

## **Continuity**

There are many different Transformers narratives. *Eugenesis* is set firmly in what is known as the Marvel Comics Universe, which includes all the British and American Transformer comics published by Marvel and the animated movie.

For the (totally) uninitiated, here is the Story So Far...

### **Robot War 2012 (A Bluffer's Guide to the Transformers)**

For millions of years, a race of sentient robots – the Autobots – live peacefully on the metal planet of Cybertron. But the so-called Golden Age comes to an end when a number of city-states begin to assert themselves militarily. A demagogue named Megatron, once a famous gladiator, becomes convinced that he is destined to convert Cybertron into a mobile battle station and bring the galaxy to heel. He recruits a band of like-minded insurgents, including Shockwave and Soundwave, and spearheads a series of terrorist attacks on Autobot landmarks. Ultimately, however, it is the exchange of photon missiles between the city-states of Vos and Tarn that triggers a global civil war. Megatron invites the refugees of both cities to join his army, which he christens the Decepticons.

Megatron goes on to develop transformation technology, creating for himself and his followers secondary modes better suited for warfare. The Autobot military, led by a charismatic member of the Flying Corps named Optimus Prime, follows suit. Over time, the combatants become known to neighbouring civilisations as Transformers.

The ferocity of the Transformers' conflict eventually shakes Cybertron loose from its orbit. On discovering that their home planet will soon collide with an asteroid belt, the Autobots build a huge spacecraft, the Ark, and set off to clear a path. The crew, led by Optimus Prime, complete their mission, only to be attacked by Megatron and a Decepticon boarding party. Determined not to let the Ark fall into enemy hands, Optimus Prime engineers a crash-landing on a nearby planet: Earth. The spacecraft comes to rest at the base of a dormant volcano. The Transformers, now off-line, have arrived in North America, some four million years BC. The volcano will one day be known as Mt St Hilary.

Megatron's lieutenant, Shockwave, witnesses the crash from the Decepticons' otherwise deserted spacecraft and gives chase, but his guidance systems are scrambled by Earth's gravitational field and he lands in a strange part of Antarctica known as the Savage Land, where evolution has not progressed beyond the Jurassic period. Reacting to the Decepticon threat, the Ark's ailing on-board computer, Teletran-1 (a.k.a. 'Aunty'), repairs five Autobots, gives them dinosaur modes, and despatches them to confront Shockwave. In the ensuing battle, all six combatants drown in a tar pit.

On Cybertron, with Optimus Prime and his crew missing, presumed dead, a warlord named Trannis seizes control of the leaderless Decepticons and recaptures many Autobot city-states. Faced with defeat, all but one of the Autobot Council of Elders vote to surrender. The dissenter, Emirate Xaaron, gathers a squad of warriors and takes the Resistance underground. Those who stay behind are murdered.

Time passes. Earth is visited by an alien race, the Vok, who seed the planet with crystalline energon (the Transformers' primary fuel source) as part of a cosmic experiment. Time-travelling groups of Maximals and Predacons – descendants of the Autobots and Decepticons from the far future – crash-land and battle for supremacy in a series of skirmishes that become known as the Beast Wars. The warriors eventually find a way to return to their own time, and leave Earth having unwittingly facilitated the evolution of the human race.

On Cybertron, Trannis and his lieutenants turn their attention to the stars. Firmly of the belief that mechanicals are the ultimate form of life, they decide to cleanse the galaxy of organic, carbon-based life forms by transforming worlds into mini-Cybertrons – a process known as ‘cyberforming’. Not all Decepticons are convinced of this course of action. Before Trannis can lead his army into space he is assassinated by a group of Xaaron’s commandos. An ambitious young Decepticon named Jhiexus takes his place. He leads his troops off world and leaves the tyrannical ‘Lord’ Straxus and a vastly diminished army of Decepticons to guard Cybertron.

In 1984, Mount St Hilary erupts, re-activating the Ark’s onboard computer. Obeying emergency protocols but unable to distinguish between Autobot and Decepticon, Teletran-1 initiates a repair programme that fixes all of the Transformers on board and gives each of them the ability to transform into Earth-based machinery, vehicles and weapons. Thus, the Transformers’ war continues on Earth, with Optimus Prime – wracked with guilt for unwittingly endangering an innocent world – determined to protect humankind from Megatron’s plans to harvest the planet’s resources.

Unbeknownst to either faction, the Decepticon Shockwave has been accidentally freed from his tar pit by an Autobot probe investigating Transformer life signs in the Savage Land. Shockwave gatecrashes a standoff between the Earth-based Autobots and Decepticons, tipping the balance in the latter’s favour. He assumes command, incarcerates the injured Autobots, and sets about creating a new generation of Decepticons by exploiting the life-giving Creation Matrix program contained within Optimus Prime’s mind.

The only Autobot left standing, Chief Medical Surgeon Ratchet, strikes a deal with the usurped Megatron: he will help to depose Shockwave if Megatron frees the injured Autobots. Ratchet travels to the Savage Land and excavates the Dinobots but Megatron, mistakenly thinking that Shockwave has been defeated, reneges on the deal and moves to kill the Autobot doctor. The Dinobots intervene, knocking Megatron off a cliff. Ratchet repairs his comrades and Optimus Prime throws Shockwave into a swamp. His successor, Soundwave, soon stands aside when Megatron reappears.

When the Earth-based Transformers re-establish contact with Cybertron in 1985 it seems as if very little has changed, with Xaaron’s troops still being hounded by Straxus. The Decepticons create a giant Space Bridge to allow Transformers (on both sides) to travel between Cybertron and Earth. Meanwhile, a professor named Peter Morris takes control of a giant robot, Centurion, which has been built by the US government in an attempt to protect the country from the Transformers, who are seen as uniformly evil.

In 1986, the Transformers on Earth are thrown into disarray by the arrival of a supremely powerful Decepticon, Galvatron, who has time-jumped from the year 2006. Galvatron, a future version of Megatron, intends to create a colossal weapon capable of destroying his master, the planet-sized Transformer Unicron, but he is thwarted by a powerful new Autobot named Ultra Magnus, who has been given life by the Matrix Flame on Cybertron. Sent to Earth to investigate the mysterious disappearance of Optimus Prime (who, as per the rules of mass-displacement time travel, has been shunted into a ‘holding dimension’ by the arrival of Galvatron), Magnus is aided by three Autobots from 2006 – Hot Rod, Kup and Blurr – who are being unwittingly manipulated by Unicron. Between them, they trick Galvatron into returning to the year 2006.

Galvatron returns to present-day Earth again the following year, decapitating an unfortunate Centurion on his arrival. The Decepticon is fleeing from his future counterpart, Rodimus Prime. The robot in question gives chase, hoping to capture both Galvatron and a robotic mercenary, Death’s Head, who intends to collect the bounty on the Decepticon’s head. Rodimus steals Galvatron’s time-jump trigger, hoping to send him back to 2007, only to find that it has been tampered with: activating it sends everyone other than Galvatron back to the future instead. The increasingly deranged Decepticon will remain a thorn in the side of the present-day Transformers until the Time Wars of 1989/2009.

Megatron visits Cybertron and discovers that Straxus – reduced to a head in a life-support machine by the Autobot Blaster – is planning to transfer his mind into his (Megatron’s) body. Megatron murders

Straxus during the abortive body-swap, but suspects that some part of Straxus lives on in his mind. He returns to Earth feeling disoriented and paranoid.

The Earth-based Autobots are devastated when Optimus Prime is destroyed after fighting Megatron within the artificial confines of a computer game. Ethan Zachary, the human programmer who had engineered the confrontation, secretly preserves Prime's personality on disc. Megatron reacts badly to the death of his nemesis, resenting the fact that a human struck the killing blow. Acting irrationally, he climbs onto the Space Bridge and explodes it. He disappears, leaving Shockwave to once again assume command.

On Cybertron, a team of Autobots based in the Manganese Mountains are fighting a running battle against the local Decepticons, led by Scorponok. The Autobots' leader, Fortress Maximus, feels so disillusioned by the war that he and several others – including the old-timer Kup and his brash protégé Hot Rod – abandon Cybertron and travel to the planet Nebulos. On arrival, they surrender their heads and weapons to the human-like population to demonstrate their peaceful intent. But Scorponok and his troops track down their adversaries and the Nebulans are caught in the crossfire.

Fortress Maximus earns the trust of the Nebulan leader, Galen, who persuades several citizens to undergo the 'binary bonding process' – bio-mechanical surgery which enables them to transform into the head or the weapon of their Autobot partner. The Headmasters and Targetmasters are born. Scorponok follows suit, creating Decepticon equivalents. The Autobots eventually leave Nebulos and head for Earth – hotly pursued by the Decepticons – after intercepting an Autobot SOS.

On Earth, the Autobots' situation is desperate. They send Optimus Prime's corpse into space on a funeral barge and choose Grimlock as their leader, but the Dinobot's arrogance and apparent disregard for human life nearly leads to mutiny. Having finally fixed the Ark, the Autobots repair to Earth's orbit.

Meanwhile, the human anti-terrorist squad G I Joe discover Megatron roaming London's sewers. This 'Megatron' is in fact a clone that was built by Straxus as a repository for his mind in case his body-swap went awry. Animated by the amalgamated personalities of Straxus and the original Megatron, the disoriented clone is eventually defeated by the Autobots and G I Joe. The newly repaired Centurion holds Megatron firm until Tomcat missiles can find their target; the ensuing explosion consigns them both to the Thames.

Some time later, fearing that he is to be usurped by Galvatron, Shockwave arranges for the Megatron clone and Centurion to be brought back to the Decepticon Fortress. Using a psycho-probe to simultaneously cure Megatron's madness and leave him vulnerable to suggestion, he orders him to kill Galvatron. Megatron first confronts Galvatron's ex-lieutenants, Cyclonus and Scourge. The two renegade Decepticons have been living outside their natural timeline since being transported from the year 2008 – three years after their creation – to 15<sup>th</sup> century Cybertron. Megatron murders Cyclonus and the resultant paradox (death before creation) triggers a rift in space-time that will continue to grow over the next few months.

The Autobot Headmasters and Targetmasters arrive on Earth and rendezvous with Grimlock's Autobots. Fortress Maximus arranges for Optimus Prime to be rebuilt on Nebolus, where he is binary-bonded to a Nebulan scientist called Hi-Q who doubles as the robot's engine. Given 'life' using the copy of his personality that was saved ahead of his death, there is some debate as to whether the new 'Powermaster' Optimus Prime is a continuation of the original or merely a convincing replica.

Prime's return to the fray coincides with the Decepticon Starscream's possession of the Underbase, an ancient storehouse of Cybertronian knowledge. He uses his new power to attack the Earth-based Transformers, killing dozens of them, including the Grimlock's Dinobots, but is unable to contain the Underbase's ancient energies and is eventually torn apart.

The Megatron clone tracks down Galvatron, intending to kill him. Instead, the two of them decide to join forces and take over the galaxy. The space-time rift, which appeared several months ago in 1988 and 2008 simultaneously, continues to grow, until finally it threatens to destroy Earth and Cybertron. Autobots and Decepticons from 2009, having traced the anomaly back to Galvatron and his two time-jumping lieutenants, join forces with their present-day counterparts in an effort to send the rogue Decepticons back to their own time. In the end the space-time rift does their job for them, consuming Galvatron, Scourge and the deceased Cyclonus and forcibly returning them to the future.

The Megatron clone heads for Cybertron and, in a run-down region known as the Dead End, runs into the original Megatron, deposited there by the exploding Space Bridge two years previously. Devastated by the revelation that he is nothing more than a vessel for Straxus's mind, and determined to not let Straxus win, the clone commits suicide.

Back on Earth, the first few months of 1989 see the rise of the Micromasters, human-sized Transformers who designed to be more fuel-efficient. The original Megatron, still working from Cybertron, kidnaps Ratchet and forces him to resurrect Starscream as a Pretender (a robot hidden inside a protective shell). Ratchet's revenge is twofold: he revives Grimlock, Bumblebee and Jazz as Pretenders and teleports explosives into Megatron's base. He then prevents the Decepticon from using a warp gate to escape as the base explodes. Neither Ratchet's nor Megatron's body can be found.

Days later, a malfunctioning warp gate sends the new Autobot Pretenders – and their Decepticon pursuers – to a chamber at the centre of Cybertron, where they discover a huge robotic face. It is the face of Primus, the Transformers' god. An acolyte calling himself the Keeper outlines the origin of the Cybertronian race.<sup>1</sup> The Decepticons arrive on the scene. In the resultant fire fight, a stray laser beam hits Primus between the eyes and jolts him awake: his scream is heard telepathically by his nemesis Unicron (a.k.a. The Chaos Bringer), who heads for Cybertron – a journey across the galaxy that will take many months.

1990 is spent preparing for Unicron's inevitable attack. The Chaos-Bringer himself plucks an alternate Galvatron from a parallel universe and sends him ahead to cripple the Transformers' defences. The Autobots realise that they need the Matrix if they are to stand a chance against Unicron. The Matrix is stored inside Optimus Prime's original body, now lost in space. The search begins.

Meanwhile, the detective Nightbeat, a Headmaster who has recently been recruited to the ranks of the Earth-based Autobots, discovers Ratchet and Megatron in a pocket dimension, having been deposited there via the collapsing warp gate. The two Transformers are fused together like Siamese twins; even their minds overlap. Grimlock, determined to resurrect his Dinobots, disobeys Optimus Prime and secures a new but dangerous fuel-source, Nucleon, which has miraculous healing capabilities.

Unicron attacks Cybertron in 1991. Thousands die, including Xaaron and Scorponok. The Autobots and Decepticons join forces to repel him, and he is eventually destroyed when Optimus Prime – brandishing the recovered Matrix – flies into the planet's maw. But thousands are killed, including Primus, Emirate Xaaron, Scorponok and Prime himself. Furthermore, Unicron's attack has triggered earthquakes that now threaten to tear Cybertron apart.

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<sup>1</sup>*According to the Keeper, the Transformers' story begins billions of years ago, when a near-omnipotent energy being – Primus – clashes with his opposite number, Unicron, to prevent him from wiping the 'life-stain' from the universe. Having carried the battle to the astral plane, Primus traps himself and his enemy in barren metal asteroids. Drifting away from each other but still connected telepathically, the two god-like beings restructure their prisons: Unicron becomes a vast metal planet capable of transforming into an equally huge robot. Primus becomes the planet Cybertron, which he populates with freethinking robots. These 'Autobots' are to act as the last line of defence against Unicron. Primus channels his essence into the Creation Matrix, a life-giving computer program contained within a crystal. Planting the Matrix inside an Autobot called Prima, the Transformers' god then shuts himself down to avoid detection. While Primus has been sleeping, says the Keeper, the civil war has distracted the Cybertronians, leaving them ill prepared for Unicron's inevitable strike.*

On his deathbed, Prime chooses Grimlock as his successor – but it is the recently repaired Prowl who works hardest to preserve the fragile Autobot/Decepticon alliance. He works with the Decepticons' new leader, Bludgeon, to organise a mass planetary exodus. But the Decepticons sabotage the Autobots' ships and leave their enemies to die while they head for Klor, a nearby planet ripe for colonisation.

Meanwhile, the alternate Galvatron stows away on board the Ark, which has been commandeered by Shockwave and Starscream as part of their bid to conquer a defenceless Earth. The Decepticon triumvirate are unaware that the recently separated Ratchet and Megatron are on board, stored in stasis pods. Ratchet forces the Ark to crash-land in Canada in an attempt to kill his Decepticon co-passengers. Galvatron survives, but is confronted by Fortress Maximus, the last Autobot on the planet. The battle leaves Galvatron trapped beneath the ice.

Back on Cybertron, Grimlock – grappling with the revelation that Nucleon robs Transformers of their ability to transform – reveals that he anticipated the Decepticons' sabotage and unveils replacement ships. The Autobots give chase, unwittingly abandoning a group of human superheroes – the Neo-Knights – who had accidentally been brought to Cybertron prior to the battle against Unicron. The Neo-Knights run into Hi-Q, Powermaster Prime's Nebulan companion, who has discovered – first-hand – that the binary-bonding process ultimately leads to the total amalgamation of the component personalities. He has become Optimus Prime. He leads them to the legendary Last Autobot, who creates a new body for Optimus (complete with a new Matrix) and transports them all to Klor, where they assist the other Autobots in seemingly defeating the Decepticons once and for all.

The victorious Autobots return to Cybertron, having discovered that the planet, rather than tearing itself apart, was simply repairing itself using the energy generated by Unicron's destruction – a process of regeneration guided by the Last Autobot. With Bludgeon's Decepticons in self-imposed exile, Optimus Prime believes that the Transformers' war is finally over. Not so.

After months of uneasy peace (interrupted by Bludgeon's failed attempt to revive Megatron using a newly discovered strain of Nucleon that does not impede transformation), Optimus begins to hear rumours of unidentified Decepticon forces operating in distant parts of the galaxy. He also fears that Bludgeon will return and attack Earth.

Optimus appoints Grimlock leader of Earthforce, a new team comprising many of the Ark's original crew. As humankind's defenders they have their work cut out for them: Earth soon becomes a base for Megatron, Shockwave, Soundwave, Bludgeon and a host of other Decepticons. Autobot reinforcements come and go, and in late 1993 the Decepticons withdraw from Earth altogether. In an effort to stop Megatron stealing the Ark, Fortress Maximus is killed.

Grimlock disbands Earthforce to pursue the Decepticons across the galaxy. On his travels he discovers a sprawling Cybertronian Empire. At its centre is the Hub, an interlocking network of mini-Cybertrons controlled by a mysterious being known as the Liege Maximo, who claims to be Megatron's progenitor.

The Autobots are attacked by Lord Jhiexus, one of several Liege Centuros that command the Empire's forces in the Milky Way. Jhiexus – once a common-or-garden Decepticon tyrant – has moved on: he now regards the original Autobots and the Decepticons as evolutionary throwbacks who have no place in the new order. Railing against the threat of extinction, the Transformers unite to tackle the Cybertronian Empire.

Plagued by visions of an impending apocalypse, Optimus interfaces with the Creation Matrix and bears witness to scenes from Cybertron's ancient past: astonished, he watches Transformers 'giving birth' following a biomorphic process similar to cell division. 'Pregnant' robots expel globules of liquid metal – 'proto-forms' – which solidify into recognisably Cybertronian figures. Prime guesses that Primus blessed his asexual 'children' with the ability to reproduce, but, as a safety measure, ensured that they would be rendered barren once the planet was fully populated. But in the four million years

following the Ark's crash landing on Earth, Trannis had rediscovered the secret of creating new life, and the process had begun anew.

Prime breaks his trance too soon to see that each act of biomorphic reproduction creates a tangible black substance that, over time, has mutated into the Swarm, a ravenous cloud of dark energy that has since left Cybertron to seek sustenance elsewhere in the galaxy.

The Cybertronian army blitz the Autobot/Decepticon forces, but their assault is interrupted by the Swarm. Having retraced their galactic steps and consumed many cyberworlds *en route*, the Swarm are eager to destroy the Transformers themselves. Jhiaxis is destroyed. Optimus surrenders himself to the Swarm, exposing a nascent consciousness to concepts such as nobility, compassion and sacrifice. The Swarm breaks off its attack and leaves to seek enlightenment.

Between 1995 and 2003 the battle rages on, with both sides gaining the upper hand and losing it again.<sup>2</sup>

In 2003 the UN gives Optimus Prime permission to build Autobot City: Earth. The giant Autobot Metroplex is sealed inside the sprawling complex, allowing it to transform into a battle station in the event of a Decepticon attack. That attack comes in December 2005, and leaves both Optimus Prime and Megatron mortally wounded. Optimus Prime passes the Matrix to Ultra Magnus and dies. Megatron is cast into space and found by Unicron, who offers to recreate him on the condition that he destroys the Matrix. Megatron, having no memory of the monster planet, accepts the offer – and is transformed into Galvatron.

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<sup>2</sup> A group of Transformers fans based in the UK, myself included, wrote a series of stories that helped bridge the narrative gap between Generation 2 (1994) and The Movie (2005). While the summary below is not canon, the events described take place as far as Eugenesis is concerned.

*In 1995, Optimus Prime discovers that the Empire's territory in the Milky Way is split into quadrants and ruled by four Liege Centuros: the Destrans (led by Deathsaurus), the Legion of New Cybertron (Star Saber), the Dominators (Skyquake) and the Star Formers (Thunderclash). The Liege Maximo sends a team to cyberform Nebulos, but they are attacked by the Quintessons, who describe themselves as being servants of Unicron. Following his destruction in 1991, the Chaos Bringer lives on as a disembodied spirit. Furthermore, he has slowly and patiently removed himself from the Transformers' collective memory by creating a race-wide 'mind gap'. He is now diverting all his energies into creating a new body.*

*Meanwhile, in giving birth to Arcee, Hot Rod becomes the first Transformer outside of the Cybertronian Empire to create new life via biomorphic reproduction. The Decepticon kidnapping and subsequent Autobot rescue of the President of the United States signals a turning point in Autobot/human relations (and paves the way for the creation of Autobot City: Earth in 2004).*

*In 1996, in an effort to negotiate peace, a delegation of Autobots meet with Star Former moderates and argue that organic life is not worthless. The Liege Centuro, Thunderclash, sees the error of his ways when he discovers that Chromedome, a Headmaster, is binary bonded with a Nebulan. He resolves to atone for his past mistakes.*

*The Liege Maximo, meanwhile, transports himself to the Primal Chamber on Cybertron, where he hooks himself up with Primus in an attempt to attain godhood. Although considerably weakened by his separation from the Hub, the Liege Maximo still manages to fight off Optimus Prime. In the end it is Thunderclash who brings down the Empire when he shoots the distracted Liege Maximo dead.*

*The Empire fragments. Over the next few years the majority of inhabited cyber-worlds sign up to the Non-Intervention Treaty and 'disown' the Autobot/Decepticon war. But some of the Star Formers, notably Thunderclash, join the Autobots.*

*Megatron's Decepticons manage to reclaim Cybertron in the late 1990s, shortly after the planet completes its elliptical path through space and returns to its original orbit.*

Galvatron travels to Cybertron and, on New Year's Day 2006, murders the treacherous Starscream. Realising that Unicron has the power to destroy him if he disobeys orders, the new Decepticon leader Galvatron gathers his lieutenants, Cyclonus and Scourge, and time-jumps to 1986 (see above). Punished by Unicron on his return to 2006, he follows orders and searches for the Matrix. He finds it within Ultra Magnus and, rather than hand it over to Unicron to be destroyed, resolves to use it against his master.

Meanwhile, Hot Rod, Kup and the Dinobots, fleeing Galvatron's troops, crash-land on the planet Quintesson. Separated from the others, Hot Rod and Kup are captured by a group of robotic enforcers, Sharkticons, and their five-faced, techno-organic masters, the Quintessons. They are rescued by the Dinobots and an Autobot, Wheelie, who has been hiding on Quintesson for years.

Galvatron tries to destroy Unicron using the Matrix but cannot tap into its power. In response, Unicron transforms into robot mode, swallows Galvatron, and attacks Cybertron. Hot Rod, Kup and the Dinobots arrive and drive their shuttle through Unicron's eye. Inside the colossal robot, Hot Rod crosses Galvatron's path and is attacked. The Autobot touches the Matrix and, in that instant, is recreated as Optimus's true successor, Rodimus Prime. Rodimus throws Galvatron into space, where he uses a hand-held time-jump mechanism to travel back to 1987 (see above). Rodimus opens the Matrix and Unicron is destroyed for a second time.

The revitalised Autobots re-take Cybertron and drive the beleaguered Decepticons off world. Rodimus Prime puts a bounty on the missing Galvatron's head. A mercenary named Death's Head discovers that the Decepticon has time-jumped and travels to 1987, swiftly followed by a desperate Rodimus Prime. They both return empty-handed. The Decepticons, led by Shockwave, re-establish a foothold on Cybertron. For the first time in millions of years the two sides are evenly matched, and an uneasily stalemate ensues.

In January 2008 Death's Head shoots Cyclonus and Scourge down over the planet of Junk, having been hired to kill them by Rodimus Prime. The three of them discover Unicron's head being tended to by an army of brainwashed Junkions, who are slowly building him a new body. Unicron uses Death's Head to murder Shockwave and install Cyclonus and Scourge as the Decepticons' new leaders. Discovering that Unicron is still alive, Rodimus Prime heads for Junk. His Junkion ally, Wreck-Gar, lays explosives at the base of Unicron's head. They explode just as Death's Head chases his two targets, Cyclonus and Scourge, through Unicron's time portal. Cyclonus and Scourge are sent back to 15<sup>th</sup> century Cybertron, where they serve under Scorponok and eventually become Targetmasters. There is no trace of Death's Head.

Unicron's essence – his physical form having been destroyed by the explosives – is trapped inside the Matrix. Soundwave takes control of the Decepticons on Cybertron.

In late 2008 the Quintessons, having finally escaped Unicron's grasp, discover that their planet is about to be ripped apart by the widening space-time rift (see above). Their leader, Lord Kledji, has his generals, Ghyrik and Jolup, launch attacks on Autobot City and Cybertron. The Quintessons fail, unprepared for the appearance of Metroplex, the living heart of Autobot City, and a last-minute alliance between the Autobots and Decepticons. The planet Quintesson is destroyed.

By 2009 the expanding space-time rift threatens to devour not just 'present day' Earth and Cybertron but their 1989 equivalents, too. Autobot scientists blame the phenomenon on temporal anomalies – Galvatron, Cyclonus and Scourge hiding in the past – and Rodimus Prime leads a team of Autobots to Earth, 1989, in an attempt to bring them 'home'. Soundwave and the Terrorcons give chase.

Mission accomplished, Rodimus Prime and his Autobots time-jump back to the future – only to arrive in a parallel universe. There, Rodimus is possessed by Unicron, who exerts his influence from within the Matrix. Rodimus manages to re-absorb Unicron and lead the Autobots back to 'their' 2009, but on arrival they are shocked to find Galvatron, Cyclonus and Scourge alive and well, having

been restored by the space-time rift. Keeping a promise he made to 1989's Optimus Prime, Rodimus destroys all of the Transformers' time machines.

In 2010 Unicron manages to free himself from the Matrix and fashions himself a body, albeit one much smaller than normal. As the Chaos Bringer tears through Cybertron, bent on destruction, Rodimus Prime summons all his strength and contains the monster. He is left badly shaken, and for a time insists on solitary confinement. He fears that he is too weak to keep Unicron in check, and that he will eventually lose control.

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Cybertron, December 2012. The planet is controlled by Galvatron and his Decepticons. Rodimus Prime and Thunderclash have led the Autobots to a secret base underneath Iacon. Autobot City: Earth is still operational, with Ultra Magnus and a team of 100 protecting the planet against Decepticon attacks, but the enemy has been quiet of late.

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