

Chapter Eight

Auto Parts

Adam Head's apartment was the nicest place Kazoo had ever seen. Every nook was dedicated to one comfort or another. Pressing buttons made tables and chairs pop into place. At the pull of a lever, spouts of sweet drinks would pour themselves into suddenly appearing plastic cups.

More impressive, was Head's butler: a four foot tall *robot*. The robot stood rather slightly, with a round head, minimal facial features, a broomstick torso, and extender limbs. He was a Japanimax import model.

Adam Head said, "Bill, I'd like for you to say hello to the late Hum Sim model childcare robot, an Audiomatic Prodo 1600. His name is *Awdokai*."

"I just call him *Auto*," said Gel, "Like Auto Parts. Cuz he breaks down all the time."

"That is not accurate Miss Gel," said Awdokai, with no hint of humor.

"Hi," said Kazoo, his spirits brightening slightly.

He seems to be a rather nice robot, thought Kazoo.

He'd seen a few Company Biter Units in action before, a thought back to the time he witnessed a truant get his arm chomped clean off.

Auto said, **"It is my pleasure to meet you, young man."**

Gel made for the door, "I've got to *talk* to you, Dad."

Adam Head replied, "Wait up, dear. I must tend to some teens in my office. They are poised to battle one another for no good reason, I should say. Kazoo, you shall be fine here for a few minutes, with Awdokai. He'll get you anything you like."

He leaned in, from beyond the doorway, then, and said, "You can trust him, Bill."

Gel looked back at Kazoo as the round door parted for her.

Kazoo said, "Good-bye Gel."

She screwed her face at him. She winked and the Heads were gone.

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"Is there anything I can obtain for you, sir?"

Kazoo thought for a moment. Surely there was no reason to be shy with the robot. He was a *machine*. Actually, he wanted to ask him lots of things.

"Might you have any Comic Books that I could thumb through?"

"Do you have anything particular in mind? Adam Head has an extensive collection."

As far as Kazoo remembered, the rest of the *Kid America and Friends* series was a little bit repetitive. True, almost every different kind of Supercandy there was had surfaced in this series, as well as many of the characters who would define the *next* series, which was called, simply *Supercandy*. By the time Supercandy started, the world of Kid America was a world of *superheroes*. Kazoo had found relatively few issues of *this* Comic-book.

"How about the obvious favorite. Supercandy #1?"

Awdokai said nothing, but instead walked over to a keypad on a wall. He plugged

his fingers in, and within moments, an envelope was shooting out of the slot above.

“Supercandy #1, though I fear it is a reprint, it is in very good condition. I hope that you shall enjoy your reading.”

“Thank you, Awdok--”

“Auto is just fine, teenager.”

Kazoo sat down on the sofa, and began reading.

* * *

Supercandy #1 appeared one month after the final issue of *Kid America and Friends* (#365), picking up the action as if a year had passed in the storyline. The first issue is entitled, “Do You Believe in MakeBelieve?”. It has been years since the IceCream-Man has been to see Kid America, and the Decoder Ring he gave him has not been much good. Kid America has required his bicycle, as it took him nearly the entire rest of the *Kid America and Friends* run to get it back from Suckerboy. The tone of this Comic Book is very different from it’s predecessor. It is more serious, times are presented as much more grave. Supercandy has sprung into a full scale *epidemic*, as many kids are disappearing, and those who are still around are sick with toothaches and a strong detachment from reality, as in a super-mononucleosis. Even most of our heroes are unwilling to believe that the Supercandy is causing this, except for Rollerskatie, who has risen to be a great leader of the heroic (supercandy) crew: Makebelievers.

Then, it happens one day, that before a night of adventuring, Kid America hears a THUNK! inside his refrigerator. Inside, is a teenager made of living snow called Ollie Mode, who has brought a message from the Ice Cream Man. A meeting has been called for all Makebelievers and kids who are pertinent to the Candy Battles. Ollie Mode is a Snowball Fighter, of a crew of Sam’s personal apprentices in the Ice Cream Wars. Ollie Mode gives Kid America an address, located somewhere in the Bronx, but when the Makebelievers make the trek to the coordinates, they find that they must exist somewhere in th middle of the Bronx Zoo. They find that there is a small castle, hidden from sight, in the giraffe pasture. When they arrive, they place is overrun with Ice Cream Trucks and strange sorts of cycles.

Sam’s immediate reaction to Kid America and Fatboy is anger, because they are obviously falling prey to the ill of effects of eating too much Supercandy. Sam urges all the kids that have gathered that the Supercandy is unnecessary to one who wishes to have powers. He demonstrates this by turning his body into snow. The “Candymaker” and his “Factory” are alluded to as the engineer of a great plot against childhood. “There is still very little we know about him,” says Sam, “but everyday, me and a team of special agents try to penetrate his lair. Above all else you must resist the candy, because it is keeping you all from your *true* powers.” With this he looks at Kid America, who is near bursting with doubt. Kid America stomps out of the castle, dragging Fatboy and Jumpus with him. Near to the exit his little sister Elf (revealed in issue #300 of *Kid America and Friends*) implores him to stay and listen. Softening Kid America says he has something important that he must do.

This begins a long run of issues that feature the “dark Kid America” wherein he struggles with the candy and the basis of good and evil. Although he is ever a hero, he sometimes neglects the finer points in being a good person. His longtime romance with Rollerskatie begins to get disrupted, and he often is caught in deep trouble, in need of rescue by his fellow Makebelievers.

Of further relevance to the major script, is the youngest Creamcoloured, Copernicus, and his splintering from the Tricketreaters, in order to form his own slipshod crew called Screwballs. Copernicus shows himself to be a genius, and possibly smarter than any of the characters involved in the story. He will not touch the candy, believing it to be ill, but uses it to keep his three minions in check, who

include, the scruffy duo Hobby Horse and Raggedy, and the supercandy giant Upside Down Brown who ate a Bellybean. Brown is Copernicus' only real friend, he seems to admire the giant for his great size. He takes care of him and keeps him fed, but he wants to grow just the same way, although he can find no more Bellybeans. Hence, Copernicus reveals his plan to find the Candy Factory. We also find out that Copernicus has a great flare for technology, he has a "pet" Spaceship that he designed (containing an artificial intelligence, equivalent to a loyal dog) and miniature robotic spy operatives he calls Teenibots.

**-Bodey Flugel
Encyclopedia Komica
synopsis of Supercandy #1**

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Kazoo finished reading the comic, left with an idea. He figured he didn't have much time before Head would return. And so, without any further ado, from out of one of the lower pockets in his pants, he produced the Tape Recorder. He held it up to Awdokai's rather faceless head.

Kazoo said, "I need some repairwork done on *this*. Do you know what it is?"

Auto took the tape recorder and began to examine it in his hands,

"It appears to be a refurbished *Microbug™* Tape Recorder... as well as a--"

Awdokai paused.

Kazoo would not wait, "What?!"

"Well sir, it appears that the remodifications have made this particular Microbug, a *mobile module*."

"Huh!?"

Kazoo was disappointed, "You mean it's like a--a remote control thing--like a spy recorder?" He added sullenly,

"A spy!?"

Auto's head squeaked back and forth rapidly.

Finally, he said, **"No. Not exactly. It has been made as to be able to transform from it's original status as a Tape Recorder, into a miniature *hovercraft*. It is operated, not by a remote, but from the *inside*."**

"How do you mean? Is it Company issue? Is it bad?"

If the robot could look astounded it would have.

"*Negative*. By no means, I should think, by all calculations. The modifications made on the craft are the work of either another robot (probably a renegade), or a telekinetic. Probably a force of both. A team, you see. And I might add, this concoction seems to be an act of desperation. This Recorder is an anomaly. It is a dangerous thing in these times. Especially beyond the parameters of this School. With permission, sir, may I scan the appliance with x-rays?"

"I suppose so."

A hole opened in the center of Awdokai's head, and a 2" diameter lens telescoped it's way out. In addition, Awdokai's stomach revealed a viewscreen on which Kazoo could view what the robot saw.

What appeared onscreen made Kazoo's heart leap. Auto, as well, appeared to be astonished.

He spoke at a slightly higher volume, **"Outer Space! There is a miniature robot imprisoned within. He was equipped with full mental faculty. A smart-model. If I am not**

mistaken, a *robyte*. I have not seen one so small since well before the Blanket. I'm afraid from all cerebral scans, however, he appears to be defunked."

Kazoo wouldn't believe that. He said, "I don't think so, Auto. Can you remove him from the Recorder?"

"Certainly."

Awdokai's fingers *became* the necessary tools. His right pinky acted as a lasercutter.

"Do you know, sir, that this little robot appears to be a mid 22nd century Drum-Machine counterpart? There were several companies that produced such things at the time, for all kinds of appliances. But if I am not mistaken--"

Awdokai suddenly went silent. He appeared to be frozen.

"Auto! What happened? Speak to me!"

"I am experiencing something very strange. My nueral mechanics are trying to reroute themselves."

"I don't get it."

"It has something to do with the subject I am attempting to broach. Someone has tinkered with my programming."

"Well can you override it?"

"Indeed, but it is still rather disconcerting. One moment."

Again, Awdokai froze.

"There. Now, although it is rather impossible, *this* is a *Durobyte*--a SKi model. A Hum Sim Tech design. A brother unit, in some ways, to myself. Are you familiar with Hum Sim Samo?"

"He was a genius. He was supposed to have made a machine that could disrupt the Blanket, right?"

"That is correct sir, but it wasn't just a machine. It was a drum machine, a device used to manipulate information of a sonic nature."

"I understand, Auto."

"Yes, well, please do pardon me sir, but it might take me a few moments to override these silly program deficits. There. Now, if I am correct, this *Durobyte* appears to be *the* SK 1. The next SK built would have been SK 2, and so on. The SK 1, was supposed to be the counterpart to that great Drum Machine. But this Robot SK 1, or rather, as he has come to be known, *Robotski*, is a famous character in children's legend and underground--"

"Comic Book stories."

Awdokai now had the little robot free of the Recorder. He held him very gently. Kazoo knew Adam Head would return soon,

"Please sew up the Tape Recorder, Auto."

Awdokai began to do so, but noted,

"There is a cassette lodged within. It is soaked in battery acid. The entire outfit, both robot and recorder appear to be powered on old-fashioned electricity."

"The Company rarely detects the use of those kinds of devices. On the surface, it's quite common, Auto."

"I see. Shall I eject the cassette then, sir?"

"Yes."

The cassette was the smallest kind Kazoo had ever heard of, and the first *tape* he'd

ever actually seen with his eyes. Tapes had long gone out of use in the 21st century, while Kazoo was now trudging blindly through the 22nd (or was it the 23rd?). Kazoo snatched it greedily from Awdokai's fingers. Imprinted into the plastic was the word

B A N D Y

A tiny label underneath this read the word:

m i x t a p e

Kazoo looked at Awdokai helplessly.

Auto said, "**We have no machine that may play such a cassette, sir.**"

"*Kazoo*. Please call me Kazoo, okay?"

The robot nodded, as he tinkered, trying to restore power to Robotki.

Suddenly, Sebastian Woofe had begun to bark and was pulling at Kazoo's pantleg.

Kazoo knew that Adam Head must be preparing to return to the apartment. Kazoo said, "Auto?"

"**Yes, Kazoo?**"

"Would it be possible for you *not* to mention any of this to Adam Head? It is of the utmost importance to the security of the, um, *world*," Kazoo gulped, thinking the words sounded strange, if not stupid.

Awdokai did not know why, but *something* in his programming, perhaps a Hum Sim trait, made him agree, to the extent that his programming would allow.

He said, "**You must understand, friend Kazoo, that I can remain silent, *unless* Adam Head asks me directly what we have been doing. Then I will be powerless. I will have to answer. I must include, quite in favor of Mister Head, that you have been quite lucky to come under his surveillance. Adam Head is a fine gentleman, and to put it bluntly--a hero. He will not do you ill. In addition, if you are in fear of the King DJ, I would like to assure you that Mister Head is quite impervious to his aural machinations.**"

"And how's that? Surely, no one is *impervious* to anything."

"**You see, Adam Head is deaf.**"

Kazoo couldn't believe it. He responded quickly, "But he *responds* to anything I say--"

"**Adam Head has two microphone inputs that act as his ears. All the information he receives is downloaded into a microcomputer that feeds communications directly to his brain. He receives all audio information as written words. Hence, he cannot be destroyed nor uplifted by *music* or *Knoizak* in any way.**

"**Adam Head is a Bottlecap, a Milk bred individual of the underground elite. He and few others of the School try to keep the underground safe. They are *fighters*. There are others in this school, however, who try to keep us comfortable through dangerous politics.**"

Kazoo nodded, "What about *Gel*?"

"**Miss Gel has been my charge since she was born. She is confused like many teenagers of her generation. The Radio has leaked into the Deep's once Soundproof scramble barriers. The DJ claims Electro City is his to control and this is true.**"

“But--” Kazoo felt despair.

Auto’s blank face held the Juvenaut in his optics. With a rare electronic courage he said in a mechanical whisper,

“It is word that one such Sound Barrier yet exists. One soundproof refuge that the Muffinman cannot crumble. In all probability, this barrier barely protects the size of this room.”

“That’s where I must *go*, Auto. I have to.”

The robot made no further motion, but stood still, listening.

“Awdokai, *where is this Sound Barrier?*”

“You may think me dysfunctional if I utter that which is... *restricted.*”

“*Please*, Auto.”

The robot nearly seemed to take a deep breath,

“I believe it is much closer to the surface and quite in the opposite way from which *you* were traveling when Adam Head found you. I refer, of course, to the studios of Kid America and the Action Figures.”

The robot paused. Kazoo stood hovering on the words. *Did this, a robot, believe the fantasy... ?*

“Forgive an old robot for believing in *science fiction*, Kazoo.”

Kazoo then asked, eagerly,

“Do you have their Cube?”

“You mean their demonstration (Stupid) Cube, sir?”

Kazoo nodded.

“All trace of that Demo was erased from my records. As I believe is true of the entire School.”

“*But why?*”

“I do not know. If I once did, this information has been erased, or possibly frozen to my access codes. The School’s stance on this is simple: Kid America does not exist. He never did. He is a fantasy.”

Kazoo made no attempt at more questions. He sensed Adam’s approach and wanted no trouble in this, feeling a sudden distrust of *everybody*. Could this whole thing be an elaborate hoax staged by Jim to teach him a lesson? He quickly shrugged that off, thinking how unimportant he really was.

Kazoo replied, “I want to thank you Awdokai.”

Kazoo gathered the remains of the Tape Recorder and Robotski himself. Robotski was quite heavy, all his joints were limp, and it made Kazoo feel like he was holding a dead little animal, rather than a toy. Kazoo gently dropped him into his one remaining empty pocket, along with the mixtape.

Adam Head abruptly walked in, trailing liquid from his sneakers. Kazoo could still not see if Head himself was wearing Voltors.

Head said, “There was a small problem. A fight. One of the Ak-wrestlers and a telekinetic. They did quite some damage to my office till I was able to restrain them. Well, we must be off. Sub-Principal Milkrates awaits, he is eager to see our new student.”

Auto stepped forward, **“May I attend with you and friend Kazoo?”**

Adam peered at his robot. Awdokai belonged to Gel, in actuality. If it weren't for her he would not keep the robot, but probably grant him some sort of freedom.

Adam said, "It's strange, but Gel asked the same thing. Well I suppose it'll be O.K. for you to accompany us down to the level, at least. Everyone is eager to help our young friend here."

Kazoo said, "Down?"

Auto responded, "**The Sub-Principal occupies the lowest level in the School district. The psuedoscience and robotics departments are closest to his apartment and offices.**"

"Come Kazoo, Gel will join us at the bottom," said Adam Head.

Kazoo gulped.

Awdokai: pronounced Awe-Doke-EYE