kwan do tournament.

"Who won?" Jason asked.

Lani made a face. "Pua," she complained. "Pua always wins," she grumbled. She noticed Tai scrutinizing her. She blushed and patted herself to make sure she was in proper order. He smiled at her. "How do you think your dad would feel about a new student?" he asked.

Holly blanched. "Can I not?" she asked.

Lani put her hands on her hips. "Are you afraid of my dad?" she asked.

"Uh..."

"I always knew you were a smart girl. Seriously Tai, I wouldn't even sic my dad on Widow," Lani said.

He nodded and went over to her and tightened her black belt, making her color slightly again. "What about you?" he asked.

"Me?" Lani frowned. She peered at Holly. Holly smiled wanly back. She shook her head. "I want to keep being friends with Holly," she said. "If I try to teach her tae kwan do, it'll change our dynamic. I already don't have Manny," she said.

Tai thought about that a minute. "Fine. Holly. Karate with Jason," he said.

Holly let out a breath she hadn't been aware she was holding. "I can do that," she said.

Fox began clapping. "Brava, dashi. Impeccably handled as usual," he said.

"Fox," Tai said in warning. Fox gave him another bow. "Training should start training immediately," he said for everyone.

Rex nodded. "Let's change venues," he suggested to KiKi, but also including Wood and Tori in that statement.

"Where?" Kiki asked.

Rex glanced at Tai. Tai nodded. "Tai's training yard," he said.

"Ooh," Wood said.

"Oh, the flashbacks, the trauma, the tropical vomit," Fox said, covering his face.

"We'll take Fox to my training room," AJ said loudly to Mace.

"We really should before he pushes Tai anymore," Mace agreed.

Jason led Holly out so that she could join a class that was about to begin. Tai watched AJ and Mason herd Fox out, who stopped at the doorway and gave Tai another bow before disappearing. Rex and the rest left as well, leaving on Tai and Lani. He smiled down at her. "Do I need to call out Pua and put him in his place?" he asked her.

Lani rolled her eyes. "It would be a different story if he simply won, but he's sooo smug about it," she complained. She sighed. "After what evil you did to him, he's still not your biggest fan. Not sure beating him in a match would win you any points," she said.

He grinned and pulled her close to him. "Hmm, I like how you naturally assume I'd win," he said.

"Of course. He might be older and bulkier, but you're, well, you," she said and beamed up at him. His ears turned red and he rubbed the back of his neck. He cleared his throat and dipped his head, kissing

her.

He drew back before he got too distracted. "Where are Keone and Noa? You need a strategy," he said. "And I need to see Pua in action," he said.

Lani raised her brows. "I'll text them and see. Noa's preparing for his move to Mariner Bay. I could probably convince Keone to challenge him, though. Noa would be for that," she said. Tai nodded. They left the room to see what they could do about deflating her eldest brother's ego a bit.

-x-

Moriko was snuggled up to Griff on their comfortably cozy sofa. Though they'd been quiet while she flipped through a manga she borrowed from Rei, he'd been quieter, almost pensive. She glanced up at him, closing the book. "Are you thinking about Titus?" she asked.

He wasn't surprised that she'd figured out where his thoughts wandered. "We should have kept him with us," he said flatly.

She shook her head. "He wanted to find his own way. You can't blame yourselves for what happened," she said. She suddenly raised a brow at him as a thought occurred to her. "Say, is he the person you thought of during Valentine's that was a little like you and a little like Sora?" she asked.

Griff hesitated to answer. Then he suddenly found himself thankful to Zita Repulsa as she barged into their warehouse. Wearing another shirt pilfered from Tai and a pair of blue jeans, and ankle boots, she's actually taken the time to braid her pigtails and pin them in buns high on her head and apply a little make-up. Not many would still connect her to evil space witch bent on conquering Earth, but she didn't look like a bon-bon eating couch potato anymore either.

Moriko got to her feet. "Zita," she said, wondering what could have made her sister finally seek her out.

"Yes, 'tis I," Zita said dismissively. "I need your help. Both of you," she said and looked at Griff. "Don't worry, you won't have to think overly much. You just need to tell me everything you know about this Dr. Lee person," she declared.

Moriko didn't know whether to be disappointed that Zita wasn't reaching out because of their shared destiny, or thrilled that she was at least showing interesting in something besides soap operas. "Oh, and why would you want to know about that?" she asked.

Zita wandered around her sister's new residence, taking it in. "I've found a challenge. Someone said I couldn't do something. I'm going to prove them wrong," she declared.

"Like what?" Griff asked, though he suspected he had somewhat of an idea.

"Remove tamper and magic proof technology. There's no such thing as magic-proof. Magic-resistant, sure, but never magic-proof," Zita declared.

Moriko leaned forward slightly. "So, you really came here to learn about Titus," she couldn't help saying.

Zita scoffed. "Keep your silly romantic flights of fancy to yourself," she seated herself regally in an armchair and crossed her legs. "Now, tell me everything," she prompted. "Do try to use words longer than one syllable," she added.

Used to Zita insulting his intelligence, Griff ignored her barbs. He was, in fact, rather grateful to have her help on this issue. Moriko settled in beside him again as he began to fill her in on everything he knew. In fact, due to her probing and pertinent questions, he even told her about things he hadn't even realized he'd observed in the hectic time that they'd dealt with Dr. Lee.

Moriko listened silently. She tried not to smirk and did indeed keep her romantic flights of fancy to herself. Zita, as always, would have to realize things herself.

-X-

Palace on the Moon

Widow crossed her arms behind her back as she walked along the corridors of the palace. She paused at the door of the lab where Roki was still working on his project. "My dear husband. Where has our insufferable houseguest gone?" she asked.

Roki paused and looked up at her through goggles that magnified his eyes. He blinked. "Rio?" he asked. "I haven't seen her," he said. He frowned and removed his goggles. "I have not seen Rio in quite a few days," he said.

Widow sighed and rolled her eyes. "I would say, the less seen of her the better, but I don't trust your cousin," she said.

Roki shook his head. "Neither do I. If she's no longer on the moon, perhaps I can take this opportunity to ban her completely," he said thoughtfully. He set aside his project and removed his magnifying goggles. He turned to his wife with a slight smile. "What do you think?"

Widow was thoughtful a moment then she nodded. "Very well," she said. She drew a circle in the air. "I spy with my little eye Rio Revile," she incanted. The air shimmered but nothing changed. Her face tightened. "I spy with my little eye Rio Revile," she said more forcefully, putting a little more power into the rather simple spell. The air shimmered once again, but still; nothing was revealed to her.

Roki grunted. "There's only one place she could be if you aren't able to find her," he said. "In which case she's gone to ally herself against us. I'll begin the banishment," he said since technically only he was able to do it. "Zita is much better at these things," he muttered.

Widow sighed quietly. "Then ask for her help while Finster and I prepare a gift for the Rangers," she said. She walked out of his lab. She wondered what Zita would do when given the choice of helping her brother or helping the Power Rangers.

Roki wondered the same thing.

The Station

Astronema sat in the control room, legs crossed as she rubbed her head near her implant. She didn't understand why it throbbed so. A display of the Earth occupied a large screen. Why this puny little planet was such a bone of contention, she really had no idea. All things considered; it was a backwater. A collector of space junk. Why had it been under siege for such an unseemly amount of time? The Axis of Evil even nearly met it's end here. Empires, years, centuries, even millennia in the making had fallen here.

She supposed revenge was as good a reason as any for some, but why bother it to start with? That was the question that occupied her mind. She glanced up when Nubia entered. The other woman bowed. "Mistress," she said greeted.

"What is it, Nubia?" she asked, glad to be distracted from her thoughts and the throbbing in her head.

"We have a guest and I cannot find Titus," she answered solemnly.

"Titus can do nothing against his program," Astronema said dismissively. "But what in the cosmos do you mean by a guest?" she asked.

"One of the inhabitants of the moon. She calls herself Rio. She claims she's here to seek asylum."

Astronema cocked one eyebrow. "Intriguing. Let her in. I'll hear her out," she said. A beeping sound interrupted them. "One of the pods is ready. Find it and release it," she instructed.

"Yes, my lady. What about Titus?" she asked.

"Take Gebbo. Find him. Punish him," she said dismissively. I'll handle the guest on my own." Nubia seemed to want to argue but a thought that activated her implant stopped her short.

"Are you trying to disobey me, Nubia?" she asked.

"Never, mistress," Nubia grunted. The pain eased. Nubia got to her feet and bowed. She'd send in the guest and be on her way. The little blue dog creature scurried after her.

Draped in a cloak Rio came into the control room. She gave a reverent bow. "Astronema, Princess of Evil," she said in preferential tones. "I am Rio Revile and I have come to join you," she said.

Astronema got her feet and eyed the woman, pacing around her. "You wish to betray your family and help me?" she asked.

Rio's face tightened with anger. "I want vengeance on those who killed my mother. Those *sisters*. Especially Zita," she spat. "I can do nothing on the moon because of Roki and Widow. She doesn't trust me--"

"With good reason it seems."

"And he's as guilty as his sisters," Rio finished.

Astronema smirked. "Changing allegiances isn't as easy as you may think. Have you noticed that you can't quite connect to your power? Are you feeling like one of your limbs is missing?" she asked.

Rio's eyes widened. The effect had been so subtle that she hadn't really noticed until it was pointed out her. "What have you done?" she demanded.

"Not me. Dr. Lee. Nebbo, Zebbo. Rio will be joining us from today. Escort her to the lab have her fitted," she said. Her other two pets ran forward. They shifted into humanoid creatures, a cat-like woman with her three tails, and an androgynous figure with wings. They each took a resisting Rio's arm and began dragging her from the control room.

"No! You can't do this. I came here willingly!" she protested and struggled, but the two creatures were much stronger than she was.

"You should have stayed where you were or run away. Dr. Lee leaves nothing and no one beyond his control," Astronema said as she sat back down. Her head was throbbing more than ever. Even after the door closed, she could hear Rio shouting in protest and struggling to get away.

-X-

Angel Grove

Getting Keone and Noa on board to finally defeat Pua once and for all wasn't as difficult as Tai feared it may be. Noa, who'd known Tai the longest as they'd been in the same grade since the Lyong's moved to Angel Grove, readily agreed. Keone was a little more distrustful. The day they'd gotten on Tai's bad side when he'd been under the influence of the Sword of Evil still stuck with him.

Noa actually spoke up for him since Lani was obviously biased. "I get Pua still being hung up on it because his pride took a hit but Tai's not usually like that. I'm sure there were nefarious evil alien explanations for that," he said reasonably. "Besides, do you think Lani's taste is really that bad?" he said. Lani frowned at them but decided not to interject.

Keone crossed his arms over his chest at that and eyed Tai. They'd stepped aside to have this discussion, but Tai could still hear every word while pretending he couldn't. "Are you saying he took down Pua like because aliens?" he asked. Even after everything that'd happened in Angel Grove this past year, that seemed like an awfully convenient excuse.

"So, the one time Tai was anything but respectful to you guys is just because he's secretly a jerk and he couldn't hold it back anymore, and I'm too stupid not to notice it any other time?" Lani finally asked drily.

Keone didn't know what to say to that. "Fine. I'll let it go. If he thinks he can help us finally beat Pua, I'm willing to listen," he agreed. "After all, we've been arguing over the fact that he did take him down in one move," he said.

Lani clapped her hands together. "Okay. Tai. We're ready!" she called out.

Tai then invited them to his house for special training. When they arrived, they were surprised to see so many other people there. Grandpa and Zita and even Rei sat on the ground, sharing tea while watching the youngsters training. Zita and Rei patently ignore one another but chose to be on their best behavior in front of Grandpa.

Mason's training was coming along better than AJ had expected, so they'd decided to move out of the dojo. He was sparring against Fox under AJ's supervision. He was still at the basic stage and neither could yet summon animal spirits, but they were shaping up nicely. He was also keeping an eye on Rex and Danny, who, because of their years of experience, caught on more quickly than the other two.

With wooden sticks, KiKi and Tori were sparing with Wood occasionally stopping and helping KiKi when she needed further guidance.

Holly was practicing with Zara and Chloe while Melody watched. Sora was supervising them but when Tai and the Lyong's appeared, he left Chloe in charge. Neither Lyong brother had noticed them at first, but it appeared Taran and Lammy were also there. They joined the newly forming group.

"What is this place?" Keone asked. They weren't at Tai's house. They'd been led away from there when they arrived.

"Training ground. The future home of Tai's martial arts empire," Sora answered with a grin.

Neither Keone nor Pua knew this trio very well. They just knew they all attended AGU and hung around the Youth Center. They didn't enter martial arts competitions or anything, so they weren't on their radar. So, it begged the question, why did Tai invite them over. Even Lani seemed confused. "So, guys, what's going on?" she asked.

"Ask Tai," Lammy answered.

"I've watched all your training sessions," Tai said. Mr. Lyong was nearly religious about recording his children's training and competitions. "I figured out why Pua always wins," he said.

Keone raised a brow. "Oh. Do tell," he said, a note of disbelief in his voice.

Noa just grinned at his skeptical brother. "Yeah, let's hear it," he said.

Lammy rolled her eyes. "You've all had the same training and your skills are nearly equal, but he's older, has more experience, and knows all your weaknesses," she said impatiently.

"Yes, thank you, Lammy," Tai said. "In other words, from today until your next family free-for-all, you'll each be getting special training," he said.

"From...them? Why? Who are they?" Keone asked. Noa was just as puzzled.

"Not every martial arts expert has to show it off on the competition stage," Taran said. "From what's Tai's told me, Keone's sword work and speed need to be improved. That's where I come in. I don't have expertise in any one area, but I can help you break out of your comfort zone. I don't think we've ever met. I'm Taran Goldsmith," he said, holding out a hand.

Keone eyed him. Now that he was getting a better look at the blond farm boy, he did seem like a warrior. "I'm willing to give it a try. Keone Lyong," he said, taking Taran's hand.

"So, what's my weaknesses?" Noa asked.

"Strength and stamina," Sora answered. "My sensei always said there's no dishonor in outlasting your opponent," he said.

"Your sensei would say that. I'm not sure he even has a sense of shame," Rex drawled. He'd wandered closer to see what Tai was up to. "But, in this case, he isn't wrong," he added. Noa nodded slightly. He also went to high school with Rex. Despite his words, he seemed to have a sense of respect for this unknown sensei. Sora chuckled. "I'm Sora O'Keefe. Pleased to meet one of Lani's brothers," he said.

"How exactly do you know Lani?" he asked.

"Taran and Sora live in the same building as Manny's grandmother," Lani answered breezily. "So, does this mean you're giving me to Lammy?" she asked Tai. "What exactly is she helping me with?"

"You're temper," Lammy answered. "You lose it easily with your older brother. It makes you sloppy. I was kind of appalled watching the videos. Couldn't believe it was the same person I knew," she tsked. Lani flushed but knew she probably couldn't dispute that. All her brothers knew how to get under her skin like no one else. But it was only them. Lammy grinned as if reading the direction of her thoughts. "Don't worry. I know exactly how to help you," she said.

Lani sighed, slightly apprehensive. "Fine," she said. "You two have any objections?" she asked her brothers.

"None from me," Noa assured.

"I'm willing to learn," Keone agreed.

"Then, I'll leave you to your new masters," Tai said and moved away from them. With those words each of the Lyong's bowed to their new trainer.

Tai went to the table with Grandpa and the Repulsa sisters. Rei poured him some tea as he folded himself to the ground. "*It's nice for things to be lively*" Grandpa said with some satisfaction and sipped his tea.

Tai nodded slightly as he watched everything. Rex had settled into travelling around the various groups and observing for a while.

"And nothing about it screams 'Power Rangers in training'," Zita said drily.

"Don't you have a secret mission to undertake?" Tai asked her just as drily.

Zita narrowed her eyes. "Seems it's not that secret," she said. "Who told you? Let me guess. The meathead told his sister and she told you," she grumbled.

"Don't put all the blame on Griff," Tai said. "If you need anything from me, let me know," he said. He got to his feet, offered a bow to Grandpa and joined Rex on his wandering. Zita glared at Rei since the meaning of his words weren't lost on her. Rei serenely took a sip of tea.

Grandpa chuckled. Yes, it was nice for things to be so lively.

-X-

It took Widow and Finster awhile to perfect their latest masterpiece. Their newfound rival had given Widow a bit of idea. Once they'd finished their newest creative masterpiece. The Mad Madam was perfected painted queen with long, lusciously flowing locks of lavender, a simple but elegant purple and pink peasant dress, fishnets and glittery purple shoes. His face was pale and perfectly painted to enhance his acid green eyes and deep red lips.

He wafted through Angel Grove looking for his perfect partner. But alas, he was just an expression of perfection that no entity, living or otherwise, could match. So, he took his jealousy out on all the best friends he saw and turned them into the most vicious of rivals. And when they were almost the perfect match, he became really spiteful.

Just watching the tall blonds with glasses and blue clothes drinking coffee as they discussed scientific things was just too much for him. He slinked over to him. "Oh, you two must be the best of friends. Just look at how close you are!" he exclaimed.

Danny and Billie, having been discussing way to power the RAD cannons so they didn't take so long to recharge, were taking aback at the arrival of the Madam. "Uh, yeah, I guess. Can we help you?" Danny asked, wondering why someone was suddenly all up in their business.

"As a matter of fact, you can," the Madam said. He smiled, his lips stretching beyond human means. He produced a wand. "Don't be best friends. Be best rivals," he said and waved his wand and with a twinkle he disappeared.

Billie and Danny blinked. "Was that a monster?" Danny asked.

"No alarms went off," Billie said.

"Still, we better report this," Danny said.

Billie smirked and pushed him. "Me first!" she said and teleported.

Danny growled and teleported, determined to be the first to report what had happened.

The Mad Madam wasn't done making friends into rivals. He bumped into the cutest little pair of twins he'd ever had the pleasure to witness. Matched perfectly in nearly every way. They were hanging around with a bushy haired boy he paid no attention to as he showed off the replacement scooter, he'd finally been able to get. He didn't like them one little bit. He cast his spell and moved on.

Wood barely knew what to do when Tori and KiKi suddenly began to squabble over who would get to ride on his scooter first. They were fine a minute ago, then all of a sudden it was a death match. "I'm his girlfriend. Of course, it's going to be me," Tori said with all the confidence in her body. There was a lot.

Kiki scoffed. "Yeah, well, we're mates and partners," she pointed out just as confidently.

Wood scratched his head. "There's really no need to fight," he said.

"Stay out of this!" they snapped at the same time, giving him identical, hard aquamarine stares. Wood immediately put up his hands.

-x-

Damien had finally returned to the Angel Grove. He and AJ were risking their livers and eating convenience store hotdogs on the way to a racetrack. They wanted to open up their bikes and have a good race. They hadn't raced in a while. Between working in the dojo and Damien's travels for the School, they haven't had much down time. But things seemed to have worked out for them to get a day for fun.

They were propped against their bikes wolfing down the barely edible food when the Madam spotted them. They definitely had the auras of either being the best of friends or the bitterest of enemies. It was intriguing. He moved over to them. "My, aren't the two of you handsome," he purred in greetings.

Both of them paused in their eating as they watched the gaudy guy approach. "Thanks," AJ said weakly.

"Are you guys friends? The very best?" the Madam asked with keen interest.

"What's it to you?" Damien asked.

The Madam shook his head. "Just wondering what would happen if you weren't," he said with an elegant shrug. He walked away but gave his wand a little twinkle before disappearing completely.

Shaking off the encounter, Damien and AJ started to eat again. They noticed they each had about the same amount of food left. A hard, tacit challenge shifted through the air and they wolfed down the food even faster, a competition to see who'd finish first. Afterwards they jumped on their bikes and raced off the track.

-x-

It took Nubia awhile to locate the Chimera pod that was ready to open. That's because it was in the ocean. It floated on the surface of the water. Titus made a face. She'd found him taking a nap in the cool of mountains and forced him to go on the hunt with her. She'd been dragging him around for days and

they finally found it bobbing on the surface of the water like a sickly buoy. "I don't really want to know what thing is going to turn into," he declared.

Nubia scowled at him. "Dr. Lee's great plans are not for you to scoff at," she said.

"Dr. Lee's great plans can suck--" his words stop when she had the audacity to backhand him across the face. His eyes narrowed and his nostrils flared. His hand shot out and grabbed her by the throat and lifted her off her feet, surprising her. His implant lit up and he felt the pain, but since was expecting it, he was able to block it for the time being. "Never are you touch me again. Do not mistake my disdain for the circumstances in which I currently find myself for weakness. Cross that line again, even if I die from this implant, I'll take you with me," he warned. He abruptly let her go and wiped the blood away from his nose.

Nubia fell to her knees and gulped in air. She rubbed her neck.

Gebbo snarled and growled, baring teeth that were too large for it and were getting even bigger as it ran toward Titus and leaped.

A crack of purple lightning made the dog-like yelp in pain and crash into the ground and roll. Titus never saw what caused the lightning or what happened next because of the pain from the implant overtook his senses. And he crumpled.

Nubia gasped and scrambled to activate the pod even as Zita Repulsa appeared. She wasn't the same Zita Repulsa from her time on the moon, but neither was the moping Zita Repulsa who didn't know what to do with her life anymore.

Standing before Nubia, her dark make-up and wide, dark-lipped, dangerous smile was present as always, but gone was her gothic Lolita. Much more practical, dark leather pants, tall suede black boots attired her lower half. The top half showed some signs of her personal style. A white corseted top with frills at the bottom was over by a deep purple tailcoat with puffy top sleeves that buckled at her through and strapped just under her bust and at her waist. Her dark hair was pulled into her usual high pigtailed. She held one hand out, a magic force holding up the unconscious Goldsmith. The other was held toward where the dog-like creature had landed. "No one touches what belongs to me," she warned. The little mutt struggled to its feet, baring its teeth at her.

They were both distracted by the explosion from the water that launched the newest Chimera onto land. Like a sloth, a jellyfish, and Venus flytrap thrown into a pot and mixed together then reassemble again, the sight of it was horrible. Terrifying for humans, vaguely disgusting for Zita. "Ew. At least Finster has a since of aesthetics," she said.

"Anemonemone! Attack her," Nubia managed to yell out hoarsely. She ran to Gebbo, scooped him up and teleported.

Zita pursed her lips. Thinking it best not to try to transport Titus by magic, she just used the magical force to move him out of the way and faced the monster. She held out a hand. "Try me," she said and beckoned him forward.

Anemonemone roared and spit a slimy bubble at her. She produced a sword not unlike Lammy's rapier

and slashed it. It exploded with enough force to knock her off her feet. She rolled to her knees and realized despite its sloth like appearance, it was fast. It was already on the loose. Well, that was a problem for the Power Rangers. She stood and walked over to where she stashed Titus. She knelt down sighed. "Bleeding again. You really are one of them," she said and pulled a piece of cloth from a pocket and wiped his face.

His eyes suddenly snapped open and he gripped her wrist, stopping her. "Do your spidey senses not work with that thing? Don't know the difference between help and danger?" she asked.

His head was throbbing, but he smirked. "Is there a difference when it comes to Zita Repulsa?" he asked. He released her wrist but took the cloth from her to wipe his own face. Her grin widened. "Maybe not," she said as got to her feet. "Do you think you could not get yourself killed before I can figure out how to remove that?" she asked.

He didn't try to get to his feet. He knew he wouldn't make it without assistance, so he crossed his legs and leaned back on his arms to look up at her. "Why?" he asked.

His grin faded and she cocked her head. "Because I was told I couldn't," she answered, and her grin appeared again.

He couldn't help but give a slight laugh at that. "I'll try not to get myself killed," he said. "I don't know if you care or if you intend to spread it around, but Rio Revile went to Astronema," he said and scoffed.

Zita raised a brow. "It was only a matter of time. I'm sure she thought doing so would help her get revenge for her mother," she said.

"Dr. Lee doesn't care about anyone's personal grudges. She should've stayed where she was. She's no better off than any of us now," he said when he was finally able to get his feet.

"What do you mean?" Zita asked. He pointed to his implant. Her eyes widened slightly. "You mean Astronema had her implanted? When she went willingly?" she asked.

Titus' laugh was cold and bitter. "Astronema? She doesn't run anything. Don't for a moment think anyone but Dr. Lee is in charge. He just let's Astronema use the title of Princess of Evil because it suits him. She's a tool, same as me, Nubia, those little mutants, and that thing that came out of the water," he said. "All tools and dispensable," he said solemnly.

Zita nodded. "Will he experiment on her? Rio?"

"Without a doubt," Titus said.

Zita rolled her eyes. "Luckily we can't be cloned, but I don't want some mad doctor decoding any Vilite's DNA," she said. She harrumphed. "Keep your nose clean. I can't always be around to save you," she said and disappeared in a puff of purple smoke.

Titus smiled tightly. There would be punishment. He needed food to replenish his strength so he could handle it. He wandered off to find some.

Since AJ and Damien were off playing with their bikes, Mace didn't have to train with them. He decided to avoid Rex as well and headed away from the Youth Center. Chloe was still playing hard to get so he headed toward a skate park he used to like to go to before he left Angel Grove. Skating was about the only other thing he'd done besides gymnastics. When his mom found out, she'd gone ballistic because how easily he could have hurt himself and ended his career before it had even begun. That was no longer a problem for him, and he decided to see if skating itself had been as fun as he remembered or if it had been the thrill of doing something besides gymnastics behind his mom's back.

He was somewhat surprised to encounter Fox along the way. Fox had a habit of avoiding the Youth Center when he wasn't working. He spent enough time there and didn't feel the need to spend too much of free time there if he didn't have to. He had no particular aim in mind when he left. Free of training or working, he'd just wanted some fresh air. Running into Mace had been unexpected. They greeted each other somewhat awkwardly.

But Fox wasn't known for his ability to filter. "You don't like me much, do you, mate?" he asked as he somewhat feel into step with him.

"It's not the other way around? You don't feel like I took your spot?" Mace asked carefully.

"Maybe at first, but now I get it. I wasn't supposed to be Mastodon. Megalodon fits me so much better. Feels right. I ain't a problem with you. It's Chloe," he said.
Mace stopped in his tracks. "What?" he asked, flushing faintly.

"You don't like me because of Chloe. And she's playing it up. Look, mate, I don't know what the deal is there. It ain't my business. Me and her, you can't even say we're friends. We were partners, we relied on each other in ways that go beyond that. She's fierce, tiny little bombshell, I give her that, but other stuff? No way," he said.

Mace gritted his teeth and crossed his arms. "I'm not sure what exactly you're thinking--"

"Ain't no use denying. Everybody can tell. I'm sure Tai's already said something. Trust me, mate. You don't want Tai to decide it's time for him to get into it. If it interferes and threatens the team, he will. I ain't one to meddle in other people's business but I think I have to be the one to settle her down," he said.

Mace blinked. "Are you saying you're going to help me? How?" he asked, no longer denying he needed it. And maybe Fox was exactly the right person to do it.

Fox nodded. "This involved us Black Rangers. Rex would probably get involved before Tai and nobody wants that either," he said. Mace chuckled. He couldn't argue with that. "Let's think of a plan. Whatever the thorn is, her avoiding it isn't doing anyone any good," Fox finally concluded.

They both suddenly stopped in their tracks and turned to look behind them. The Mad Madam was watching them intently. He pouted. "This is no fun. You aren't friends, but you're no longer rivals either," he complained with a petulant harrumph. He tossed his hair and turned to leave.

"Monster," Fox declared and hit his panic button.

"You sure?" Mace asked. Fox nodded.

"How did you know? What gave me away?" The Mad Madame demanded. He grinned and shifted into a hot pink and purple striped tiger. He maintained his acid green eyes. "Not that it matters," he growled and pounced toward Fox.

Mace pushed him out of the way. He cried out when the monster's claws raked his arm, but it was already beginning to heal.

The Madam growled. He shifted again, turning into a large snake and tried to wrap himself around Mace.

"Bronze Blades!" Fox summoned his swords and charged toward the monster, slashing it. He cried out and sparked, slithering away to shift again to his usual form of glory. "Dark Putties!" he summoned.

"So, is that what's Finster's into?" Rex suddenly speaking from behind him, startled Mace. He glanced around and realized that Team One had appeared along with Rex and Holly.

"We're not getting into that," Tai said. "Let's go!"

"Sorry. I'm not going to ruin my make-up playing with you anymore," the Madam said and twiddled his fingers before disappearing in a twinkle. But plenty of Dark Putties remained.

"It's Morphin' time! Tyrannosaurus!"

"Triceratops!"

"Mastodon!"

"Pterodactyl!"

"Smilodon!"

"Stygimoloch!"

"Ankylosaur!"

"Nyctosaurus!"

"Megalodon!"

The Rangers morphed and engaged the Putties. Red summoned his Tyrannosword. He slashed through several of the Putties as they attempted to smother him. They eventually overwhelmed him and knitted together to form a Puttie Hulk atop him.

Blue was disappearing and reappearing, occasionally throwing her Sai when invisible. She was the first

to notice what was happening to Tai, but she couldn't get over to him to help. "Someone help Tai!" she called out.

Black summoned his flail and was using it to the best of his limited mobility, the Dark Putties were smart. Only Blue seemed to have any actual autonomy to move around as the Putties kept each of them separated from the others.

Pink summoned her Fans and whirled through Putties encroaching on her but even as she escaped one circle, another soon formed around her. "Wood! Can you jump them?" she demanded.

Yellow was flipping and leaping like no one's business, but he still couldn't shake them. "I can't get past them," he complained.

"They've gotten smarter," Green decided as she practically speared her way through several of the putties. She even headbutted one of them and it sent her stumbling.

Platinum's kama were short range weapons, and his metallic skin only managed to fortify himself, but he had confidence in Tai. "Just concentrate on your protecting yourselves," he said.

"That's practically all I can do," Titanium declared, firing cross bolts at Putties who surrounded her.

Bronze sliced and diced, so that No Puttie could get to near him, but he couldn't find an opening. "Shifu's right. Dashi can handle that," he said.

Red held his breath, summoned his strength and managed to get to his blaster. He began to fire rapidly. He kept firing. Puttie Hulk began filling with red energy. It began to crack apart as it glowed. It suddenly exploded in a massive red light that knocked everyone back and took the remaining Putties with it.

-x-

Anemonemone was heading toward more densely populated areas and every human he met, he spat at with a slimy bubble and caught them. At some point, he was detected by the Power Rangers. Team Two and the Legends were dispatched to deal with it while the others rescued went to the rescue of Fox and Mace.

Just as it was to launch another bubble at a huddling old man and his terrified wife, a blast of red energy shot it. It exploded but the Gold Ranger shielded the couple. "Hurry, get to safety," he said. The old couple tanked him and hurried away as fast as their aged frames could take them.

"You guys help the citizens to safety," Red instructed him. He nodded. Silver and Electrum helped him clear the area.

The other Rangers faced the Chimera. "Oh, it's so ugly. It's like the brain bug from Starship Troopers, but worse," Blue said.

"Yeah, the brain bug wasn't attached to a sloth sasquatch," Pink agreed.

"Nerds," Black accused them.

A skoris pod landed nearby and broke open. The insectoid creatures began spilling out to protect the monster.

"Enough chatter," Red said. "Danny, Nathan, take out that pod. The rest of you handle these things," she instructed.

"Right!" they agreed.

Green summoned his Stygian Blade and used it and his intangibility to engage the Skoris. "I really don't like these things," he complained.

"Ditto, bro," Yellow agreed. Being super agile came in handy when all you were fighting with were a pair of little bitey things, but they did seem to pack something of an electric punch that made up for it.

Black summoned her Power Axe and hacked her way through them. She huffed. "I think it's just general consensus that they're horrible," she said.

Blue summoned his Power Lance, but not to use in battle. Instead he was fiddling with something inside of it. It suddenly changed shape, becoming long and narrow and glowed blue. "Ha. Take this Billie," he mumbled to himself. "Nath!" he said and tossed it up to the Pink Ranger and threw up a force-field to protect himself now that Nath couldn't do it anymore.

Pink had been levitating and guarding Blue, but when he caught the Lance, he pivoted midair and faced the pod. He notched the lance like an arrow. He pulled his arm back and took careful aim. He fired and the Lance flew into the pod and exploded in a bright flash of light.

Red was trying to get close to the monster, but every time she tried, he spit a bubble at her and when she hit it, it exploded.

Having finished with the civilians, Gold, Silver, and Electrum rejoined her. "Get your cannon ready," Gold told her.

She nodded but before they could make a move, the Chimera started making a gurgling sound. As if foaming at the mouth, several small bubbles formed but the bubbles kept getting bigger and bigger and it began blowing a huge bubble that kept getting bigger and bigger.

"What's it doing?" Silver asked.

"Protecting itself," Gold said.

"It'd take the brunt if we burst it," Electrum said reasonably.

"There's going to be a lot of damage either way," Red declared. "Everyone behind me. Danny!" she called.

"Right! Gather close. We got you covered, Danny," Gold assured him. Blue nodded and the Rangers gathered closely together.

"Saurolophus!" Red called. The duck-billed R.A.D. digitized into existence. "SauroCannon!" The little robot transformed itself into a single barrel team cannon that seemed to hover on its own power. She aimed it. Her team helped her steady it. "Sauro Blast!"

As soon as she fired, Blue threw up a forcefield that was reinforced by Gold and Electrum channeling magical energy into him. And he needed that reinforcement. The power of the cannon's blast hitting the bubble exploded the world. They only managed to stay on their feet because they steadied each other, but as it was, Blue completely gave out when all was said and done. He lost his Morph and fell back into Gold's arms.

-x-

Command Center

Team One and the Mythic Rangers regrouped after their encounter with the moon monster. "Can you tack it Billie?" Tai asked. "What's the status of Team Two?" he asked Nyo.

"About to go Megazord, but Danny's down," Nyo said as the pooped Blue Ranger appeared in the Medi-Lab. "But we have a weird problem," he said.

Billie no longer felt the urgent need to one up Danny as worry for him set in. "What happened to Danny?" she and Holly demanded at the same time.

"He only needs to rest," Beez assured them.

"What's the weird problem?" Tai asked Nyo.

"There's a huge Pai Zhuq battle going on in the middle of raceway off the interstate," Nyo answered. "AJ and Damien are fighting and it's getting pretty bad," he said and pulled up a screen.

"The monster!" Billie said. "He said something weird to me and Danny about not being best friends but best rivals," she said.

"Well, that explains things," Wood said.

"Explains what?" Autumn asked.

"Why KiKi and Tori almost came to blows over gets to be the first to ride my new scooter," he said. "And then said some things that will be very hard to take back," he added, and sent Tori an odd look.

"I didn't say anything that wasn't true," she said. "I can't help it if I'm better than she is," she declared.

"Right. Definitely monster influence," Autumn agreed.

"We better go stop AJ and Damien," Rex said. "With any luck the monster will be watching it's handy work," he added.

"Right," Tai agreed. "Rex and I will Try and handle AJ and Damien. The rest of you get the Cannon

ready," he said. They agreed and teleported out.

-x-

AJ and Damien were in the midst of fierce battle. AJ's white and crimson tiger was howling and slashing at the massive green and teal lion that belonged to Damien. "Give it up, AJ. You can't beat me. You never could," Damien called out.

"Don't make me laugh. I've only ever let you win so I wouldn't hurt your feelings," AJ goaded.

Suddenly, a huge black and gray bat broke screeched and flew through the big cats, startling them into breaking up the fight and hurting their ears.

Startled, Damien and AJ looked around for the source of the bat. Tai and Rex were approaching them. "Rex?" Damien asked. "Since when can you--?"

"I spent several months in space with nothing to do but talk to Zhane. Practicing unleashing my animal spirit was preferable," he said.

"See, even Rex is better than you, Damien!" AJ called out. Damien fumed and started toward him, but Rex stopped him.

"Let me go, Rex. I need to put this punk in his place," he said.

"Bring it on, hog boy!" AJ called out and stepped forward, but Tai appeared in his path. "I'll apologize later but I don't think we'll be able to talk sense," he said. Before AJ could understand what he meant, Tai struck, and AJ slumped.

Damien wasn't fast enough to prevent Rex from following his lead. The big cats faded and the two of them were teleported to the Command Center.

"You stopped the best show! But maybe there's an even better show to be had with you two," the Mad Madam said, suddenly appearing before them. He waved his wand and smiled triumphantly.

Tai and Rex looked at each other. "You feel any different?" Rex asked.

Tai shook his head. "No. You?"

"Not really. Kinda sneezy for a second but it went away," Rex said.

The Mad Madam screeched. "Why isn't it working?!"

"Perhaps I can explain. Unlike Danny and I, Rex and Tai are already each other's acknowledged biggest rivals. The thing you didn't anticipate is that rivalry and friendship are not mutually exclusive," Billie said from when she joined them. "You two, please duck," she said to the boys.

They all got out of the way just as the male Black Ranger, holding the BrontoCannon fired. The kickback

almost got him, but the others steadied him.

"Now what? Team Two and the Legends are still dealing with the other monster," Billie said.

"I have good news and bad news," Titanium said as the monster grew. It was no longer an elegant drag queen. Instead it was an ugly old man in a frumpy dress and messy hair.

"Dastards! My beauty! How dare you!" he said.

"Let's have it," Tai said.

"We have Mythic Zords. The Alpha Zords are still nonfunctional," she said.

"Go for it. The rest of you head back to the Command Center," Tai said.

Rex nodded. "It's Morphin' Time! Ankylosaurus!" he morphed as Tai and Team One teleported out. "AnkyloZord!" he summoned. Digitizing into existence, the spikey armored silver-white and black Zord zoomed forward and whipped around crashing its tail into the monster. Platinum teleported into the cockpit.

"NyctoZord!" Titanium summoned. Digitizing into existence in the sky, the sword headed, silver and black flying Zord screeched, swooped and grabbed at the hair of the monster. Titanium teleported into the cockpit.

"MegaloZord!" Bronze summoned. Digitizing into existence, the bronze and black shark clamped its powerful jaws around the monster's middle. Bronze teleported into its cockpit. The monster shouted and flailed but managed to shapeshift into a giant snake to escape the assault. When it became humanoid again, he brandished his wand like a sword and slashed at the Zords.

-X-

Despite the absence of Danny, Team Two summoned the Raptormax Megazord and the Legendary Megazord to battle the now humongous monster, but the power increased with its size, and both Megazords were taking big hits.

"How can we get past those bubbles?" Red asked, hoping for ideas from either team.

"I have something of an idea," the male Red appeared in the shared cockpit, in Blue's usual place.

"Tai!" female Red gasped.

"Taran, we're not far from raceway where the other monster is. Let's herd it there. There's nothing out there except the raceway and AJ and Damien already cleared the place out," he said.

"Right. We'll follow your lead," Gold agreed.

"It's not often we get to play together on a Megazord," female Red told her partner. "Let's do this," she

said. Both Megazords began herding the monster, protecting themselves from blow back from the bubbles as much as possible.

-X-

After tussling with the Monster individually for a while, Platinum decide it was time. Besides, they would be having guests soon. "It's time to bring 'em together!" he declared.

"Right," Bronze and Titanium agreed.

"Megazord mode activate!" Platinum initiated the sequence that had his Ankylozord breaking into an armored humanoid base with a club, Nyctozord breaking into a shield and helmet, and the MegaloZord becoming leg and arm armor with its fierce head attaching the Megazord's chest. They appeared in a joined cockpit. "Mythic Megazord!" They announced.

"Is that supposed to scare me?" the Mad Madam laughed but was quickly on the offense when the club turned out to be on a chain similar to a flail and crashed into him.

He sparked and lashed at the Megazord but the NyctoSheild protected it.

"Hey, here comes your soul mate," Bronze jeered as he spotted the other monster and Megazords closing in on them.

The Madam whirled and recoiled. "You've got to be kidding," he said, aghast. "I may be a monster made of clay, but I have my standards," he declared.

Someone how detecting it was being insulted, the Chimera monster turned toward the clay monster and gurgled.

"What did you call me, ugly?" the Madam demanded. Somehow forgetting about the Rangers, the two monsters began to attack each other.

"Not exactly how I expected things to go, but we can work with it," male Red declared. "Summon the Cannons," he said.

"Sharp-Toothed Cannon!" female Red summoned.

"Spike-Tail Silo!" Gold summoned.

"Bone-Headed Blaster!" Platinum summoned.

Each Megazord summoned massive launcher type cannons and aimed them at the fighting monsters. The monsters suddenly still. "Hey, buddy. Get the feeling we just lost?" the Mad Madam asked. Anemonemone gurgled in agreement.

"Fire!"

All three cannons fired into the monster and turned their backs on the ensuing explosion. They managed

to win the day, but things were getting more and more serious.

-x-

Appearing in the Command Center, Tori and KiKi both burst into tears and couldn't apologize enough for the horrible things they said to each other. Whatever the words had been, neither they nor Wood were willing to share with anyone else.

Billie and Holly checked on Danny, who was beginning to wake up.

AJ and Damien also came to their senses only to face not only a stern Tai, but Jason had appeared to watch over his little brother. Tai decided to leave them to the older Red. Even under the influence of the monster, there was no excuse for setting loose animal spirits the size of Zords in a place where there were civilians just to fight each other.

But all was not well that ended well. Although most of the people that Dr. Lee's monster had captured were freed after its defeat, many were unaccounted for. They definitely needed to figure out how to find Dr. Lee's station.

-x-

Outsiders were not invited to the Lyong family free-for-all, so Tai couldn't witness firsthand how his efforts came out, but he quickly heard about. The Lyong's met Tai and their three masters in the Youth Center. Noa had his luggage with him, because he was catching a bus to Mariner Bay to attend a specialized program for aspiring marine biologists who wanted to work with aquatic mammals. It had been his last free-for-all and he couldn't be more pleased.

"Judging by that face, I'm guessing Pua finally lost," Tai said, looking at Noa. Keone didn't seem too pleased, and he couldn't really tell how Lani was feeling.

Noa grinned. "You should have seen his face when he lost. Well, I'm sure you will if ever see the training video, but man. To be there. It's a memory I'll treasure the rest of my days," he said.

Sora cocked his head. "Then, did you win?" he asked wondering if he should be proud of his student or not.

Still grinning, Noa shook his head.

"It was Lani," Lammy said.

Lani shuffled her feet sheepishly and couldn't face Lammy. After Lammy's training, Pua's wheedling would never be able to bother her again. She was also now intimately privy to why Lammy doesn't consider herself to be capital G Good. She wasn't even sure if Lammy was completely lowercase g good.

"Oh, that's why Keone's still put out. He thought he'd be the winner if it wasn't Pua," Tai guessed.

"I tried my best," Taran said. What he didn't add was what every single one of them always thought, the girl for Tai wouldn't or couldn't be ordinary. He also knew Lammy. There was never any doubt that Lani would be victorious against her brothers.

Keone looked at Lammy. "What did you teach her? Can you teach me?" he asked.

Lammy smirked. "Sorry, sweetie. Your fragile male ego could never handle it. Lani wouldn't like it if I broke one of her brothers," she said. She finished her espresso when she saw Winter come downstairs. "Excuse me boys. I'm going on a date with my fella," she said. She threw them a smile and hurried over to him. She walked out with him looking like any girl in love and not hottest, scariest woman either of the brothers had ever met.

"Your friends are weird, I'm taking Noa to the bus station," he said.

Still grinning, Noa waved at them and followed his older brother out. "A date sounds fun. Let me try to make up for having you train with Lammy," Tai said Lani quietly. Lani looked at him then laughed. "You don't have to make up for that. It's what I needed," she said. "But do let's go have fun," she said. She smiled and waved at Sora and Taran and pulled Tai out with them.

Sora noticed Taran watching them. "What's with the look?" he asked.

Taran shook his head. "A weird phrase just kind of appeared in my mind when I was looking at them and it's the perfect description," he said.

"What phrase is that?" Sora asked.

"The Red Lord and his Lady," Taran answered.

"Does it feel a bit like a premonition?" Rei asked from behind the counter. "Your powers are improving a lot," she said.

Taran smiled slightly. "Exactly. A premonition," Taran agreed. Both of them turned toward the counter. She beamed and poured him another espresso. Sora didn't get it, but he didn't have to. He returned the smile Rei sent him as she gave him another spiced tea. He trusted it was a good premonition and the future was brighter than things seemed at the moment.

-x-End 06-x-

7 - Royal Blush

Tori found herself in a predicament as school started up again. The senior that was supposed to be taking over as cheer captain had suddenly moved away just before school started. The coach was in freak-out mode. The almost captain's clique were simultaneously lobbying for the position and threatening to quit the team. The coach was fairly new to the job and it had only been the experience of the members that they'd even placed in the nationals the previous year. She was in over her head and appealed to Tori for help.

Tori wasn't entirely sure how she could help, the team was a mess and with Manny gone, she didn't have many close allies she could appeal to for help on the team. So, she asked some outside allies to meet her at Think Pink.

KiKi was new to school but her previous training and her enhanced, almost precognitive reflexes and agility would be a big help. Chloe was her best friend. Zara and Melody were potential candidates. She even had her eye on her best partner and an ace in her pocket for keeping the older girls on the team without too much fuss especially if a junior became captain.

Mason sprawled on the floor of one of the training rooms in the studio. "Why am I here again?" he demanded.

"Why are any of us here?" Zara asked as she went about the task of cleaning up the room with a dust mop.

Chloe sighed. "It's the yearly cheer recruitment speech," she said. "You know how I feel about it, Tori. I just ain't miss school spirit," she said.

"I haven't even started my pitch yet," Tori said with a pout.

"Cheerleading?" Mason asked. "Seriously? Me?"

Tori held up her hands. "Just let me talk, guys. Okay?"

Nathan clapped his hands together. "Okay. Let's hear the pitch," he said. This wasn't the first time Tori had tried to recruit him either, but she seemed more serious about it this time.

"We're listening," KiKi assured her. Not long ago they'd been influenced by a monster and she'd been the first to say something completely and utterly awful to her long-lost sister. She still bad and didn't let influenced-by-monster be an excuse. She would do whatever she could to make it up.

Tori squared her shoulders. "Chloe, my dearest, oldest, bestest friend," she said, and Chloe winced. She was really pulling out all the stops. "I know you're going to use your lack of interest and your karate tournaments but think about this. You have plenty of karate trophies. You're one of the top female warriors in the country--"

"Get it right, one of the top warriors period. There are plenty of guys who can't beat me either it's just the Association doesn't let them try," Chloe interjected.

"Of course. That just makes my point even more. You have tons of karate trophies already. How about a different challenge? Something to break up the monotony," she suggested.

Chloe stared at her friend for a long moment. "You have a point. But you're not quite there. Go on to the next person," she said.

Tori made a face at her that was part pout part irritation. She'd take that challenge. "Zara--"

"No," Zara said. "I don't want to, and I don't have time. This is one Earth thing I just do not understand and don't want to," she said.

"They don't do sports on KO35?" Mason asked her.

"Of course, we do. Competitions of physical and mental skills seems to be a universal human thing. But this cheerleading thing? No," she said, shaking her head.

Tori put her hands on her hips. "You're lucky I don't have time to educate you on the origins, history, and development of cheerleading as its own sport right now. Fine," she huffed.

"KiKi! You played a cheerleader before. You're athletic and it would be a great way to bond as sisters. We--"

KiKi held up her hands to stop her tirade. "You don't have to try too hard. I'll do it," she agreed.

Tori squeal-giggled and hugged her hard while bouncing. KiKi sighed, hoping she wasn't going to regret this.

"As curious as I am about what tailor-made argument I'll receive, I spare you the breath. I'll do it until you and your coach get things in order. If I find I like it, I might stay on," Melody said. She laughed when she was subjected to Tori's glee. "It's a provisional yes," she reiterated.

"It's still a yes," Tori said victoriously.

Nathan raised his hand. "Same. I'll try it out," he said. "Without Rex to compete against, victory is kinda in the bag this year. I'll consider this cross-training," he said. "Now where's my happy hugs?" he asked, opening his arms.

Tori shook her head. "I'm too afraid of Billie. I'll let her pass on my happy hugs," she said.

Nathan snickered. "I can live with that," he said with a grin.

Mace shook his head. "All right, so what's my argument?" he asked. "Why do you want me?" he asked.

"Because you're pretty," Tori said.

Mace raised an eyebrow. "Excuse me?"

"I'm not pretty?" Nathan demanded.

"You're both pretty, but you have options," Tori said. Nathan nodded in satisfaction.

"Are you convincing me or insulting me?" Mace demanded.

Tori looked sheepish. "That came out wrong. If you join us the seniors will likely stay. You're good-looking and an Olympian. You're really my ace in the hole. Also, you aren't allowed to compete in gymnastics anymore and people underestimate how rigorous competitive cheer actually is. So, you can hide the fact you're doing something similar to what you can't do anymore. If you complain every now and then about your leg hurting, no one will know the difference!" she said with a flourish.

"You're more devious than I thought possible," Mace declared.

"Well, she did lie about her identity for years on end. Not that anyone is blaming her," Nathan said.

"I still kinda blame her," Chloe said.

Tori pouted. "Fox is right, you do have sharp teeth," she said.

Chloe grinned, baring said sharp teeth. She wrapped her arms around her friend, gave her a squeeze, and kissed her cheek. "You already have quite the team, sweetie. If you think you still really need me, I'll reconsider," she promised.

"Hey, I didn't agree to anything," Mace interjected.

"Give in, Hart. Youse gonna do it," Chloe stated flatly. "I gotta run. Dad's coming in for the weekend and me and Danny are gonna eat with him. I gotta get ready," she said. She squeezed Tori again.

"Have fun," Tori said. The others murmured similar sentiments as she walked out of the room, but Mace got to his feet and bounced out after her.

"Chloe," he said, trying to forestall her.

"I ain't got no time for you, Hart," she said as she walked down the steps at a brisk pace.

Mace puffed out a breath. "You should make time. Fox said neither of us want Rex or Tai getting involved in this," he said.

She stopped and whirled around. "You talked to Fox about that?" she demanded, practically spitting fire.

Mace shook his head. "No. Of course not. But Fox isn't stupid. He was your partner for months. He knows you pretty well and can tell your attitude toward me isn't exactly welcoming," he said. "Tai's also

mentioned it," he said.

Her face turned pink. "Why did you have to come back?" she demanded. She turned and stomped down the remaining steps at a brisk pace. "If you were leaving, you should have stayed gone!" she shouted back just before she disappeared.

Mace sighed and turned to head back and stopped. Faces were peeking at him. They disappeared just as he spotted them. Great. Everybody knew there was a problem. He groaned and leaned against the railing. A problem that would never be solved if she didn't even give him a chance to even speak with her.

-x-

Astronema slipped away from her bodyguards. Not that Titus was an enthusiastic one. Nubia on the other hand was overly enthusiastic. The three pets had been sleeping in a little fur pile when she decided she needed to get away from the Station. She didn't take a ship because she'd wanted to be undetected.

Appearing in a quiet place in Angel Grove was a relief she hadn't known she needed, but the pain in her implant eased considerably away from the station. She hadn't mentioned the pain yet because she weighed her options and the occasional headache was inherently better than Dr. Lee playing with it.

The place she'd chosen to visit was outside the main hustle and bustle of the target city. She'd come for peace, not war after all. The last thing she wanted was a confrontation with those

Power Rangers. It was quiet there. The air smelled faintly of ocean which she could hear in the distance. The ground was covered in wildflowers. She followed the sound of the sea and discovered she was standing on a moor that overlooked the ocean. It was a nice place. Even she could appreciate the beauty in it.

She decided then and there that this would be her place and anyone who intruded on it would pay the price of disturbing the Princess of Evil. That decided, she sat down and began making a flower crown.

-x-

Moon Palace

Roki set aside the final piece of his project. Of course, he wasn't done. There was so much to do still, but for now his creations were finished. He sat back with a satisfied grunt and rubbed his aching shoulders. As if summoned, his wife appeared and worked at his tired muscles with her hands. She peered over his shoulder. "I chose very well when picking a husband," she declared.

Roki grinned. "Are you praising me or yourself?" he asked. He shrugged off her hands and turned to her, pulling her close. He nuzzled her neck contentedly.

"Both," she said with a sigh. "What's your next step?" she asked.

Roki was quiet a moment. "The Sword of Darkness contained a massive amount of magic. When it broke, it didn't just disappear. It went somewhere. I must find it," he said. He knew he'd never be able to find the broken pieces. His sisters would have seen to that very well. But he didn't need the Sword.

Widow was thoughtful a moment. "Considering what happened, the Power Rangers are a good place to start. But we can't be too obvious," she said. "And if we're lucky, the imposter and her side will also help us distract the Rangers," she said.

Roki cocked her head at her. "What are you thinking, my devious queen?" he asked.

Widow shrugged delicately. "A surprise," she said. She kissed his cheek before stepping away. "I must consult with Finster. Why don't you rest for a while? When I'm done with him, I'll join you and help you relax," she said.

Roki chuckled, you expect me to relax after hearing that?" he asked. She threw him a wink before she left his lab to find Finster and implement her plan.

-x-

Mace left not long after Chloe and Zara still had to work, so Nathan, Mel, Kiki, and Tori left the pink studio after Tori taught them a few routines and set out. Tori was filling them in a few things they needed to know for try outs. "Do you think Mace will agree?" KiKi asked her sister.

Tori made a face. "I'm not sure. I'll let him cool down and ask later," she said.

Someone came up behind them and KiKi dodged just as an arm draped around Tori's shoulders and made to include KiKi as well. Tori glanced up at Rex then at her sister. Rex gave a wink. "Nice reflexes. You're almost as good as a Goldsmith," he said. "So, pinklings, pinkling adjacent, what's with the long faces?" he asked.

KiKi cleared her throat, mildly embarrassed she only dodged a friendly gesture. "How did you know our faces were long, bro? You came up behind," she said.

"Body language can give away your faces, even from behind," Melody said.

"Ay reckon," KiKi said with a shrug.

"Say, Rex. Mason is your cousin--"

"That's what they tell me. Personally, I don't see the family resemblance," he said. Nathan snorted at that. "What about him?" he asked.

Tori had pursed her lips at his interruption, but then she smoothed her face. "Never mind. Chloe won't even tell me, there's no way you'd know," she said, and her shoulders slumped again.

Rex gave her a squeeze. "It's looking more and more like a Black Team meeting is becoming necessary," he said thoughtfully.

"Not sure if you should go that far," Nathan said hesitantly. "I mean, you know Chloe..." he said.

Rex stopped. "It's not that I want to interfere in their personal stuff, but if it starts effecting the whole team, it won't be me they'll have to deal with. Who'd you rather address any delicate issues? Me or lead-foot Stapleton?" he asked.

Mel cocked her head. "I don't think you're giving Tai enough credit," she said.

Rex chuckled. "That was the joke. I never underestimate our fearless leader boy. He's giving me a chance. I think we both hoping they could work it out on their own, but my former partner is being even more stubborn than usual."

He shook his head. "Anyway. I came for her," he said, pointing at Melody. "So, we'll see you guys later. Don't worry too much about Mace and Chloe. It'll get sorted out one way or another," he said.

Tori nodded and smiled. "You two have fun," she said, slipping away from him and pushing Melody forward. She linked arms with her sister and Nathan and pulled them forward and away from Rex and Mel.

Mel was blushing but Rex chuckled at Tori's usual match-making antics. She cleared her throat. "You wanted to see me?" she asked.

"Do you have time now?"

"For?" she put her hands in her back pockets and tried not to shuffle her feet.

He didn't answer, instead he grabbed her arm and led her away from the street. Finding an accommodating spot, he stopped and turned toward her. "I'm sorry. It's just that I've been thinking about this for months and I don't think I can wait anymore," he said. Before she could ask him what he was on about, he slipped his hands around her waist, pulling her close. He dropped his head and pressed his lips against hers.

Although startled, having also been contemplating this very situation for months, Melody wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed him back.

"Oooh! What a pink scene! I simply must capture it!"

Rex turned, pushing Melody behind him. A monster was watching them with a somewhat jubilant expression on her rabbit-like face. She was covered in dusky, dirty-pink fur with searing magenta eyes. White hair was pulled into an ornate style that made a heart shape with rose-gold roses adorned it. She wore layered and patterned robes of varying shades of pink and her rose and heart motif was very prominent.

She flicked out a playing card and tossed it. Rex's skin covered itself with a metallic exoskeleton as he braced for whatever impact was coming, but the card, growing larger as it spun, passed right through him. It enveloped Melody and captured her inside. The card returned to the monstress. "Another

perfectly pink rose for my collection. As for you," she glared at Rex, "off with your head!" he shouted, and several Dark Putties appeared. They're arms were shaped into large blades. They lunged for the metallic man.

Rosie O'Hare, Queen of Hearts disappeared in a flutter of pink hearts, off to capture more pink roses for her collection.

Rex hit his panic button while he defended himself against the Dark Putties. He finally got a moment to summon his Kama. Holly and Fox teleported in to help him. "Don't worry, Shifu, we got you," Fox said as the skin around his fist began to bulk up.

Holly crawled up the side of the alley and summoned her Titanium Bolt.

"Thanks for the assist," Rex said.

"No worries," Holly assured him and began firing the Bolt at the Dark Putty heads.

-x-

Tori, KiKi, and Nathan got a monster alert not long after parting ways with Rex and Melody. "There's a monster nearby. We go help," Tori said decisively.

"Watch out!" KiKi knocked Tori aside just as a playing card came spinning toward them. Nathan tried to jump aside as well but he wasn't fast enough. The card hit his foot and enveloped him. The card returned to the monster's hand. She turned her pink-eyed stare on the girls. "Outta the way, mustard girl. Give me my rose," she said.

"Not on your life, bro," KiKi said. She activated Tori's morph and jumped to her feet. "Power Grips!" she summoned.

Rosie O'Hare made a sound and disappeared in a cloud of hearts. KiKi grunted. She teleported to the Command Center to regroup.

-x-

After beating off the Putties Rex, Holly, and Fox also regrouped at the Command Center where everyone was gathering to assess the situation.

"It got Nathan. It ignored KiKi and went after me," Tori explained.

"Nathan? Again? He really is a Pink Ranger," Billie grumbled.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Tori asked.

Billie didn't answer, she was already working at console trying to pinpoint the monster. "It's only taking specific people," she said.

"Like Pink Rangers?" Tai asked.

"Mel's not a Ranger," Fox pointed out.

"No but she has a connection to the Pink Quasar Saber," Billie said. "But it's not as easy as that. She's attracted to the color, I think. So far anyone she's captured have been wearing pink in some way," she said, analyzing the footage they'd amassed since the monster first appeared.

"Quarantine the former Pink Rangers with Tori," Tai said.

"They aren't going to be happy about that," Danny said.

"Better discontent than trapped in a playing card," Lani said.

"Very true," he agreed.

"We'll handle that," Autumn volunteered, meaning she and her brother. He nodded in agreement.

"We'll help," Taran said, including his sister.

"Me, too," Sora, knowing his cousin would probably be the first to kick up a fuss.

"Get on that. The main issue is pinning the monster down," Tai said.

"We'll work on that. Trust me," Billie said dangerously.

Tai nodded. "The rest of you can leave, but be on high alert," he warned them.

They agreed and started leaving to work on their tasks. Rex pounced before Chloe and Mace could go their separate ways. He draped an arm over Chloe's shoulder, capturing her. He caught Mace with a significant glare. "We're going to the apartment. Let's go," he said.

"Rex--" Chloe started to protest.

"Now," Rex said a tone he rarely ever used but assuredly brooked no arguments.

"Guess someone ain't the favorite anymore," Fox said. He teleported in a hurry when Rex glared at him.

"Let's go." He and Chloe disappeared, and Mace obediently followed them.

"Well, that's one less thing to worry about," Lani said with a sigh. Tai nodded in agreement.

"I'm going to stay with Tori," Wood said.

KiKi nodded. "Do you want me to go to you place and get you anything?" she asked her sister.

Tori shook her head. "I have Wood. That's enough," she said and smiled at him. He grinned in returned.

KiKi grimaced playfully. "Right then. I have to be home for dinner. I'll come back and see you after," she said. She waved and left.

It wasn't long before the Command Center started becoming a haven for former Pink Rangers while the brains of the bunch attempted to figure out how to pin down the flighty monster.

-x-

While Astronema was on Earth, her control device began to beep. Since she was already there, she decided to find it herself instead of summoning Nubia and Titus. She didn't have the patience for either one of them at the time. The signal was coming from inside the city. There was an old run-down looking strip mall. One of the stores was a restaurant being renovated.

"Future site of Jungle Karma Pizza," she read a sign on the large window that was covered in brown paper. She checked her device. The signal wasn't coming from there. She turned her attention to the aquarium store next door. "There you are," she declared, and a corner of her mouth pulled up slightly. The door of the restaurant opened, and a man walked out. She raised a brow at him when he fell into a defensive stance.

"Astronema!" AJ was flabbergasted to find the neo Princess of Evil standing on the sidewalk outside a friend's restaurant.

She cocked her head at him. "Have we met?" she asked and walked toward him, circling him. "I'm pretty sure I would remember," she said and threw him a wink.

That flabbergasted him even more. He cleared his throat. "No, but I know who you are," he said.

She laughed. "Yes, I suppose everyone on this little blue rock must know me by now. I am, after all, going to rule over it and become it's queen," she declared. "How about it, handsome? Wanna be my king?" she asked him.

Feeling heat crawl up his neck, AJ cleared his throat. "Hard pass. The Power Rangers will stop you," he stated.

She scoffed and rolled her eyes. "Oh. You're with *them*," she said with a sigh.

"Nooo! What happened to that delightful pink atmosphere?!"

Both AJ and Astronema were astounded to find themselves the subjects of the intense scrutiny of a moon monster. AJ didn't know which one was the bigger threat, but then some instinct took over and he knocked Astronema out of the way when the monster threw something at her.

They fell aside and rolled. She pushed him away and glared at him. "Why in the name of this planet would you help me?" she demanded.

AJ shook his head. "I lost my mind. That's the only explanation," he grumbled. He hit his panic button to alert the Rangers to the presence of the monster.

Astronema smirked and got to her feet. She pressed a button on her device and clicked it on her belt. "You want to mess with me, furball?" she demanded. She clacked her wrists together and sparks arched between her hands.

The monster tossed another card just as Astronema tossed a bolt of lightning toward her. The card passed harmlessly through the lightning and captured the temperamental princess, but the bolts also hit their target.

Rosie O'Hare cried out, but she still caught the card. "Another lovely rose for the collection," she grunted triumphantly. She cried out when something from inside the aquarium store shot through the window and covered her with inky black goop that exploded on contact.

AJ watched in horror as something emerged from the store that looked like it walked right out of an early 80s horror B-Movie. It had an octopus as a head and most of its upper torso was covered by tentacles. The rest of it was like sasquatch took a swim in the black lagoon.

The moon monster shrieked. She held out a hand and a staff of hearts appeared. She whirled it and shot at the octopus monster a spray of pinkish energy that made him snarl and wail, his tentacles flailing wildly.

Rosie O'Hare disappeared in a puff of hearts to regroup, leaving AJ there with Octogross the Chimera.

-x-

Chloe was not happy to be pushed around, even by Rex. She growled when they arrived at his apartment. She shook him off as Mason also appeared. "This is none of your business, Rex!" she shouted at him.

"The details, no. The friction in the team? Absolutely," he said and leaned toward her mulish face. "I'm going back to the Command Center. If I find out you left here without clearing the air, it won't be your dealing with. You know that," he said.

Her face turned a mottled pink, but she didn't argue. She crossed her arms over her chest and jutted out her. He took it as she agreed. "Good girl," he said. "Good luck," he said to Mason before teleporting. He'd be first on the scene when they got that monster nailed down.

The silence was long and awkward. "So...what's it going to take to take for you to vent it all out?" Mason finally asked. Now that he'd actually managed to get her alone, he didn't even know to begin solving the problem.

Chloe whirled on him. She snatched up a throw pillow off the sofa, mentally taking a moment to be mildly surprised the sofa in the apartment of two college guys had throw pillows.

"Take your beating like a man," she said.

Mace swallowed then he nodded. "Just do it," he said spreading his arms slightly and bracing himself, clenching eyes.

Chloe made a sound and threw the pillow. It hit him in the middle with enough force to make him blow out a breath but that was it. She sat on the couch. It was a nice couch. In fact, the entire little living room was very tastefully done in muted, cool tones. "Not really what I pictured but somehow not surprising at all," she said drily.

Mace sat in a coordinated armchair. "This is about what happened before I left, right?"

"You mean the thing where you kissed me and left to follow your dreams? That?"

He sighed. "That's it," he said. "I mean, you smacked me when I did it, so why are you mad about it still?" he asked.

She shook her head. "I wasn't mad that you did it. I was surprised, that's why you smacked. I'm mad that you did it and *left*," she emphasized. "Then youse just show up outta nowhere again! I don't even know what I'm s'posed to do that with that much less how to be partners!"

Mace nodded slowly. "I'm sorry. I don't know what to do with it either, but my feelings haven't changed," he said, not sure if that was helpful to the overall situation or not but he thought it needed to be said.

Chloe nodded slowly. "Okay," she said. She nodded more vigorously and got to her feet. "I promise, I won't be such a bench. I just not to figure it all out," she said and offered a slight smile.

He returned the smile. "Good. Good. All I want is a chance to work with you. Anything else, I'll leave it up to you," he said. He got to his feet. "Let's get outta here. There's a monster problem after all," he said.

She nodded. They left the apartment in silence, but it was an okay silence. Not quite comfortable, but not as volatile as before. "Did the monster interrupt the thing with your Dad?" he asked conversationally, attempting to ease some of tension.

She shook her head. "Nah. Lunch was over by then, but I figured Tori was in cheer-mode, so I was developing some film," she said. "Let's head over to the YC. That's prolly where everyone else is waiting to deploy," she said.

Mace nodded. "Yeah. I've already gathered the place is kind of like a secondary Command Center," he said. His communicator beeped and he answered it.

"Mace, Chloe. Hope you got something settled. We need you both to join Team One to handle one of Astronema's creatures," Lani said.

Chloe nodded. "Understood," Mace answered back, but they were taken by surprise when the other monster appeared in front of them in spray of pink hearts. She looked a bit worse for wear, but her eyes sparkled when she saw them.

"Oh! Delightful!" she said and tossed a playing card. The card enveloped Chloe. "Well, that was a nice surprise," she cooed. "Toodles!"

"Oh, no you don't! Power Flail!" Mace summoned his weapon and slung the ball of it. It wrapped around her just as she was trying to disappear. He heaved with all his might to keep her contained and pressed his communicator. "I have the Easter bunny!" he said, grunting with the effort of her struggled.

"I'm not the Easter bunny! I'm the Queen of Hearts! I'll have your head for this!" she raged. She threw her entire weight to one side and it over balanced him and he hit the ground and his grip loosened. She broke free and summoned her staff. She fired her heartfelt energy at him, but a blue force-field went up to protect him just in time.

"Go join Team One. We got this," the male Blue Ranger told him when he bounced to his feet. Team Two and the Mythic Rangers surrounded the monster.

Mace clenched his fist. This is the monster that took Chloe.

"Go. I'll handle her. Trust me," Platinum assured him, a dangerous edge to his voice. Finally, Mason relented and teleported to the site of the other monster.

-x-

AJ just barely managed to dodge when Octogross shot ink at him. He rolled out of the way. The sidewalk bubbled and glopped, but the ink didn't appear to be as explosive as what was shot at the rabbit monster. He exhaled called for help on his communicator.

Help was almost immediate. He was teleported away and Team One appeared. "Oh, sweet mother, it's almost worse than the last one," Green said under her breath.

"Wouldn't have thought that was possible," Yellow declared.

"You would've been wrong," Blue said.

"Should we call in the Legends?" Yellow asked.

"Chloe and Mace should be here soon," Red answered. "For now, let's try and do something with that first," he said. "TyrannoSword!" he summoned.

"Power Sai!"

"Power Daggers!"

"Power Staff!"

They attacked the monster, but his inky attack was really quite hard to predict. It seemed that any of its tentacles could produce it. Each took a hit and had to retreat.

"Power Fans!"

"Power Flail!"

The flail wrapped around the monster from behind, and a spinning pink whirlwind cut into it making it spark. Black and Pink joined their comrades.

"Sorry, I'm late. The other monster got Chloe," Black said.

"When I saw she was occupied, I decided to join in here," Pink said.

Red nodded.

"Where are the creepy insects that usually try and get in the way of us beating the monster?" Black asked.

"The other monster got Astonema. I think anyone else has noticed yet. Let's do this quickly before they do," Blue said.

"Good idea," Black agreed. "Power Blaster!" he pulled his side arm. Blue, Pink, Yellow, and Green did the same. They began firing on the monster.

"Brontosaurus!" Red summoned. The brontosaurus RAD digitized while the others were keeping the monster occupied and contained. "BrontoCannon!" the robot transformed into a team cannon. "Behind me!" he called out. The Rangers regrouped behind him and he aimed the cannon. "Bronto Blast!" The double barrels fired and hit the monster.

They waited but the monster didn't grow. "Is it over?" Green wondered.

It was not. Nubia appeared along with those three little mutant animals. They ran around like crazy things. "Where's Astronema!" the woman demanded.

"We're not the ones responsible for that. You'll have to take that with Widow and Roki," Red told her.

Nubia growled. She took a device out of her belt and hit a button. She and the animals disappeared again as the remains of the monster began to grow.

"Need to learn when to keep my mouth shut," Green murmured to herself.

"RptoZord One!"

"RptoZord Two!"

"RptoZord Three!"

"RptoZord Four!"

"RptoZord Five!"

"RptoZord Six!"

-X-

Team Two was down two bodies, but the Mythics made up for it, but the monster was tougher than she appeared. She seemed to have no desire to use her playing cards on them, but she was more powerful than she seemed. They couldn't seem to get an upper hand on her. The staff weapon she used was powerful, and the way she fought with it was nearly flawless.

"Should we ask for the Legends?" Bronze asked after he was sent flying and crashed into Green.

"You can, or you can let me play." They were both surprised to see Titus standing there.

"What are you doing here?" Red asked. She didn't know whether or not to trust this long-lost Goldsmith clone.

"Apparently, that thing has Astronema, which means anything I do now is fully within my programming to protect her," he said, a frankly frightening grin beginning to stretch his face. He cracked his knuckles as he began to shapeshift. A somewhat familiar exoskeleton appeared on his skin but that was soon covered by black fur. A scorpion-like tail spouted from his back as well as huge feathery black wings. His face grew into a ferocious, fang-filled snout. "Aahh. What a relief," he said. He ran toward the monster and jumped. His wings spread so that he sailed for a moment. He folded them and dropped. She tried to swing her staff at him, but his tail whipped forward and knocked it aside.

The fight was quite ferocious. "As much as he might think so, Titus can't defeat it alone. When you get the chance, use a cannon," Lammy told them over comms.

"Understood," Red said.

"We'll take this one," Platinum said. She nodded. "Ed!" he called.

"Edd!" Titanium called.

"Eddy!" Bronze called.

The little raptors digitized, ran around them and jumped shifted into blasters which the Mythics caught. "CompyBlaster!" They combined the blaster into one long cannon. Titanium and Bronze knelt in front of Platinum and he aimed.

There was an explosion and both monster and alien crashed in opposite directions. "Compy Blast!" Platinum pulled the trigger. A surge of tri-colored energy crashed into the monster and she exploded.

Playing cards went flying everywhere and turned back into people, including Astronema, Nathan, Melody, and Chloe. All seemed to be somewhat dazed.

"We'll get the civilians clear," Red told Platinum. He nodded

Nubia appeared. She collected Astronema and disappeared with her. The Rangers were clearing

civilians even as the monster began to grow. "Noooo! My roses! How dare you! Off with your heads. All of them!" she screamed and began swinging her staff around.

"AnkyloZord!"

"SinoZord!"

"MegaloZord!"

The Mythic Zords appeared and teleported their pilots into their cockpits. The Zord combined. "Mythic Megazord!"

-x-

The Raptormax Megazord was battling against many tentacles of the octopus monster. They'd largely managed not to get too inked because of the RptoShield but the tentacles often entangled the RptoSword.

"We're literally fighting an octopus!" Yellow complained.

"We can't even get enough distance to use a cannon," Black grumbled.

"Maybe we can't, but we're a good distraction, aren't we?" Blue said. She looked at Red.

"You're brilliant, as usual, Billie," Green praised.

"Why aren't you in the cockpit more often?" Pink asked her.

"Danny likes playing with big robots more than I do. What do you think, Tai?" she asked.

Red nodded. "Taran, I need the Legends," he said.

"We're on it," Taran answered.

While the Raptormax took it's beating from the monster, the StegoZord, VelociZord, and CeratoZord began to digitize into existence.

"I was wondering when we'd do something this chapter," Silver said from his cockpit.

"A break is nice sometimes," Electrum responded.

Gold ignored his teammates. "Megazord Mode!" The three Zords combined. "Legendary Megazord!" They announced. "This do it," Gold declared. "Spike-tail Silo!" they summoned the stegosaurus headed cannon and readied it. "We're ready," Gold told the other Megazord.

The Raptormax suddenly pushed out with the shield and knocked the monster slightly off balance, giving themselves room to get away.

"Fire!" The silo fired and exploded into the monster as the Megazords turned away from it.

-X-

Heavily armored, but surprisingly light, the Mythic Megazord gave as good as it got from the murderous monster who kept trying to take off its head. "I'm done with this unlucky jackrabbit," Platinum said.

The Megazord deflected a blow from the staff with the shield and held it down. It crashed the club into it, breaking it into. Rosie screeched. "Bone-head Blaster!" they summoned. They took aim. "Fire!"

The monster exploded and the Megazord turned away.

-X-

The Station

Astronema came to her senses and became agitated. She paced and made inarticulate sounds of anger and disgust, unable to believe what had just happened to her. "Where's Titus?" she finally demanded of Nubia.

"He didn't return. Probably off sleeping, as usual. Or eating. There's nothing else he's good for," Nubia said in distaste.

Astronema raised her brows. "Isn't he the one who fought with that thing to set me free? What did you do?" she asked.

Nubia bristled. "My princess, he only did that so that he could use it as an excuse to abuse his powers," she said.

"But he did so. Let him rest. I don't care. That's what I shall do," she declared. She then pinned Nubia with a hard stare. "I'm also going to rest. I will not be disturbed by you again," she warned.

Nubia cried out and went to her knees as pain exploded in her head. "My apologies, mistress! It'll never happen again," she gasped out. She slumped when the pain eased.

"See that it doesn't," she said and left the control center.

Nubia banged her fist on the floor.

-X-

Titus was indeed resting. He'd found a nice cozy cave. It was out of the sun, a breeze wafted through and he could hear an underwater river below him. He strung out a hammock and even had a store of food. Whenever he could get away from the station, he enjoyed being there. He slouched in his hammock, rocking himself with one foot on the floor while eating a banana. He didn't know why, but he really enjoyed bananas.

His senses tingled slightly but didn't stop his leisurely swinging. A shadow fell over him blocking out what light did come from the cave. "So, you can shapeshift sometimes," Zita drawled.

He wasn't surprised this space witch found his hideaway. He hadn't run into her lately. He thought maybe she'd given up on her fruitless mission to free him of his technological restraints. "Under very specific parameters," he said, and grinned. "Today was a good day. Monsters should capture Astronema more often," he declared. He took another banana from the bunch he kept within reach. Before he peeled it, he glanced at her. "Banana?" he asked.

Zita shook her head. "I'm not partial to sweet things," she said.

"Suit yourself," he said and peeled the fruit. "To what do I owe the pleasure of this visit?" he asked.

Zita tilted her head. He genuinely was in good spirits. It was the first time he'd interacted with her without being grumpy, grouchy, or sarcastic. "I just wanted more information about the restrictions and limitations and how, when, and why they were set aside," she said.

He groaned slightly and finally rolled out of his hammock. "I don't all the technical stuff. I just know if it's to protect Astronema I can do whatever I want without pain," he said and approached her. He leaned an arm against the cave opening in front of her. "Did you really come here to ruin my good mood?" he asked, bending closer to her.

Zita narrowed her eyes and pursed her lips. She put a finger on his forehead, pushing him back slightly. "Don't get on my bad side, Goldsmith. You won't like it there," she said.

"Don't call me Goldsmith," he said flatly. She smirked at him.

He let her think she won and stepped back. "Now you have your answers, Repulsa. Let me eat my bananas in peace. Next time you get on my bad side, I promise," he suddenly grinned wickedly at her, "you'll love it there."

Zita blinked at him. He must be insane. That was the only explanation. She shook his head. "Your last warning," she said and turned away, disappearing in a puff of dark smoke. He chuckled and lounged in his hammock once more.

-x-

Those who'd been captured by the monster were checked out and cleared, as nothing seemed unusual. Then the Ranger's debriefed, though they still hadn't figured out why it captured Chloe or, of all people, Astronema.

"Well, Astronema is Karone's clone, and Karone was a Pink Ranger," Melody reasoned.

"That's convoluted but true," Billie agreed. "But then there's Chloe," she said.

"Must be her sparkling personality," Fox suggested.

"Watch it youse. Just because youse ain't my partner anymore doesn't mean you're safe," she threatened. Fox hid behind Autumn and made a face at her.

"Speaking of partners," Rex said and looked at her seriously and then glanced at Mace.

She sighed. "I won't say everything is a hundred percent okay, but it won't affect the team or our teamwork," she promised. Mace nodded.

"Good," Tai said. "I think we can call it a day now. You don't have to go home, but you can't stay here," he said, dismissing them. And that's just what happened. He himself among the first to leave because he had a date with his favorite girl.

Tori whirled on Mace on Chloe. "If we're all friends now, about cheer...?"

"No." Chloe said. She returned Tori's pout with an air kiss.

Mace sighed. "Okay. I don't think I can take your disappointed face for the rest of the year if I don't agree," he said finally.

Rex caught up to Melody. "So, before, I did it in the wrong order. The movie was supposed to come first," he explained.

She pinkened and looked up at him. "What movie?" she asked.

"The one I was going to ask you see before I got distracted. It's not too late to still go," he suggested.

She smiled. "That sounds great. And, um, don't worry about the order. As far as first kisses go, it was pretty great, although the end was kinda meh," she said.

Rex chuckled. "I'll try and make that up to you," he promised.

"Looking forward to it," she said quietly.

He held out a hand. "Shall we?"

She pinkened slightly again but took his hand. They teleported out of the Command Center.

-x-

Palace on the Moon

Roki turned toward his wife. "And interesting monster, but I'm afraid I don't see the big picture yet. What do we do now?" he asked.

"Now we wait," she said. "Not patiently. That would give the game away. They'd wonder why we're being so quiet up here. Then they'd investigate, and well, it's best they don't look too closely," she said. "Not

that they'd understand what they found, but still," she said. She approached him and plopped herself in his lap. She looked up him with a little pout. "Take me to bed and rub my feet," she commanded.

Roki chuckled. He didn't ask her to explain her plan. She seemed to be having fun. He didn't want to ruin it with too many questions. "Of course, my mistress. Whatever you require of me," he assured her. He bundled her up and stood. They left the Earth in peace for the moment. For soon, if they had their way, that peace would be utterly shattered.

-x-End 07-x-