

Saving Life

Von Atemue

Kapitel 8: Chapter 08

Part: 8/12

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Warnings: angst, romance, suspense, slash, SPOILER for Transformers Movies 1+2

Pairings: Jazz/Prowl, Ratchet/Ironhide

Feedback: Please, yes, I love feedback! =^^=

Summary: When one mech is on the edge of being offlined forever, another mech realises the truth of his past and the destiny he is supposed to have. But what do you do, when you wake up from the brink of death just to stare into the eyes of what is supposed to be the enemy? If you happen to be an ops mech – you collect your answers of course.

Disclaimer: Nothing is mine I don't make money with it and write only for fun and to get better in writing English. ^_^

Helpful Pointers:

Vorn - 83 years

Stellar-cycle – 7.5 months

Orn - 13 days

Joor - 8 hours

Breem - 6 minutes

Astrosecond - 5/6ths of a second

Klick - 1 millisecond

"..." - Speaking

/.../ – Sparkbond speaking

~...~ - comm.-speech

microchip morons – stupid fools

dim-spark – dimwit

glitchhead – idiot

bit-brain – pea-brain

Please note that I've only ever watched the two movies from 2007 and 2009. While I've 'met' a lot of Transformers from the comics and cartoons, that more often than not show up in fanfics I, of course, have not seen them in action and therefore might

not be able to interpret their characters right. I am using mostly what I've learned through the movie (and maybe fanfics) and while catching some ideas here and there I am mainly using my very own ideas for things like energon, space bridges and so on.

And not to forget, much thanks to Taralynden for betareading.

Also, the inspiration for Prowl's and Jazz's past was mostly taken from the fanfic 'Story of a lifetime' written by the wonderful Taralynden. This was taken with her permission. Go and read her story, you'll love it.

When Jazz pierced his spark the second time with the energon blade, creating the illusion of mortal danger for his bondmate in order to help fight off the virus, he noticed that his beloved's antivirus worked a lot quicker than the time before. He saw that as a good sign and pointed out his observation to Prowl when the tactician requested he cease his actions, should Starscream decide that a third time was in order.

The Saleen transformer could not deny the truth of the facts Jazz had to offer for a continuation and allowed him to suffer them both through a third and even fourth time of creating an appearance of dying.

By that time the NEST soldiers and also most of the Autobots realized whatever the Decepticons did was somehow forcing Jazz into his strange actions. Had they been willing so far to hold back any attack on Optimus' order while the dispute was between the Decepticons only, they considered attacking now that those actions endangered some of their own comrades.

However, the saboteur knew that he could not risk Starscream, who by now was again the holder of Shockwave's little virus remote control, to get away with an intact remote if he ever wanted to free his bondmate. Therefore he requested a delay, just before he had to suffer through a fourth round of sparkpain.

Not very surprisingly his request, forwarded by Ratchet - the only one near enough the saboteur to listen to his near-silent words - was met with disbelief and unwillingness. However Optimus again intervened, declaring his faith in the decision of the Autobot head of special ops and ordered the whole NEST-team to restrain any attacks, but stay on alert.

By then Starscream seemed to finally have realized something because instead of trying it a fifth time, as his impatient nature would have suggested, he kept a tight grip on the tool while throwing repeated quick glances from the heaving form of Barricade to Jazz and back.

Jazz could see the moment some piece of the puzzle seemed to piece together in the seekers processor, when his optics suddenly brightened and he even hold away the device from the impatient Megatron who was demanding his second in command start another round.

"No", everyone could hear the trine leader snapping at his leader, something that happened very seldom. The seeker was known for his backstabbing and arrogance but he also had a very healthy sense of self-preservation, one of the reasons that also caused him to be famous for being a coward.

"You dare to deny me, Starscream?" Megatron growled out threateningly, his hands grabbing for the device and again he was denied by his second in command.

"In this case, yes", Starscream retorted, desperately trying to explain his reasons to save his poor body from another round of abuse. "I can see it now. The way Barricade clutches his spark, while it seems that this other Autobot scum is piercing his heart. Shockwave always insisted that we not use this virus for bondmates, because sparkbonds are still rather unknown and an unreliable variable for a virus like this. Sparbonded define themselves outside their own processor and that's a rather big risk we cannot take."

Again the second in command glanced over at the grimacing Jazz who was watching him like a hawk, and the poor form of Barricade, who had finally stopped twitching and was sitting with his back against the wall of the still intact part of the barn.

"What does that stupidity have to do with anything?" Megatron rumbled rather displeased, his impatience now causing him to overlook what his second in command concluded.

"It's obvious, isn't it?" Starscream sneered over at the Autobots and let his hands sweep in demonstration from Jazz to Barricade. "He is clutching his sparkcase while that other idiot is torturing his own spark. They are bonded. This would certainly explain why we had so many problems with Barricade, contrary to our expectations. That saboteur's actions are triggering something that causes Barricade to fight the virus and force it dormant."

"I see", Megatron finally seemed to calm down a bit and threw a quick glance from the wary saboteur, to the shocked looking Autobots over to where a rather tense Saleen transformer was leaning against the wall. Then he quickly grabbed the device from the seekers hands, catching him by surprise and triggered another activation of the virus, grinning cruelly down at his gaping second in command.

"They might have found a way to fight this virus with their bond, but it obviously is a rather painful one", he deigned to explain his actions. "So we just need to keep going until one of them is finally giving up in face of the pain."

/He... is right, you... know?/ Prowl was able to brokenly send his thoughts over the bond. After four rounds of spark deep pain the tactician felt rather wary and he knew that Jazz must feel even worse with his strong injury and the original pain he caused by piercing his spark.

/Jazz, you tried to protect me, to save our life here, but I can't allow you to cause yourself pain again and again just to prevent the virus from taking over. I can't watch you suffering like this./

He could immediately feel the answering refusal of Jazz to give up that easily and then he received images and calculations that promised a resolution of a different kind, a goal that they had nearly reached.

/Apart from wha' this does t' meh, would ya be able t' go through this one more time?/ Jazz asked rather forcefully. /Ah know ya want meh t' stop hurting an' ya insecure about th' success. But allow meh t' try one last time an' Ah promise Ah will end it all, if tha' doesn't work either. As long as ya feel yerself ready to suffer one las' time. Ah can't just give up yet./

Prowl considered his mate's request while trying to ignore the burning pain and heat the new activation of the virus caused him to suffer through. It felt a lot less painful than the first time anyway and he was somehow certain that Jazz was right. Something was happening. Each time period when he succeeded in forcing the virus back into dormancy, was getting smaller and smaller.

He heaved a sigh through his vents and relented.

/One last time, Jazz. I can bear it one last time, but if that does not bring the results you wish for, then I want you to end your suffering. How you can control yourself like that while experiencing so much pain will always be beyond me anyway./

/Thank ya, love!/ Jazz replied, sending his gratitude, pride and love through their bond before he concentrated on the blade in his hands again. Prowl braced himself for what he knew would be the last round of intensive pain. He was determined to see this through, now that they had come so far, but he could not deny how surprised he was of himself, that he kept up with this as long as he had.

A long time ago, Jazz had expressed his concern to prevent the tactician to ever suffer from Decepticon torture. It had been first and foremost a selfish wish for the tactician's safety. Yet, the unspoken lack of faith in Prowl's pain endurance was obvious if one asked him and he remembered very well how discouraged he had been of Jazz's judgment. Yet not long ago after that, he was forced to admit that his bondmate had been right from the beginning as he was beaten to the ground by an enemy and already wishing it would end.

He was created and educated to be a tactician, to fight with his mind most of all. Therefore it was only logical, that he was not well in enduring pain. However, Prowl guessed he had grown since those days. He had his fair share in being beaten up, though no torture, and with his body's unwilling change into what was now known as Barricade, it seemed he simply had learned to endure a lot more than he ever expected.

Of course, that did not mean he would ever be able to meet such horrible pain as calm and controlled as his beloved bondmate did, who just now pushed the tip of the blade back into his spark. Pain exploded inside Prowl's own spark and he could not help but groan and twitch as his body lost its balance and fell from his sitting position to the ground once again.

Through a haze of pain he could hear Starscream howling in rage, ranting something about unforeseen factors that could destroy everything. On the other side of their bond, which was right now as open and clear to him than ever before, he could listen to Ratchet muttering curses while trying to again sit stock still to not distract Jazz's concentration.

The saboteur himself was torn between concentrating on his iron hard will to not give in to the pain or watching Prowl through his optics and the bond for any unusual reaction besides the expected suffering that resonated from two bonded sparks.

Prowl only started to realize what Jazz had been hoping for when instead of his body slowly cooling down after his antivirus fought successfully against the virus, he could feel himself heat up even more. He shuddered, now from not only pain but heat as well and then, within astroseconds, his tanks quivered and he didn't realize they had emptied themselves, until he was nearly through with retching out his insides.

Only after there was nothing of his nearly half processed fuel left, did he notice that the pain of an about to break bond vanished and he could instead feel emotions of triumph and concern floating through their connection into his spark. But only when he heard Starscream's screeching and cursing, did he really grasp, what Jazz had been planning to accomplish.

"It's gone! See, the virus is gone!" the Decepticon second in command screamed frustrated and waved around the device he had taken back from Megatron. "This is exactly why I did not want to continue as you oh so stupidly did."

The seeker realized his mistake when Skywarp and Thundercracker winced and stepped away from him and a fist flew through the air right into his faceplates. The punch Megatron bestowed upon him sent the second in command flying a good distance away from where his comrades stood.

As he landed on the ground, the Decepticon leader was already beside him, one hand closing around his neck and holding him up into the air.

"I think you forget your place, Starscream", Megatron growled out, his red optics flashing bright in unsuppressed anger. The seeker realized that he had lost himself too much in the scientific aspect of the current situation and ended up only seeing the destruction of an important, interesting experiment. He raged, totally forgetting that he was no longer a scientist and first and foremost a soldier in a war and with a leader that did not take well to back talking.

Whimpering the Decepticon second in command tried to at least calm down his leader enough so he would not be killed.

"But Lord Megatron", he whined pathetically. "With triggering the virus into action again and again we just caused his antivirus system to learn until it was able to defeat it instead of forcing it into a simple dormancy. Now the virus is absolutely gone and

this stupid tool is useless to us. All I did was to try to prevent that from happening."

Megatron answered with a deep rumble and one of his arms transformed into a weapon which he held right against the seeker's spark. Whimpering yet again in fear and pain, Starscream tried one last attempt.

"My Lord, if you kill me now who will help you fight against the Autobot scum, now that they certainly gained one more comrade? You'll be outnumbered, if you don't allow me to assist."

Silence followed that statement for about ten astroseconds.

"You are, for now, right, Starscream", the leader of the Decepticon admitted grudgingly. "You will stand your ground and fight with us at this instant. In fact I will spare your life for now. But don't think for a klick that your current actions have been forgotten. I will watch you closely after your little stunt and you should hope that you will never displease me again."

He released the seeker who ended up on the ground in a heap of metal.

"Thank you, Lord Megatron", the second in command tried to assure his loyalty by sweet talking as much as possible, much to the displeasure of all three remaining Decepticons.

Jazz, the Autobots and the humans had listened and watched what took place between the enemy, though the saboteur was a bit distracted by checking on his bonded as well as Ratchet probing him none too gently after he had finally moved the energon blade away from his spark. The second the knife had not been dangerously near to his life force anymore, the Autobot medic acted and knocked the risky object out of the saboteur's hand.

"You slagging, dim-sparked, processorless piece of a tailpipe!" he started to rant, while he sent the first probing scans over the broken body in his lap. "What did you THINK you were achieving with what you just did? Not that I expect you to be capable of thinking. After all, first your fight with Megatron and now THIS? Are you out of your processor?"

Jazz could not help but wince over the volume Ratchet's voice had reached by the end of his first triad. Trying to end this as quickly as he could, he opened his mouth before the medic had the chance to.

"Ah know yer furious an' ya want answers an' diagnosis. But before Ah explain mahself, before ya can do an' say anything more, Ah want back over there, where Barricade sits an' is suffering from th' aftermath of an unpleasant purge. An' if ya not willing t' help meh, Ah understand but Ah go there mahself."

For a moment the medic stared at the saboteur with an expression that asked if he was making a very, very bad joke. But then he remembered that the patient in his

arms was bonded and his mate lay not too far away looking rather miserable. Of course Jazz would be thinking about his bondmate first and himself later. It had always been the annoying characteristics of bondmates, one of many reasons why the Autobots and neither the Decepticons wished to accept bonded couples in their midst.

The risk factor was simple too high. Bonded couples were not only taking their bonded's comfort above everything else, leading to misjudgement and prepossession in decision making, they also meant a double lose, if one of them died in the fighting, because a bonded spark would always follow their dead mate to the Well of Allsparks.

To realize that Jazz, their high ranking officer, was bonded to a Decepticon no less, was a heavy blow to every Autobot present. After all it had been no secret that Prowl, original second in command, and Jazz had been sparkmates. Of course, the saboteur had been known for his berth-hopping long before he met the Autobot tactician, but Ratchet had questioned the truth of that rumour ever since they learned that Jazz had always been a secret ops agent, in fact the BEST ops agent their fraction ever had. For all he knew, the rumour about his berth-hopping could very well been put to life by Jazz himself to feed his undercover image.

But shortly before his cover blew, Jazz was forced to announce his steady relationship with Prowl for the sake of the tactician's well being and ever since then they had been devoted to each other outside of their work. He remembered how hard it had been for both mechs, when the crew for the Allspark retrieval was definite. They took it hard, the upcoming separation, though they understood the decision from the point of their soldier identity. That did not mean they had to like it.

In fact, Jazz demanded the last half orn before launching to be declared unfit for work for him and Prowl and they spent nearly all of their time behind closed doors. Only Bluestreak, Mirage, Hound, Bee and surprisingly the twins were allowed to approach the couple and only in a limited amount of time.

Jazz had not seen Prowl ever after the start of their search for the Allspark, but everyone knew he missed him terribly. It made the medic thankful that he at least was allowed to keep his lover with him, because the idea of Ironhide and himself separated hurt a lot more than he was comfortable admitting and in their case they had never even been considered sparkmates.

Til their landing on Earth Ratchet had absolutely no doubt that Jazz's spark had always been partly with Prowl, no matter there they were and what they did. And now they found out that a Decepticon was bond to his spark. How could that fit together? Better, how did it happen and then?

Deciding that the answers to his question could only come with actions, Ratchet growled a bit and glared down at the smaller mech in his arms, but without another word, he stood up, Jazz carefully held, and went over to the lone Decepticon, who was just trying to move back into a sitting position.

Knowing he could trust a bondmate with his bonded's life, the Autobot medical

officer had no qualms to lie Jazz down just beside the Decepticon and stood back to perform a quick scan over them both.

Jazz had watched his every move carefully, even after he was finally within reaching point of his bondmate again. Grabbing Prowl's servos to lace them together with his own, he looked over to the puddle of half digested energon thoughtfully before coming to a decision.

"Ratch' you might wish to take a sample out of what he's purged", the saboteur started quietly when he was sure that the medic was done with his scans. "But be VERY careful, because whatever you might find inside the sample can turn out to be quite dangerous. I have no idea how that stupid virus works and what kind of contact is necessary."

"A virus?" Ratchet replied sharply his medical interest kindled, no matter how bizarre their current situation in general was. "I heard the Decepticons talking about a virus, but frankly I don't know what's going on. However, I have a feeling that you know exactly what they were talking about and you are going to tell me, because I am sure as the pit will not sit here and accept the given facts, just because you feel like it. You two, and I don't care if you are a Decepticon or not", he declared sharply in Barricade's direction, "will do some nice question - answer game with ME asking the questions."

Both mechs simply nodded, knowing Ratchet well enough to realize any protest would be a very, very stupid idea.

"Ah was planning t' tell ya everything anyway", Jazz finally told the medic when he was bending down to carefully extract a sample of the purged energon into one of his safest container he had with him. "Just wanted th' Decepticons t' be taken care of first."

"Right, so are Optimus and our soldier allies now allowed to attack the Decepticons, if the situation requires it?" Ratchet dryly asked the saboteur while putting the container into another one just to be safe. He did take it seriously when Jazz emphasised the possible danger of what his mate had purged and he was not taking any chances. He subspaced the double packed container into his special pocket and paid his full attention back to the bonded couple.

"Besides, if you two microchip morons want to be safe from any dim-sparked actions of our own, especially from the human soldiers, I need to get back there for a klick or two and explain bondmates to them. Thankfully at least our own people know about this and I am quite sure an order from Optimus will prevent even the twins from doing anything accidentally until you explained this situation in detail. And make no mistakes, you WILL explain in EVERY little detail", Ratchet emphasised and glared at the two mechs on the ground.

Jazz was grinning slightly at the show of his usual manners, though it was obvious that the saboteur was physically and emotionally exhausted. He only fought to stay on alert because of the Decepticons, who were watching them with calculating eyes as well as the Autobots and NEST soldiers, who were mistrusting both, their own

supposed comrade and of course his Decepticon bondmate.

The special ops soldier was nudging his bonded now and to Ratchet's great surprise he found himself addressed suddenly on a private Autobot commlink by the Decepticon.

~Jazz and I are expecting the Decepticons to attack us the moment you leave~, the Ford Mustang Saleen informed the medic in a simple manner. ~We concluded that if they cannot take me back, they want to make sure I cannot be of help to the Autobots either. They noticed your confusion and mistrust at Jazz over the revelation of our bond, therefore I calculated they don't expect a reaction to an attack the moment you return to your comrades. ~

But Ratchet was having none of that. Instead he stared incredulously at the black and white Decepticon before throwing an accusing glare at Jazz.

~How the frag do you have the data for our commlink?~

Jazz, who did not need to be involved in their private talking to guess what Ratchet was glaring at him about, shrugged his shoulder joints and looked at the medic with an air of all innocent.

"Don' look at meh, Ratch'. Mah comms are destroyed among other things, so no information leak from mah side."

"But you know how!" the Search and Rescue vehicle transformer accused, which caused the smaller mech to grin.

"Of course Ah do, an' ya supposed t' find out when it's safe, remember?"

Getting the hint, Ratchet burst a quick message over a very private commlink to Optimus, informing him they better were ready to protect these two glitchheads until he could get his hands back on them or they would be very sorry they destroyed his chance to get answers to the whole fragging situation.

All three mechs watched discreetly as the Prime acknowledged Ratchet's message by silently informing his comrades and the humans both. And while some of the bots, especially Ironhide and the twins looked not happy with the order their Prime gave them, the soldiers looked even less happy. Some of them were glancing at the Decepticon with an alarming glint in their eyes, just as Ratchet had predicted.

Nodding to their medic when informations and orders had been given, Ratchet stood up from his crouched position in front of the two injured mechs and nodded.

~You will definitely not be harmed if we can help it.~ he assured the Saleen over another comm-message. ~And I promise to be back in a klick.~ With one last nod in their direction he turned around and left.

Megatron waited until the medical officer of the Autobots was a safe distance away from the two handicapped mechs and already urgently addressing the human soldiers. Then he roared in triumph and looked back at his Decepticons.

"If we cannot use him, then no one shall!" he announced to his soldiers. "Decepticons, attack!"

But before anyone could move the slightest transformation sequence for their weapons, they all heard the familiar hum of a ready weapon and suddenly there stood Bumblebee and Ironhide in front of the two injured mechs, weapons pointed directly at the Decepticons.

"Are you sure you want to attack?" Major Will Lennox, one of the few humans who trusted the judgement of Optimus Prime without further explanations for now, shouted from his cover at the side of the rest Autobots, his weapon ready and also pointed at the Decepticons. "Because the moment you trigger your weapons you will find out that every single Autobot here is ready and willing to fight. You might usually feel superior, but don't you think you are a bit outnumbered to risk your metal armor like that?"

"If they are outnumbered like that how come we ain't taking them prisoners", Robert Epps whispered at his commander in obvious surprise.

"Because, do you remember the last time we had a fight with that jet with the purple stripes?" Will whispered back. "He can teleport and he can take at least one mech with him, meaning they would be able to get away anyway. Besides, Optimus said that in this case he would prefer if there will simply be no fight at all. It's more trouble than it's worth it, his words, not mine."

Epps just nodded in understanding. He knew from experience that Megatron alone was a force to be reckoned with and it would be nice in this case, if they would not lose more brave men in another fight. Especially since there was still the mystery with the thought dead Jazz and what they called a bondmate, who was none other than the Decepticon Barricade. Therefore it would be far nicer to skip the nasty parts and simply get some explaining done.

Megatron seemed to realize that he had miscalculated the willingness of the Autobots to fight for what they thought to be a Decepticon and he grounded his denta in obvious anger. He was no fool. He might succeed in killing those two bondmates, but he might risk some of his best soldiers for that price. Soldiers who he still needed in his future plans, especially Skywarp with his unique ability. He could not take that risk, not today.

Growling he glared back at Optimus Prime, who also had his weapons focused on the Decepticon leader, then back at the two bonded mechs just behind Bumblebee and Ironhide.

"You will regret what you did today", he promised in a dangerous low voice. "I will kill

you for this, slowly and painfully, that's a promise."

Barricade was returning the look of the Decepticon leader unfazed, saying nothing. Jazz on the other hand was ignoring the threatening 'Con altogether and concentrated wholly on the second in command who was cowering just a bit behind his leader.

"Starscream", he addressed the seeker in a calm but icy voice, "be assured th' moment Ah'm fine again, Ah will make it mah mission of life t' hunt ya down. Ya an' Shockwave, that's a promise. Ya will regret th' day yer were sparked. What ya did was unforgivable an' as repayment ya will help meh t' find out jus' how long Ah can torture a Decepticon before he dies. Ah don't care about Autobot rules, ya hear meh? Th' only thing Ah care is repayment for what ya did t' mah mate. So ya better hide far away from meh an' tell Shockwave he better do th' same if he wants t' stay alive. Not tha' it will help ya, be assured."

Starscream could not help but whimper in fear. Usually he did not take Autobot threats seriously. The twins were insulting and threatening his trine all the time and they still lived. However, an angered bondmate was known to be unreasonable and always focused on the other part of their spark. The way Jazz looked at him, it was obvious that he was speaking nothing but the truth. Besides, he was the most dangerous ops agent the Autobots had in their midst and all Decepticons were aware just how unpredictable and deadly the legendary Meister could be.

Of course, Megatron couldn't care less that his second in command was just promised to be killed by an injured Autobot. Angry and with hurt pride he simply hit the nearest seeker, which turned out to be Starscream, into the sides before ordering a retreat.

"This was not the last you've heard of me, Prime!" he threatened the Autobot leader. "We will meet again and then things will not look in your favor once more."

Megatron and Thundercracker transformed and with a burst of powerful engines flew away, while Skywarp took the injured Starscream, who could no longer fly thanks to Jazz's successful shot to his wing, and warped them back to their secret base.

Optimus Prime simply triggered a long release of air from his vents, a close simulation of a human sigh.

"I have no doubt we will, brother", the Prime muttered dejectedly before concentrating on the situation at hand. He still had a seriously wounded second in command and his Decepticon bondmate to take care off.

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