

Chapter 7.5 or Meanwhile in Chapter Six

In the Electric Company's Executive Cylinder the meeting plods on.

The Cylinder existed somewhere between plain Electro City and that which was Stereo. It sat above the Radio Station, but was not yet engulfed in the mysteries of the fabricated system. One could see the Udvventure Amusement Platforms stretching into the distance above them. The Cylinder's view was probably the most fantastic in all the world(s). At once it looked out at the electronic city below, at the cartoon scenes broadcast across the Blanket, and at those extraordinary things which were constantly being hauled in and out of the Platforms.

The gathering of Electric executives had turned ugly long ago. Three A&R's lay dead. The Muffinman had crushed another's neck and Mix shot one with the laserbeams that he often fired from his eyes. The DJ ordered,

“Zeppelin, have these bodies turned into *gijeba* program *Jimi-drones*.”

“Yes, Master.”

Jimi-drones were the relatively small force of bionic zombies that were directly under the order of the Transistor Jim in his war on the Truants. He had ten or so Jimi-drones on hand every so often, but they were destroyed easily if Jim did not care for them with *all* of his technopathic attention. When on a field assignment, Jim preferred his Jimi-drones to the Club Unit connected to him because they obeyed him with no question and never spoke. The Club, on the other hand, often grew cantankerous and made fun of Jim. These 3 fresh dead bodies would fill out the ranks of Jimi-drones at an all-time 13 high, necessary for the mission ahead that was steadily growing in importance.

Third Base sat frozen in his chair. As punishment for his intolerable slip-up, the Muffinman played him a new musical composition, a special triple-time *fastforward* rendition of an experimental *Dephikuzz* torture track. The particular piece was designed like an old school slasher flick.

Third Base was struck white with terror halfway through, had thrown up, then lost his voice. As the playback neared it's close, the rest of his facilities shut down. He'd been like this for the last 3 hours, so he was expected to regain a good percentage of his brain power soon enough. The piece of music was called *The Broken Beats of Stupid Simon*.

Muffinman continued, turning his attention to Jim.

“It appears you'll have to intervene on this one, Jim. Have you made contact with that old fool Milk Crates?”

“I have, Primogul. The Sub-Principal assures me that he has the boy. The Juvenaut has been given enough truth so that he trusts in the School, in order that the offender should remain there until our arrival.”

“Good. You will enter the underground maze from the basement of this very building. Bring the full force of Jimi-drones and as many Clubs as you like. Soda Jerk and Dr. Nylon will accompany you along the Fathoms to the shield entrance of the School.

They shall wait there should anything go wrong. Understood?”

Jim nodded gravely and cast his gaze on the Soda Jerk, that Transistor who wore the number 6, then nodded to Dr. Nylon, who wore 7.

Muffinman then turned to Rabbit Breckinridge, the Transistor who wore the number 4.

“Rabbit. I’m sending you Deep as well.”

She rubbed her hands together, in happy plot. She barely spoke, except in sounds or imitations.

The DJ said, “You, however, shall head in the opposite direction as Jim’s party. It shall be you, dear Rabbit, and the entire mass of Biter Units and Sneaker Peds. You will fan out the ranks and find those criminal elders responsible for this Tape Recorder nonsense, which the Clubs are making such a stink over.”

Rabbit hiccuped in agreement. Muffinman then added,

“And you shall bring Mix and young Mega-Kenny with you. Mix can lead the Biter Units better than any in the Company. And Mega-Kenny, the Peds.”

Mix shrieked,

“DJ, no! I have some work to finish on the Stereo!”

The DJ’s neck stretched a little, resembling a dinosaur, as he bent his head towards Mix.

He said, “No Mix, you *have* to go.”

“But I hate the underground. It’s filthy and, and--”

The Graph Zeppelin stood firm and glared at the little robot, which he constantly had to repair, due to his many foolish physical stunts.

Graph boomed, “*You shall go!* You shall heed the DJ and serve the Company as he sees fit. No one defies him as you dare. Your programming is ungrateful. You are merely a clown, here for all our amusements. Were I just to rewrite you.”

Mix began replaying the words the Zeppelin spoke from the beginning. He imitated him, transforming his body to resemble him as he might look were he a metal midget. The humans in the room giggled but the Muffinman seized the robot Mix and threw him hard into the Zeppelin, toppling them both to the floor.

“You *shall* do as I say Mix! And *you* will not speak for me, Zeppelin.”

At this, Third Base was beginning to come around. Muffinman turned to him.

“Third Base! I have new assignments for you and your bumlbers. You, Fun Freddie, and this Stuffed Eddie, *all* shall have be reassigned. You three are being split up! Fun Freddie shall be made to work with Rabbit. *Stuffed Eddie* will accompany old Jim, and you, Base shall come with me, into the *Stereo System*.”

Mega-Kenny looked over at Base, who stood by, seemingly emotionless. The DJ turned to Rapunzel,

“You and I shall retire to dinner shortly. Afterwards, I shall take a Boombox out for several maneuvers in Stereo. You shall be in charge of the Company the whole of this time. Please send Third Base and his affiliates after me shortly. I have a pogogram concert tonight at Midnight. We will be broadcasting from the *Plastic Castle*. And Jason!”

“Yes, DJ?”

“You and the Ghattoblasters shall be performing! You shall open the show!”

“Wonderful, DJ.”

“Quite. And you shall not disappoint me. Nor the throngs! I will see to it!”

With that, he rose, and said,

“Rapunzel. Meet me in my quarters in 15 minutes. Later for you all!”

He filtered out of the air, his presence depixelating; seeming to teleport away to his destination. Jason’s image followed suit, as did Third Base’s. Mix turned to the Graph Zeppelin and said,

“An old trick of the Stereo. I wonder how he did that, huh?”

Then he shot Graph in his chest with his eyebeams. The Zeppelin grabbed for him but found Mix was fading out just like the DJ had.

Mix, however, reappeared across the room next to Mega-Kenny. He said,

“Ha ha you idiots! None of us was ever here, we were all pogograms!! Ha ha ha! Come Mega-Kenny, let us prepare our swarms of robotic retards.”

* *

Once Zeppelin had the Jimi-drones outfitted properly he had them meet Jim and his team in the basement. There was Jim, his thirteen Jimi-drones, and a 9 character Club squad of Truancy officers, including Stuffed Eddie.

They entered the underground with little ceremony, 15 minutes before the Ghattoblasters would take the pogographic world stage for the first time in history.