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opening extract from

Bionicle Legends: Island of Doom

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INTRODUCTION

Six powerful figures stood on the shore of the once-great city of Metru Nui. They were the Toa Nuva, heroes whose power and skill had defeated the darkness and allowed the Matoran to return to the place that had once been their home.

All around them, Matoran were hard at work rebuilding the city. It had been damaged centuries ago by a massive earthquake and then overrun by Rahi beasts. Most of Metru Nui was in poor shape, some of it completely ruined.

The Toa Nuva and Takanuva, Toa of Light, had spent most of the past few weeks assisting in this effort. Now they had been called away by Turaga Vakama and Turaga Nuju for a private conference. From their expressions, the Toa could tell they were not about to hear good news.

Vakama led the Toa to an isolated spot where Turaga Dume was waiting for them.

Dume had been living in Metru Nui, waiting for the Matoran to return, for over a thousand years. He looked at the Toa Nuva with undisguised desperation in his eyes.

"My friends, I do not know how to say this," he began. "One thousand years ago, the Great Spirit Mata Nui was struck down by treachery and cast into a deep sleep. It is said that you Toa Nuva are destined to one day awaken Mata Nui and restore light and peace to the universe."

Tahu Nuva frowned. They knew all this already. Bringing the Matoran back to Metru Nui had been the first step toward awakening the Great Spirit.

"I have studied the stars, few and dim as they now are," Dume continued, gesturing toward the darkened sky. It was true that few points of light could be seen, and those that were visible had hardly any glow. "I have consulted with Turaga Nuju, who was once a talented interpreter of the messages to be read in the heavens. He agrees with my findings."

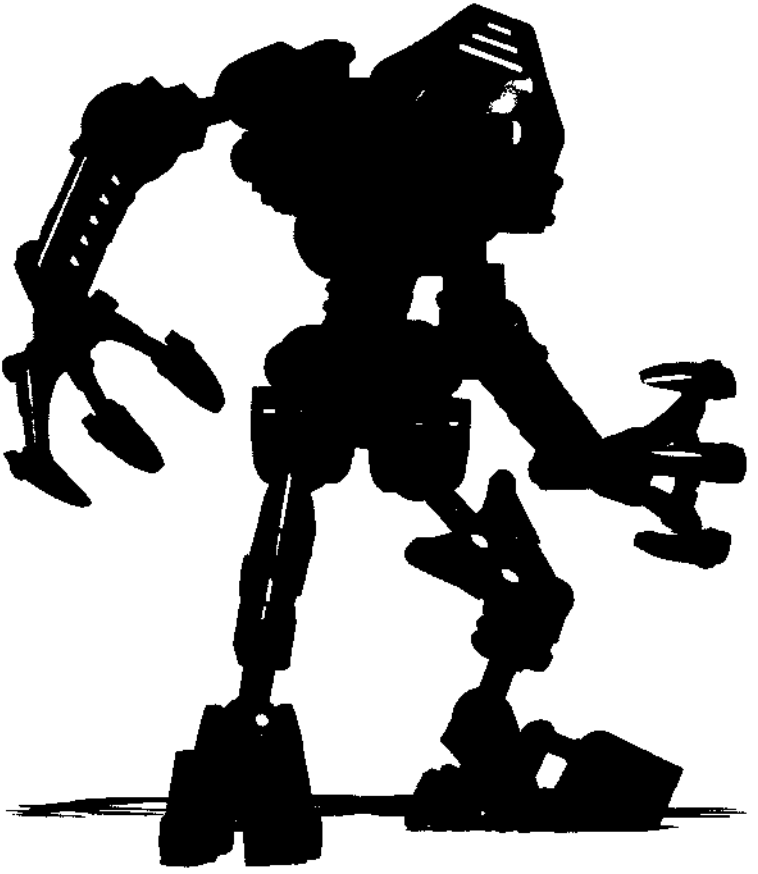
"Which are?" Kopaka Nuva asked, impatience creeping into his voice.

"Mata Nui is not merely asleep," Dume said quietly. "My friends, Mata Nui is dying."

After the initial shock and disbelief had passed, the Toa Nuva insisted on seeing the proof of Dume's claims. He and Nuju showed them how the passages of the stars, and their diminishment in brightness and number, spoke of an end to all things. In the time that had passed since Mata Nui first fell into slumber, the Great Spirit's hold on life had gradually grown weaker. If action was not taken, he would die, and all hope for the universe would be lost.

"What can we do?" asked Gali Nuva, Toa of Water. "With all our power, there must be some way we can save Mata Nui."

"And so there is," said Dume. "There is a great Kanohi Mask of Power – the Mask of Life – hidden far from here. That mask is the key to saving the life of Mata Nui. You must



travel to an island that should not exist, but does, to find this treasure."

"And when we have found it?" said Onua Nuva, Toa of Earth. "Then what?"

"It is our belief – our hope – that once you

have the mask, the Great Spirit will find a way to tell you what to do next," said Turaga Vakama.

Tahu Nuva nodded. "This doesn't sound very hard, not compared to some of the things we have already done. We travel to this island, find this mask –"

"And quick-save the universe," finished Lewa Nuva brightly. "Just like past-old times!"

Turaga Dume shook his head. "Do not take this task lightly, Toa Nuva. The stars are there for all to see, including those with evil intent. There are some who would not weep at Mata Nui's passing . . . and others who simply wish to possess the awesome power of that mask. If they should reach its hiding place before you . . ."

Tahu turned to Gali. "Tell Takanuva: We must leave at once."

"No!" snapped Dume. The others looked at him, startled. "Takanuva must stay here."

Kopaka wheeled on the Turaga. "I don't understand. You tell us that this mission is

vital, and then subtract one-seventh of our power. Why?"

"Metru Nui must be defended in your absence," Dume explained. "The stars say that it is Takanuva's destiny to remain here and guard the Matoran."

"I have to stay?" asked the Toa of Light in disbelief. "The others may need me. I should be with them!"

"You are needed here," said Turaga Vakama. "The time will come when your power may be all that stands between us and the darkness. On that day, you must be prepared to act. Until then, your place is in Metru Nui with us."

"All right, I will stay," said Takanuva. "But the others – do you think they will be all right?"

Vakama pondered for a long moment before answering. Then he said simply, "No, Takanuva. No, I do not."



one

The Island of Voya Nui:

The small armoured figure walked purposefully across the rocky landscape. His eyes scanned the ground and the steep slopes on either side, searching for the slightest sign of moisture. It was a ritual he repeated every day without fail, but one that grew more frustrating each time.

There is precious little water left, Garan thought as he studied the bone-dry terrain. *When the lake fully recedes, I don't know what we will do. Only the green belt near the coast remains lush, and none but the Great Spirit knows why.*

In the distance, the volcano rumbled and spewed red-hot lava into the air. The ground

trembled beneath his feet, but Garan had long since learned to keep his balance. A Matoran villager on the island of Voya Nui quickly mastered the art of dealing with eruptions, tremors and drought, or he did not last long.

He stopped at what looked to be a likely spot. Crossing his twin tools, he fired a pulse bolt at the ground. It blasted through the rock, gaining strength as it travelled, until it dissipated about six feet down. A little puddle of stagnant water rested at the bottom of the hole.

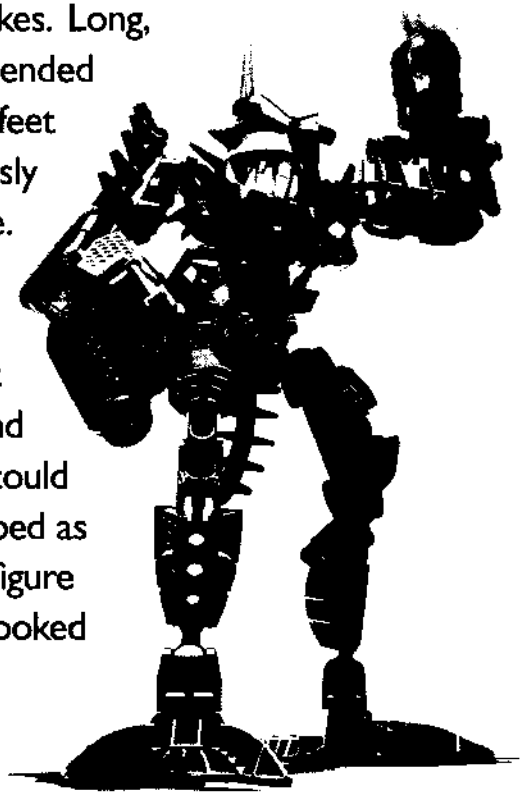
Garan sighed and looked out at the ocean in the distance. *So much water, and none that we can drink. If only –*

His eyes caught sight of something bobbing in the surf far below. It gleamed in the bright sunlight . . . it looked like a canister of some kind. As Garan watched, it struck the ice ring that surrounded the island and ground to a halt.

The lid of the canister rotated with a hiss and then fell off, sliding across the ice and

back into the water. Part of Garan wanted to run down to the shore and see what was inside, but he restrained himself. He crouched behind a boulder and watched carefully.

After a moment, a figure emerged from the canister. He was strong and lean, clad in snow-white armour that was lined with spikes. Long, muscular legs ended in two-toed feet that effortlessly gripped the ice. Strangest of all was the face, with eyes that glowed red and a smile that could best be described as savage. The figure paused and looked around with seeming satisfaction,



then began walking down the path that led to the Matoran settlement.

Garan peered around the rock to keep the being in sight. The armoured figure didn't look like anything he had seen before, but there was no mistaking the aura of power that surrounded him. It seemed impossible, but there was only one thing this new arrival could be – a Toa!

The white figure stopped suddenly. A Visorak was watching him from behind some nearby scrub, and evidently the Toa had detected it. Casually, as if he ran into such things every day, the Toa waved a hand in the Visorak's direction. The scrub suddenly came to life, its thick branches wrapping around the spider creature and squeezing tight. It did not let go until the Visorak had collapsed, its only movement an occasional twitch. At that point, the plant went back to being just a plant.

Garan was awestruck. With powers like that, this new Toa would be able to solve all of Voya Nui's problems in no time. He smiled

happily, confident that the Matoran's old way of life would soon be just a memory.

Reidak waited impatiently inside his canister. He had felt it wash up on the shore minutes ago. Zaktan had stated that Matoran would be sure to come investigate, and when they did, he was to open the canister and declare that he was the Toa of Earth.

This, Reidak decided, sounded all too much like some of Zaktan's other plans. They always tended to be over-complicated and too subtle for Reidak. After all, he wasn't a Toa – he was an ex–Dark Hunter and now a Piraka. He didn't even look like a Toa. All the Toa he had ever met were small and weak and usually died much too quickly. He preferred opponents with more longevity.

I have had enough of this, he grumbled to himself. I have heard only sea birds landing on this canister. If the Matoran will not find me, I will find them, much to their regret.

Shrugging his powerful shoulders, Reidak

tore his way out of the metal canister. Brushing scraps of iron off himself, he stalked inland.

Balta had come upon an opened canister while scouting for food. He had no idea what it might be. Perhaps Matoran from some other village had received the messages they had been throwing into the ocean and sent supplies? He knew that this was highly unlikely.

His doubts were quickly confirmed. The canister was empty. But there were footprints trailing away toward the settlement. Balta decided that food could wait. This was a mystery, after all, and Voya Nui could use a little mystery.

He caught up with the red-armoured newcomer about an hour later. The first thing he noticed was the stranger's smile – at least, he thought that was supposed to be a smile. There was something about it that reminded him of a predator's grin . . . just before it pounced on prey.