

Switch Runners #1

"A Matter of Trust" (working title, may change that)

Page Breakdown

Page 01

Open on good guy HQ (don't worry so much about the design--I'll get you a sketch of the base soon). Ramp is calling the group together into a large room to look at Farz's latest vehicle design--the Breakneck. Farz is awfully proud of her latest incorporation of the Ovidian Switch-Tech (the tech that she developed from the strange moon material that merged with their base). Rondo is really taken by the smooth lines, and Talika is skeptical that it won't blow up on its trial run. "We need to test it," says Ramp. Rondo instantly volunteers, but Farz warns that this is the fastest and most dangerous machine yet. Talika says "Don't look at me--what about the workaholic over there?" Talika points to Anchor, who appears to be dozing in a chair. "He's got nothing to live for, anyway, ever since his girlfriend decided to turn traitor." Ramp: "Anchor?" Anchor: "Hnh. Getting blown up can't be any worse than having to listen to Talika's gums flap all day."

Page 02

Bad guy HQ (again, don't worry about the design yet--I'll help with that). Tritannus is in his three components and he's addressing the entire group of baddies. Tackle has devised a system of energy siphon devices to pull the Ovidian energies contained in the mountains of the Switch Runners' HQ and focus them back at the bad guy's base, giving Tritannus the strength to reform. Cyndral is ordered to go to a small range of hills by a large lake. Cyndral hems and haws for a bit in his excited southerner speak, and Tritannus has to interrupt him to issue his next orders. He then tells Crass Reptilicus and Shilla to plant another device on a high plateau in the south. Crass Reptilicus groans as Shilla squeals with delight. Terzo: "What about me?" Tackle: "You and me get to seal the coffin on the Runners." Tackle belches some oily smoke as he laughs, which grosses Terzo out.

Page 03

Anchor speeds across a Transformer-esque desert range in the Breakneck. He's closing in on 800 mph (or the space equivalent), and the engines aren't even close to red-lining. Farz is pleased with herself, in her grease-monkey way. Ramp orders Anchor to slow down and test the Switch Mode, and Anchor does it with an open throttle, nearly spinning out. Anchor smirks, but Ramp is irritated with his recklessness. Talika: "Serve him right if he did crash and burn." Ramp: "That's enough." Talika: "Hey, what're you yelling at me for? At least I wave the company flag." Ramp tells Anchor to bring it in, and before Anchor can comply he sees something on the southern plateau--Crass and Shilla setting up some kind of device. He reports this to base, which worries Ramp and Farz. Anchor thinks to himself "If **they're** here, where is **she**?"

Page 04

Farz does some scans and locates both the Crass/Shilla array, but also sees another blip over by the lake. Ramp issues orders--Rondo is to take the Sea Strider to the lake to investigate, and Talika is to take the Cicada to the plateau to intercept Crass and Shilla. Ramp tells Anchor to give Talika backup, but Anchor flatly refuses as he bolts off in an unknown direction. Anchor: "I got something else I have to check out--you'll have to trust me on this." Ramp is pissed. Talika: "Sheesh, so he pretends to take all that talk personally so he can play hooky the rest of the day. Typical." Ramp: "Just go!" Rondo and Talika bolt off from the base to intercept the bad guys.

Page 05

Crass and Shilla, unaware that they've been spotted, continue to set up the array. Crass is being overbearing, issuing orders to Shilla, who clumsily tries to set things up right for him. Crass pushes her aside to handle some of the delicate electronics. "He's so commanding", Shilla sighs lovingly. A laser nearly beans Crass (maybe singes his hair?), and the baddies turn to see Talika, holding a laser pistol, speeding towards them on the Cicada. Shilla goes into berzerker mode in defense of her beloved, and bounds toward the Cicada, and Talika mutters to herself about a bad day getting worse.

Page 06

Cyndral is nearly finished setting up his array on a small island in the middle of the lake. His chubby fingers make it hard to finish the job, and his constant flustered babbling doesn't help. Rondo speeds towards him in the Sea Strider, and Cyndral kicks on his flames. They begin to fight. Insert some cool action here.

Page 07

Back at the base, Ramp is still trying to get Anchor on the line. No answer! Ramp: "I'm going to give Talika backup in the Dispatcher!" Farz: "You can't handle that vehicle without me, and we can't leave the base defenseless!" Meanwhile, Rondo and Cyndral fight. Through a clumsy accident, Cyndral chuffs a huge chunk of land into the water, which forces the Sea Strider to pitch way sideways, nearly knocking Rondo out of the boat. Cyndral takes the opportunity to hit the activation key on the device. It powers up, and a beam shoots off towards the good guy's HQ.

Page 08

Talika swings around in the Cicada with Shilla hanging onto the vehicle. Talika tries to do a Switch Mode in mid-air, but Shilla swats her down and knocks her out. Crass congratulates Shilla, which makes her blush. Crass hits the activation key on the device. A beam shoots toward the good guys' HQ, and the beams reflect towards the bad guys' base. The beam falls on Tritannus's three components: "At last, we can unite to become--", and in the next panel we see Tritannus complete, soaring into the sky, lightning behind him. "--Tritannus!"

ACT BREAK

Page 09

Tritannus flies towards the Switch Runners' base. Now that he's complete he has total mastery over the planetary forces. He passes over the lake where Rondo is fighting Cyndral still, and Tritannus flicks his hand to create a roiling wave to overtake Rondo and the Sea Strider. It also overtakes Cyndral, who congratulates Tritannus as he bubbles under the water. Meanwhile, Ramp and Farz realize how deep they're in the soup now, so they both go to launch the Dispatcher.

Page 10

As the Dispatcher leaves the base, we see Tackle and Terzo just outside, getting ready to infiltrate. Terzo wonders aloud how they're going to "seal the coffin". Tackle informs her that the beams are siphoning the energy from the Ovidium around the base, which gives Tritannus his abilities, but the real prize is the secrets of the Switch Tech that the good guys have. He's there to hack their system and steal the schematics of all the vehicles. Terzo: "Fine, but what am *I* here for?" Tackle "You used to work for them, so Tritannus figures you can help with hacking their systems. You're my lovely assistant." Tackle belches more oily smoke as he chuckles, and Terzo just grimaces at him. Terzo thinks to herself "I wonder what would happen if **I** got the Switch Tech secrets?" She smiles grimly as she considers her gun.

Page 11

Tritannus, with Crass and Shilla, go to take on the heroes. They're meeting in the same desert scape we saw Anchor zooming across on page 03. Tritannus uses his earth powers to make giant logs of rock jut out of the ground, threatening to overturn the heroes in the Dispatcher. Farz does what she can to dodge the rocks, and she curses. Ramp calls to Rondo and Talika, who are just gaining consciousness. "Let's form up, gang!"

Page 12

Rondo and Talika show up in their respective vehicles, and in an impressive display, the SkyDrive is formed! Big fight here. Talika opens fire on Crass and Shilla, sending them flying off into the distance. Tritannus sends lightning bolts to hit the ship, and they just barely dodge. Farz is doing repairs as the ship smokes on the inside. Ramp orders her to make the repairs, and Farz yells at him that she's already on it. Tritannus grapples with the ship's nose, and Ramp and Tritannus have a face-to-face confrontation through the canopy of the SkyDrive. Tritannus: "You don't even realize that I've already won!"

Page 13

Tackle & Terzo are inside the base. Tackle explains as he's unloading some special equipment--he's going to directly upload the data into the beams that are simultaneously sapping the power of the Ovidium--so Tritannus will directly receive the data when Tackle is finished. The upload begins, but then Tackle is shot from behind. He falls to reveal that Anchor pulled the trigger. Terzo is cool as a cucumber, and she strikes a casual pose: "Long time no see, gorgeous."

Page 14

Tritannus is cracking the canopy of the Sky Drive. Farz hits the button to open it, which gives Tritannus

an uppercut as it flings open. Tritannus falls away from the ship a bit, but he's not out of the game yet. Farz steps up onto the nose of the ship and flings her space-wrench like a spinning hammer at Tritannus, which beans him on the face and sends him into a free fall (cue the BW Megatron scream as he falls). Farz closes the canopy and mutters something about messing with her ship. Ramp is trying to contact Anchor--they could use the firepower in the Breakneck. Ramp: "Blast it--where is he?" Meanwhile, Terzo is trying to tempt Anchor to return with her to the bad guys. As she talks, she reaches behind her for a hidden gun. Anchor hesitates to take her on. Anchor: "No. You threw away whatever trust I had in you a long time ago." He raises his gun.

Page 15

Terzo shoots at Anchor, but Anchor dodges. The blast hits Tackle's hacking device! Tackle: "No, you dumb soft-skis! The feedback through the siphon will--" Tritannus is hit by the feedback and separates. His three components beat a hasty retreat. As they run away they pass Cyndral, who is dripping wet and just arriving at the battle. "I'm here, Tritannus!" Tritannus "Retreat, you fool!" Cyndral stammers as he chases after his leader. Ramp and company are confused at why Tritannus suddenly lost his strength, but decide to return to base.

Page 16

Good guys are outside the base, on their way home. They suddenly see Tackle and Terzo get blasted out of the side of the base. They tumble down the mountainside, cursing all the while. Ramp and Farz exchange confused glances. They get inside, and Anchor is seemingly dozing in the chair as he was in the beginning. Talika expresses confusion about what just happened, and Anchor lifts one eyelid and gives her a smart remark. Ramp chuckles as Anchor snoozes off.

The End!

Other prospective titles:

Divide and Unite

Running Anchor

Anchor Man