Fallen Star

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Fallen Star

by rnn

Summary

When a ball of fire crashed at the entrance of the mine, Megatron didn't expect to see anything salvageable in the rubble. Instead, he finds a very alive (and very angry) young Seeker.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

A loud clang echoed through the cavern as Megatron hammered away at the piece of ore. They had been digging for weeks and only just found something worthwhile, despite their supervisors' assurances that the mine would be rich. It didn't matter to Megatron—the longer it took, the more shanix he earned. The same could not be said for many of his companions.

"That's a big one!"

Orion's voice came from behind him, radiating excitement.

"I've seen bigger," Megatron said.

Orion came closer. The drone was barely up to his shoulders, and most definitely not built for work like this, but to the superiors, a free worker was a free worker. Megatron's shift would end soon, but Orion would be forced to work until it was time to recharge.

Megatron's grip tightened on his pickaxe as anger surged through him. Generations ago, when the Quintessons still lived, he had been treated the same—sent into battle and forced to fight until he dropped. Many times, he collapsed on the battlefield, assuming the fight was his last, only to wake up in a medical bay later.

Megatron was a survivor. Orion Pax, on the other hand…

A loud rumble interrupted his thoughts. Orion stiffened, plating snapping close to his body. Apprehension swirled around him, tinged with curiosity.

"Do you hear that?" He asked.

Megatron grunted affirmatively. He dropped his pickaxe with a thunk and headed toward the entrance. Whatever this was, it was coming fast.

A ball of fire crashed into the ground outside the mine, sending debris everywhere. Megatron held his arms out to shield himself as smoke blew into the cavern. When the smoke cleared, a small shape sat in the middle of the crater.

"You think it's a meteorite?" Orion asked.

Megatron shook his head. Meteorites weren't red and gold. He stepped closer. Was it alive?

The form stirred, plating shifting into a recognizable shape. A quiet whirr came from it, presumably from broken cooling fans. There was no way the rotors would survive an impact like that. Megatron reached out, hand brushing against a flat appendage.

"Wings," he muttered to himself.

"Wings," Orion repeated. "A Seeker Drone?"

When the drone didn't respond to the touch, Megatron rolled it onto its back.

"Yes," Megatron said.

It lacked the bulk of a jet warframe or even the first few Seeker models. It must have been a newer one. But there was no mistaking the wings. Seekers were designed for intimidation and show, with large, ornate wings that cast shadows upon their quarry.

"You should take him back," Orion whispered. "See what the medics can do."

Megatron wrapped his arms around the drone and lifted it. "My shift isn't over."

"We'll cover for you," Orion said. "This is more important."

With a grunt, Megatron hoisted the drone into his arms. He threw it over his shoulders, its mangled wings resting against the back of his neck.

"Don't get in trouble," Megatron said.

Orion smiled. "I won't."

■■■

The Decepticon medbay was a small thing. It had to be, to keep hidden from the enforcers. It was ironic to bring a tool of the enforcers straight into it, but whatever happened, the Seeker wasn't in any state to report them. Megatron headed straight for the only office he trusted with a flightframe.

Ratchet turned around with a sigh. "*What* have I said about showing up without an appointment—"

His gaze landed on the drone, and he froze. Then, he motioned frantically toward the table.

"Put him there!" He growled. "You're holding him wrong!"

After Ratchet got settled and called for an assistant, Megatron was shooed out of the room.

■■■

"He's awake."

Megatron jolted from what was sure to become a recharge if it hadn't been interrupted. He pushed himself to his pedes and followed Ratchet into the room. The drone, half-sitting, stared at him with bright blue optics.

"You're the one who found me," the drone said, his voice crackling with static.

"Yes," Megatron said.

The drone's gaze fell to his lap. "I didn't expect anyone to."

Megatron hummed. "What happened?"

"I wanted to take a nice, long fly," the drone said, tone growing sharp. The air popped around him. "And *never* come home again."

Ratchet glanced at Megatron, a frown on his face.

"That's not what you told me," he said to the drone.

"What does it matter?" The drone hissed. "I'm here. *Alone*. Everyone probably thinks I'm dead."

"What *matters* is if you're a suicide risk, you'll have to be monitored," Ratchet barked.

The drone's wings, damaged as they were, fanned out. His field was fuzzy and difficult to read, but it crackled like lightning as he bared his teeth.

"It was *not* a suicide attempt!" The drone screeched at a volume that tempted Megatron to turn the sensitivity of his audials down. "I was looking for a friend, but I can't even leave the pits-damned *atmosphere*, so it doesn't matter anymore."

"I'm still putting you under watch," Ratchet said.

The drone muttered angrily. Most of it was unintelligible, but Megatron did catch the word 'fragger' twice.

Ratchet rolled his optics, then turned toward Megatron. "He's *your* find. Want the first shift?"

Megatron nodded, and Ratchet was on his way. The drone watched with narrowed optics as the door closed.

"'*Your find*,'" the drone repeated. "Do you pick half-dead mecha off the ground often?"

It had *really* only been Soundwave and his cassettes. And Orion. And *maybe* B-127, though the waste disposal drone wasn't injured so much as he was lost and hungry. Megatron shook himself out of his thoughts with an amused grunt.

"One might say that," he said.

"So what is this place?" The drone asked, picking at the edge of the berth.

"A clinic."

The drone's wings flicked, his field crackling with irritation. "I know that! But this definitely isn't a *normal* clinic, so what is it?"

Seekers were the tools of the council. They were released across Cybertron to hunt down criminals and record instances of rebellion. If Megatron told the drone anything about the Decepticons, there was a serious risk that the rebellion would find itself quashed.

But the mech before him barely fit the description bestowed upon his kind. He was small, sickly, and most of all—*angry*. Megatron knew that anger. He relied on that burning fury

when there was nothing else left to drive him.

"If I tell you, you will not speak a word of this to your superiors."

The drone scoffed. "*Those* afthelms? I don't tell them anything unless they *force it* out of me."

A defiant one, then—a potential ally.

"This is a Decepticon clinic," Megatron said.

The drone tilted its head. "Then I'm to assume you're a recruiter."

"Technically, no," Megatron said. "But in practicality, yes."

"I'm interested in joining."

The smile on the drone's face was small, but his field rippled with smugness. A Seeker *would* know about the Decepticons—many mecha knew at this point. Seekers had joined the cause before, but their lives were pitifully short. Whether it was the Enforcers catching on or the demanding life of criminal capture, they succumbed quickly to death. Most only came when they had no other option, and were reluctant to do so.

The tiny drone held no doubts, optics blazing with passion. His wings were high. His field buzzed with anticipation.

It was impressive. The drone held no fear, no regard for authority.

Megatron placed a hand on the drone's shoulder. The drone's wings flicked, his plating tightening. It was… amusing to watch the little thing stare up at him with such determination in its eyes.

"Then consider yourself recruited," Megatron said. "What's your designation?"

The drone jerked away from his touch.

"My serial number is UL-362," he said. He flexed his fingers, claws catching the light. "But if you value the integrity of your plating, you'll call me Starscream."

"Starscream," Megatron repeated.

What an ironic name. A grin twisted Megatron's lips.

"Welcome to the Decepticons, my fallen star."

The Seeker scoffed at the pet name, but didn't protest it.

■■■

Starscream, limbs barely healed enough to support him, limped around the room in circles. Megatron rolled his optics as the drone completed yet another circuit. Did he ever get dizzy? Or tired? His colors had begun to come back in—an eye-catching gold and red—but they

were still patchy in many places. In areas that were completely replaced, it would take a long time for the color nanites to spread.

"You're going to wear ruts in the floor," Megatron said.

Starscream paused, wings shifting upward. The air rippled with restless irritation. "What else do I have to do? You and your medic won't let me leave!"

"Stop whining!" Megatron scolded. "Your plating is barely attached to you. You can't go anywhere in that state."

The Seeker ran a servo down his face, vocalizer letting out a crackling hiss. His wings flicked.

"There has to be *something* for me to do!" He complained, punctuating the words with a whine and another hand down his face.

Megatron snatched one of the hands. Starscream immediately jerked away, letting out a surprised squawk.

"I swear, you're behaving like a newspark!" Megatron said.

Starscream swatted at him with his free hand. "Let me go! I'm not a newspark!"

Megatron released Starscream's hand. The drone fell backward into the berth. As Starscream pushed himself back onto his feet, Megatron contemplated his own comment.

"How old are you?" Megatron asked.

Starscream stiffened. "Old enough."

"A number, please."

Starscream muttered the number. Megatron put a hand to his olfactory ridge. Of *course* he was a newspark. It explained *everything*.

"Sit down," Megatron said, motioning toward the bed. "I need to comm Ratchet."

[Why didn't you tell me Starscream was a newspark?]

[I don't exactly check a mech's age when I'm doing emergency surgery,] Ratchet replied. *[Why?]*

[He's bored and I can't take it much longer. Please tell me you have something I can distract him with.]

[I'll put something together.]

■■■

That something happened to be an old datapad with a small set of games downloaded onto it. Starscream tapped away at the cracked screen, wings wiggling as he concentrated. It was… cute. Megatron found himself watching the drone's wings more often than not.

With the datapad distracting him, Starscream was a lot quieter. Time passed quickly, and soon the newspark was ready for a new coat of paint to cover up the scratches. Ratchet entered the room with paints that matched his current colors, placing them on the table with a quiet clink.

Starscream looked up from the datapad. His wings shifted downward.

"I don't want those colors," he said.

Of course. Nothing could be easy with the Seeker.

"What colors *do* you want?" Megatron said.

"There's a blue," Starscream said. "A really specific blue. I don't know what it's called. But I want it."

"You want to be *blue*?"

Starscream flapped his hands. "Not *all* blue! I need that one before I pick the others!"

Thus began the short trek to paint storage. Megatron had protested taking Starscream out of the room, but Ratchet didn't want to bring every single blue in the clinic over just to appease him. So, with Starscream leaning against his side, they scrutinized every single blue in storage.

Starscream held a particularly purplish blue up to the light. "This one. It's exactly what I need."

"Great," Megatron said. "What about the others?"

Starscream sorted through the rest of the paints meticulously, holding each up to the light next to the blue. Eventually, he settled on a deep black and a magenta pink. The combination was absolutely garish, but it was *his* frame. What right did Megatron have to restrict him from making such a blunder?

■■■

Starscream was nearly healed—enough that the drone *claimed* he was flight-capable, despite Ratchet's assertions to the contrary. Megatron was under strict instruction not to let the drone out of his sight after he'd been caught in the vents, because apparently the drone was petite enough for *that*.

"Come *on*!" Starscream whined. "Just a quick flight? My wings barely hurt anymore!"

Megatron sighed. "No. Your internals are still healing."

Starscream's wings lowered as he scrunched his olfactory ridge. "I've flown in worse condition."

"*Worse* condition?" Megatron said, raising a brow.

Starscream waved a hand and rocked on the edge of the berth. "Yeah! I crashed into a building chasing a target once. They shot one of my wings off with a blaster. Still caught him, though. And those *fraggers* didn't even care! They told me I took too long! Do they even have *optics*—"

"Enough!" Megatron growled. The newspark tended to prattle endlessly if not harshly silenced. Regardless, it seemed the Council and their ilk had learned nothing from the past. "You will not be flying until you're fully healed. I prefer my allies *alive*."

A small smile graced the drone's face. "Right. Allies."

He picked at the edge of the berth, wings fluttering. His ever-tingling field crackled with warmth—some sort of joy, most likely. What could *possibly* make him so happy?

Then, Starscream jolted upward with a gasp.

"What is it?" Megatron grumbled.

"My comms!" Starscream said, wings spread wide. "How did I forget about them?"

"What about them?"

Megatron was ignored as Starscream flexed and unflexed his fingers. He took a step closer, determined to get the newspark's attention.

"*What* are you doing?"

This, too, went ignored. As Megatron prepared to grab him, he finally turned toward him, a grin on his face.

"I sent my wingmates a message!" Starscream said. "They know I'm alive now!"

Megatron fought back a groan. More Seekers was *exactly* what they needed.

■■■

[Alert: two Seekers at entrance. Possibility of discovery: high.]

Megatron sighed.

[Thank you, Soundwave,] he replied. *[There is no need for an alert yet. These Seekers were expected.]*

[Understood.]

Megatron held no doubt that Soundwave would still watch the Seekers. As long as his cassettes kept quiet when they snuck around, that wasn't any cause for concern. If the Seekers were anything like their wingmate, they would understand the desire for increased security.

Megatron turned to the berth. Starscream was deep in recharge, finally calmed after getting into a shouting match with Megatron over a particularly difficult level of a game earlier. He shook Starscream gently, and when the drone didn't wake, simply pulled him off the berth.

Starscream, upon hitting the floor, squawked and thrashed. A brief flash of crackling fear nearly made Megatron wince, but it quickly shifted to confusion and irritation. The drone pulled himself onto his feet ungracefully, leaning against the berth.

"What was that for?" He hissed. "Didn't I tell you to leave me the frag alone?"

What right did that petulant newspark have to tell *him* to frag off?

"Don't take that tone with me," Megatron said. Starscream's wings hiked up as the Seeker prepared to speak again, but Megatron cut him off. "Your wingmates are here."

Starscream's wings fluttered, tingling excitement radiating from him. "Skywarp and Thundercracker?"

"You never told me their names."

Megatron pushed the door open. Starscream followed after him, delicate pedes clinking rather than thunking through the halls.

Two Seekers waited at the entrance for them, one purple and yellow, and the other, blue and orange. They were both heavier set than Starscream—older models. Though, as Megatron met the blue one's optics, something seemed off.

"Thundercracker! Skywarp!" Starscream called, leaping at them like an excited turbopup.

The two Seekers returned the embrace, wings high. They radiated warmth and affection—a deep fondness that even Megatron could envy. Then, the purple Seeker shifted their hand downward, claws brushing against the base of Starscream's wings.

Starscream immediately jerked out of the hold, but the purple Seeker pursued, grabbing him by the edge of the wing. As the purple Seeker pulled Starscream to their chest, they continued coasting their claws along the base of his wings. Starscream squirmed.

"Warp!" He said between laughs. "Stop!"

The purple Seeker—Warp? *Skywarp*?—grinned. "Nope!"

After a few moments passed and the tickling didn't cease, Megatron interrupted.

"I would appreciate it if we went inside," Megatron said. "We don't want to attract attention."

Skywarp released Starscream. Thundercracker watched the two of them before turning to Megatron. The Seeker's field dripped with apprehension, plating tight and wings wide—completely unlike his wingmates. Starscream was surrounded by buzzing joy, a smile on his face, while Skywarp radiated excitement. Clearly, only one of them truly understood what was happening.

Megatron led them back to Starscream's room in the medbay. The Seeker wasted no time, crossing the room and pulling out his datapad.

"Warp!" Starscream said. "Look at this! It has games on it!"

Megatron turned toward the purple Seeker only to find empty air. Moments later, they reappeared next to Starscream, leaning over his shoulder.

"Skywarp!" Thundercracker hissed. "I told you not to use your outlier here!"

Outlier? Outlier mecha were rare—teleportation abilities, even rarer. Such a thing would be immensely useful to the Decepticons, should the Seekers join…

Skywarp shrugged. "So what?"

"*So what*?" Thundercracker repeated. "I expect you to listen to me!"

Skywarp tilted their head. "You never told me why."

Thundercracker sighed. "You're right. I'll tell you later. It's too late, anyway—the cybercat is out of the box."

A beeping sound drew Skywarp's attention. Starscream, completely uninterested in the conversation, had begun to play one of the games on the datapad, wings fluttering as he concentrated. Skywarp leaned over his shoulder, then tapped at the screen. Starscream scowled at them and turned away, but Skywarp just moved behind him again.

Megatron took the moment of distraction to study Thundercracker. The mech was obviously their leader—but why? Upon clearer examination, it became obvious. Thundercracker's plating was just a little thicker than Skywarp's, his cockpit a little larger. There were scuff marks along his seams, hinting at many past transformations. His weapons were situated on the shoulders rather than on the forearms—a very specific trademark.

"You're a warframe," Megatron said quietly.

Thundercracker's optics widened, wings twitching as his field tingled with anxiety. "Y-yes, I am."

"But your wingmates are drones."

Thundercracker's tone grew sharper, field shifting toward apprehension. "Yes, they *are*."

Starscream and Skywarp had graduated from avoidance to wrestling, wings caught between each other as they tussled. The datapad laid dangerously close to the edge of the berth,

forgotten.

"A mech like you would have a place among us," Megatron said.

Thundercracker's olfactory ridge crinkled, field souring. "I'm done with fighting."

"Starscream asked to join," Megatron said.

Thundercracker's wings shot upward as his lips curled into a snarl. "He doesn't know what he's agreeing to."

"But he wanted to," Megatron said. "Are you going to deny him the ability to make his own choices?"

Thundercracker's wings fell. *There* it was.

"No," Thundercracker said quietly. "No, I'm not."

"I hope—"

Skywarp and Starscream fell off the berth with a loud clank. The conversation was put on hold as Thundercracker scolded them for not paying attention to their surroundings.

All three Seekers stayed beyond Starscream's recovery. The Decepticons didn't *truly* have the berths to spare, but to convince the outlier and warframe to join, it was worth the sacrifice. Thundercracker was still reluctant, but Megatron knew that as long as he had one wingmate, he had all three.

It was only a matter of time.

End Notes

This was originally going to just be the first scene, but it was way too short. Then, I came up with too many ideas and had to cut a small chunk to keep this thing from becoming a multichap. It was really only a couple of things (Megatron giving Starscream the energeon detection protocol, liberating the Seekers, Starscream witnessing death for the first time), but I decided they were better off unwritten.

▶ Rambling about the characters
▶ Rambling about Cybertronian lifestages and what "newspark" actually means in this AU/continuity

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