

One Destiny

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Kapitel 1: Chapter 01: New feelings

Chapter 1: New feelings

The suns were just about to rise but the cries of a battle already sounded over the trees of Le Wahi.

A wave of fire branded over Lerahk knocking the green Rahkshi unconscious but that was only one out of four and Tahu knew that the others would withstand his fiery attacks rather than their green friend.

As if it was for a prove a black staff was slammed against his back making the ruby Toa stumble and crash against a hut.

"Tahu!" a bright voice called. Lewa blocked Guurahk's attack with a stormy blow out of his Katanas and ran over to his friend. "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine, just a little scratch", Tahu grumbled trying to hide the wound on his back where he felt a small trail of blood dripping down.

Vorahk started another attack against Tahu but was frozen on half of his way.

"You better watch out", a calm voice came from behind. Kopaka had shot a casual ice blast against the black Rahkshi while still fighting against Panrahk.

"Wow, seems like I'm here right in time. Would have been bad if I had missed all the fun."

Onua came climbing over the last few branches.

"Hey, another Toa is unfair", Guurahk screeched.

"You were unfair too first", Lewa grumbled. "Four against three..."

"And who said you can break up our fight in between. Come back here!"

"Don't worry." The black Toa wandered over to the blue Rahkshi with a slight grin.

"Now you can fight with me, deal?"

Lewa still tried to get a look at Tahu's back.

"Are you sure you're alright?"

"I said I'm fine, okay?" the ruby one now nearly shouted.

Lime-kissed eyes looked at him half frightened, half worried.

"O-okay."

The fiery Toa tried to give his voice a calm tone. "Look, there are only two Rahkshi left. The village is more important now. We can take care of ours wounds later on. Now go and help Onua or Kopaka, will you?"

Lewa nodded and ran over to Onua. "But you stay out of fight, heart-promised", he shouted over his back.

Tahu now felt kinda guilty. Why did he always have to yell at everyone especially Lewa? Sure, the first few months the younger one was sometimes really tearing down his nerves with his bubbly and agile personality like a squirrel on cappuccino. But over the years he learned to accept it and, yeah, maybe he also kinda liked him the way he was, but he never had shown it. Rather he had given the little emerald one a hard time by yelling at him for any reason and making him feeling guilty for nearly everything he did although he sometimes felt closer to Lewa than to anyone else of his friends. Possibly because the Toa of air was the complete opposition to him.

'I'm sorry. I should be the one feeling guilty', he thought while he watched the blue

Rahkshi fleeing through the leaves.

Behind him Kopaka snorted because his Rahkshi was doing the same.

"Now look, the defeated ones are gone too, however they made that", Onua said when he came back from an unsuccessful Rahkshi hunt. "Now we're at where we began. We haven't defeated a single one."

"At least the village is safe for now", Tahu shrugged and sighed when he noticed that Lewa was buzzing around him again searching for injuries.

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It had become night again. The four Toa had crowded around a little campfire in the middle of Le Koro near the Le Suva, Lewa's shrine. They had spent the day with helping the Matoran repairing the damages and patrolling for other Rahkshi but none of them had shown up again. And still Tahu hadn't let anyone take care of his wounds.

The fire Toa had just come back from another patrol and now sat down a bit away from the others. He watched Onua and Lewa laughing and he didn't know why but he felt a bit jealous right now. The two had been friends since the first time they met.

'More than friends?' Tahu jealousy thought but then immediately shook his head. Why was he thinking about something like that? And by the way it was really hard not to like Lewa at all, even for Kopaka.

The icy Toa was sitting a bit separated too right now but even that didn't prevent Lewa from coming over to him from time to time. Even Kopaka sometimes gave him one of his rare smiles.

Lewa's gaze suddenly shot over to Tahu again. "Oh no, I'm sorry, I've nearly forgotten about your injuries."

Tahu waved a hand. "Don't mind. It will heal without care too."

"No. I said I want to take care of it even if it's just frugal." He gasped when he looked at Tahu's back. "Why haven't you said it had been bleeding? It looks awful right now. Onua..."

"Shall I get some water to clean it?" the ebony Toa asked and stood up.

"Oh yes, I just wanted to ask you that right now. Thanks."

And there it was again this feeling of jealousy. The two knew what the other was going to say in advance.

But it was immediately gone when Lewa started to clean his wounds. Strange warmth spread through his body. The water hurt a bit, but still he wished Lewa would never stop and nearly was a bit disappointed when the emerald Toa started bandaging him because this was the sign that his care was nearly over. Now Tahu's wound should heal on its own.

Kopaka had now stood up, nodded shortly and walked away into the darkness. Surely he had to take care of his own village too. He had been away for too long now.

"I think I have to get going too", Onua said, "Checking Onu Koro if there had been any attacks lately even if I'm sure there hadn't been a single one. Otherwise my Matoran would have called for me earlier. And I need to get off that tree. The sooner the better. Not too fond of this height."

"And what's with you Tahu?" Lewa asked.

"Well, I think I want to ..." He scanned his brain for the right words. "I think I'm going to stay in Le Koro for a little while longer. Ta Koro is a citadel by now. The Rahkshi would have a hard time to get over those walls. And it doesn't look as if Le Koro is

already built up strong enough to withstand another attack.”  
The emerald one gave him a thankful smile.

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The ruby Toa had been awoken even before the suns had risen. He had started working on something with a bit of sand and fire. Now he looked at his work. A little flower made of glass. Not as perfect as Kopaka's ice flowers but still beautiful. He had planned to give it to Lewa. Something to say 'Thank you', something to apologize his behaviour yesterday. Or maybe also his behaviour throughout nearly three years. He hadn't finished his work too soon. Only a few seconds later he heard a door and a well known voice that yawned, "Morning Tahu, isn't it a bit early to be already out of bed?"

The fire Toa turned around. "Not for me", he said with a smile.

Now Lewa noticed the little shiny thing in Tahu's hands. "Wow, what is it? Have you made that right now? It looks beautiful."

"I ... I made it for you ..." Tahu could slap himself for stuttering when he last needed it.

"For me? But it's not my Birthday or something else considering me."

"I ... just wanted to thank you for taking a bit care of my wounds. I can't remember that I thanked you yesterday. And ... and I also wanted to say sorry for yelling at you too quickly when you just wanted to help ... for nearly always yelling at you ..."

Lewa turned the little flower around and looked at it with shining eyes. Suddenly he leaned over to Tahu and gave him a quick kiss on the cheek. The ruby Toa blushed slightly.

"Thanks so much. But I was never mad at you. I learned to know you as a hot-head, always only seconds away from exploding. But I also know that leading some folks you didn't know before isn't the easiest job and sure I gave you hard times too... But thanks so much. It's making my heart quickfloating."

"What?" it shot out of Tahu but he didn't get any answer because they were interrupted by a Matoran's cry.

"Rahkshi incoming!"

"Oh great ..." Tahu muttered.

Kapitel 2: Chapter 02: First cut is the deepest

Chapter 2: First cut is the deepest

The three Rahkshi came crashing into the village as if they wanted to wipe it off the landscape, destroying and burning down everything that got into their way. Lewa helped the Matoran to get out of Le Koro quickly while Tahu shielded their backs.

"Hey, come back here", Turahk snickered and set fire on another hut, "We promise to do it fast."

"In your dreams", Lewa sneered and turned face to face with the Rahkshi after the last Matoran had disappeared somewhere in the treetops.

"What do you think?" Vorahk shouted over to his brothers. "Father said we should only bring one of them to him so he could take them out one by one. More than that would be too risky."

"Then why not taking one out here and now and bringing the other one to him?" Kurahk chuckled.

"You aren't doing anything", Tahu growled. His shield faded but now his swords started burning. Not as long as we still stand and fight."

"As you wish but we've warned you."

Vorahk slammed his staff against Tahu's chest but was blocked by crossed flame swords. He jumped back quickly when he saw what the Rahkshi was planning.

"Aw, don't be so greedy", Vorahk chuckled, "You have enough energy left. Why not giving me part of it? Or maybe all?"

"You're kidding."

The fiery Toa tried a counter attack but had to retreat again. The Rahkshi had fully activated his special attack. His whole body now worked like a power siphon.

Kurahk kept running around the huts looking for Matoran who had stood behind while Turahk and Lewa were attacking each other. The red Rahkshi was more blocking with his activated staff than attacking but still the emerald Toa's sight got blurrier with each strike. Blurred by rushing by scenes of his worst fears and memories. Le Koro burning, people dying and there was nothing he could do at all.

He heard Tahu's cry of pain close to him, saw him breaking down to the ground. No, this wasn't imagination any more, this was reality. It snapped him out of thoughts full of fear long enough to shoot a blow against Vorahk who was about to slam his staff into Tahu's back but earned a slash through his own back therefore.

"Never turn your eyes away when you're faced to a Rahkshi", Turahk grinned. Now he got support from Vorahk who was still hungry for power after he had weakened Tahu.

"Giving someone a blow isn't very nice, you know?" the black creature snarled.

"As if you knew what's nice", Lewa hissed, slowly backing away. But he didn't run, didn't retread although his mind was screaming he had to. Otherwise he would have had to leave Le Koro behind. And Tahu.

Two Rahkshi in front of him came closer but the 'attack' came from behind. White hands grabbed his arms so hard that the emerald Toa believed Kurahk had broken his bones. Vorahk's staff shot under his chin as if he wanted to cut Lewa's head off but it didn't even cut his skin a bit.

"Just another little bit ... please..." the black Rahkshi grinned and his staff started glowing.

Lewa could feel his powers fading, unable to do anything against it. His knees gave in. He couldn't control his muscles anymore, his limbs felt heavier than ever before.

"This was too easy", Turahk scoffed and slung the weakened Toa over his shoulders.

"Leave ... Lewa ... a ... lone ..." Tahu tried to get up again but he couldn't move a bit. His muscles felt weak, the cut on his back started hurting again.

The black Rahkshi turned around unimpressed. "Still awake? You're tougher than I believed ..." His gaze fell on something shiny on the floor. He picked it up. "How pathetic..." He closed his fist over it. Tahu heard a slight crackling sound above him and saw little splinters of shimmering glass falling down beside him.

"Well, it's about time to get out of here."

Vorahk turned and began walking away.

"Can you fly with that extra weight on your shoulders?" he asked Turahk.

"Will be okay."

"N-n-no ... come ... back ... don't ... L-Le ... wa" Tahu watched through blurry eyes as the three creatures took Lewa away. And there was nothing he could do. He slowly reached out a hand to grab a piece of the broken flower as tears threatened to spill from his eyes. But he choked them down, didn't want them to flow here and now.

Shadows and figures were crowding around him and others were running off to other places. His vision was blurred from dizziness and the held-back tears. He could only make out various shades of green which only made him feel worse.

"Lewa..." he mumbled.

Kapitel 3: Chapter 03: Listen to your heart

Chapter 3: Listen to your heart

A day later he woke up in a hut that seemed very familiar. He sat up and found that he was in a bed. His bed. But who had brought him there and why?

When he finally managed to get out of bed and his hut he saw two familiar figures sitting near the Ta Suva.

"Kopaka! Onua! What are you doing here?"

"We got message from your well-being and hopefully soon awakening", Kopaka said.

"Man, I thought this time that damned Rahkshi sucked up too much and you're going to die when the Le Matoran had come to get me to Le Koro and I first saw you there on the floor."

"Where's ..." He had a strange feeling in his stomach but tried to keep his voice stable, "...where's Lewa?"

"The Rahkshi took him, but that's all we know", Onua said, "We don't have a clue where they brought him nor did we have a chance to search for him. Those creatures held us in breath for the last few hours."

"And now the villages of you two are left unprotected just because you wanted to look after my well-being?"

"Ko Koro is more a castle than a monastery right now", Kopaka exclaimed, "I came here to get some help from you so that we can finally start our search."

"Onu Koro is safe too. I blocked the main entrances and only left some corridors open that are large enough for a Matoran but too small for a Rahkshi. And the main way to your village because it's a citadel like you said and I don't think anyone will come over that way as long as Ta Koro hasn't fallen. I think I have an idea where they could be. No other village has been attacked so often since I found you than Le Koro. So I think they have to be somewhere in the jungle right now."

Tahu's heart made a jump, then started racing. He really hoped Onua was right. "Okay, then we will search through the jungle first."

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He had felt that they had let him fall on cold stone ground and he could see the darkness around him but until now he just had to lie on his stomach unable to move a bit. Now he finally slowly regained his strength and tried to get up a bit. A sharp pain shot through his hand when he placed it on the floor. With a gasp he dragged back his hand and looked at it. Little splinters were sticking in it. A few drops of blood fell to the ground. Bright eyes wandered over the floor and spotted a broken flower of glass. Slowly Lewa picked it up and turned it around. Pain filled his heart. What had happened with Tahu? Was he alright? Or had the Rahkshi realized their plan and killed him? He lent his back against the mossy wall. The thoughts in his head were spinning around. Why did he worry more about Tahu than about his own life although he knew in what danger he was?

And why had Tahu been so much nicer to him this morning? Lewa had never been treated so nice like that by him nor had he ever heard something like 'I'm sorry' from Tahu's lips. Unusual but it made Lewa like him even more. Another glance at the



flower. He liked him more than he ever did before in his life.

*I know there's something in the wake of your smile  
I get a notion from the look in your eyes  
You've built a love but that love falls apart  
Your little piece of heaven turns to dark  
Listen to your heart*

Lewa stood up. He finally felt strong enough to fight his way through if necessary.

*Sometimes you wonder if this fight is worthwhile  
The precious moments are all lost in the tide  
They're swept away and nothing is what it seems  
The feeling of belonging to your dreams*

He knew these caves since he had been caught by the Nui Rama and controlled by Makuta. They belonged to the old Rama nest. His feet were nearly flying over the ground. Just a little more time and he would reach an exit.

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"Have you heard that?" Panrahk's head shot up.

"Sounds like the little brat is trying to break out", Vorahk answered. "I knew we should have killed him instead of waiting for our father to return to his lair and then bring the Toa to him."

"I know but father wanted to get him alive, why ever. I'll get him back."

The brown Rahkshi turned tail and disappeared into the darkness.

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Light! He finally could see light. Lewa sped up some more. Just a few more meters and he could start flying. In the air he would be hard to catch even for a Rahkshi. Suddenly the earth started shaking. The emerald Toa nearly lost balance. He turned his head and nearly stumbled. Panrahk was running after him. Each of his steps caused a little earthquake. And he was fast. Faster than Lewa could be. The Toa tried to spread his Katanas to see if he could already fly in here. The walls were scratching over his knuckles. There wasn't enough space to lift off. A staff was rammed against his shoulder. It didn't hurt him but it made him stumble and nearly fall. Panrahk grabbed his wrist.

"Gotcha! Where do you think you're going, little one?"

"Let me go!" Lewa tried to slash his Katana against him but as a result the Rahkshi tightened his grip. The young Toa cried out in pain and sank to his knees.

"Get away from him!" a voice sounded through the corridor.

Panrahk's head shot up and Lewa turned around too. Through a veil of tears he could see three well-known figures standing in the entrance.

"Says who?" the Rahkshi chuckled but loosened his grip a bit.

"Say we."

"You and which army?"

Kopaka stepped pass Tahu and came closer. "Now get away from the kid."

Kid? That nearly hurt more than the Panrahk's grip.

Tahu and Onua now walked up to him too.

"You know you're alone and we are four."

"But not for long. I'm sure Vorahk is still hungry for power."

But before the Rahkshi could even turn around Kopaka had dragged out his sword and frozen him.

"Sorry, pal, but we have no time for a fight."

Tahu helped Lewa back on his feet. "We have to get out of here and back to the villages before more of them are going to show up."

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"What are we supposed to do now?" Onua asked when they nearly reached the caves of Onu-Ta-Wahi.

"I think I'll go with Lewa deeper into the swamps and look for a safer place where he and his people could stay for a while as long as Le Koro is still under massive attack", Tahu answered.

"Shall we help you?"

The ruby Toa thought it over but then he said. "No, I think it's okay if just we two stay in Le Wahi. You should return to your own villages. Or better go and check if Po or Ga Koro need your help. They aren't the safest places right now."

"I will go to Ga Koro", Kopaka said. "Not too fond of walking in a desert", he explained his quick decision.

"Then I will join Pohatu", Onua said.

The two went off into the corridor while Tahu and Lewa headed for the jungle.

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"Shall we stay here?" Lewa asked and wanted to point at the place in front of him but winced. Not only that the cuts of the splinters still hurt. Panrahk had nearly broken his wrist.

They had reached a part of the swamp where the roots of the giant trees built natural shelters. The treetops were so dense that it would have been very hard for a Rahkshi to spot them from above.

"I don't know", Tahu said, "Maybe we should stay here for a while. Over night or so, just to check how safe it really is."

The night had fallen in. It wasn't the most comfortable accommodation they ever had but at least they didn't have to sleep in the swamp water. It was drier around the trees.

Tahu had tried to make bandages out of reeds for Lewa. Just something to support his hand a little bit. Lewa watched the fiery Toa trying to knot it around the younger ones wrist without tearing it apart again.

A little fire ball was floating in front of them like a little sun. Tahu hadn't been able to dry enough wood for a campfire.

It was hard to knot anything. Tahu's hands were too sweaty and not only because of the jungle climate. Lewa was sitting closer to him than ever before. He could nearly feel his breath. Thinking about it made his stomach turn even more.

"Tahu?"

"Hm?" Another reed slipped through his fingers.

"I-I wanted to thank you and Kopaka and Onua for getting me out of the Rama nest. I would have never made it on my own."

"No prob."

The emerald Toa looked down at his nearly bandaged hand. "I'm sorry I've broken the little flower you gave me more than it already was."

"Oh, that was nothing too valuable."

Lewa gave him an a bit defiant glance. "It was valuable to me."

"To ... to you?" Tahu looked up. The last part of the reed slipped out of his fingers again. His stomach made a big jump.

"It was made by your own hands and you gave it to me. The best thing you've ever done for me. And you've been so much nicer to me. That makes it even more special."

"Lewa ... I-I ..." Tahu's voice failed. He now could nearly feel Lewa's breath.

*And there are voices that want to be heard  
So much to mention but you can't find the words  
The scent of magic, the beauty that's been  
When love was wilder than the wind*

Tahu's thoughts were now centred at one thing. Just do it. He still kept looking into Lewa's eyes, afraid of doing anything other than this. He always thought his eyes were of poisonous green. Now he noticed they had more a warm lime-kissed touch.

Just do it.

Slowly he leaned over to him and gave him a kiss. Nearly he had awaited that Lewa would back away but he didn't. Instead he returned the kiss.

## Kapitel 4: Chapter 04: Take me to the clouds above

### Chapter 4: Take me to the clouds above

Makuta walked around in circles. Rage was burning inside of him but he didn't want his anger to burst over his sons. Not yet.

"So you had him and he escaped again?"

"If it wasn't for his friends..."

The Dark Spirit let out a cry of rage. Friendship. He hated it. It made him feel weak. As if his brother had started to wake up again.

"Why do you want to see him dead, anyway? He's just a Toa."

"First, when you want to break a chain start at the weakest point", Makuta replied, "Second, my brother must have given him some special protection. He had been caught by Rahi, controlled by me; Bohrok destroyed his village, killed half of his people, but this Toa is still alive after all. I don't know why he's protected that much but I'm sure it won't do my brother any good if I wipe out his little protégé." An evil grin flitted over his face. "Now bring him here. I'll be back soon. And after his death I will slowly take out the rest of his kind."

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When Tahu woke up he felt Lewa snuggling close to him. He repressed the need to wake him up just to ask him if everything that happened in the night before wasn't just a dream. A very wonderful dream.

He slowly stood up. Maybe there was something suitable for breakfast around.

A bit later Lewa awoke to the smell of something cooking over a fire. He sat up and saw Tahu who held a Fikou on a stick over the fire ball.

"Oh, you're awake?" the ruby Toa asked, "I was out and tried to get something to eat when this thing landed on my head. I hope this is eatable." He held up the big spider.

"Are you hungry?"

Lewa let out a bright laugh. "Oh Tahu ... yes you can eat that." He looked around. "We can take those leaves as plates. A bit wet but good enough."

They both ate in silence wrapped up in their own thoughts. Just the moment they finished Lewa heard something in the trees.

"What was that?" He looked around for any sign of movement.

"What was what?"

"Shh, listen?"

Tahu listened and heard a rustling in the tree tops. He slowly stood up and was on alert. The Toa of air picked up his Katanas while Tahu activated his swords and stood ready to fight. And to protect Lewa.

A few tense moments passed then they heard a loud screech from above. Lerahk jumped from a tree and landed right on top of Lewa, slamming him onto the ground. Tahu wanted to run over but was stopped by Turahk as he jumped in front of him.

"Out of my way you damn creature!" Tahu shouted.

"Oh, but if I do you would take him away and I can't let that happen. We need him, you see", the red Rahkshi snickered.

"Move it!" the ruby Toa yelled and fiercely attacked Turahk.

Lewa tried desperately to get Lerahk off him but it was of no use. The green Rahkshi slammed his staff against the Toa's head causing him to cry in pain. This made Tahu fight harder just to could beat the hell out of the Rahkshi that had hurt Lewa. He was finally able to get Turahk out of his way after a few more blasts and ran straight into Lerahk, throwing him off the emerald Toa.

"Are you alright Lewa?"

"Think so", Lewa answered. "Look out!" he yelled and pointed behind Tahu.

Lerahk jumped against Tahu and the two forces pushed against each other. As the two clashed Lerahk smiled wickedly. His staff scratched over the Toa's leg. It was just a little wound but big enough to let toxic acid drip in.

The fiery Toa gasped and jumped back holding his leg while he hissed in pain.

"Tahu!" Lewa cried as the ruby Toa fell to his knees. He was about to run over to his friend but was stopped as Turahk yelled out, "Get him!"

Vorahk and Kurahk jumped out of the trees, each one grabbing one of Lewa's arms. He was trapped.

"Let ... go of him!" Tahu shouted and tried his best to get back on his feet but he couldn't. The acid had seeped inside his leg. The pain now cursing through his body was far greater than any he could have imagined.

Turahk advanced towards Tahu but just smirked at him and walked up to Lewa.

"So why would our father want this kid, huh? He's no danger for us anyway." He lifted Lewa's head by his chin to look the Toa in the eye but he wouldn't meet his gaze.

"You're ours now, whether you like it or not."

"No ... he's not ... leave him ... alone!" Tahu yelled and tried to get up again but Lerahk kicked his stomach causing the fire Toa to double over in pain.

"Tahu!!" Lewa cried and tried to get free again but the Rahkshi held him even tighter.

"Don't worry ... Lewa ... I won't ... let them ... ugh!" The green Rahkshi's foot connected with his head.

"You shouldn't make promises you can't keep. Good night Toa of fire", he laughed.

"No, let me go you stupid creeps!" Lewa screamed. Turahk smirked and looked into Lewa's lime-kissed eyes while the Toa glared back.

"Don't worry, he won't suffer long." He turned his head to Lerahk. "Poison the swamp around here. I don't think he would survive for long in this acid. Vorahk, Kurahk, take the kid back to Ta Wahi."

"Yes, sir!" Vorahk and Kurahk yelled trying to drown Lewa's scream.

The lifted off carrying the still struggling Toa in their arms.

Tahu had never fought so desperately to stay conscious. His head was hammering, his leg burned like hell and the swamp around him was water filled with acid that could soon reach his body. He finally managed to prop himself up on his arms. The only way to keep the acid from floating over to him he could think of was to dry the water away around him. His body started burning. Another sharp pain shot through this leg but to his surprise it got weaker the longer he kept burning. This acid seemed to be susceptible against fire.

The ruby Toa could finally stand straight again. The heat was healing his body. But now he had to get to Ta Wahi as fast as possible.

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Turahk was walking around in circles. "What keeps father up for so long? What's he doing in that damn desert? Building up a fortress?"

Lewa sat coiled up in the corner that had the farthest distance. He was shivering. Tears came welling up his eyes but he pressed them down again. Tahu might be dead right now or at least in awful pain and same would happen to him soon as well.

"Can we play around a bit with our new toy?" Lerahk asked and looked into Lewa's direction. "Just a bit for training, you know. We promise not to kill him."

"If you like", Turahk shrugged.

"Oh great", Panrahk snickered when he stepped over to the Toa who tried to back away even more but couldn't get far with a stone wall in his back, "I always wanted to have a new punching ball."

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Tahu met several Rahkshi who were wandering around and searching for their father but he managed to sneak pass them. He knew the region of Ta Wahi better than they all did together.

He headed right into the direction they came from. When he entered another part of the corridors he saw Lewa lying on the floor. Tahu gasped. The emerald one had several bruises on his body. A little trail of blood was coming from his mouth.

The fiery Toa ran up to his friend. He gently stroked his cheek and picked him up. Lewa moaned and cringed under Tahu's touch. The ruby Toa quickly checked the halls and ran out of them into another part of the caves. Near the lava streams he felt more secure to lay down Lewa again. He couldn't carry him too far in his condition. Tahu pulled the younger one very close to him, carefully not to hurt him more.

Lewa moaned as he awoke. He was still in a dark cave but he felt more comfortable. He looked behind him and saw Tahu holding him in his lap. "Tahu?"

"Relax. You need to heal up a bit before I can bring you out of here."

Lewa nodded and clung to Tahu's warm chest. Tahu tightened his hold instinctively. The emerald Toa closed his eyes and dozed off.

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"Lewa! Wake up!"

The Toa of air stirred and awoke to Tahu's voice. Something was wrong. Tahu stood in front of him, swords drawn, ready for battle.

"What's wrong?"

"They aren't blind. They've noticed you're gone. And Makuta is about to come back. I can feel him closer."

Lewa shivered and looked around. "Hey, can't we use that lava stream?"

"If you feel fit enough to surf."

"I do."

The ruby Toa gently picked him up and jumped on his lavaboard. After a few minutes they knew into which direction they were heading.

"The lava is floating into the Lake Naho", Tahu shouted, "It gets too hard to surf. We might have to run." He stopped his board and jumped to the side where the ground was already so hard he could stand on it.

"Not necessary", Lewa smiled when Tahu let him down again. "I know an easier way. He took the ruby Toa's hands in his. A strange feeling shot through Tahu's body. When he looked down he could see he was flying over the ground. Lewa hugged him close. "I can't use my Katanas for flying this way but I think it's enough when we float over the Lake Naho. They don't know where we are and they won't come after us that fast."

After a few minutes they finally reached the beach of Ga Koro. Far enough away from the caves of Ta Wahi to call it safe.

"Thank you for saving me", Lewa said. "And thank Mata Nui you're still alive", he added whispering.

Tahu hugged him close. "I swear I will try to protect you from now on. I love you too much to let you be hurt again."

Lewa looked up at Tahu who smiled back at him. He gently kissed the emerald one's lips. Another time he felt his feet leaving ground but he didn't mind as long they were flying both.

*Fly on the wings of love  
Fly, baby, fly  
Reaching the stars above  
Touching the sky*

*There's a boy, I know  
He's the one I dreamed of  
Looks into my eyes  
Take me to the clouds above*

~~~\*\*\*~~~

Crimson eyes wandered through the darkness. It couldn't be. Another time the Toa had escaped alive. But this time Makuta's eyes held no rage. They were looking thoughtful, maybe there was also a bit of fear in them. What was it with the red Toa? Shouldn't he be dead by now too? It was impossible that the whole team had survived all of his attacks for so long time. Could it be possible that his brother protected them in his sleep? He would have to find it out sometime. But for now he had other plans to keep them away from fulfilling their destiny.

Kapitel 5: Chapter 05: Keep you my secret

Chapter 5: Keep you my secret

"Have you told the others about us, Tahu?"

"No, not yet ... but I will ... soon ... promised."

The Toa of Air and the Toa of Fire were snuggling together in Lewa's hut. In opposition to Ta-Koro, the Le-Matoran had other things to do than disturbing their Toa in his privacy.

Lime-kissed eyes looked a bit disappointed. "So, you'll keep me your dirty little secret?"

"If secret, then rather secret love, and only for now", the ruby Toa tried to explain, "You see, time isn't at our side. The Rahkshi continue attacking the villages and I don't think the others are ready for outings by now."

Lewa sighed. Tahu was a knuckle-head, had always been. Why didn't he just say, he was afraid of losing his face – he, the strong, hot-headed, independent Toa of Fire fell in love with the childish youngster of the group – instead of trying to find excuses. Tahu slowly shook his head and spoke out loud what Lewa was thinking of. "I guess I know what you're thinking about and it's ... also a bit true... What would the others say about us? There's about ten years age difference between us. And how old are you?"

"Eighteen!" Lewa shot out. "Nearly ... in several days", he then mumbled, "But what's wrong with that?"

"There we have another problem. You're still underage..."

"Bah!" Lewa waved his hand, "The others won't care about things unnecessary. As long as you love me and are good to me."

'It's not all, I have problems with', the ruby Toa thought, 'I'm not sure but I think Kopaka and Onua would want you too. You're like ... a little Geisha for them.' It wasn't hard to see, how close Onua was to him. Maybe just best friends, maybe more... And about Kopaka? He was just too hard to look through but he seemed to be less ... stiff when he thought he was alone with the emerald Toa. But on the other hand he seemed to be more severe to the younger one when the others were around.

So Tahu just said out loud: "By the way ... we really have to get up 'cause we should be at the meeting at Kini-Nui in some minutes."

They shared a last kiss, and then they broke up. For the next few hours they'd just be seen as friends only.

Since their leader hadn't arrived yet, Kopaka had gotten the word. He talked about the Rahkshi who were still rampaging throughout the villages. Nothing that the others hadn't already known. He gave the two newly arrived Toa an icy glare.

"That took you guys long enough. Where have you been? I thought I was ought to talk forever."

"Uhm ... just some Rahkshi near Le-Wahi ... they were no threat to any Koro 'cause they were just standing around talking. And fortunately they didn't notice us", Tahu apologized. Saying the truth wouldn't be good now...

Kopaka snorted. "So, talk to us, oh great leader. We are awaiting your words of glory."

"That was a bit too cynical..."

"Sorry ... The Rahkshi are tearing my nerves down."

"Don't bother. We're all a little stressed, aren't we? So, why have we come together? I really don't have a plan, what to do about those Rahkshi. Normally Kopaka and Gali ... and eventually Onua are the strategists."

"I think, we should all separate", Kopaka said, "Everyone shall protect his own Koro."

"No, it's our destiny to work as a team. Divided we fall", Gali protested, "The Rahkshi are mighty enemies, too strong to be defeated by only one of us."

"But as you see, while we had been defending Ta-Koro from three Rahkshi, the other three attacked Ko-Koro. If we only stay in one group, we may lose some villages."

"Kopaka has a point", Tahu thought loud, "What would you say about that? Ahm ... are you there yet?" He waved hands in front of the other three Toa who hadn't said a word until now.

"I'd think, they're both right", Pohatu finally got the word, "We shouldn't stay in such a big group but we also can't walk around all alone. Maybe we can split up. Let's say, for example, Ga-Koro and Po-Koro are nearly neighbour villages, so I'll stay near Ga-Koro. Gali can swim fast; I can run fast, so we can change locations in nearly no time. If one Rahkshi attacks Ga-Koro and another one Po-Koro at the same time it would take a bit longer... Hopefully, my Matoran can keep it up that time."

"As Le-Koro is in my nearest neighbourhood, I'll work with Lewa", Onua suggested.

"I work alone", Kopaka said.

Tahu shrugged. "Ta-Koro is like a citadel by now. It'd take a Rahkshi long time enough to get through. So maybe I can help out in Onu-Koro a bit, if it gets too hot."

Everybody just nodded in agreement, then they splitted up once again since their meeting was over. Tahu and Lewa stayed a bit longer.

"I think, I have to go back home", the ruby Toa apologized, "I'd stayed in Le-Koro for too long."

"No prob. We all have our duty."

Tahu kissed his love on the forehead. "So, be good, my green angel, don't hurt Onua and don't burn the jungle down."

He went away with a grin, leaving a slightly confused Lewa behind.

Kapitel 6: Chapter 06: Ikuta incoming

Chapter 6: Ikuta incoming

In the night Lewa was woken up by a bright light shining through his windows. Looked like ... Le-Koro burning? When he ran out he saw several flames, on the huts, on platforms, in the trees, but they didn't spread like fire normally does. As if they were kept in places by something.

"Worried 'bout your people, little one? Don't be. They're in safety. We're heroes to them... for now", he heard a voice from behind. As he turned round, he saw the two weirdest creatures, he'd ever seen. They looked like a mix between Toa and Rahkshi. One was red, the other black.

"Who ... who are you? What are you? And where are my Matoran?", Lewa asked, slight fear in his voice.

"Aww, you don't know us anymore? Ah, I forgot that we've deleted your memory about your past", the red one chuckled in a sarcastic manner, "I'm Lhikuta, this is Reikuta, but you can call us the Ikuta brothers. Your Matoran we've ... let's say ... 'beamed' to safety."

Lewa was now confused. "I-I knew you in the past? I had a past before Mata Nui?"

"Yeah, before your departure to Mata Nui, we attacked you and your colleagues. You were half a kid. You all were nearly half kids. We could beat you so easily, that we were nearly ashamed that we had attacked children... Since that three years had passed and we need you back."

"Why do you need me just now?"

"'Cause we had other plans in the past. But for our newest 'project' you're one of the keys. So we have no other chance than to take you to our homeland ... to your homeland."

"And where should that be?"

"Uh, I can't tell you. Don't wanna spoil. You'll see when we take you there."

"You take him nowhere!"

The green Toa's head shot around. "Onua! You're here?"

"Yeah, I was in the jungle to see if everything is Rahkshi-free. Then I noticed that Le-Koro glowed as if there was something big burning. Sure thing, I had to come for help."

"Too much talk, too less action", Reikuta muttered, "Let's eliminate that black pest and take the kid!" In his hands a Rahkshi-like staff appeared and he stabbed at Onua. The ebony Toa could avoid that attack by jumping back but was struck through a fire sword from behind.

"Hey! That wasn't fair!" Lewa ran into Onuas direction but Reikuta stepped in this way.

"And where d' ya think ya goin'?"

He rammed the side of his staff against Lewa's chest so that the green Toa wasn't hurt but lost his balance and fell back. The creature tried to stab through the Toa's armour but his staff was crossed with Lewa's Air Katana.

While the others were still wrestling with their weapons, the fight between Lhikuta and Onua was a battle for life or death. The fire sword slashed through Onuas chest. Little trails of blood dripped down but his chest armour had prevented him from

being hurt worse.

"Oh, I see I should attack something less protected", the red creature said in his sarcastic tone.

"But you won't find that!" Onua rammed Lhikuta against a hut. Therefore he earned a slash through his face.

"Found it."

"Why ... don't you ... attack me ... instead of ... blocking", Lewa snarled, still trying to keep the staff away.

"Cause we need you in one piece. You shall recover fast and that's only possible that way." He finally activated his staff. "I'm more Rahkshi than you believe."

Lewa suddenly got weaker and weaker. His sword glided out of his hands. "No ...", he whispered, fighting to stay conscious. But from the beginning on, his fight was just lost. The emerald Toa finally blacked away.

Onua was nearly beaten too. His legs felt like they couldn't hold his own weight anymore and he fought to keep balance.

"You see, I'm still standing. And as long as I'm alive you won't be able to harm Lewa."

"We've no time for that", Reikuta said from behind and touched him with his staff.

The ebony Toa wanted to turn around but instead sank down on his knees. He couldn't control his body anymore.

"So, that should be enough. His wounds will give him the rest", Reikuta chuckled.

Lhikuta took Lewa off from the ground. "Let's go!"

They vanished into red and black smoke.

Onua was still fighting to stay awoken. "No ... I have to get ... after them..." His body slowly glided sideways.

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The two suns were already shining. Only one cloud was seen. Too bright for a from unconsciousness awakening Toa.

'Man ... my head hurts ... just as if a Rahi stomped in at one ear and out at the other ...'

He rubbed his forehead and felt something wet and sticky.

'Eww ... my blood hasn't dried enough ... But ... it means that I wasn't out for too long. I still can sense Lewa. He must be somewhere in the tunnels of Onu-Po-Ta-Le-Wahi (what a stupid name). But I won't be able to fight these creatures alone. Time counts, I can't search for the others, but maybe Tahu is in Onu-Koro. I can remember, he said, he wanted to help out or something.'

Some Matoran helped him to get up and back to the tunnels. They still didn't know, they were beamed away and brought back again that night and wondered what happened to Onua and where Lewa was.

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Tahu walked around in Onu-Koro. "No Rahkshi anywhere, just as I expected. I wish I was the one living in Onu-Koro. The city is awful and I hate the dirt, the darkness and the tunnels but I could live much nearer to my green angel."

He went over to the tunnels to Le-Wahi.

"Maybe I should check Le-Koro as well. Kopaka didn't want us to work in groups but no one can forbid me to look after a friend..."

He nearly ran into Onua, who shot out of one of those tunnels.

"O-Onua? You don't look good if I may say that ... What happened? Where's Lewa?"

"The Ikuta brothers have him. We must go after them." The ebony Toa was panting heavily.

"Uhm ... Ikuta brothers?"

Onua continued running down another tunnel.

"I'll tell you on our way. We have no time to loose. I can sense Lewa in this tunnel.

Kapitel 7: Chapter 07: The guardian

Chapter 7: The guardian

"What's that noise? Reikuta, have you once again forgotten to lock his cell door?", Lhikuta muttered.

"Uhm, at least we can hear that he has recovered", Reikuta apologized.

"Yeah, he's strong enough. Maybe we can start right now", the red one thought loud. "Bring him back to his cell and make sure he can't escape until we've finished", he ordered.

After a short time Reikuta came back, the struggling Lewa on his shoulder.

"Let me go! You heard? You shall let me go! Why do you keep me imprisoned? Why just *me*?"

"Well, let's say we have big plans and need a bit of your power."

The black Ikuta dropped him like a sack of potatoes and Lhikuta chained him to the wall.

"We had waited for too long to become the mightiest creatures and take over Aro Nui, your home ... Or at least rule over the world", the red one said in his sarcastic manner, "But after we've killed nearly all of the Toa, we still have another problem: Mata Nui. We can't kill a god, but we've found a way. A weapon that will drain his powers long enough. Therefore we only need the Guardians. There are eight of them. The weapon we need is at a hidden place. All Guardians have to use their power together to reveal that location. So if we want to get there, we need a little bit of every Guardian inside of us. Four we had already, the fifth was captured by our little helpers soon after our departure. You're number six."

"But how can I be a Guardian?"

"Not you exactly ... but your parents ... We killed them long time ago and so we thought, we had to find only six Guardians. But if Guardians die their children get part of their powers. It depends on the age, if they're active Guardians or not."

Lime-kissed eyes widened. "You killed..."

"Stop whining!", Lhikuta shot, "We have no time for that." He put a hand on Lewa's chest, where immediately a bright light started glowing. "This may hurt a bit. We won't tell anyone if your cry..."

The emerald Toa screamed as a sharp pain shot through his body. It felt like his heart was ripped out.

"Next time we do this, we should protect our ears", Reikuta mocked.

Although only a few seconds had passed, Lewa felt like he had cried out his lungs. Tears were flowing down his Miru and his mind cried the only name he could remember by now. 'Tahu!'

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"You heard that?" Tahu stood still and listened if there was something else, but the tunnels were as quiet as they were before.

"Heard what?" Onua also stopped. Normally he was the one with the best ears. But

there hadn't been any strange noise until now.

"Lewa! He's down there!" The ruby Toa ran into another part of the tunnel.

"But I still sense him this way on."

"Just trust me. I know, what I'm doing."

"Well, the most time it seems you don't", the ebony Toa shrugged and followed his friend.

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The Toa of Air had sunken down to the floor as far as his chains allowed. His tears were still dripping down.

"Well, we've finished. Now you have no more reason to cry." Lhikuta went up and down in front of him like a lion in a cage.

"Why do you still keep me imprisoned?", Lewa sobbed, "You don't need me anymore, so let me go."

"I'm thinking 'bout it", Lhikuta answered, "But on the other hand ... we should take you back home. Exotic goods sell best, you know."

"Maybe we should test his ... qualities first", Reikuta suggested.

His brother waved a hand. "I had my fun. This is your turn."

"Will be a pleasure..."

"No! Please, I'm begging you, don't!", the young Toa cried out, "Help me, someone, anyone, please!"

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"You were right, Tahu. Now I can sense him stronger than before."

The Toa of Fire and Earth were still running through the darkness until Tahu stopped so suddenly that Onua nearly crashed into him.

"What's the matter?"

"Behind the rocks, quick!"

Only a few seconds later the two Ikuta came out of a corridor the Toa had nearly overlooked.

"So can we take him home with us?", Lhikuta asked.

"A bit unwilling but nevertheless good enough", Reikuta answered with a big grin.

"What are they talking about?", Tahu whispered, "Where do they want to take him?"

As soon as the two creatures had disappeared, the Toa headed for the small corridor.

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"Lewa!"

"Shhh! Tahu, they will hear us", Onua whispered but the Toa of Fire didn't bother and ran over to his love. The Toa of Air hang in his chains, barely conscious, but still lifted his head a bit when he heard his lovers voice. "Tahu ... I'm ... I'm sorry", he whispered, then his head slowly sank down again.

Tahu hugged him carefully, trying not to touch his wounds, since he didn't want him to get hurt more than he already was.

"Can you take care of these chains, Onua?"

"No prob." Onua activated his quake breakers and cut them through. "You should take care of Lewa's wounds a bit. I'll look outside if the enemy's around anywhere or if we

can get to Onu-Koro in one piece." He walked out, thinking about what he had seen a moment ago. Just now it sank in. Tahu had hugged Lewa. He had hugged the younger one! Could it be ... The ebony Toa waved it out of his mind. Now there was something more important. He looked around. Nothing of importance to see, but he still sensed danger.

'Better get away from here fast', he thought and returned to the others.

Tahu sat on the floor, still holding his green angel, rocking him back and forth like a baby. Lewa had awoken, but was still too weak to fight, if they had to.

"Now you know it, Onua", Tahu mumbled, "Wished, there'd been a better time to find out. But don't tell the others yet, promise."

Onua smiled slightly. "Won't say anything until you feel right for it."

"I also want to know something from you. Is there something between ... you and Lewa ... I mean ... what do you feel for him?"

The black one chuckled. "No worries. Sometimes it may look otherwise, but he's just a good friend. I love him like a little brother."

Tahu felt, like a rock of Pohatu's size fell from his heart.

"Well, well, looks like the cavalry has come to rescue our little slave", a sarcastic voice sounded from behind.

Another voice spoke in Tahu's direction. "You can be proud of him. I've tested him. In bed he would be perfect. It's a pity *you* won't have him anymore."

"Stay away from him! I know what you've done to him", the red Toa snarled.

"Oh, what should I've done? It looked like he was fond of it."

"It's true", the emerald Toa whispered, "First I hated it, wanted to get away, but then ... it felt kinda ... right, what I was doing."

"Well, maybe I had him under my control ... but maybe not", Lhikuta mocked.

"I couldn't care less", Tahu hissed, "What you've done is unforgivable."

"We've beaten six of you as you were Toa Mata. And we've beaten two of you as Toa Nuva short time ago."

"Yeah, really great", Tahu mocked, "Beating one who is still half sleeping and one who is afraid of height in a tree. Now let us through."

"You must be very brave, Toa, or very dumb..."

The Toa of Fire took up arms against Lhikuta. "Let's see, who will withstand longer!"

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Earth and fire against earth and fire. That could have been a fight with no end. Tahu and Lhikuta both were able to block most of the attacks with their shields.

Lhikuta had only managed to scratch over Tahu's face. Onua had crashed Reikuta nearly through a wall.

Both counterparts were exhausted from senseless attacks and Lewa still too weak to jump in.

"Onua, we need other tactics. We can't attack if they keep blocking", Tahu panted out.

"Well then..." Onua dug himself into the earth and suddenly Lhikuta sank to his hips.

"Hey, that's not fair!", he shouted out.

"Oh, it's fair, it's just called skill", Tahu shrugged. "Onua, attack Reikuta with earth!"

"What? Are you really that dumb, attacking earth with earth?", the black Ikuta mocked.

A sudden fire storm against him made him think otherwise.

"No", the ruby Toa said calmly, "I just know, that fire and sand gives glass."

The ebony Ikuta screeched and disappeared into black smoke before the glass could harden.

"Coward!", Lhikuta cursed at his brother. "I see, you've found something, we could fear. For now, we have no reason to stay any longer. But I believe we would see again very soon. Especially because we have someone Lewa knows well ... very well." He then vanished too.

"Can you walk?" The ruby Toa supported his green angel.

"Yeah, a bit, but my body will recover fast." The wounds of his soul wouldn't...

"I will never let come harm over you again, my green angel, I swear..."

Onua looked around. "We should get to Onu-Koro. Our enemies could be who-knows where."



## Kapitel 8: Chapter 08: Out of the dark

### Chapter 8: Out of the dark

Onua stood off to the side and quietly watched the confrontation, too shocked to move. This attack had come too fast and the Earth Toa would have never been prepared for it.

Before him, in the candlelit cavern, tears fell like a waterfall from lime-kissed eyes as Lewa knelt on the ground, hand cradling a soon to be bruised cheek. Towering above him, Tahu stood staring off to the side and breathing heavily, trying to get his anger under control. The scratch on his face glowed brightly green.

"How could you?", the Fire Toa seethed. "After what we've been through, you go and willingly *sleep* with the *enemy*?"

The ebony Toa finally snapped out of his daze and took a step forward. "It wasn't his fault. Lhikuta had him under his control."

"No, I could see everything happening", a small, saddened voice spoke up, "I felt every dirty sensation ... and yet I did nothing to stop it. I was too weak..." Lewa shakily stood, eyes still cast on the ground. "I knew, I probably wouldn't be forgiven, but as I sat there crying in the back of my mind, I continued to hold onto a shred of hope that I could be." A sob passed his lips. "Tahu, I still love you but ... something's changed you." He looked up with a grief-stricken expression. "If you ever find the Toa I fell in love with ... the one who saved me ... tell him, I'll be waiting."

He ran off and disappeared down the tunnel.

Tahu stayed as he was, not even turning to watch him leave. After a moment, Onua walked over and placed a hand on his shoulder, but it was shrugged off.

"He's right, you know. You're not the same. A few minutes ago you'd forgiven him and sworn, that no harm will come over him again. Is there something wrong with you?" He then noticed the bright scratch. "Tahu, that...", he began to say, but was cut off as a fist connected square with his jaw. The power fuelling the blow sent him spiralling into unconsciousness.

The ruby Toa stood over the downed Toa of Earth as the light along his face faded. He blinked and dropped to his knees beside his friend. "No, what have I done? This isn't me..."

He knew that he could sometimes be quick to anger, but not that aggressive.

He carried Onua over to his hut and gently placed him on the bed. Then he turned toward the cavern's exit, nothing but sorrow held in the ruby depths of his eyes. 'I'm sorry, Lewa. It's really me who should be asking for forgiveness' With that, he ran after his love, hoping he was back in Le-Koro.

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As he knocked at Lewa's door, Turaga Matau opened.

"Can I talk to Lewa?", Tahu hesitantly asked.

"I'm not there", a voice mumbled from inside.

Matau smiled slightly at the childlike act and then turned over to Tahu. "I don't know what's wrong with him. He came here with tears in his eyes but didn't want to talk to me. Maybe you can set things right." He departed and left the two alone.

Tahu quietly closed the door before walking over to the bed. He sat down and placed a tentative hand on Lewa's lower back, causing him to jump at the touch and sit up. Their eyes locked for the briefest of moments, and then lime-kissed eyes turned away, filled with hurt, finding the wall a more enjoyable thing to look at.

With only a view of his profile, the bruise on his cheek was more apparent and made the elder frown deeply when he saw it. The Fire Toa reached a hand out to gently caress the discoloration and gave his thanks to Mata Nui when the emerald one leaned into the touch instead of pulling away.

"Look what I did to you. I'm so sorry Lewa. I don't know what came over me. I've just been feeling this foreign anger rise up within me, like a second force taking control of my body. I saw it happen and it was like watching from inside a body that wasn't my own. It hurt so much not to be able to stop myself and then to see your tears . . . My green angel, I'm so sorry. Please, look at me." Ruby eyes pleaded morosely. He leaned forward, warm breath ghosting over the bruise and causing the other to shiver a bit. Ruby lips tenderly met with an emerald cheek, moving along with the slow turn of the younger Toa's head until their lips were finally allowed to lock. All their pain and hurt and sadness were swept away with that one heart-filled kiss. When they ultimately broke apart, both gasping, Lewa sent a gust of air to close the curtains over the windows, bathing the hut in dark green filtered sunlight. He whispered heatedly in his love's ear. "Make me yours ... and yours alone."

The Toa of Fire couldn't have been happier after hearing those words and produced a grand smile. "There's nothing I'd want more." Their lips locked in another heated caress while hands wandered to unknown territory, eliciting heavenly moans as they went. Oh how Tahu had longed to run his fingers down those sides, across that lean abdomen, and over perfect hips. The experience and sounds he was able to rip from the other's throat didn't disappoint. The only downside to this was the knowledge that he wasn't the first, but he quickly pushed that thought to the back of his mind, not wanting to spoil the moment. It was a fact that would haunt him always. He could forgive, but he couldn't quite forget.

Lewa felt like he was on fire. Trails of heat were left in the wake of ruby hands, completely different from the feeling he could still remember of Reikuta and he was glad for this. If they were the same, he didn't know what he'd do. He buried his face in the crook of the elder's neck, placing tender kisses.

No other words were said aside from the whispered 'I love you', spoken in the throws of passion and the cry of each other's name when they reached their peak. Tahu left his mark in the form of a small bite on the younger's shoulder, which he hurriedly soothed with a few swipes of his tongue and an affectionate kiss. The Toa of Air was grateful for the indicator, for now it could be shown that he belonged solely to his lover and nothing could ever take that away. They lazily dozed off afterward, cuddled happily in each other's arms.

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Onua was heading for Le-Koro. As he found himself awakening on his bed instead of anywhere on the floor of the cavern, he knew that Tahu finally regained his mind and was searching for Lewa.

'I hate this', he thought as he climbed into the elevator that brought him up to the treetop village, but he had to do this because he had to talk to Tahu.

As he knocked on Lewa's door a gladly smiling Fire Toa opened.

"Shh, Lewa's asleep", he whispered.

"Oh, that's good, so you finally managed to calm him down."

"Uhm ... kinda ... sorta ... yeah ..." He quietly closed the door so that they could speak normal.

"Tahu, that scratch you gotten from Lhikuta ... it glowed while you were raging. Maybe he's controlling you too."

"Yeah, I've already thought about it. But how can he control me over that distance? Besides, the light has fully disappeared. Now it's just a normal scar. Maybe it was only an after-effect..."

"Maybe ... but I wouldn't trust that."

"Toa Tahu, Toa Onua?", Matau's voice was heard from behind, "The other Toa meet at Kini-Nui. Maybe you should be there as well."

"How comes it", Tahu wondered, "that every Le-Matoran seems to know everything from all over the island? ... Well", he looked at an imaginary watch, "I think we also should wake Lewa up. He might be interested as well."

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Kopaka only raised an eyebrow as the three finally arrived. "You are late again."

"Well, if you would have sent us a little message, instead of wandering to Kini-Nui, sitting on your ass and waiting for the others to come ...", Tahu started.

Gali got between them. "It's no time for argumenting. Pohatu has found out something that might be of importance."

"We're listening." Onua nodded into Pohatu's direction and the Toa of Stone spoke up.

"Ya know, we've destroyed Makuta's old lair. But now I found the caverns down in the old canyon, which I sealed more than two years ago and hoped they'd stay like this forever, reopened. They were once a nest of Makuta's creatures and will be that again, maybe. After we destroyed his old lair, the Rahi were stopped, so I thought that will work again." He shrugged. "Well, that was it, just an idea ..."

"But a great idea." Lewa was fond of it.

Tahu still remained sceptical. "This is Makuta, we're talking about. He must be really stupid, if he comes back to an old lair."

"He must be a genius", Kopaka commented, "Mata Nui is full of good hideouts. No one will look for someone at a place he had already hidden at. We too would never have thought of this place if Pohatu had not noticed something."

"And therefore we have to work together", Gali triumphed.

Kopaka pouted.

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"I can remember these caverns were large but not that large ... Makuta must have gophers as pets", Pohatu showed his surprise when they entered one of the caverns. Once there had been six single caves behind the statues, now they were connected through tunnels and more tunnels and small corridors led away from them, deep down into the canyon.

After some time of just standing and staring, Kopaka walked on. "Enough sightseeing, now we have a mission."

"I have a baaad feeling 'bout that", Tahu mumbled, but still followed the others.

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"We're walking around for hours now", Lewa whined, "Isn't there any end? It's late, maybe it's already night outside, and I'm tired."

"Stop annoying us", Kopaka muttered, "We will not give up until we have found any sign that proves us, it is Makuta's new lair."

They were now in a hall-like part where tunnels and corridors as many as sunrays lead away.

The emerald Toa suddenly stopped.

"Oh, please, stop acting like a little child!", the icy Toa grumbled.

"No ...", the younger one's eyes widened, "I feel grave danger coming ..."

"Where he's right ..." A pair of red glowing eyes appeared in a dark corridor.

"Nice to see you again ..." Another glowing pair of eyes showed up beside the first one.

"A trap!", Tahu growled, "We ran right into it!"

"Yes ... stupid Toa ..." Now the first Rahkshi walked out of the dark, his brothers followed immediately.

Lerakh pointed at Lewa. "Hey, look, there's our toy gotten. Aw, why'd you run away?"

"Hasn't Makuta taught you, not to point at people? Don't even dare talking to him!", Tahu growled and stepped protective in front of his green angel.

"Have I?", the green Rahkshi asked sheepishly, "Guess I have."

"Do you Toa really think, you can defeat us?", now the red one got the word, "If it needed two of you to win against one of us, what would be, when there's six Toa versus six Rahkshi. Moreover, we aren't alone!" The last sentence he said louder as if it was a command. Suddenly a strange rattling and hissing sounded out of one tunnel. Some scorpion-like Rahi were crawling around. Looking like Nui-Jaga, but smaller.

"What's that?", Onua asked.

Pohatu's eyes widened. "You'd know if you lived in Po-Koro ... Kofo-Jaga!"

"Mana! In this tunnel are Mana", Gali cried out, "Only a few of them nearly destroyed the Toa Kaita. Now there's so many of them!"

"Muaka...", Lewa whispered and slowly stepped backwards until he stood back to back with Tahu.

"Kane-Ra", Kopaka said calmly as ever, as if it was only a statement.

Only the way they came from was free of Rahi.

Gali backed away too. "What shall we do now?"

Tahu's scar started glowing slightly but he turned his head to the side so that no one could see it. "We fight! What else?"

"It would be better, we retreat", Kopaka meant.

"Retreat?! A Toa will never retreat! He will fight till the bitter end!"

"Please, Tahu, be reasonable. We only have one way to escape and we can't wait until the Rahi are blocking it too", Lewa pleaded, grabbing the arm of his love.

The scar glowed a bit less.

'What am I talking about? This fight is senseless', it shot through his mind. He started running. "Retreat!"

"Get them!", a Rahkshi screeched behind them.

Fortunately the Mana were slow and the Muaka and Kane-Ra were too big, so that they had to crouch on the floor to get through a tunnel, what also slowed them down a bit. The Kofo-Jaga would have been faster but they couldn't get past the other Rahi, which were blocking the tunnel.

"You stupid idiots!", another Rahkshi shouted out.

Vorahk ordered them back. "We have to get after them ourselves..."

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"There's no way to escape", Gali panted, "We can't run forever. They will catch up with us everywhere."

Onua was leading them, but even with the tunnels and darkness familiar Toa had no hope they would get out before the Rahkshi caught up.

The shining green of Tahu's scratch was pulsating. He suddenly stopped and looked over to a rafter supporting the tunnel's ceiling.

The others noticed Tahu's absence a second later.

"Tahu! Where are you going?!" Lewa shouted after him.

"Go!"

"But, Tahu, we ..."

"Just go or shall I force you to!?" the Fire Toa's voice was full of rage. He ran over to the rafter and slammed through it with his lava sword. Then he ran back where they came from. "Rahkshi! Come out, wherever you are! You'll never beat me!"

Lewa tried to follow his love, but was held back by Onua. The ceiling came crashing down and forced the five to back away. As the dust was gone, a pile of rocks was blocking the way to the Rahkshi ... and to Tahu.

"NO!" Lewa shouted out and pushed Onua away. He stepped in front of the blockade, tears welling up his eyes.

Onua activated his quake breakers and started digging through the rocks. "There's still a chance we can save him."

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He was struck in the left, then in the right side. The Rahkshi's weapons slashed through his armour; he was bleeding through several wounds. His body screamed for giving up, for retreat, but he couldn't. The scratch on his mask was pulsating stronger, spreading hate and rage throughout his body. Vorahk rammed his foot into Tahu's stomach. The ruby Toa fell on his knees, spitting blood, but was forced up again. He had knocked out Lerahk, but the emerald Rahkshi was the one weak against fire anyway. Now they were still five Rahkshi against one Toa.

"You'd better leave him alone!" Kopaka's calm but cutting cold voice was heard.

"Aww, is the little Toa worried 'bout his lover?" Vorahk asked, his voice dripping of

sarcasm.

Another slash by Turahk slammed Tahu directly against a wall. He broke down lifeless. "Tahu!" Lewa jumped forward, but Guurahk stepped in his way. "No, this is the lover!", he screeched gloating and kicked the lifeless Toa of Fire once more.

"Snap outta it!", Lewa growled and attacked the blue Rahkshi. As if that was a command, the other Rahkshi jumped into action and attacked the rest of the Toa. Another battle had begun.

A battle with a sudden end. "Our father's calling for us", Vorahk shouted out, "We're not allowed to kill another and shall just leave the others in agony."

Right in the middle of their fight, they vanished into black smoke.

Lewa immediately ran over to his fallen love.

"Tahu ... please ... please, say something ... do something ... whatever ..." the emerald Toa gently stroke his cheek, wiped away a trail of crimson. Tears were welling up his lime-kissed eyes again, were dripping down his Miru.

Gali knelt besides him, laid her arms around his shoulders and hugged him tightly. She looked like he felt. "He, s now where only Mata Nui can still protect him..."

Pohatu and Onua fought back their tears. Only Kopaka looked as emotionless as ever, but also his heart was crying.

"Wherever you are ...", the emerald Toa whispered, "... may angels lead you in ..."

*May angels lead you in
Hear you me my friend
It's cold out in town, I know
You gave us someplace to go
I've never said thank you for that
But I mightn't get one more chance
What would you think of me now
So lucky, so strong, so proud
I've never said thank you for that
Now I'll never get the chance
May angels lead you in...
Go with love upon your journey
May the lights be here to guide you
Through the terrors of the dark
Can you see me up where you are
Can you hear me when I cry
You have left so much behind you
All that love you have given life
And I wish that I could hold you one more time*

Kapitel 9: Chapter 09: Legends live forever

Chapter 9: Legends live forever

*Memories like these will never fade
Immortal is your nature
You ain't forgotten
You ain't dead
Cause legends live forever
And though I never knew you well
My heart is bleeding
There's only one thing I can tell you
Inside us you keep on living*

Lewa cried all night. Fortunately he hadn't looked up the stars and seen that there were only five stars in their Toa constellation, where six should have been, else he would have cried his heart out.

It was like the legends had told. A dead Toa vanishes into light, only his Kanohi will remain.

The airborne Toa didn't care about legends, he only wanted Tahu back. He had taken the only remaining keepsake – Tahu's Hau – with him, now cuddling it, as if it was the only thing on this planet.

'Why can't it be like in the stories at least', he thought, 'that the weather is feeling with us?'

Outside the two suns were shining. Only one cloud was seen.

Since Lewa refused to get outside, the four other Toa crowded around the Le-Suva, near his hut, so that he could at least hear what they were talking about.

"Why is he always acting childish like that?", Kopaka said, "I could have understood it, if he was a girl ... But even Gali was able to come here."

Gali let out a dry sob and tried to calm down her voice a bit. "How can you be so cold, Kopaka, after a friend has died?"

The icy Toa looked down and sighed. "Because it protects me. Because it would tear up my heart if I wasn't like that."

The others shared a surprised gaze. It was like Makuta popped up here suddenly and suggested to free Mata Nui from Rahkshi. The Toa of Ice was talking about his feelings...

"Well ...", Kopaka looked up and spoke like nothing ever had happened, "Was there anything special last night?"

"Some Onu-Matoran tried to find out, if Makuta has rebuilt his old lair under Kini-Nui", Onua started, "Only one of them made it back, but he was too shocked to tell, what happened. If it wasn't Makuta then it were the Rahkshi..."

"Then, what are we waiting for?", a bitter sounding voice asked from behind. Lewa stood outside his hut, Tahu's Hau fixed on his back like Kopaka had his shield.

"We can't go", Onua tried to reason him, "Maybe it's a trap after all..."

"You wanna say, Tahu died for nothing? He died 'cause he wanted to give us a chance

to escape, 'cause he didn't want us all to die because of an outnumbered enemy, 'cause he wanted us to fulfil our mission ...", the emerald Toa stood there speaking and gesturing like a prophet, "... 'cause Mata Nui shall be awoken today!"

"Now he really lost his mind", Kopaka muttered, "Shall we bring him back to his hut?"

"No", Gali stepped beside Lewa, "He's right. Tahu has sacrificed his life for us. What would he have done if someone of us had done the same instead?"

"He'd kicked some Rahkshi butt!", Pohatu shouted out, "None of us goes, as long as the enemy isn't doing the same!"

"Well ... there is only an island to lose ...", Kopaka meant, "We should give it a try."

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They took the old well-known way through Onu-Koro down to the underground lair and passed the shattered towers, that once were controlling the Mana.

"Can you remember, when we were Toa-Kaita?", Gali's voice got a strange tone, "Wairuha would have been destroyed ... if it wasn't for Akamai..."

Kopaka put his arm around her shoulders. "Don't let old memories come up now. We need to be strong, for Mata Nui's sake."

"For Tahu ...", Lewa whispered unheard.

"Long time no see. Where have you been?", a voice dripping of sarcasm came out of the dark, "You have forgotten your oh-so-glorious leader. Ah, I remember, he couldn't come with you ... A dead man can't walk anymore."

Cold laughs were heard around.

"Show yourselves!", Lewa shouted out, "We're going to wake up Mata Nui today, we're taking revenge for Tahu and no one of you will get away alive!"

Five Rahkshi stepped out of the darkness.

"Aw, how cute", Vorahk muttered, "But it's fair. Five versus five. Lerahk is still recovering from his last fight. Fire is bad for him. But for now it's enough talk. Seize them!"

It was like Tahu himself had taken control over Lewa. Lime-kissed eyes got a fiery glow. "Onua! Pohatu! Burry them two!" He pointed at Guurahk and Kurahk. "Gali! Shoot the others down!"

The Toa of water didn't understand what the younger one was planning but she shot her strongest water beam against the three creatures.

Vorahk let out a cold laugh. "You really think, this would get us down? Only because fire, earth and stone elements are weak against water?"

"No", the Toa of Air gave them an evil grin, "Cause wet Rahkshi are weak in a blizzard. Kopaka! Now!"

Snow and ice out of Kopaka's sword and wind out of Lewa's Katana formed a giant snow storm, freezing everything in its way.

"Stupid Toa, don't you know water and ice are much stronger than earth and rock?", Kurahk hissed, "By the way, I can make your best friend to your worst enemy and Guurahk can find your weakest point. And now it's your turn..."

The two Toa shared a gaze.

"Well, we can get you by surprise...", Onua started.

"And we can test our new strategy the same time", Pohatu finished, "Fortunately you



Rahkshi stand close enough..."

The auburn Toa suddenly took his claws and fired them against the Rahkshi's wrists, so that both creatures were tied together as if they had handcuffs.

"Let's burry our old problems", the ebony Toa rammed his hands into the floor causing geysers of earth and stone shooting out around the two Rahkshi and burying them when it fell down again.

Pohatu stepped in front of the pile with a big grin. "And now it's your turn again..."

"Five down, only one wounded Rahkshi and a god to go", Lewa triumphed when all Toa met together again.

"With the god, we will have much bigger problems", Kopaka sighed.

"We can think about that later. First we'll have to find him." The green Toa turned and walked on into the next part of the cavern.

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"It looks ... a bit different ...", Pohatu said.

This part of the lair once was a plain cavern hall with only a few lightstones. Now ponds of Protodermis were in the centre and many little lightstone parts were glowing on the floor. But they were spreading a dark and spooky light.

"Why are all those shadow creatures hiding from us in the dark?", Lewa muttered, "Spirit of Darkness, show yourself! We've got to talk 'bout your brother."

"How disrespectful, little Toa. Is that the way you were taught to speak to a god?"

Onua silently backed away while the emerald was still speaking ... or better said, shouting it out. "For me, you're no god. Mata Nui is the only one. You've just destroyed the island, killed half of my people and a Toa, brought darkness and sorrow over us! And you call yourself god?! Kopaka, freeze!"

The ivory Toa couldn't find a sense in this, but he was too surprised of Lewa's bossy tone, to say anything against.

"What a stupid attack. I think, you've lost your mind, little one." Makuta's body was glowing. It looked like, he heated up from inside. A loud crack let it be known, that he easily broke out of it. But his gaze shot down suddenly and his orbs widened in horror. A large crack tore its way through his armour.

"When your freeze something, then heat it up right away, it breaks", Pohatu said mockingly.

The dark Spirit sneered. "You may have damaged my armour, but you have..." Crimson eyes widened again and liquid of the same colour bubbled up his throat, spilling from his mouth, as his body staggered. A quake breaker had lodged itself in his abdomen. The last of his power dripped to the ground and he let out a curse. "Damn you Toa! This is far from over!" He tried to get back to his feet. "You can't kill me, have you forgotten? I'm the void, the nothing, the darkness."

Blasts of dark energy shot out of his staff, taking out Pohatu, Onua, Kopaka and Gali.

"That leaves only you and me, little one."

"No!" Lewa's gaze was a mix of hatred, desperation, rage and pain.

"You've killed my love and I won't let you do that with my friends!"

He tried to send the usual air blast against him, using all his powers left. But instead light collided with darkness in an exceptional display of might. Shockwaves were sent

out with each clash, the waves pushing and grappling with one another. They swirled up together like two Kanohi dragons tangled in combat and finally cancelled each other out with an explosion. Everything went dark again.

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"Oh Mata Nui, please let him be alright."

There were muffled voices beside him and they sounded worried.

Lewa groaned as he tried to get up, but he still was too weak.

"He's alive", Gali sounded relieved, "Lewa, what happened after we blacked away?"

She helped him to sit up.

"I-I don't know. I tried to attack him with my elemental powers and then there was light all over..."

"We should thank Mata Nui, we're alive", Pohatu was grateful.

"But now that the Makuta is gone, how are we supposed to awake the Great Spirit?", Onua asked.

Kopaka looked around. The little lights on the floor were now shining bright. "Have you noticed that? With those little bright things, the floor looks like the sky at night."

"And what's that supposed to mean?", Gali asked.

"Turaga Nuju has told me, how we have arrived on this island. When the Rahi started their invasion, Takua played around a bit with the sacred stones on Kini-Nui. Maybe it was just by accident, maybe he knew about the legends, but he finally put them up so that they looked like our Toa constellation. Maybe we can form the constellation of Mata Nui. Those rocks over there look like the sacred stones of Kini-Nui."

"But there are thirteen stars and only seven rocks", Gali doubted.

"The Matoran often say, we're sent from Mata Nui. So we're kinda sacred too." Lewa got up and started putting the rocks on the right lights and led the other Toa to their places.

"But ...", the sapphire Toa paused a short moment, but then she got her voice again,

"We're only five Toa anymore ..."

"Just trust me." And with that the emerald one laid Tahu's Kanohi into the centre.

A shining brightness filled the hall. It looked like everything around was glowing from inside, but the light only came from the Protodermis pool. Protodermis wandered up in the air, forming the shape of a Toa-like body.

"Great Spirit?", Gali asked.

The one on the pool was white and shining gold, his mask was the Hau Mata, the mask of protection that Tahu had before becoming Toa Nuva.

Mata Nui carefully stepped closer to the Toa and wandered around between them until he stopped in the centre of his constellation.

"I have to be grateful, Toa Nuva. For awakening me and for defeating my brother ..."

He sighed. "... although it's tearing up my heart to see him like this. Makuta wasn't always the evil one. We were really great brothers but he was jealous because the Matoran prayed to me more. And this once turned into hatred ... He still loved me deep in his heart, so he couldn't kill me, but as you had seen, he found another way ..."

The Great Spirit stopped and closed his eyes in pain.

"What is it?", Onua asked worried.

"Uh, I don't know, but I don't think it's anything you should worry about. Maybe

Makuta's still around, but he's too weak to harm anyone of us."

"But what has happened to Makuta?", Gali wondered.

"Well, where there's light, shadow can't resist. You've weakened him, through spreading light all around, but you haven't killed him. Not even I would be able to. I can just try to reason him ... But for now, I have another thing to do. This mask...", he pointed down at Tahu's Hau, "...needs life."

Little red sparkles started dancing around the mask and the floor, forming the shape of Tahu's body. The reborn Fire Toa still kept his eyes shut while he was glowing, but as soon as the light was fading, his eyes shot open and he gasped for air like a nearly drown, who made it back to the water surface in the last moment.

Lewa let out a cry of joy. "Tahu!" He ran over to his love, who had just slowly sat up, slid down to the floor and hugged him tightly. Now he couldn't hold back his tears any longer.

The ruby Toa first was still a bit dizzy but the more he regained his senses, the tighter he hugged his green angel too until their lips met in a passionate kiss.

Gali cleared her throat. "We're all happy, to see you again, Tahu."

That brought the two back into reality, both broke apart, flushing. But now it was out. No turning back.

The Toa of Fire looked around and grinned slightly. "Is there something special or belongs stupid staring to your new personality?"

Kopaka gave him a big grin. "Welcome back, fire spitter."

## Kapitel 10: Chapter 10: Up where we belong - the beginnings of Aro Nui

### Chapter 10: Up where we belong – Beginnings of Aro Nui

Mata Nui winced as if a sharp pain had shot through his body again but he regained control over himself fast.

"Maybe I'll have to leave this place as soon as possible. It seems like Makuta is getting stronger. But first, I'll have to show you something. Have you ever noticed that the sky was never blue all over? At least one cloud always remained."

"I've often seen it", Gali answered, "but there were things of more importance than the weather."

"Sure thing", the God waved his hand and the ceiling of the cavern, that was the bottom of Kini-Nui the same time, opened, "But this cloud was also of great importance."

The six Toa looked up to the sky, mouths opened in surprise.

"This is a ...", Onua started.

"An ... an island. A floating island", Lewa finished.

The cloud was gone. But now there was the bottom of an island seen instead.

The Great Spirit slowly disappeared. "This is Aro Nui. Your home. The place you came from. The Turaga may have told you much about *their* past, now it's time to discover yours." Then he was gone.

"How are we supposed to get there? We can't fly", Tahu muttered.

His green angel laughed. "Have you ever taken a ride on a Goku-Kahu?"

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As soon as the Toa had climbed off their backs, the Goku-Kahu left the island quickly. It seemed as if there was someone or something that frightened them.

"Seems like there's danger around", Lewa worried, "A Kewa is a very tough bird. You can't scare him that easily."

"Well, maybe it's just because this isn't their home island", Tahu tried to calm him down a bit but didn't succeed because he sounded unsure too.

No wonder that the Goku-Kahu had left that hurriedly. The surrounding looked dark and scary, black earth, black stumps everywhere. It was like there had been a great fire lately or a volcano had erupted. The six heroes looked around. Not only the blackness made them feel uncomfortable but also the fact that someone seems to watch them. But no one could be seen around.

Gali sighed. "There's nothing. Just our nerves. Let's move on. There has to be a village somewhere or at least a Matoran."

"Which you have already found", a voice said, making the six flinch.

The black ground and trees had hidden the Matoran perfect as he was lying down. Now he had just stood up. His body was black all over, which made him look like an Onu-Matoran, but he had glowing red eyes like only Ta-Matoran had. Maybe a mix form.

The Toa were used to it, that Matoran treated them like gods but also in this point the one in front of them was kinda different.

He was glaring at them while speaking. "I know, you have to be the Toa who had left our island three years ago and you have returned to save us like the legends have always told. But who knows if the Makuta or the Ikuta brothers haven't poisoned your heart like they've done to most creatures living here and on Mata Nui. Maybe you're just some more traitors."

Tahu stepped forward. "Hey, not in that tone, little one. We've *came* here to save this damn island and we're awaiting a little more respect."

The Matoran glared back and hissed, "And what will you do now? Kill me for that? I'm not afraid of *you*."

Gali stepped between them. "Uhm ... maybe we can proof it, that we're on your side."

The Matoran looked up to her, now a bit more friendly but still sceptic. "Well, I think the village, I live near, needs you ... just follow me." He turned round and walked away.

"And ... can you at least tell us your name?" Lewa asked carefully.

The Matoran looked at him as if he thought the Toa of air had lost his mind but then he answered, "My name's Tupua ..."

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"What is *this*?", Lewa whispered pointing at some spider-like creatures that were crawling around in the village.

"Nektann ... Scout Nektann and Guards", Tupua answered, "You're lucky, those are the weaker ones."

The Toa and their Matoran guide had hidden in Tupua's hut near the village. This wasn't a village like they knew from the island they had just come from. There were huts like on Mata Nui, but so many of them, that in this single village could live hundreds, maybe thousands of Matoran, while on Mata Nui the village with the strongest population was Ga-Koro with only about twenty to thirty inhabitants.

"The people are prisoners in their own houses", Tupua continued. "Now it's your turn to free them ... if you're really on our side."

"We are!", Tahu whispered, a fierce glow in his eyes, but not daring to speak any louder since the Nektann could notice them. "Why can't you just trust us?"

"There had been other ones who wanted to help us or originally came here in peace", the black Matoran shrugged. He looked out of the window at the Nektann swarm again. "These creatures came from the last ones. I can't trust anyone anymore."

He took a dark green bow off the wall. "But now we don't have much time left. Some of the Guards have come closer to my hut than they should. I think, they can sense you and they have only not attacked yet because they don't know who and what you are."

"What is this bow supposed to mean?", Pohatu asked sceptic.

"You really think, I want to fight without weapons? I can, but I don't want to now."

"Fight?", Tahu shot. "You really want to go out and fight? You're just a Matoran."

"Yes, your royal highness. Although you won't believe it, Matoran aren't that weak. And now shut up before they hear us ... if they hadn't already."

The ruby Toa opened his mouth for a counter attack but Kopaka's glare made him silent. The icy one then turned to Tupua. "You can fight with us. I cannot see a problem in there. But I wonder with what you want to shoot. You have no arrows."

"Don't need them, have my own ways." He turned round and walked to the door to show, this conversation was over to him.

"Well, he must know, what he's doing", Lewa sighed.

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Tupua was right. There were many of them, but they were as easy to defeat as if the Toa Nuva were fighting against Nui Rama. (And I have to say, Nui Rama are the weakest enemies on Mata Nui. Even a single Matoran can kill one of them if he shoots some disks at it.)

And he really had his own ways of getting his weapon. As long as he needed them, glowing green arrows, made of pure energy appeared in his hands.

Some of the Nektann were defeated, others fled.

Tupua ran through the streets. "They're gone again! It's safe to come out!", he shouted.

Soon the seven defenders of the village were crowded by joyful, surprised or sceptic looking Matoran in different colours.

Some of them backed away as their Turaga walked to the Toa.

"Well done, heroes, I think, I speak in everyone's name when I thank you so very much. Now I believe that we can trust you, that you're no new threat to us", he looked at Tupua, "although some of us are still non-believers..."

"Turaga?", Tahu started.

"Just call me Potaka."

"Well then, Turaga Potaka, why haven't you and your people fought them yourselves? You've seen how weak they were."

"That's a good question, young Toa, and it's a simple answer. They know us but they don't know you. We're the ones they want to enslave, but they're unsure if you have come to rescue us or aim at the same goal as they and just don't want rivals. If we went out, the Nektann would have called for reinforcements and in the worst case the Piraka themselves would have come. But neither they, nor the Ikuta brothers would care if you had come to kill some of us, as long as you don't hinder them in their mission."

He paused and looked around between them. "You look confused. Maybe I'll have to do a lot of explanation. I think, it's better, we go to my hut. My people may want to celebrate your comeback and that can be a bit too loud for our question-answer-game."

"And you should come too!", he firmly said to Tupua who had just tried to sneak away.

Kapitel 11: Chapter 11: History ante portas

Chapter 11: History ante portas

The eight were kneeling round a low table in Potaka's hut. A little fire was burning at the fire place in the background, flanked by two statues, one should display Mata Nui and the other was diamond-like looking.

"Here we go, Toa. You can ask as much as you want. I don't know, if I can answer everything but at least I can try."

"Okay", Gali started, "First of all, what is demanded from us? Why seem so many have awaited us? What are the Ikuta brothers after? What have those Piraka and the Nektann swarms to do with it? Who are those Piraka? The Ikuta brothers once kidnapped Lewa because he's a Guardian. What can you tell us about that? What 'weapon' are they searching for? Where are they now? Where are we now? Are there other villages too? Why is the sky blue?" She breathed in deeply. "And last but not least, what do you know about our own past?"

Potaka smiled amusedly. "Well, why the sky is blue, I don't know. Maybe because it would look awful, if it was green. And for all other questions, I have to start with a longer story..."

Our island once was peaceful until the Ikuta brothers came. It's said, they've travelled from island to island before, trying to conquer everything. They had only been to little islands and maybe that seemed to be too easy to them, so they headed for our homeland many years ago. We've also never found out, what they originally wanted. Some say, they're kinda megalomaniac. The Ikuta often claimed, they want to rule over the world. Aro Nui was the first strongly protected island. Protected by Mata Nui. They could have defeated us, but never a god. Then, only a few months ago, they heard about one of our old legends and I think they misunderstood them. It's about the Guardians and a mysterious thing, originally called Uriuri Puiaki. The Matoran now rather call it the Master of all Emerald or just the Emerald. It can make Mata Nui stronger, but can also weaken him. I'll come back to that later on.

Originally the Piraka and their Nektann swarms had nothing to do with that all. They came from an island down on the surface, called Voya Nui, and they were searching for something. They were harmless for us as long as we didn't disturb them and they also ignored the Ikuta. But then some time ago, their behaviour changed rapidly. They started attacking us and did everything for the brothers as if they were controlled..."

"Lhikuta", Tahu whispered.

"Like he did with you", Lewa whispered back.

"The village we are in now, is called Le Aro", Potaka went on, "Once there were six, but after the Piraka joined the battle, they had been destroyed with exception of this one. Ta Aro is now their basis camp and the place where they keep the slaves. Maybe our enemies are there too at present. I think Le Aro is only safe because the last Guardians are there and they can't risk killing them." He sighed. "Now there are only two Guardians still left. Lewa ... and Tupua."

The Toa shared a surprised gaze; Tupua showed no reaction at all; the Turaga chuckled. "Well, he might be a bit strange, as you may have already seen. Do you know what Tupua means translated? It stands for ghost, demon, spectre, object of fear, but also being strange or supernatural. Fits him quite well, doesn't it? But enough from

the Spectre ... Four Guardians had been captured before the Ikuta brothers left for Lewa, one was kidnapped by the Piraka, soon after they had left, one during this last swarm invasion. I think the Spectre can give you more information. But first I want to tell you something about your own past. As you see, I'm the Turaga of Le Aro and I don't know much about Matoran that lived in other villages, most I know about Lewa. You were all born as Matoran, that's for sure, each of you lived in another village but you've come together here when this war started years ago. I don't know, what happened with your families, maybe they're dead now... maybe they still live, but are enslaved ... I can only remember that Lewa's parents got killed during an attack on Le Aro. Since they were both Guardians, Lewa and his brother became Guardians too after their death."

"I-I had a brother?", Lewa stuttered.

"You still have, if the Ikuta haven't done anything worse than ripping his powers out of his body", Tupua growled.

"Yes, you have", Potaka continued, "His name's Rui. He's an air-fire-mix. And he was the one captured by the Piraka soon after the Ikuta left. It's nearly impossible that two members of one family become Toa later on. Well, your brother and you are Toa." While the Turaga was speaking Tahu had laid an arm round Lewa's shoulders not even noticing it himself.

"The legend says, in times like these, Mata Nui chooses heroes, one of each village. The mix must have been seen as only living inhabitant of a seventh village. You seven have managed to rescue our island once. For some time it looked like peace had returned. Then there was the day, Mata Nui called six of you to help out on another island down on the surface. Why only you six, that is one of his mysteries... maybe he wanted one to be left for looking after Aro Nui. Some Kewa should bring you down there, but before you could leave the Ikuta stroke back. They had grown incredible stronger, with new abilities, which, if you believe the legends, normally only the Rahkshi could possess. Mata Nui may have rescued you as he created capsules round your knocked out bodies, but you'd lost all of your memory."

"Excuse me, but I always hear Mata Nui", Onua interrupted, "How could he'd done anything when Makuta made him asleep decades ago?"

"That's another thing I can't explain exactly. I just would have said because he's a god. He can watch over his people and protect them in his dreams ... Is everything clear now or are there more questions?"

"Yeah, we need every little piece of information, we can get", Gali turned her head into Tupua's direction. "It was mentioned that you can tell us more about Guardians and this mysterious Emerald."

The Demon snorted, but nonetheless he didn't seem to be unwilling to tell at all.

"As you may have heard there are eight Guardians and it needs all of them together to reveal the location of the Emerald. We've never seen this thing because it's our task to protect it, not to look at it. The Ikuta believe it's a weapon but they're wrong. Totally wrong. If you kill a Guardian you can weaken Mata Nui but he will get his energy back after some time. If you destroy the Emerald or leave it back not protected at all because all Guardians are dead you will destroy Mata Nui. Easy to understand, huh? Weaker because there's less safety now for the stone, destroyed because he normally got his energy from it. No weapon."

"After we'd awaken the Great Spirit it looked like he was feeling great pain", Pohatu remembered, "Then it wasn't because of Makuta as he thought?"

"I'm afraid not", Tupua snarled, "I think some of them are dead now, I can feel it deep

inside of my heart. The power Lhikuta and Reikuta have now is useless. If a Guardian dies, his children get his powers. If he has no children, there are only seven Guardians needed anymore to reveal the location of the Emerald. And now ... it only needs me ... If they get me and my power they can find the Emerald. If they kill me afterwards ... Mata Nui will die ...", he paused for a short time, "My colleagues are dead and I couldn't have done anything to prevent it." His voice was trembling of anger. "We can be lucky if Rui and Sasha are still alive."

The Toa didn't know Sasha but it was obvious that she had to be the last of the four remaining Guardians.

"Don't worry." Lewa had stood up. "We'll find them both ... alive. And free them. And we'll get peace back on Aro Nui."

Tahu got up too. "Right. We have no time to lose any more."

"I'd suggest, you start searching where they bring all slaves", Potaka meant, "In their basis camp in Ta Aro."

Kapitel 12: Chapter 12: The black valley

Chapter 12: The black valley

Tupua seemed now eager to lead them to Ta Aro and nothing would have been able to hold him back in Le Aro. Normally the Toa would have never allowed it that Matoran risked their lives in missions like that but Tupua had proven them enough that his powers were beyond those of normal Matoran.

They were now only a few hundred meters away from the volcano they had seen on their arrival.

"This part of the island we call the Black Valley", the Demon explained.

"Looks like the Mangai, the volcano where I live", Tahu commented.

"But in opposition to the Mangai this one showed his last activity hundreds of years ago. Afterwards Ta Aro was built in there. The black rocks are formed like a giant maze, a citadel no one can take. Hopefully our prisoners are there where I believe they are."

There was depressing silence around, not a single living form where the black rocks started. It seemed as if first the volcano and then the Ikuta brothers had erased life there forever.

"Depressing, huh?", Pohatu said just to break through the wall of silence but no one answered.

Then after several minutes Gali spoke up. "Where do you think they will be?"

First the Spectre hesitated but then he answered, "You can hardly get into Ta Aro but you easily get out. The time when I could visit this village without danger I have found a teleportation gate that brought me to a kind of power station. That would be the only place you can't get out that easily. Each room could be locked up and as long as they're empty you can use them as prison cells. The way is hard to describe and even I don't know it exactly anymore."

"Oh great", Tahu muttered.

They soon stood in front of some tower-high black rocks.

Tupua waved them to a narrow crevice. "This is the only way you can come in through. Not very comfortable for enemies because only one at a time can come through", he paused for short time before he continued, "But no big problem for the Ikuta or the Nektann. The Ikuta can fly like Rahkshi. The Nektann crawled over those walls like Fikou. But now there's no time to lose. Every second counts."

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The Toa were used to fighting their way not stealth but they had to keep cover as good as possible. Thousands of Nektann were patrolling and not only the easy ones they had fought in Le Aro. Each one of them could have called the Piraka or the Ikuta. The Toa never had met one of those Piraka but it seemed better to never make acquaintance with them.

In Tupua's opinion the enemies seemed better to defeat if the Toa knew everything about them and so he whispering started explaining every Nektann they saw.

"The little grey ones are called Guards as you sure know, those olive ones are Scout Nektann. This white one with the red stripes is a Healing Nektann. As his name already said he can only heal the others but not fight. Beware the Defense and the Debuff Nektann. They're light grey and have something like harpoons on their backs. They can only harm you if they're in front of you but with their harpoons they can pull you nearer than you want. Do you see those red ones? Those are Combat Nektann. Only fight against those, if nothing else is possible. The same counts for Master Nektann. They're yellow and we're lucky we haven't met one yet."

The six heroes had never seen the grumpy Matoran lively and excited like this before. But only until...

"Can't you just shut up?", Tahu muttered, "Are we on a rescue mission or are we doing Nektannology?"

"This could be necessary one day", the Spectre complained.

"Why should I care, if this thing in front of me is red or green, Debuff or Defense, when it wants to kill me? As long as I survive the battle I don't care."

Tupua was silent and remained it the rest of their way.

The others knew that it was wrong the way Tahu treated the black Matoran but no one wanted to speak up. The situation was too strained. You never know how an exerted Fire Toa could react.

It took half an hour of rock climbing and trying not to be seen by anyone until Tupua reported, "It's here." He nodded to a small side corridor.

A small room was carved into the rocks, with a grey and white target butt looking thing lying on the floor. Nothing else was in there, except the usual lightstones on the walls.

"I've always used this thing alone so I don't know if it could transport us all", the Spectre worried, "But we can't risk going one by one. If there are enemies patrolling on the other side, we're doomed."

"So let's just try out", Tahu shrugged. "What could go wrong?"

"Oh, there's much that can go wrong that way", Gali said, "but I don't think anyone of you wants to hear that."

The ruby Toa waved it off. "This platform is big enough for us all to stand on. So, why shouldn't it be for us all to be teleported? We aren't here to give up in the last moment because there's something that *could* go wrong. If it was like that we shouldn't have come here in the first place. Let's move on."

"As the great leader wishes", Onua sighed and earned a suppressed grin from Tupua.

## Kapitel 13: Chapter 13: Brothers in arms

### Chapter 13: Brothers in arms

They had awaited everything as they arrived ready to fight but not the complete silence. Just a slight humming of running generators was heard.

"And this should be the place where they keep their prisoners?", Lewa asked. "Well, not the best dungeon, I've ever seen."

"But keep in mind that no one of them left it alive until now", Tupua answered, "And now over think your opinion about it a second time."

"They would get out very easy if they weren't as stupid as one of the here present Matoran", Tahu countered.

"Or a certain Toa of Fire."

"Hush ..." Only one whispered word of Kopaka made them shut up and now they heard it too.

"Sounds like something is dragged over the ground the floor above us", Pohatu meant.

'Or someone', Lewa thought.

Tupua moved on to the next room. "At least we know where we should search for our friends next."

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Two Combat Nektann dragged a red and green body over the floor. The Toa in their claws had red arms and feet, green legs and body. He wore a Miru, the Kanohi of Lewa, but it was red.

The creatures threw their victim back into his cell and locked the door. The mixed Toa slowly crawled backwards until he felt the cold wall behind him. He kept his normally tangerine coloured eyes closed and breathed deeply. How long had they held him imprisoned? He didn't know anymore. He must have been without sleep for days now. First they took his energy, now they kept on asking him where the last Guardian was. He didn't know, didn't know anything anymore. All he still did was praying to Mata Nui everytime he had the chance to it but he wasn't sure if he was heard.

He had nearly fallen asleep when he heard something strange outside of his cell. Voices that didn't belong to the Piraka or the Ikuta. And one of them sounded impossible familiar.

"I'm sure it was here", Kopaka said.

"And now it's gone", Tahu looked around hoping for any sign.

"We can just try", Lewa suggested and opened a door. "This one is open and nothing strange is in there. Not suitable for prisoners."

He wanted to get over to the next door but Onua held him back. "Are you crazy? Have you ever heard of thinking before jumping? What if a Nektann army or those Piraka thingies had been in there?"

"Oh ...", Lewa stopped shortly, "... haven't thought about that."

"I can't work on like this", Tupua sighed.

"One word against Lewa and you're a dead demon", Tahu menaced.

He heard right. It was Lewa's voice. He tried to stand up but then decided that it would be better to rob over to the door at first.

Tahu and Tupua were about to start their old discussion again when Gali laid a finger on her lips. "Shut up both of you. Can't you hear that? Someone is knocking at one of those doors. But it isn't very loud. Onua, you have the better ears. Can you hear where it comes from?"

"Sounds like it's behind the door Lewa was heading for."

"You see?", Lewa stated sulky, "I would have succeeded. Cause I have the sixth sense..."

Onua stepped over to the door. "Whoever is in there, step back as far as you can."

He waited a short time, then activated his Quake Breakers and slammed them into the metal door.

Rui had just stumbled back some steps then let himself fall down to the floor, coiled up and protected his head while metal parts shot around him.

"You alright?" Onua climbed through the hole. Rui tried to get up again but stood still a bit wobbly so he had to lean against the wall again.

"I ... I knew it ... you would come back", he stuttered and after he noticed Onua's confused gaze he added, "Oh, excuse me ... I'm Rui ... and if you don't know me anymore after all those years ... and after what happened ... I'm Lewa's brother..."

"Brother?" Lewa wanted to jump through the hole but couldn't get high enough and fell into the room. The mix form smiled slightly. "You're still the same..."

"I'm sorry to interrupt you", Kopaka's voice was heard from outside. "I know that you have to tell each other very much, but it would be better, we search Sasha and then get you out of here first."

"Wise words", Tahu agreed, "Pohatu, Onua, support him. I don't think he's strong enough to make it out himself."

"Do you know where she is?", Tupua asked.

Rui slowly shook his head. "But I would presume that she's still there where I had been several minutes before. There's a hall on the third floor where they bring us from time to time. They desperately want to find out where Tupua is..."

"Uhm ... we have a little problem now", Pohatu mentioned, "Lewa's bro can't fight."

"It's impossible that one of us stays here with him. Splitting up is the worst we can do now", Gali considered, "There's no other way than taking him with us and one of us should always stay close to him."

Tahu looked around. "If we talk about problems ... where's Tupua?"

Onua looked out of the door. "I think in his opinion we've talked to long ... He's on half way to the stairs."

"Oh, this little ...", Tahu gnashed his teeth, while Onua only shrugged, "Let's just follow him."

Kapitel 14: Chapter 14: The great escape

Chapter 14: The great escape

"Where is he?", Lhikuta shouted. "You can't keep your defence up forever."

He walked around in the hall and finally stopped in front of the little blue Matoran, who was chained to the wall.

"I ... I've said it", she sobbed, "I don't know. He could be everywhere. Even deep down in Karda Nui."

"And tell me, why should we believe you?" We've been lied to so often just because you stupid Guardians believed that so we won't be able to find the next of you ... He grabbed her chin. "Be reasonable, little one, or do you want us to do the same things we've done to all of your kind before they died? They had at least the pleasure of death. But we can't kill you. You and the Toa are our last informants."

"You'd better believe her. Not even a radar would have known where I am", a voice echoed through the hall. Not a second later smoke with a slightly violet touch appeared in the middle of the room. "Sometimes here, sometimes there, sometimes everywhere", Tupua said grinning at them.

"Reikuta, get him!", Lhikuta shouted but just the same second the Spectre vanished in violet smoke again and appeared near the door.

"Don't worry, this time I'll keep it fair." He turned around and ran away, Reikuta close behind.

"Now you see, what this has brought to you, little one. Nothing, absolutely nothing. The last Guardian will be caught in no time and then ..."

Lhikuta was interrupted.

"You should search friends who aren't that incapable. Just knocked him out in no time."

"You little ..." Lhikuta activated his staff but Tupua vanished again.

"Well, this time you can't escape, Matoran", the creature hissed, "Cause this time the fight is really fair."

And he teleported himself out of the hall too.

"Man, an action like this from a guy who told us to quickdodge all the enemies, and now he isn't groundpath himself at all."

"Lewa, stop treespeaking. We haven't enough time to look for a dictionary."

Tahu wanted to enter the room after Lewa.

"No, stop, don't come in!", Sasha shouted.

"Don't be afraid, girl", Tahu tried to calm her down. "We're Toa. You know, the good ones."

"But if more than one Toa is in there, the alarms would go off."

The ruby Toa immediately took back his step. "Okay, Lewa, you're in. Now get her out. Quickly and carefully."

"How shall I open these chains?"

"Your Katana should be strong enough."

It was a bit of hard work but his weapon finally cut the chains into pieces.

"Now come. I hope Tupua will find to us later on."

They were just on their half way out when purple smoke shot out of the floor and the Spectre stormed over to them.

"You both alright?"

"Yeah, I...", Sasha started, but suddenly the loudness of a siren filled the room.

"What's up? I thought this thing would only start if two Toa are in here", Gali shouted but was nearly drowned out.

"I don't know", Sasha shouted back, "The Ikuta must have activated it somehow."

In just a few seconds the corridors were filled with Nektann of every kind.

"We won't make it through", Onua doubted, "Not just because we have two wounded with us..."

Tahu clenched his teeth. "We have to try... Ready your weapons."

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Kopaka charged at a Master Nektann, weapons drawn, and brought them down only to strike nothing but the metal floor. The Nektann had jumped away just in time, much to the Toa's dismay.

That fight would be as hard as Tupua told.

He attacked again and this time he slammed his sword into the creature's back but the Nektann sent an electric shock through the weapon and through Kopaka's body, causing the icy Toa to cry out in pain.

"Kopaka!" Tahu ran over only to be struck down from a Guard's energy beam from behind.

Pohatu and Onua had enough problems on their own but at least they had no Master Nektann to fight against.

A Combat Nektann came flying from behind but was caught up by Onua's Quake Brakers. Steel striking steel. From that clash it was easy to see who was superior in brute strength, as the creature could attest after being thrown onto his back with what seemed to be a simple push from the Toa.

In this room made all out of steel their elemental powers of earth and stone didn't work so they had to fight with only their weapons and their own strength.

They also had a bit of help from Rui. He was still too weak to use his elemental attacks but at least he could use his sword to push the enemies as far back as necessary.

All in all they had a better fight then the others who had a real Guard and Master Nektann invasion.

All Tupua did was building up shields around himself and Sasha and only fired a more or less effective energy beam against the Nektann if they started attacking the shields but the Toa had no time to wonder why this strongest of all Matoran just used his weakest attacks.

Gali parried the strike from a shot harpoon with her axes and fired a wall of water through the lines of enemies but it just caused that they were pushed back a little and were not really harmed. A Guard's beam drove her back.

With a roar, a jet of flame was sent against the attackers but pushed the enemies just

as far back that the ruby Toa got enough time to help his icy friend back on his feet. This seemed hopeless from the beginning but they still didn't want to give up that soon.

"Lewa! Watch out!", Gali yelled, but too late. A harpoon struck the emerald Toa into his left side and pulled him back. He was slammed against a wall and bit back a groan as the back of his head connected with it. A grimace set his features as he felt a slick, wet substance slide down the back of his neck.

The Debuff Nektann pulled him into the other direction now causing him to be thrown to the floor. Lewa rolled onto his stomach and tried to get up but he was in too much pain. He collapsed back onto the ground. A Master Nektann moved on for the kill.

"Lewa!" A sudden kick and the yellow Nektann was flying against the wall. Pohatu took up his fallen friend. "You alright?"

"I ... don't ... it ... it hurt ...", Lewa fought to stay conscious but failed.

"All of you! Get close to me! Quick!", Tupua yelled.

The Toa didn't understand why but tried their best to get over to him. Luckily they weren't too wide splitted up.

"Great, and now?", Tahu shouted, "Now we're still trapped in the middle of this room." A sudden violet flame that shot out of the floor just a few centimetres away from his face made him shut up.

Just within a split second they all were surrounded by violet and black flames which disappeared as fast as they had come. But now the Toa found themselves in a complete different room. The room with the teleportation gate.

"If you can do that with us all, why haven't you done it earlier?", Tahu asked, nearly fire burning in his eyes.

"Because I wanted to spare my energy for an emergency", Tupua panted. "I can teleport so many people just over a short distance. Could have been possible that we've landed somewhere between the Nektann. And I can teleport so many of you only once, and then I need several minutes to regain my powers. I've seen that you've fought very well and got on your feet real fast after they got you down ... but then that with Lewa happened ..."

"Guys?", Gali's voice trembled, "I hear something crawling. They're swarming out into the other rooms."

"Support the wounded and run!", the ruby Toa shouted.

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"Isn't it very risky to rush through Ta-Aro and the Black Valley without cover?", Pohatu panted.

"No", Tupua's eyes shot around, "It seems like most of them are in the power station now. It's possible that we meet single ones but a single Nektann, even if it is a Master Nektann, is no threat to us any more after I've seen what you can do with your feet." Pohatu blushed slightly and waved it off. "Nothing special. Everyone could do that after years of Koli training."

"Wait a minute ... that just came to my mind right now ... Potaka said that they bring all Matoran slaves in there. Why haven't we seen anyone of them?", Onua asked between.

"Well, I think, they must have brought them elsewhere at the moment", Tupua presumed, "But don't have a clue where and why."

"What if the Piraka or the Ikuta are out here?", Gali threw in.

"Hopefully the Ikuta are still somewhere in the station", Kopaka answered, "And for the Piraka, well, we have met none of them until now and we can just hope that they are out on a mission or something else."

They had finally reached the gap between the rocks. Now only the Black Valley, a part of the grasslands and a part of the jungle lay before them. It would take some time to pass through all those landscapes but at least Ta-Aro was left behind.

"I think, I can try it again", the Demon said. "I got enough energy now. Maybe I can make it to the edge of the jungle."

Onua patted on his shoulder. "Then do your best, pal."

Kapitel 15: Chapter 15: Truth or whatsoever

Chapter 15: Truth or whatsoever

He hadn't made it to the edge of the jungle, but in the middle of the village of Le-Aro. Then he broke down exhausted. Immediately they were crowded by Matoran, who all wanted to know what happened. "Let them through." Turaga Potaka hurried through the crowd. "Come, follow me. We need to get the wounded to the hospital."

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Hurting brightness.

Lewa tried to blink the light away. Everything around him seemed glowing white. Slowly he recognized the bed he was lying in. And the ruby figure sitting next to him.

"Morning, sweetheart. Glad to see you're still alive." Tahu smiled slightly.

"How ... how long was I away?"

"Oh, only for several hours."

"What with the others?" He now noticed the bandage around Tahu's chest. "And what ... what happened with you?"

"Well, the Guard slightly burned my back, but it hasn't hurt during the fight or our escape. It just started hurting when we got into the village. Kopaka has the same problem, but with nearly all parts of his body. Gali just has some scratches on her chest but her armour needs a great repair. There's a really big and deep slash through it", he looked down, "We can thank Mata Nui that we became Toa Nuva and got these armours. Otherwise she'd be dead now..."

"She ... ", Lewa sat up a bit.

"Don't worry", Tahu slightly hugged him and spoke with his calmest voice, "Nothing like this has happened. She's fine ... it was just a theory what could have happened ... So don't think about it too much ... Onua and Pohatu were just tired. They had no wounds at all. Now they're patrolling through the village looking out for enemies."

"And ... what's with Rui?"

"He's fine too, really. He just badly needed sleep. As well as Sasha and Tupua."

Now lime-kissed eyes filled up with tears. "So no one blacked away. Everyone made it at least back to the village on his own feet ... Why just me? I'm not worth being a Toa. I'm too weak. The weakest thing alive."

Tahu stroked his back and leaned his cheek against Lewa's. "You're not weak at all. This could have happened to every one of us."

"And why hasn't it? Gali caught the harpoon with her axes. I haven't even seen it coming."

"It's just ... you're still young ... you have less experience than we have. It's not your fault."

He looked into lime kissed eyes. "I remember all the things you've been through. And still you can be your old playful self. For me, you're the strongest of us all." He gave

him a gentle kiss.

They didn't notice that the door opened and a figure stepped in, now standing in the room with mouth slight open.

"Lewa?"

The lovers broke apart, now staring at the newcomer.

"Rui?"

There was silence for a few moments, then Rui looked down on the floor.

"Well, I just wished I had found it out in an other way but this..." He looked up again.

"But it's your decision. And you're not the little boy any more I tried to protect years before."

He walked over to Lewa and sat down on the bed, next to Tahu. "But now we finally have the time to tell each other what happened during all those years we were separated." A big grin ran over his face. "And don't forget the details about how your love began."

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Lewa started the storytelling but after some time he found it harder and harder to speak. His head ached and Tahu meant, it would be better his green angel got some rest and let him the telling part.

"Seems like loads of danger", Rui said after the fire Toa finished with how they defeated Makuta the last time and awoke Mata Nui. He had kept it short and given him only a quick overview. Otherwise it would have taken far too long.

"So you really died? How was it? Is this really something to be afraid of?"

"I ... don't know. Because I can't remember anything between dying and reviving. It seemed like a very deep sleep ..."

"Well ..." The multicoloured Toa looked to his brother who had fallen asleep some time ago. "Now, what's with you and Lewa? How did the whole thing start?"

"Oh, I can just say, it seemed like my world was going poof and suddenly I loved him. I was never interested in him before. For me he acted way too childish and crazy. But then after a Rahkshi attack I saw how close he and Onua were and I felt ... well, kinda jealous. It's no big deal, that the two are that close. Onua had rescued his life twice before. I think even Tupua would become my friend if he did this to me."

"He had done it once yesterday", Rui chuckled slightly, "Let's just wait for the second time."

"He didn't", Tahu protested. "He said it himself that he wouldn't have done it if it wasn't for Lewa, because we fought well."

The mix sighed. "Anyway, knucklehead ... Now go on with your love story. It's more interesting now than a discussion about Tupua ..."

"I don't think I can really call this a 'love story' ... It was all too fast ... too sudden. The Rahkshi kidnapped him. I'm still wondering what Makuta was planning that time ... I rescued Lewa and, well, we found out that we both had the same feelings for each other. It was not that romantic. Then afterwards was a hard time too. Man, I was so stupid ... I always wanted to keep this love a secret because I was afraid of what the others might have thought about us until it nearly was too late ... the time I died ... But then they found it out more or less by accident, like the way you did now. I was revived, he ran over to me, embraced me and we just forgot that there were still some

more people around us, we kissed each other in front of them." He hid his face in his hands. "The most embarrassing thing ever..."

Rui patted on his back. "But at least you hadn't to *tell* them about you and my bro. I can say you, that is the most embarrassing thing ever..."

"May be right", Tahu sighed, "But now, I finally want to know what happened the time before we were sent to Mata Nui. Turaga Potaka has told us a bit about it but I don't think it was all he knew. I always have this feeling that everyone keeps away everything from us. At least our Turaga on Mata Nui did it. They knew everything that happened before but didn't tell us anything."

"I think that would be interesting to all of you. Maybe we should wait a little more until everyone has awakened. But until that you can tell me about your three years on Mata Nui a little bit more."

The ruby Toa grinned. "Why have I known that you would ask something like that?"

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Tahu tried to make his story as short as possible again but it still took him nearly two hours. He was just about to tell another time how he was revived when Gali looked into the room.

"Oh, there you guys are. I wondered where you had gone."

Rui lent back and crossed his arms behind his head. "Just some story telling. But you should have brought your friends around. I still have to tell things that might be interesting for you. About the time before you fought on Mata Nui. We'll try to wake Lewa up and see if he's fit enough right now."

~~~\*\*\*~~~

The emerald Toa tried to get up at first but then he decided it would be better stay in bed after a sharp pain shot through his head.

The others were sitting around a table near his bed, listening to the things Rui had to tell.

"Where should I start?" He looked over to Lewa. "Well, maybe first a bit more about us. Our mother was the Toa of air, our father the Toa of fire. That's why I look a bit ... different. Everybody warned them of their relationship. Fire and air would never fit together, they said. The personalities are way too different." He smiled slightly when he noticed the gaze Lewa and Tahu shared and continued, "But our father just kept saying that fire can never exist without air ...

We had a quite normal childhood. Played with other children, went to school, and were taught by the Turaga of all villages ... The only difference was that we were the children of Toa.

The villages were under attack from time to time but for us this was normal. We were born in a time of war and never knew the meaning of peace. And it was always like this: mummy and daddy stayed out for a fight for some hours or days and made the bad thingies go away ... At least till that dreadful day, the Ikuta came with reinforcement.

There had always been Nektann on this island. Harmless creatures, only dangerous to the little Rahi they hunted. Now it seemed that the brothers had them under their

control making them to dangerous enemies and let them attack our villages. The first time, the Ikuta showed that they hadn't just elemental powers, but at least it was just one single Rahkshi attack each one of them could do at that time.

This was the first time our parents didn't want us to stay in the village. We were evacuated with the other Matoran. Before we left our mother gave us two of the sacred stones – I didn't know where she got them from or why she had them and I still don't know – and she said if they hadn't returned within the next three days, we should bring the stones to the Great Shrine of Aro Nui." Rui's voice got more silent now. "On the fourth day our journey began... We were guided by Tupua. Fortunately it was a quiet day. The enemies had disappeared once again ... but same counted for our parents ...

The last part of our way we had to go alone. Our Guardian stayed outside of the temple. And in there", he looked around, "we found you. Not you exactly. You looked different because you all were young Matoran. Very young ... the oldest of you about twenty years old, the youngest one about my age, fifteen. Only Lewa was still a kid of twelve years age. I didn't worry about that at first because all we had to do was to put those stones on the right places on the shrine. But after we'd done that light shot out of the shrine suddenly. I felt like my body was transformed onto something different but I couldn't see anything. When the light finally faded we all looked like Toa. Seven Toa instead of six. As long as you're a Matoran being a Toa has something heroic but now ... We didn't know each other, didn't know how to use our weapons or powers. There was this feeling: We have no abilities and must fight this mass of enemies ... we're supposed to die ... But we got help from where we last expected it. Tupua believed our abilities were similar to the ones Guardians have and, well, he was kinda right. Through showing and explaining he gave us some little training. Then in his opinion we were ready.

I still couldn't believe why Mata Nui would have chosen Lewa. He was still too young. You can't force a child to fight in a war. But it was the way it was. The Great Spirit has his reasons ... even if we can't understand them from time to time."

The mix slowly shook his head.

"Our first fights were disastrous, but at least we weren't defeated. They were very close wins. And we learned during our fights, so the real training lasted for weeks ... months ...

After nearly one year we got the chance to fight against the Ikuta brothers themselves and we won. Unfortunately we couldn't kill them because they disappeared too fast. But since that day it looked like peace had finally come to our island after so many years ... at least for several months.

It's usual that a Toa who isn't needed any more changes back to one of the normal inhabitants of his village, but we didn't.

Then one day Gali has this vision about an island down on the surface called Mata Nui. The Great Spirit was calling the Toa for help but wanted me to stay here in case of emergency.

You six should have been brought down there by Kewa but minutes before your departure the Ikuta stroke back. This was the first time they had all Rahkshi features and they would have killed you if Mata Nui hadn't created this kind of capsules around you and teleported you down on the island. But unfortunately now your memories are all gone...

The Ikuta didn't show themselves again for many, many months. It seemed like they only wanted a last revenge. But then the attacks started again and this time they had

controlled Nektann and the Piraka on their side ... And no new Toa were chosen. I was the last remaining one until they captured me. First I thought because I was a Toa but then I found out that I was a Guardian too. No one ever told me that...

But now that you're here again and have rescued me, we'll show those creatures real Toa powers and defeat them for the really last time."

He looked around the a bit overwhelmed looking Toa. No one said a word.

Gali was the first to find her speech again. "We have to get away from here as soon as the last ones of us fully have recovered. I believe the Ikuta are searching for us. This place is the last one where the Matoran can live. We can't put it into that great danger."

The others still remained silent, but all of them slightly nodded.

Kapitel 16: Chapter 16: United we stand - divided we fall

Chapter 16: United we stand – divided we fall

The very next day they prepared to break up.

"Do you really think you're ready for that?", Tahu asked as he visited his green angel. The emerald Toa looked for any damage on his armour before putting it on.

"Yes, I do. Don't bother me with that. I know what I'm doing."

His head still hurt and he felt sick after every sudden movement but he didn't want to show his weakness. They had been in this village for too long. If the Piraka or the Ikuta came here on their search for the last Guardian it would be his fault as he believed, because he slowed his friends down. He felt like a weakling after all, no matter what Tahu kept on saying.

The ruby Toa sighed. He could feel that Lewa was worrying about something but he couldn't help him as long as he kept it his secret.

"We still can stay here for some more time... Gali's armour was destroyed and I don't think it can be repaired during that short time we still have."

"No way, Tahu. I've talked to her. Tupua has offered her to use one of the armours he collected in his hut over the years. There's nothing to say against our journey any more."

He went over to the door and turned back for a last time. "Thanks for worrying about me, but I don't need it. I'm fine." Then he walked out of the room.

The Toa of fire desperately sighed. Why did Lewa have to be so stubborn?

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"Where do you have them all from?", Gali asked.

She and Tupua were wandering through a room that lied under the Spectre's hut.

"From Toa who didn't need them any more", was his answer and he added quickly, "Not the ones who had fallen ... they take their armour with them into eternity. I mean the Toa who had become Turaga. You can take this one. It would fit you perfect. Trust me, I made this kind of armoury and I have an eye for what fits and protects you perfect and what not. Wait, I can still take a look over there, but I don't think I will find anything better."

He walked behind some shelves.

Meanwhile Gali surveyed the chest armour on the wall. Tupua could have been right. It looked like made for her.

She took it off when a piece of paper that was stuck behind it fell down, but she was able to catch it in the air. It showed a nearly perfect drawing of Gali as Toa Mata and something was written on the side: Whanaungatanga.

Whanaungatanga? It sounded like the old language of Mata Nui but she couldn't translate it. Only the Turaga still spoke it.

When Tupua returned she quickly put the drawing on a shelf.

"Useless, I knew it. Take this one", the Spectre said. "And now we have to get out, doing the last preparations."

~~~\*\*\*~~~

"Why on Aro Nui must you two come with us?", Tahu muttered, "The last thing we need are Matoran on our journey."

Tupua glared at him. "Sasha and me we're *Guardians*. Have you forgotten Koli-head? The Ikuta hunt *us* not *you*."

The others just sighed or shook their heads. They were just a few minutes away from the village and they started their little battle yet again.

"Oh can't you just shut up?", Kopaka got between them. "We don't have the time for foolish fights."

The two shared a last glare then walked as far away from each other as possible without losing contact to the group. Now Tahu walked with Lewa, Tupua beside Gali. "You must know", Gali tried to explain her colleagues behaviour, "normally we're fighters but since the day we'd came here on Aro Nui it seems like we're running away from everything. I know, that this is better... But Tahu is a fighter from the bottom of his heart. And now he feels like there's no use for him any more. That makes him more aggressive than he normally is..." 'Even if he's unpredictable enough without those facts', she thought.

Onua suddenly stopped. "Uh-oh ... I think I hear something coming..."

"Spread up", Tahu ordered, "In the jungle a single Toa is harder to find than a whole group."

~~~\*\*\*~~~

The two creatures that were walking by looked more like Toa than anyone would have expected. They looked stronger ... and taller, about a half time taller than a Toa, but all in all it was like strong built black-beige and white Toa with strange looking Kanohi and tails were wandering around followed by a group of Nektann.

"Those are two of the Piraka", Tupua whispered to Kopaka and Gali who were hiding near him under some Harakeke plants.

"Those?" Both Toa shared a surprised gaze.

"I know, they don't look much like danger and, well, when they and the hundred more Nektann they took with them came here, they really weren't much danger to us..."

The black-beige Piraka looked around. "Really, Thok, there was something. I've heard them and I can still feel them."

"They're gone, Reidak, give it up. At least they were no Guardians", Thok answered.

"You've heard Lhikuta. They need them rather than new slaves."

"How can you be sure that there were no Guardians? I felt very many different kinds of energies. It's possible that a sense of Guardian was hiding there too."

Another figure was coming closer.

"Hey, who's there?", Thok shouted.

"Just me, just Avak", the brown Piraka answered. "I bring news from the Ikuta. They found a new source of energy. Something where they don't need the last Guardian any more... Only if they finally need a little bit of revenge... But I can't tell anything more than this right now. It's better to get back to our lair first."



"They have found what?", was Rui's first thing to say after the Piraka had disappeared and the Toa and the two Matoran came together again. "But ... how is this possible?"

"It may be a trick", Sasha said.

"And if not?", Tahu asked. "They didn't know that we were here too. It looked like they met Avak accidentally. What would you think?"

"In my opinion", Pohatu answered, "it's maybe better to find that Emerald thingy before the Ikuta do and protect it directly. But I'm not a Guardian ..."

Tupua looked into Gali's direction as if he wanted to see her reaction first and as he saw consent, he nodded too. "Just to be on the safe side. The Ikuta have the powers of the others and are now on their way for sure, so I think on our side ... it only needs me to reveal our way for us."

He closed his eyes for a few seconds then he nodded again.

"Yeah, I can feel it. Follow me. And prepare for a hard journey..."

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Their first day consisted of walking and a few little fights against weaker Nektann. They had passed the jungle long time ago, wandered through knee-high grass and after several hours the surrounding slowly changed once more. Now the plants got rare, therefore there was now a landscape made of sand and rocks. If they had been still on Mata Nui, they would have said they were in Po-Wahi now.

The night had fallen and they took a rest between some rocks. Sasha, Tupua, Kopaka and Onua were the only ones who had thought about taking victuals with them and now shared them with the others.

Gali looked a bit embarrassed. "I could kick myself for that I haven't thought about that. Cause Toa normally don't need those things to survive, but they too get a bad feeling if they don't eat from time to time..."

"Take mine!", Kopaka and Tupua had shot out the same time, now sharing a surprised gaze at each other.

Tahu avoided everything brought by the Spectre. Instead he started again, "Is that all? Walking all the day? And this is what you called a hard journey..."

"Don't jump off the rocks until you know how high they are, fire spitter. It was just our first day. Next morning we're heading the tunnels to Ga Aro and Onu Aro. They're like a giant maze and you can never know, what's lurking in the shadows."

"Oh, very impressive your little goodnight-horror-story", Tahu mocked.

"I don't think any of the two towns is still existing", Tupua continued unswerving, "we have to head for Onu Aro, I think, then take one of the next tunnels there until we come to an ancient tomb looking like ..."

"Hell, I haven't asked you to describe me the whole way. I just wanted to know if there would be anything more interesting."

"My legs hurt", Lewa muttered between and got back answers from two different sides.

"Whiner." (Kopaka)

"Need a massage?" (Tahu)

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It was too less sleep for real recreation. Next day they all felt like they had a hang-over ... if they knew alcohol...

Lewa now nearly got used to feeling sick and an aching head.

Slowly Tahu shook his head. "This travel got harder earlier than I presumed... I don't think I would be able to walk all day long."

"But you'll have to if you want to get anywhere before the Ikuta do", Tupua answered. The emerald Toa let out a bright laugh even if he regretted it afterwards because it felt like it made his head exploding. "Hey, you have to walk, but I can fly."

"And why haven't you done it yesterday?", Kopaka sneered.

"Well ...", Lewa shrugged grinning, "It had a good thing ... Otherwise there would have been no need for a massage..."

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The suns were glowing hotter than an eruption of the Mangai could have ever been and as if that wasn't enough the sand reflected it.

Gali and Kopaka had to fight the most while Tahu and Pohatu seemed to be immune against it.

Lewa was less affected too because he was floating several centimetres over the floor so that his feet never came into direct connections with the hot sand. But also he felt weaker than normal although he should have been used to that. The jungle was hot too but in the jungle there was more humidity.

"Isn't that tunnel showing up soon or shall we let Onua dig one for you?", the icy Toa growled. He remained close to Gali trying to cool her and himself down a bit but failed because everything he created was melted away immediately.

"Maybe we should try rain dances", the emerald one suggested and started dancing in the air like an Indian around the fire..

Tahu nearly felt relieved now. At least his love hadn't lost all of his old playful self. But there was still something to worry about. The Lewa's personality changed rapidly within the past few days. Where was the carefree Lewa he once had known?

"Oh please, stop acting like a fool", Kopaka sighed annoyed.

"How about you both stop acting like fools?", Tupua snarled in between.

"Only a few more hours and we've reached our first destiny", he then added calmly, talking more to Gali than to anyone else. "So keep a stiff upper lip ... and your friends away from killing each other because in their heads there doesn't seem to be anything more left than steam, hot air..."

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"Maybe it's better to take those with you."

Every time they passed a lightstone the Spectre took it off the wall.

"They will get less if we get deeper into the caves until they're completely gone. Originally this was a protection measure against enemies but I think the Ikuta must have found other ways to get to Onu Aro."

Only Onua didn't take one because of his ability to see in the dark.

"Hell, and if they have?", Tahu asked, "That could mean they're already awaiting us

somewhere in there."

"Nothing's for sure. We have to take the risk." Tupua walked into the first tunnel.

"Right, we won't know anything if we don't try it, and so let's just give it a try!", Lewa called out with a big grin, gave the ruby Toa a rollicking kiss and ran after the Spectre. A slight smile twitched over Tahu's face. Old Lewa was coming back again...

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The deeper they got and the more corridors they had seen the more unsure Tupua seemed to be. He had never been to this place. First his instincts told him where to go but this was now slowly fading.

"Great job, Matoran", Tahu sneered, "Looks like we're lost now."

"I would still be able to sense the Emerald if somebody wouldn't repeatedly disturb me in my concentration", was the counter.

He was now standing at another crossroad and had to decide between three other directions.

"Tupua?", Sasha started carefully, "Maybe ... we should form three groups so that we can explore everything and maybe we too find out what other ways the Ikuta have taken and ... yes ... "

He looked at her kinda thankfully. "Yeah, a faster way ..."

"But if one group finds something, how should the others know?", Gali argued.

"You know, I can still change locations so I could teleport from group to group...", Tupua suggested still sounding very unsure which was really unlikely for him.

Lewa's head shot around. He flinched because of the pain that still hadn't disappeared fully but tried to ignore it again. Now there was something of greater importance.

"Guys, my sixth sense tells me there's something groundpath dark ... I mean, something's hiding somewhere in the dark."

The other's looked around too but not even Onua noticed something strange.

"Maybe you've just erred", Tahu shrugged but wasn't convinced himself. Lewa's sixth sense never was wrong. "I think it's better the Guardians each take a different way. If someone's there ... it's more likely they're after them, so our enemies have to split up too."

So it came that Gali, Kopaka and Sasha headed for the first corridor, Pohatu, Onua and Tupua left for the second one and Lewa, Tahu and Rui took the last.

But no one of them noticed that only a few meters behind several pairs of eyes flashed up, following every move they made, every step they took.

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Correct me if I'm wrong but ... it's getting hotter in here."

Gali's eyes wandered around but there was no sign they had walked around in a circle and now came back to the desert.

"Hey, I think ... I know this way", Sasha remembered. "I've been here several years ago. We'll come to another little corridor on the left side. It leads us pass the lava rivers of Ta Aro. Although the volcano is inactive, the lava is still flowing in the underground. After that we'll have to go up for some time and then we come out near Ko Aro. If we take the straight way we'd just come to Ta Aro." She shivered. "The last

place where I want to go now.... That means our friends have taken the ways to Onu and Ga Aro."

The left corridor was existing, and so did the rivers. The three were just about to start their way up to Ko Aro when Gali suddenly stopped.

"I ... I think someone else is here ... "

To their left and right side the ground was falling down sharp, ending in lava. Whoever was here too could only come from front or back.

"Fear the darkness?", a voice whispered before Lhikuta, followed by a red Piraka stepped out of the shadows into the shine of their lightstones. "You should, because it's the last thing you'd ever see."

"Not you again", Kopaka moaned, "You annoy us."

"We're deeply sorry. But if you just had the kindness to tell us where the last Guardian..."

"Then you've taken the wrong corridor", Sasha interrupted, "And by the way, why do you still need him? I thought, you've found another way to the Emerald where you don't need Tupua."

"Have we? Can't remember... But now after you'd been so friendly to show up we'll have the pleasure to kill you ... or maybe we need you for something else but I'll have to think that over first... Hakann, I think our little guests want to play a bit before they leave."

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Gali tried an attack against Lhikuta but the Rahkshi-like creature slammed his staff into her stomach sending her flying back and hitting the ground hard.

"Gali!" Kopaka ran towards her but was stopped by Hakann. "Get out of my way, you monster!"

"Monster? Aw, that really hurt my feelings. Now I'm gonna have to hurt yours", the Piraka taunted.

The icy Toa jumped at him but was stopped and slammed down too.

He tried to get up but Hakann was sitting on his back, leaned his head down and whispered, "I actually feel sorry for you. You have to lay here and watch your girlfriend suffer, and there's nothing you can do about it. Doesn't that just suck?" He chuckled.

Kopaka struggled and tried his best to throw Hakann off of him.

"Damn you ...! Gali! Wake up, please!", he cried.

The blue Toa remained motionless as Lhikuta approached her.

"GALI!"

Amber eyes snapped open and an axe was brought up to defend against Lhikuta's attack. Gali winced as pain began to flair through her back.

"What's the matter little Toa? You hurt? Let me check."

Gali's eyes widened and she gave a cry of pain as the creature's foot smashed into her side.

"No!"

Kopaka finally managed to throw Hakann off his back, trying to freeze him but was only able to create a weak wall of ice.

'Damn! The lava...'

He had no time for Hakann right now. He ran over to Lhikuta, slammed his sword against his armour now causing the enemy to stumble back and helped Gali up to her feet.

Everything Sasha could do was watch. She didn't have the abilities Tupua had. Besides he was the only Guardian with Toa-like abilities. All others had been normal Matoran like her.

The two Toa rushed up to her.

"It's senseless!", Kopaka yelled, "But we can't go forward or back. They will follow us. There's only one way. Hold on tight and trust me..."

He grabbed the girls around their waists and dragged them with him over the cliffs, creating an icy platform under him that was melted away immediately. But nearly the same time he created another one a bit deeper and so on. Everything real fast. It looked like they were gliding down an invisible slide.

"Not with me, Toa!"

Lhikuta threw his staff like a spear after them. Kopaka hissed as it slashed through his right shoulder. But not only that... He could feel Lhikuta's poison rushing through his veins. His sight got blurry. He just could see another rocky platform some meters under him, still too high to jump on it but everything was better now than falling into the lava.

"Prepare to jump!", he shouted to Gali and Sasha.

The last thing he felt was his body falling down then everything got dark.

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The other two teams had the same problems of fleeing from enemies.

Pohatu and Tupua were lucky to have Onua's night vision so they left their lightstones behind and the Toa of earth led them through the tunnels. The Nektann were unable to find them again.

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"Why do we have the most stupid way?", Tahu shouted.

They were half climbing, half hanging on a rocky wall, several meters under their feet the roaring river, trying to get away from the following Nektann swarm.

"Why the hell water? Can't it be lava?"

Rui looked back. "They're closing up!"

As spider-like creatures they had it easy to follow them over the wall.

"There's just one way left ..." The ruby Toa looked down.

"But ... Tahu, you can't swim", Lewa tried to reason him.

"I can, I only have problems with salty water." He grabbed his love's hand and shouted over to Rui, "If I say it, we all jump off, right?"

Rui only nodded.

"Then ... Let go!"

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'Salty!'

The first thing that shot through Lewa's mind after he connected with the water.

Tahu's hand was torn out of his. He wanted to catch it again but the stream dragged him deeper. As Toa of air he wouldn't drown that easily but Tahu could. Now panic was rushing through him. His love was in danger but no matter how hard he tried to get back to the surface he still was torn deeper down.

Suddenly he felt something ... an arm was closing around his waist. He tried to struggle free but the same time it was like his power was sucked out of his body.

"You've lost, little exotic", Reikuta's voice was echoed in his mind.

*I see your face before my eyes*

*I'm falling into darkness*

*Why must I fight to stay alive*

*Heroes falling*

*Wake me, can you hear me calling*

*Out of darkness they come crawling*

*Creeping in my soul*

## Kapitel 17: Chapter 17: Brothers under the sun

### Chapter 17: Brothers under the sun

Hammering pain in his head snapped him out of unconsciousness. The emerald Toa let out a husky groan. His throat was sore because of the salty water he had swallowed. He tried to cough out the rest of it when he heard this voice from behind.

"Don't barf on my back, Toa."

Just now Lewa noticed that he was hanging over Reikuta's shoulder.

A weak struggle to get free, then the Toa gave it up. He couldn't even manage to lift his head. It looked like the creature had taken his energy completely.

"Don't worry", the Ikuta chuckled. "You'll get free as soon as we reach the market. At least free from me..."

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Ga Aro, the place where they now brought most of their prisoners. Like Ga Koro the city was built on giant swimming leaves. All the Ikuta had to do to keep the Matoran from running away was, to take away the bridges. Hardly any Matoran beside the Ga Matoran was able to swim. But what did they do with the inhabitants of Ga Aro? Maybe they were still kept in Ta Aro. Maybe Sasha was the last of them ... but Lewa didn't want to think about that.

Two Nektann were crawling around on the beach. As they noticed Reikuta they pushed a bridge made out of bamboo over the water and dragged it back again as soon as the Ikuta reached the city.

The emerald Toa passed by Matoran, who were sold and bought on this marketplace too, saw their expressions on their faces. It hurt. They looked like they had lost all of their hope with his capture.

'Yes', he thought, 'how much hope is really left, if even a Toa has no chance against them...'

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Lewa was touched, pushed and dragged around as if he was a rare and expensive textile. The Nektann in here seemed to never have seen a Toa before.

He now was allowed to walk on his own (if he could in this mass of Nektann), but as soon as he got away a bit too far his legs gave up carrying him. It wasn't hard to see what Reikuta meant, when he said, Lewa would never get away from here even if he would try to fly. Soon the Toa believed the Ikuta did this just for fun as he broke down another time without any reason, without even having moved a centimetre away from him.

"Oh, come on, not just touch. Buy", Reikuta shouted over the market place. "I want at least 600 Widgets for him. Who bids more?"

From time to time a Nektann waved a leg but they seemed to do it only to make

Reikuta happy.

"Why is this Toa so expensive?" A blue Piraka pushed through the Nektann and went up to Reikuta.

"Ah, you know, the Matoran we can use for work but this little Toa has ... *special* features, if you know what I mean", the creature leered, "And I had the pleasure to test him ... Look at him. 600 is a really fair price."

Vezok rubbed his chin and did as if he was thinking it over but his smirk blurted out that he had already come to a decision.

"Yes, I think I can give you the money..."

"I bid 6000 Widgets!", a voice called over the place.

Vezok looked around. "Wow, you must need that really badly", he sneered as he saw the green Piraka rushing through the scampering Nektann.

"I just can't let pass an offer like this", he grinned.

Only Lewa noticed the twitching muscles on his face, as if he was extremely concentrated.

"Sorry, Vezok, deal is deal, maybe next time", Reikuta closed the bargain, "For now Zaktan just outbid you..."

Zaktan grabbed Lewa's hand and dragged him away. "Come, I don't think I can hold it back any longer."

Laughters were heard from behind but the Toa had a clue what the green Piraka really wanted to say.

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They passed the bridge once more. Now Zaktan speeded up. Their way leaded them over the beach some time, then into a bamboo wood.

Lewa's eyes widened as he saw the building lying in front of them deep in the wood. It looked like an overgrown temple.

The Piraka nearly pushed the Toa through the door, and then fell onto his knees. "Whew, that was close ..."

Lewa went back as far as he could. This creature might have rescued him for now, but he was a Piraka after all.

"You can come closer", Zaktan chuckled, "I don't have plans to eat you ..." Then he got serious again. "I can understand if this is confusing for you. You must know, we don't do that all because it's our decision. The Ikuta keep us under their control. But sometimes we manage to break out of this. During that time I found that temple and as I walked in it felt like nothing can ever harm me again. It may sound stupid but this building protects me from the mind control. In here I'm just myself. I brought you here because we're safe now. But I can't stay here for too long. Otherwise I'm afraid the Ikuta might get suspicious and search for me. And then this temple would be doomed..."

"But ... why have you rescued me?"

The Piraka stood up and walked over to him. "Look, I don't want this all to happen, but I can't fight against it anymore. But now you and your Toa friends appeared. I trust in you. I can't give you any advices what you should or can do, but still I believe you will make it. Let this island be a free place again."

*I had a dream, of the wide open prairie
I had a dream, of pale morning sky*

*I had a dream that we flew on golden wings
And we were the same, just the same, you and I*

Lewa slowly shook his head.

Zaktan started again, "We may look different and we may be enemies right now, but we have the same things we want to reach. That kinda makes us to brothers..."

*We are like birds of a feather
We are two hearts joined together
We will be forever as one
My brother under the sun*

"We have no chance too", the emerald Toa said. "So many fights and we hardly won them."

"I know, but be honest, how many of your first fights against the Rahi have you won?" Lime-kissed eyes shot up. He was right. Their beginnings had been a struggle between live and death too.

Zaktan gave him a warm smile which looked a bit scary on a Piraka's face. "Now go. I can't keep you here any longer. Reikuta may trust only in his brute strength all of the time but that doesn't mean he's stupid."

"But how ... I don't know where my friends are." Lewa sounded more desperate than he wanted to.

"I'd suppose that they're somewhere near Onu Koro because I knew Reikuta caught you on your way to this city, but it's just a guess. I've heard that Toa and Guardians can always find each other no matter where they are. And you are both. So just trust in yourself... And remember not to get caught again. I gave all my money for you so I won't be able to buy you a second time ... if I'm still alive if it comes to that again ..."

The emerald Toa felt guilty welling up. Zaktan was risking his own life for a Toa's freedom ... for the freedom of the whole island ...

They looked at each other for a last time.

"Thank you ..."

"What for?"

"For buying me, for risking your life ... for just everything ..."

Were his eyes playing tricks on him or was there really sadness on the Piraka's face for a short time? He wasn't sure because within a blink it was gone.

"Don't keep up any longer. Just go, Toa ... or better run, run for your life ..."

*Follow your heart, little child of the westwind
Follow the voice, it's calling you home
Follow your dreams, but always remember me
I am your brother under the sun*

~~~\*\*\*~~~

He nearly had forgotten about it. Now his head stroke back with fullest pain while running.

How long was it ago that he had rested? Minutes? Hours? He hadn't thought about it, didn't want to think about anything anymore, just concentrated on the way lying

before him.

The bamboo wood was still around and it was hard to see if he was still heading into the right direction. Bamboo all around, not any sign of Onu Aro. Flying would have led him faster to his destination and he would have been able to see more, but he avoided it at any costs. The Ikuta could the same. Down in the woods he at least had cover.

His body was screaming for a little bit of rest, while his senses kept on alarming that grave danger was around. He nearly could feel Reikuta behind him.

What happened to Zaktan? Lewa hoped he was able to make Reikuta believe his little Toa slave escaped alone without his help.

How was the Ikuta able to follow him that fast? Had he seen him running away from the temple? Had he followed them to the temple at first place? Had he heard anything they had been talking about? In this case, Zaktan was doomed.

He suddenly grew sicker than ever before.

Now he felt something different from the direction he was running to but his senses didn't warn him so it seemed to be no danger.

His legs finally gave up carrying him. He broke down exhausted, vomited up nothing but stomach liquid, but jumped up immediately after, stumbled forward some more meters, then broke down again. Now way he could carry on. An incoming enemy would just find a very weakened Toa who was no danger at all.

And now it came, came crashing through the woods.

Everything Lewa could do was breathing faster although he had thought increase wouldn't be possible any more.

Something blurry appeared between bamboos. The emerald Toa tried to correct his vision but it was impossible right now.

"There you are", he heard Reikuta's voice. "Felt something getting away from Zaktan and had to look after it. Stupid Piraka. Can't even watch over his own things."

Despite the danger Lewa felt a bit relieved. After all Zaktan was out of danger. But now there was a Toa who was supposed to die.

He readied his Katana – at least he still could move his arms – but it was futile to think he could fight right now. In the best case parry some strikes – if his vision cleared up. He still could see only blur where an Ikuta should have been.

"Hm, might not be good to sell you again. Risk's too high, that you run away once more. Silly Toa, the Piraka may have treated you like a slave but at least you could have stayed alive longer", he moved closer, "Now there's no other way than killing you ..."

"Get away from him!"

A brown figure came flying over Lewa and created a little earthquake when it landed. And he felt another quake when something black shot out of the floor.

"Not you again!", Reikuta yelled.

The last think Lewa heard, then he felt his head hitting the ground. Too weak to keep it up any longer. He wanted to be part of the following battle, wanted to help the two figures whoever they were, but the exhaustion now spread through his body rapidly, taking its toll.

So tired...

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'Where am I?'

The ground was still shaking. No, not the ground. He was carried by someone, was lying in black and grey arms. And now he noticed the chest armour he leaned his head against and the black Kanohi over him.

"Pohatu, wait, I think he's waking up."

The auburn Toa looked around. "Well, yes, I think we can stay here for some time. At least we'll see enemies fast. It looks like it will be dark soon and it mightn't be good to wander around then."

Onua knelt down, laid down Lewa carefully but still held his head in his arm. "Are you alright?"

Lewa groaned. "Uh ... yes ... just still a little tired ... Thank you two for helping me."

Pohatu smiled. "Well, when we got out the tunnel near Onu Aro we had a very bad feeling. As if danger was close and someone of our team was involved ... But it would have been harder if Tupua hadn't lent us a helping hand."

The emerald one looked around but couldn't see the Spectre anywhere. "But ... where is he?"

"He wanted to see after the others", his ebony friend answered, "Maybe they're in danger too. We'll try to follow him soon. But for now ... want something to eat?"

Lewa took it gladly. There was a dull feeling in his belly. But at least his headache was nearly completely gone.

He asked them too if they knew more about Tahu and Rui but they had no clue. Everything they knew was that they had to wait for any sign of Tupua.

While they were eating Lewa was staring at the sunset. Another night in slavery, another night in fear for so many Matoran. He desperately wanted to help them. Better now than later.

"I need to get back to Ga Aro."

"What?" The two others looked at him as if he had announced he wanted to kill Tahu.

"Yes, now I know the Piraka are controlled like Tahu once was but they can brake through this sometimes as far as Zaktan has told."

"Who?"

"Believe it or not, he's a Piraka too ..."

The Toa of air told them in short form about how he was torn away from his group, the slave market and his escape.

"I believe it's possible that all Piraka snap out of their control. Maybe they won't be on our side but the Ikuta are their enemies too."

"No," Onua shook his head, "Your shot can go off behind..."

"It can't. If they ignore the Ikuta, which I can't believe, it's the same as before for us. Two parts of enemies but with the little difference that they don't stick together anymore. But otherwise we get a little help. It's worth a try."

"We should do it", Pohatu agreed, "but it's night now, so it would be better to wait until tomorrow."

The emerald one jumped up. "No, every second we wait can be a second too late."

"But we're alone", the Toa of air argued, "Do you have any plans how we can do it? I don't think we can do it? I don't think we can go up to a Piraka and try to reason him."

"We can", Lewa gave him a grin, "And I know him. Now we only need to find him."

Kapitel 18: Chapter 18: A feeling cold as ice

Chapter 18: A feeling cold as ice

Kopaka slowly opened his eyes. Around him freezing coldness and dim light, but as Toa of ice he just noticed the twilight.

He hissed in pain when he leaned on his right arm to get up. A little streamlet of crimson dripped off his shoulders over his upper arm. As it had not yet dried it was unlikely he had been out cold for too long.

He looked around. An empty room made of smooth stone, a door of metal but nothing else. As far as he could see he was alone. And whoever brought him in here now had his weapons. At least his shield was still on his back.

Where were Gali and Sasha?

A sudden feeling as if he had swallowed ice cubes spread through his belly.

"No", he said to himself, "Don't blame it all on you. It is not just your fault. What else could we have done?"

His gaze went around again, this time with x-ray vision turned on.

And then he saw her, Gali, the room next to his, sitting against the wall, arms clasped around her knees, shivering.

For a short time he forgot about the pain in his shoulder, robbed over to the wall and leaned his head and hands against it.

"Gali", he whispered, then remembered that there was still a wall between and repeated it a bit louder. He wasn't shouting, just talking like a normal Toa but the volume of Pohatu's and the sound of his voice together sounded as if he was yelling her name.

The sapphire Toa looked up. "Kopaka?" She followed his voice, leaned against the wall too there where she believed he was. "Oh, I'm so glad you're still alive."

Kopaka moved a bit sideways so that they were now really sitting face to face, leaning as close to each other as possible without being able to touch.

"Is Sasha somewhere with you? Do you know where she is?", he asked although he could see the answer by himself. Just to say something, just to give her the assurance that somebody was still there.

She was still freezing badly and he wished he could at least heat up the wall.

"No", she slowly shook her head, "I don't know. All I can remember is that you were hit by his staff and that this platform was still too far away. But I think we made it to it nevertheless. I felt that I hit something rocky. The next thing that I know is waking up here alone..."

Her eyes started flickering but she tried to fight it down.

Kopaka knew how she was feeling now. Being locked up alone in a dark, cold room must be the worst thing for a Toa who had always tried to keep the team together, who had always preached them 'United we stand, divided we fall'.

He placed his right hand where her left one was, ignored the pain in his shoulder, only silently cursed the wall between.

"They have taken your weapons too?" Another unnecessary sentence. He saw it. It was

just to prevent her from the feeling of being all alone.

Damn, why is this coming over me now? Could it not have been before?

Before she could answer he started again, "Will our elemental powers still work without weapons? You have always been the brain of our team. What would you say? Is it worth a try?"

Gali took a deep breath. "Do you remember when the Kal took our elements? We still used our weapons ... so I think they are independent from each other. But I can't use water in here. It's too cold for an water attack and without my axes I would need any liquid near me..."

The door to Gali's cell suddenly slammed open. She whirled round, eyes widened as she saw the two creatures coming in.

"Hello, little Toa, wonder where your friends are?", Lhikuta sneered, "Don't worry, you will see them soon ... as long as you come with us."

Gali backed away as far as possible.

"Aww, are you afraid of me?" Hakann chuckled while slowly stepping up to her. "Don't be. When I move for the kill I normally do it fast and painless."

"Get away!" Now she was not only trembling because of the coldness.

Fear. Kopaka knew this Rahkshi attack too well. He had made acquaintance with it already. But it was from a real Rahkshi.

"Leave her alone!"

Hakann's head shot into Kopaka's direction. Could he see him or was he just following his voice.

"Don't get impatient. You will be next."

Everything the ivory Toa could do was watching as the two dragged out Gali. She tried to struggle free. Useless.

"Kopaka!"

He slammed against the door only causing his other shoulder to hurt. The three slowly vanished out of his vision.

"Gali..."

Slowly he sank down on his knees.

She hadn't even been able to attack them, because she needed water. He stared at his hands as if he never had seen them before. An icy fire glowed up in his ice blue orbs. His element just needed freezing coldness...

He laid his hands on the door.

"Ikuta beware, I am back ..."

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Rushing through unknown corridors he didn't know where he was going exactly, just followed his feelings, didn't notice pain or the Nektann on his way.

He could have never believed it but it had been easy to shatter the door with ramming his shield against it after freezing it.

The Nektann attacked him but he just tried to evade it. No time for a fight. And by the way, there was only a very little amount of enemies around. It wouldn't be a problem to escape from here, with or without them. The bigger problems were the Piraka and

the Ikuta.

A Guard's beam hit him in the back, leaving a burning wound. Kopaka shot round, crushed his shield through the Nektann's body. Steel connecting steel.

But even that didn't keep him up any longer.

One enemy more or less, he didn't care. The thoughts in his head were spinning around the same thing. He now had only one destination. Gali.

~~~\*\*\*~~~

The Toa of water was still trembling of fear. She tried to calm down herself a bit although she knew there was hardly a way out of this Rahkshi attack. Only one Toa was once able to brake through it: Kopaka. But she also knew that a frightened Toa wouldn't be much of help.

The two creatures had brought her into a room a bit bigger than her former cell.

At least she saw Sasha again. The young Matoran was brought in by a couple of Nektann.

Immediately after the spiders let her free, she ran over to Gali.

"What are they planning?" she whispered. Her body was shaking too but it was more the coldness that made her shiver than the fear.

The sapphire Toa could only shake her head. She didn't know, and never wanted to know.

"So you still keep it a secret where the Guardian is? How cool ... Then let's just see how much cooler you chicks can still get", Lhikuta sneered. "Thok, we need more energy."

They hadn't seen the second Piraka by now. Possible that he was still staying outside the room.

From one second to another the temperature of the room fell rapidly.

Hakann and Lhikuta were still standing on the same place and watched over their prisoners. The coldness had no effects to them. Hakann was a fire element and Lhikuta, well, hard to say what he really was, at least he was red.

Gali and Sasha had sunken down to their knees, holding each other as close as possible. As water elements they were supposed to die within the next minutes ... or just seconds.

Kapitel 19: Chapter 19: One-way-ticket to white hell

Chapter 19: One-way-ticket to white hell

Was she already hallucinating or was it really snowing?

Slowly Gali opened her eyes. Some snowflakes landed on her Kanohi.

No, it was real. And it got warmer in here. Still not very cosy around but at least no one could die at that temperature.

And then she saw him, the white Toa who wandered through the room, passing by the surprised Hakann and Lhikuta as if it was the normalest thing in life that Piraka and Ikuta were standing around in a room, and stopped in front of the girls.

"Was ... was that you?", Gali stuttered and felt kinda stupid after her question.

Kopaka gave her one of his rare smiles but remained quiet, just helped them both to stand up again.

"I'm still not strong enough without my sword", he whispered, "But we can catch them by surprise..."

Lhikuta shook his head to finally snap out of confusion fully.

"Why we just stand here? Hakann, get them! Thok, you stupid bastard, where are you? Get in! ..." He was nearly ran over by two Toa and a Matoran.

"Was that your plan to get us out of here? Just run away?", Sasha panted.

"Well, I actually had no plan. I said we can get them by surprise and that was surprising for them. We should not forget that we are still unarmed", was Kopaka's answer.

"Do you know where we can get out of here?" Gali asked. She was still holding Kopaka's hand tightly as if everything would be lost if she let him out of her grip.

"I can only guess but my x-ray tells me there is light over there. Natural light not the one of those light bulbs in here. So there must be a door or something else out."

~~~\*\*\*~~~

They had kept the security measures too low because they had trusted that fear, separation and the loss of weapons would make their enemies weak. They would never learn...

The three met just a few single Guards which couldn't really stop them. But they still had a big problem because Thok, Hakann and Lhikuta got closer really fast.

"I was right... this door is a way out", Kopaka sounded relieved.

"Can you break it?" The water Toa's head shot around. It was only a matter of seconds until their enemies would reach them.

"Nothing easier than that."

He laid his hands on the door and froze it.

"But now I need a bit help. It is stronger than I have awaited. Everyone push!"

A loud crack. Metal was breaking into parts and they stumbled out into knee-high snow.



"Where ... where are we? ... This looks like the Mount Ihu, but that can't be." The sapphire Toa blinked a few times. The brightness was hurting in her eyes.

"It is the former place of Ko Aro", Sasha answered. She had problems to move forward because the snow already went over her hips.

"Hm, explains why it had been so cold in the building." Kopaka had no problems at all. Whenever he went the snow was splitted like the sea did in front of Moses. "But now we have to get away from here as fast as possible. I will create the way for you. Sasha, it is better if you walk between us."

"They had gotten away!" Thok yelled as he saw the broken door.

"Don't worry...", an evil grin set Lhikuta's features. "They won't get far. If the incoming blizzard isn't killing them then it would be one of their own team..."

~~~\*\*\*~~~

Snowstorm and freezing coldness. The temperature had fallen within the last few minutes but as long as they stayed close to Kopaka it seemed several degrees warmer. The icy Toa was the only hope for the water girls to survive the white hell.

He went around as if he had been walking this way for years. Was it just the landscape that reminded him of his home down on Mata Nui or was it something different? Could he maybe remember something about his past? Was this his home years ago? His thoughts didn't go any further because suddenly a sharp pain shot through his body starting in his right shoulder.

He cried out in pain, broke down to his knees.

"Toa Kopaka, what is it?", he heard Sasha's worried voice behind him.

"Stay away from me, Matoran!" He shot up again and pushed her into the snow. "What I need is the Toa."

Gali backed off a few steps. "Kopaka, what's ... what's wrong?"

She just could evade and ice beam hot at her in time.

"Sasha, stay away from him!", she yelled.

"Oh can't you just shut up!?"

The next blast sent her flying into the snow, but it was one of Kopaka's weakest attacks. Otherwise she would be frozen right now. It seemed that his real self was still fighting to get back control.

The Toa of water shot up again but had to avoid another attack immediately.

"Kopaka, I don't have weapons and you know that!"

"Yes, I do, but that makes the whole thing more interesting..."

"Please, I don't want to fight you. We're friends, remember."

"Ice has no friends."

There was not much space for defending herself left. The falling snow had already nearly covered the way Kopaka had created. Wherever she tried to get, she was sinking in. And the worse was, she got exhausted really fast.

Snow was blowing into her face and it had gotten colder. Now she realized that Kopaka had also held away most of the storm before.

"Kopaka, be reasonable. Everything would be lost if we let the Ikuta destroy our friendships. I know, splitting up was the worst idea ever and I can't change what's

lying in the past but we can still get back to the others. And therefore you're our only hope. We'd be lost in this hell. So please, don't let Lhikuta destroy *you*."

No, he wasn't under Lhikuta's control fully. He still could hear Gali, even stopped his attacks just to listen to her. His real self was struggling to get back. Once he managed to break free of another Rahkshi attack and that shouldn't have been the last one.

"Gali ... I ..."

Something was forcing him to his knees. The poison. It was still rushing through his veins. And this senseless battle had him made even weaker. His body was sliding sideways.

Sasha was the first one to be by his side again.

"Are you okay?"

"Yes ... no ... I do not know ..." He saw Gali getting closer too. "We ... need to get away from here..."

The Toa of water knelt beside him. "But where? I don't know where to go..." A short pause. "Please ... you have to stay alive. I ... we need you. I know this is a strange request..."

Kopaka tried to look up but failed. His head felt too heavy to move. "On Mount Ihu there are many caves..."

Sasha looked up. "Yeah, I think I remember that in the region of Ko Aro there are many too."

"Can you walk?", Gali asked, but she already knew the answer. "Sasha, can you help me?"

"And I ... I can try to keep ... the storm away a bit..."

~~~\*\*\*~~~

The hardest march of their lives.

Kopaka fought to stay conscious to at least keep the storm away. Creating a path was already too hard for him so they had to wade through the knee-high snow.

Sasha suddenly winced as she noticed something. A small trail of blood followed them through the snow.

"Gali! Kopaka's shoulder..."

"Oh no, the wound has snapped open again." She tried to get over to his other side but was stopped when Kopaka pressed out, "No ... Care about that ... later ... in safety ... I cannot hold away ... much longer ..." His voice faded. Not enough energy left for talking. He had to concentrate on the weather.

~~~\*\*\*~~~

Never stop. Just keep on walking.

The storm had grown stronger.

Gali let Sasha make the decisions where to go after she said she had been to the region of Ko Aro several times. It still was a riddle how the Matoran could find anything in this white desert but maybe it was the same phenomena how Kopaka or any of the Ko-Koronans found their way on Mount Ihu.

The Toa of water already couldn't feel her legs any more. Her breath went intermittent. Snow was splashing into her sight.
Never give up, never surrender. It could have been the second motto of the Toa.

It could have been worse. At least the snow on the ground had gotten harder and they didn't sink in as deep as before ... but still deep enough.

"There is it!", she heard Sasha's call, "I know this rock formation. If we can get there we'll be safer for now."

Gali strained her eyes. The rocks which were meant were just about hundred meters away and still hard to see. And hard to reach too. They had to get up the mountain a bit and the snow now had formed a very slippery path.

Due to her smaller size Sasha was sinking in deeper, but she still fought. And Gali admired the little Matoran for her strength because she was already about to give up herself.

Only a few meters... Was Kopaka getting heavier?

Gali now had her eyes more on him than on the way before her. His eyes were flickering and she sent a pray to Mata Nui that they all would make it through this alive.

Just some more steps...

The part they were heading for looked more and more like a little hut the closer they got. A really misshapen carcass of a hut made of ice and stone.

They stumbled through something that could be considered as a door. Sasha broke down to her knees breathing heavily. She couldn't walk any more meters. Only a few seconds later Gali followed her onto the floor but more carefully because she was still supporting Kopaka. He now had his eyes closed fully but at least he was still breathing.

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The night had fallen in.

Sasha and Gali were sitting back to back, Kopaka was lying beside them. He still hadn't opened his eyes yet. They had nothing to take care of his wound. Gali managed to stop it bleeding by pressing her palms on it and now the only thing they could do was waiting for a fast Toa healing ability.

Try to stay awake. Never ever fall asleep now.

And the storm was going on.

Speaking was the best thing to keep themselves awake so they had started to talk about everything what was coming up their minds by turns.

"What do you think about Tupua?" Gali asked.

"Well, he's kinda strange. I still like him, but I don't know much about him. But I

thought you know him better. He seems to be closer to you than to anyone else."

"I can't remember ... but it feels as if we had been friends for years. He's a stranger to me but still he seems to be so familiar."

Sasha looked to the side. "Do you think Kopaka will be okay?"

"I hope so. He's our only hope. And my friend too. I don't want any of my friends to die."

"He still has this poison in his body."

"I don't know, but I don't think it can kill you. Just control your mind and weaken you. Tahu was poisoned too but he died because of the Rahkshi."

"He was able to snap out of the Ikuta's mind control really fast."

"Yes, he seems to have a great resistance against Rahkshi attacks. To one he has total immunity."

"Yeah, I know. Fear. When the Ikuta used it to keep us in place, and he walked them by, he didn't seem to feel anything."

"He was once attacked with Fear and it showed the same reaction as it did while used on any other one of us but then he suddenly cried out something like 'I can never let this happen' and it looked like the attack had no effect any more, no matter how hard the Rahkshi tried."

"Have you ever asked him what he saw? What his greatest fear was?"

"No, never."

"Maybe it was concerning you."

"Me? Why me?"

"Well, I just thought ... isn't that obvious?"

"Uhm ... no?"

"Sorry if I have to say that, but, girl, you must be blind. He was eager to be in a team with you. Didn't want anyone else to go with you."

"Well ... sometimes, or let's say most of the time he doesn't get along with the other guys very well so there's nothing to wonder if he chooses me as his team mate."

"He nearly ran Tupua over just to be the first to offer you something of his victuals. He hesitated to attack you really. It seemed that his only destination when he rescued us out of this fridge room were you and he just remembered me because I was close to you", she breathed in deeply, "And I just can feel it, the vibes he's sending out. It's like he isn't fighting for this island or the inhabitants anymore. Not even for his friends or himself. He's fighting for you."

Gali opened her mouth to say something against it but then remained silent and thought about Sasha's words. It was true, Kopaka really acted strange when he was close to her lately. Sure, he had always been a gentleman but he wasn't the kind of Toa who desperately needed someone around him and just talked if absolutely necessary.

"Do you think he'll really be alright?"

Sasha's words brought her back into reality.

"What?"

"I mean Kopaka. He lost much blood and the poison is still in his body. Not the best conditions for this ice hell."

"I'm sure. It's his element. I believe he doesn't even feel how cold it is. And Toa can heal fast."

She laid a hand on Kopaka's shoulder. It felt hotter than it should be. Or was it just because of her own cold hands. Had he fallen unconscious or was he just sleeping?

She shook her head. 'Stop thinking about that now. Try to talk about something

different.'

So she asked Sasha, "I think you're from Ga Aro. Do you know something what happened to your people?"

"Yeah, I do", her voice sounded bitter, "Our village was attacked just because they needed a new 'prison'. Something that was safer than Ta Aro and what could have been better than a swimming village? It was just impractical for my own people because they were the only ones who were able to swim. So they brought us into the black valley, where I was separated from them." She sighed. "I hope they're alright ... hope they're still alive..."

"Do you ... have family there?"

She felt that Sasha was shaking her head on her back.

"No, they're gone long ago. I can't even remember them."

For a short moment it was silent again until they heard a slight groan beside them.

Gali's head shot around. "Kopaka!"

The ivory Toa pressed his eyes tightly together just to snap them wide open the next second. He blinked a few times, let his gaze wander around.

"Where are we?", he whispered, "Have we made it?"

Slowly Gali nodded. "But just to these caves not out of here."

He tried to get up, but had his problems because he still couldn't fully use his arm.

"Well, I haven't awaited more than that." His voice got stronger now. "For I guess it was hard enough to get up here."

The girls helped him to sit up a bit.

"Thank you ... and sorry the same time..."

Gali gave him a surprised gaze. "What for?"

"The 'thank you' or the 'forgive me'?"

"Why do you feel sorry?"

"...I do not know. It is just a feeling ... If this staff had not hit me we would have never landed here. I should have calculated my way more precise..."

"Come on", Sasha answered, "We had no choice. And no one can calculate that fast. Let's just say it's the fault of us all because we've chosen this part of the tunnel at first place."

Kopaka remained silent and looked at the wall. No, it seemed like he was looking through it and maybe he really did that.

He looked back at the girls. "How long have you stayed awake? I would say it is better for you now to get some sleep. I hope the storm stops tomorrow. If it does we have to break up as soon as possible and it would not be good if we are too sleepy. Don't worry I'll try to keep the room at a moderate temperature."

"But ... what about you?" the sapphire Toa threw in.

"I had my sleep and it felt enough. All I still want to do is to let the rest of my wounds heal."

Gali felt that she was getting tired again and Sasha looked as if she was feeling the same way. 'Yes, maybe it is better to get some rest', the Toa thought.

She laid her head down on Kopaka's shoulder, the left one of course.

"I hope it is okay for you", she said.

"Yes, it is better to stay close to me for now for I cannot say how long it takes to bring this room to an acceptable temperature", she heard his voice while slowly drifting away. Was she already dreaming or did she really feel Kopaka's arm around her waist,

pulling her closer?

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The bright light awoke them. First they just tried to blink it away then they realized that this had to mean the storm was gone.

"Morning miladies..."

The Toa of water looked up. Kopaka gave her a slight smile. He looked way fitter now than just several hours ago.

"Enough rest for now? That is good." He carefully stood up and picked his shield off the ground. "I hope our way is not too long. But still I prepare for the worst... By the way ... maybe we first have a little breakfast. I still have some victuals with me."

~~~\*\*\*~~~

Wind was blowing into their faces but now they had a Toa of ice at his full strength. Kopaka had decided they had to go down because it was harder to get lost. And it was an easier way to travel because they didn't have to walk. They could use the shield as a kind of sledge.

"Wait a minute ... Kopaka can you stop?" Sasha shouted against the wind on their half way down.

"Why?"

"I thought I've seen something or someone. It looked like ... a Matoran."

Kopaka steered his shield sideways so that it was easier to brake.

A Matoran-like figure was standing some meters above them and watched. Now it came closer.

"In Mata Nui's name, is this ...? Tupua!"

Sasha jumped off the shield and tried running up to him but was stopped as she sunk in. They had to follow Kopaka to get anywhere. Tupua wasn't sinking in that deep. He may have found a way where the snow was harder.

"How have you found us?", Gali asked as Sasha hugged him stormily. The Spectre tried to keep balance but failed and fell into the snow.

"Intuition...", he brought out when he had finally managed to get up again and helped the other Matoran up too. "Well ... kinda not. I just followed the way you had taken through the tunnels and a few minutes after I stepped out you came right into my direction." Another time it seemed like he was just speaking with Gali. She could hear that he was talking to the others too but his eyes were only on her as if she gave him the security he needed to speak freely. It may seem strange for others but kinda not for her. 'Maybe I really knew him very good in the past', she thought. Then she noticed Kopaka who had stepped up beside her. Wasn't he looking a bit jealous? Gali sighed. Fortunately he wasn't Tahu ... Starting an open fight wasn't Kopaka's style so he decided for his classical icy glare.

Without even noticing Kopaka, Tupua continued, "We need to get back, but ... there's a little problem now. It seems like something is using a great energy amount of the

Emerald and I would need that too for teleporting us somewhere else. We might have to walk."

"A great amount?" Sasha asked. "The Ikuta?"

Tupua looked at her. "I don't think so. It feels like nothing dangerous... Maybe Rui or Lewa..."

"Sorry, but how will we get out of here?", Kopaka interrupted.

"Intuition ... no", with a little grin Tupua pointed at a flag behind him. And a few meters further there was the next one.

"I used an old Ko Matoran trick..."

## Kapitel 20: Chapter 20: Blood rain

### Chapter 20: Blood rain

Tahu was breathing heavily, his body was lying half in the water half on cold stone. He was slowly gaining back his strength to pull himself out fully. Where was Rui? He was leaning against a giant stalagmite close to him.

"You alright, fire-spitter?" His voice sounded rough.

The ruby Toa tried to answer but it ended in a cough. The salt was burning in his throat.

"Where ... is Lewa?", he finally managed to say.

Rui just shook his head. "I was only able to get to you but I didn't reach him anymore. I hoped he was still close to us..."

Tahu's head sunk back to the floor. Why? Why had he ordered to jump?

"He isn't dead", he heard Rui's voice again, sounding as if he was talking more to himself than to the red Toa on the ground. "He's the Toa of air. He can't drown that easily. Maybe he just couldn't hold on the rocks we were..."

Tahu got up. "Which means we have to follow that tunnel. Maybe the river crosses it again."

Rui silently nodded and stood up to follow him.

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"Can I ask you something?", Tahu broke the silence after what seemed like hours of waling. They just knew they didn't go in a circle because they met no more rivers.

"Don't ask for asking, just ask", was the answer that came back.

The fire Toa just had to smile about that sentence. Was Rui always like this? Easy going yet responsible. Somehow he reminded him a bit of Lewa right now.

"Was Lewa always like this?"

"Like what?"

"Well, I mean, childish the first moment and then only a second later more mature than Kopaka could ever be."

"Yeah, well, not exactly, no ... He was 'childish' as he still was a child and while growing up he got more mature of course but then there was the time he became Toa and started with that with his strongly staggering emotions. I think it as a kind of self protection. But I can't tell what the real Lewa would be now. The carefree or the serious one. I've sworn to protect him but I can't get through to what he's hiding deep in his soul..."

Tahu could remember. He once promised the same, but had failed in about everything.

And Lewa's personality had had a drastically change. He sometimes acted too serious, too bossy to be himself. The fire Toa desperately hoped that this wasn't Lewa's true nature.

He felt Rui's gaze on him.

"Don't reproach yourself."

"I don't."

"You look like you're doing."
"And what should I reproach myself?"
"Dunno, you just look like it."

Yeah, why should he? Maybe because he couldn't protect him from the Rahi, the Bohrok, Makuta, the Rahkshi, the Ikuta... Because of his failure the wounds of the younger one's soul grew bigger and made him act the way he did now...

"Don't you sometimes feel the same? That you should have done better?" he asked the mix.

"Are we still talking 'bout Lewa?"

"If you want so, yeah."

"Sometimes, but then again I think there's not much I could do about how the things happened."

Sure, Rui would have had to protect him against his destiny, Tahu just against creatures, what made his failure even worse.

The next few minutes they walked beside each other covered in silence, everyone wrapped up in his own thoughts but still hoping the same: Lewa had to be alive.

"Hey, look!" Rui disturbed the silence.

Tahu shook his head to snap out of his nearly vision-like thoughts and looked up.

Their tunnel ended in something what seemed to be a giant hall like the one Onu Koro was built in.

"I think this could be Onu Aro."

Were all cities in this world after the same scheme?

"I don't think we will meet any Matoran there", the ruby one said.

"No, don't either, they're the Ikuta's slaves now or they have fled to Le Aro. But we'll have to get through there nevertheless. There's no other way if we don't want to return to where we started and swim our way back."

~~~\*\*\*~~~

They'd awaited everything but not that... They were wading through pools of blood, passing ruins of a city once full of life...

Tahu knew during the time of the Bohrok attacks half of Lewa's village was exterminated. Another cruel thing his little one had to bear but the fiery Toa himself had never seen dead and destruction of this kind before. He felt awfully sick. Rui was walking beside him as if he was in trance.

Until now they hadn't found any dead bodies, neither Nektann nor Matoran but they also didn't want to know what happened to them.

"Who can do cruelty like this?" Tahu whispered.

"Can't you figure that out?" With disgust the mix looked at a deep bloody scratch on a ruin wall. "The sign a harpoon left. The sign of a Nektann."

Yeah, he had thought about this but still he couldn't believe a Nektann could be that deadly. Sure Tupua had warned them that they were dangerous, but on the other side, infected Rahi were dangerous too because they could infect you too, made you change to Makuta's side. Dangerous but not deadly.

Tahu's legs felt wobbly but he tried to walk straight. Never stumble. Never fall into crimson.

Rui laid a hand on the ruby Toa's shoulder but it was unsure who he wanted to calm down. Himself or the other Toa?

"We have to get through this now. Now way back ... Just a few more meters ..." His voice was barely a whisper.

They could already see the end of the hall. So close but still so far away.

'If we at least could fly over this', Tahu thought. Fly, like his green angel would do. What was he forced to see the time the Bohrok swarms were rampaging through his jungle? The fire Toa slowly shook his head. 'Don't think about that now. Better think about what's lying ahead...'

Blood ... That was all that was lying ahead. Ruins and blood. He forced his gaze to the tunnel. Just a few more former huts to pass, just a few more puddles to walk through.

~~~\*\*\*~~~

They were stumbling through the tunnel, just a few meters further then Rui broke down to his knees.

"I feel like I have to barf..."

"Won't stop you..."

Tahu heard the mix vomiting behind him and tried to calm his own stomach down. He stared at the stone wall. Not a single sign for the battle that had been in Onu Aro. A war that had taken place on a clearly defined location, not a single meter further. There was just a crack in the wall but it seemed to be naturally.

He knew nothing else to do so he looked through it. And couldn't believe his eyes. There was another corridor behind it which ended after a few meters at a giant door, over and over decorated with signs. Tahu could read them but he didn't understand the words they were telling because it was in a language he didn't know.

"What is it?" he heard Rui's now again a bit rough voice behind him. He looked through the crack too. "Mata Nui ... Tahu! That's it! We've nearly found the secret hideout."

"*Nearly?* We're standing in front of it."

"Yeah, but we need the last key to get through this door or at least break through the wall. We need Tupua."

"We just need Onua and he can drill through that."

"Don't think so. The Matoran here were miners and it would have been very unlikely that they had never dug through these walls and found this door. The Nektann normally crawl around in this cave too and it seems like they also haven't been able to get there although they could drill through stone like Onua."

"So then, let's get on. This tunnel is leading just one way, maybe the way out, and I hope we will find Tupua *and* Lewa outside." He turned around again. Not a very good feeling to know that they had to get back to this awful place soon.

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Their tunnel ended in stairs which lead up a few meters then they stood in front of a kind of curtain made of Harakeke.

Tahu didn't want to think about what danger could be lying there behind, just pushed it aside. He just wanted to get out of here.

"Mata Nui ..."

Rui stepped out close behind him. "Yes, that would be the right word..."

They were standing in an abandoned temple full of ivy and moss. Harakeke was growing where once a shrine was, Mata Nui's Kanohi hanging over them as if he was watching over the plants; a palm tree was growing into the temple as if it was looking curiously through the window.

But it was as dark as in the tunnel. It had gotten night again.

What the lightstones were in the caves, this were now the moon the stars.

Rui sat down and leaned against a bamboo. "We should stay here for now and wait for the daylight. I don't think we can find anyone right now."

Tahu wanted to protest but then he saw that it would be better and sat somewhere close to Rui where it seemed comfortable.

Had Lewa found a place to stay over night too?

He thought about Le Koro again. Visions of the swarms, a destructed village, half of the people dead, the other half under Bohrok control.

*The rain is soaking me to the bone  
It's washing my insides away  
I'm writhing around in a half-sleep  
Wrapped up in my sheets  
From the visions that are haunting my dreams*

Was Rui sleeping or was he staring into the night too?

*I can't breathe the sweet oxygen  
My lungs are full of blood  
Can't feel anything anymore  
My spine has been severed  
My soul has been shattered  
The slivers of pain will cut deep  
The pain will burn in my fresh wound*

Where was Lewa now? Had he really survived or was it just a wish to the stars? A last bit of hope for Tahu to hold on?

*I don't know how long it will be  
Until I feel warmth again in this icy heart  
The darkness is seducing me, inviting me to stay  
I can't see the bright sky  
My eyes are full of poison  
I can't expect you  
To always be there waiting in the shadows  
I couldn't ask you to deny yourself anything  
All I feel is the emptiness*

Onu Koro shot into his mind. He could see the marketplace, the traders, the people who came from everywhere on Mata Nui to buy and sell goods. A city full of life. They had lost everything during the Bohrok attacks too but they managed to build it up

again. And they had survived it. Every single one of them. And then he saw Onu Aro again. Was this place like Onu Koro some time ago? Pain. He felt it as if he had lost his own hometown. His own people.

*My will has been shattered  
The shards of glass cut deeply  
The blood runs from my fresh wound*

He wrapped his arms around his legs. Under the cover of darkness he couldn't hold back his tears any longer, didn't want to. For the first time of his life, or at least the life he could remember, he cried...

*Shattered ... blood in my lungs ...  
Shattered ... eyes are burning ...  
Shattered ... please heal me ...*

## Kapitel 21: Chapter 21: Even angels cry

### Chapter 21: Even angels cry

On the horizon some sunrays could be seen but it was still dark enough to call it night when Tahu startled out of his dreams. He really had fallen asleep but whatever haunted him in his dreams now made it impossible to sleep again so he just looked out of the window. Behind the palm tree he could see the stars. Six stars for their own constellation, the comet was still there, or was it a new one? He didn't know. Vakama once tried to teach him to read which date it was or how to find out where he was standing right now and find his way if he got lost by just looking up the night sky. Maybe Tahu was Vakama's worst student ever... But now he remembered a constellation that seemed to be important to him...

It was just several hours ago that Lewa had gotten one year older.

Eighteen years he had survived this hell now...

'Where are you? I wished I knew it, my green angel...'

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"You sure we should do that right now? He's a Piraka after all and who knows if we can trust him?"

Lewa turned around annoyed. "Pohatu! I know what he is and I also know that we can trust him. I would be dead if we couldn't. Or something worse..." He continued his way.

"Well, it's his decision", Onua shrugged, "And as he said there's nothing to lose. We will never know if it could have worked if we don't try."

The emerald Toa was thankful for this words. Only one of the reasons why he called Onua his friend. He never treated him like a little child and took it serious when he had to say something. He had to rescue Lewa twice, but the Toa of air never felt like a child in distress because the elder one always tried to appeal to Lewa's own strength, that the younger Toa could free himself with just a little bit of help.

'But this time Onua didn't just listen to a suggestion', Lewa thought by himself, 'he took my command...' He suddenly felt guilty. What came into his mind that he acted bossier than Tahu? That wasn't the way he wanted to be. But what was his personality really like? Not the crazy child no one took serious he was before but also not a tyrant. For sure he had grown up, had matured through the years but he still hated too much seriousness. But what was now his real self like? He was jumping around between treetop-high and downleaf. Maybe it was hidden somewhere in between.

"Do you know if this is the right way?", he heard Pohatu's voice. They still walked through the bamboo wood and now Lewa too believed they would never get anywhere today but on the other side the rush of the sea grew stronger. They had to be on the right way.

And then the wood got lighter, they could see the sea the village lying in peaceful silence, the moon glittering on the water. It could have been beautiful if they didn't know what was waiting behind the peaceful surrounding.

"How shall we find Zaktan here if we don't want to wake the whole village?" Onua

asked.

"I hope he's guarding the bridge or something else. After he's the only one who has found the temple I think he normally is out of the village a lot."

"There's someone waiting close the bridge", Pohatu threw in, "Guys, if this really is Zaktan I hope we'll survive the next few hours cause this would be too much luck for one day."

"It is Zaktan!"

The green Piraka jumped up. "Who's there? Toa! You're lucky that I warn before I attack. Get your ass away from here as long as you still can."

"Zaktan, please, we're no threat." Lewa tried to walk closer to him but was stopped by a loud hiss. "One step closer, Toa, and I can't guarantee for anything anymore."

"Please, try to remember, you saved me, you gave me the chance to escape. You're the first Piraka who managed to break out of the Ikuta's control and I believe you can do that again."

The Piraka stood and listened but it was unsure if he believed Lewa's words or not.

"We're just the same. We're like brothers. Because we have one destiny. Your words, right? Can you still remember them?"

"Little Toa ... why have you come back? I said you should never return."

"Because I can't stand it anymore that the Matoran are kept imprisoned and you Piraka too. I know you can walk around freely but is that really free as long as you're controlled? I thought our fight would be easier if we have more of your kind on our side. You have broken free of your control, why shouldn't the others to be able to do the same?"

Zaktan stepped a bit closer. "Come, I need to get to the temple first. It's safer to talk there and I can get my head a bit clearer."

Lewa gave Onua and Pohatu a triumphing smile. "You see, it works."

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Tahu shot out of his thoughts again. Was he just dreaming? No, he heard voices coming closer and they sounded really familiar. He crawled over to Rui and gently shook his shoulder. "Hey, Rui, wake up. There's someone coming."

"What..." The mix listened into the night. "Don't we know these voices?"

"Yeah, let's get out."

"Someone's getting out of the temple", Zaktan snarled.

"Don't we know those figures?" Onua asked.

They could hear one of them giving out a cry then saw him running up to them. And running directly into Lewa.

Then after the first shock moment... "Rui, you squeeze me. I can't breathe...", the air Toa laughed.

The other one was getting closer too.

'What's that Piraka doing here?', Tahu thought. But Zaktan didn't look much like danger. Had his little one really managed to get a Piraka on their side?

"Man ... where have you been, guys?", Pohatu asked in but didn't get back an answer right now. Now even Rui let go off his brother. His head wandered over to Tahu then to Lewa then back to Tahu again. They were both standing some steps away from each other but no one moved any closer.

The ruby Toa didn't know exactly what was holding him back. Maybe because Lewa

had changed rapidly again. His features where much harder than Tahu remembered. But then again... He looked into his eyes. Pools of lime green. And deep under a hard shell, a Toa so vulnerable...

*Captured*

*By a beautiful lime-kissed*

*Too deep...*

*To exist in our colour spectrum*

Tahu wanted to get up to him the last few steps but before he could even react, the younger one had rushed over, clung to him. For a few seconds they just stood silently, holding each other, just feeling warmth, safety. Then Tahu gently lifted up Lewa's chin, nearly sunk into pools of lime and their lips met into a passionate kiss.

*A sweet fruity taste*

*Lingering gently*

*On my nervous tongue*

*As my teeth hold*

*Your glistening lower lip*

*Not willing*

*To let it escape*

*Ever fearing*

*It will be the last time*

*And my fingers run*

*So afraid...*

*Afraid from the unknown*

*To the small of your back*

*Where they had always felt at home*

*Mapping out*

*The familiar landmarks*

*So long abandoned*

*Looking back*

*It doesn't really surprise me*

*I always could remember*

*Every smell, every taste*

*And exactly how it felt*

*To be in your arms*

*But maybe...*

*Just maybe...*

*Our souls so far apart*

*And longing*

*Too deeply*

*To bear it any longer*

*Ran away*

*Just to meet somewhere in between*

*And love*

*In the skies over Mata Nui*

When they finally broke apart gasping for air they noticed that the others were still standing around. Zaktan looked to the side a bit embarrassed, Rui down to the floor. Pohatu was staring at them and had Onua's hand under his chin. It looked like as if the ebony Toa had closed the auburn one's mouth right now.

"Guys, do you know how stupid you look?" Lewa chuckled. For Tahu it was a great feeling to see his angel laughing again.

"Bleurgh, this is disgusting...", a strange deep voice was heard from the wood. Zaktan's head shot to where it came from. "Holy shit! We're not in the temple! They still could feel you very strong!"

First they just saw several pairs of glowing eyes around them. Then slowly five Piraka stepped out.

"No Ikuta?" Lewa's head wandered over to Onua and Pohatu. "Have you hit him that hard?"

"You aren't that important, Toa, that we should come with higher stated company." The deep voice belonged to the red Piraka. "The brothers have business of their own. They just gave us the order to eliminate everyone who gets too close to our village." His eyes wandered over the Toa until they stopped on the green Piraka.

"Zaktan ... you treacherous son of a Maha ... you will pay for that."

Tahu draw his weapons. "We're five Toa and one Piraka against five Piraka. You still think you can get us that easily?"

"Hm", Hakann did as if he was thinking it over, "You're right. But don't worry. We won't hit you too hard so you will at least survive the beginning of our fight."

"Hold it, both!" Lewa got in front of Hakann. "Can't you see? The Ikuta are controlling you. I don't think this is all our free decision. You don't want to attack us, do you? But you can break out of this. Zaktan has already made it and you can succeed too. Listen to the voice deep in your heart. It's the real Hakann who's calling. Why would he have a reason to attack us?"

The first second it looked as if the air Toa succeeded a bit and Hakann really thought it over but then he took up his weapon again. "Because it's fun!" And with that he slammed his blaster right into Lewa's chest. The emerald Toa stumbled back but was caught by Onua.

"Enough!" Tahu charged at Hakann but the red Piraka dodged the attack and shouted over to his colleagues, "And you don't just stand around!"

Immediately the others joined the fight too.

Hakann's fire blaster had one main advantage. It could do damage to all Toa around no matter how far they were away. And Toa weapons had one main disadvantage. They were short ranged weapons. They still could use their elemental powers but not all the time because they would need a little bit to recharge, and they didn't have those split seconds.

The mix was the only one who needed to use fire and wind all the time because he had no weapons any more.

The Piraka mainly focused on Zaktan first and let Hakann do the job of Toa attacking. The green Piraka was trying to give his best but it wasn't enough. They overpowered him.

After his fall they were ready to fight the Toa.

Onua yelled as he was sent flying towards Pohatu and landed only a few steps away from him.

"Damn, I missed", Vezok chuckled.



"Onua!" The Toa of stone crawled to his fallen friend. "Onua, are you okay?"

"Y-yes ... I'm fine", the black Toa replied.

"You don't look fine." Pohatu gasped. "Onua what happened?" He looked at his blood stained hand then at Onua's torso which had a deep gash on the side.

"Don't worry ... I'm f-fine." He tried to get up again but was pushed back by the auburn Toa. "No, you're not. Better let me take care of that."

He slammed his claws into the earth, sent a rock blast against Vezok but only caused that the Piraka was pushed back a few steps.

Thok rushed forward, jumped up and landed right on top of Lewa, slamming him onto the ground. Tahu wanted to run over to him but was stopped by Hakann.

"Not so fast, sweetie, you're going nowhere."

"Out of my way, creature!" the ruby Toa shouted and attacked the red Piraka.

"Enough!" Hakann suddenly shouted. "We've lost too much time now!"

The Piraka combined their powers sending a giant energy blast against the Toa.

And then darkness again. The hated darkness.

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Lewa shot out of his unconsciousness as if his mind had fought against it the whole time and finally found a way to brake free.

Over him he saw the ceiling of a Ga Aronan hut.

'No, not again', he thought, 'Everywhere but not Ga Aro.'

"Finally woke up?" Hakann's deep voice sounded.

Lewa sat up a bit. "Why haven't you just killed me as you were ordered? And where are my friends?"

"You will see them soon ... very soon. Get up!" He dragged Lewa up to his feet and out of the hut. "But first tell me, how a young Toa like you can be that tainted to do something so disgusting?"

"What have I done?"

"You were kissed by a male. If there's something more deadly than betrayal then it's that."

"But ...", Lewa started, but didn't finish because Hakann pushed him away from him over to some Nektann.

"To the market place", he ordered. "Your lover will suffer until he wishes to be killed. Same counts for Zaktan."

"Why ... why Tahu? Why just Tahu?", Lewa shouted while trying to get free of the Nektann's claws. "I have kissed him back, right?"

"You're just a kid. You don't know it better. We just give you the pleasure to see your lover's agony before we kill you next."

The emerald Toa saw a crowd of Nektann and Piraka on the market. Saw Tahu raging. Avak and Reidak had their problems to hold him back. Rui was standing between Nektann, did nothing but looking on the ground as if he had already seen that it was hopeless. Zaktan hadn't fully recovered. He was just hanging in Thok's and Vezok's arms but still looked up as he noticed Lewa coming. Ruby eyes met lime-kissed and the Toa of air startled from what he saw in his gaze. It was as if he wanted to say to him 'No matter what they do to me, I would even die for you, little Toa'.

He couldn't see Pohatu or Onua. What had they done to them?

"Unfortunately we couldn't bring all of you here", Hakann started. "Our blast sent them flying deeper into the woods but we didn't find them anymore. They were gone without any trace. Hope they were also gone for good." He let out a loud laugh but stopped after short time and glowed over to Tahu. "Thok, can't you just stop that rampaging thing?"

Thok didn't say a word, just readied his weapons and went over to the fire Toa. Vezok was unwilling to hold Zaktan's weight alone and just let him fall down.

An icy blast hit Tahu's chest. He screamed out in pain and tried to get free from the Piraka.

"Defend yourself, Toa", Hakann chuckled, "or you'll be frozen in no time. And you Nektann keep the mutant quiet."

Life had finally come into Rui. He fought to get to Tahu but was run over by the spider-like creatures.

"But don't hit him too hard. He should bleed out on his own. Same counts for that betrayal whore."

Some more Nektann crawled over to Zaktan. He couldn't even defend himself.

Lewa watched in horror unable to do anything. He was hold in a too tight clasp. "No ... please stop that ...", he just whispered trying to choke back his tears.

"Let's see how much the fire-spitter can really resist..." Hakann took one of Lewa's air Katanas.

"NO!"

He slashed it through Tahu's armour. A cry of pain, the ruby Toa's legs gave in but he couldn't sink to the floor because Avak and Reidak were still holding him. A little trail of crimson dripped down from his belly.

And Lewa started glowing. His body was covered in emerald green light, which suddenly spread out over the village like a giant blast and covered the whole scenery.

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Tahu slowly opened his eyes. Over him the blue sky. The light was gone. It hadn't felt like an attack. The blast was just dazzling him. He had been torn down by the Piraka beside him. When he sat up and looked around he saw Rui opening his eyes right now, Zaktan who tried to get up but had his problems because he was still a bit weakened from the earlier fight. Onua and Pohatu came running over the place. Where had they been? And what took them so long? The other Piraka and Nektann were out cold. Whatever this light was, it just took out the enemies but didn't do any harm to others. Now his eyes nearly scanned the place. Where was Lewa? He found him lying a few meters away. The emerald Toa still hadn't moved a bit and kept his eyes closed. Tahu shot up and ran to his fallen love.

"Lewa! Oh please, be alive..."

He cuddled the younger one up in his arms. At least he was still breathing.

"He's just exhausted", he heard Rui's voice from behind. "Come, we carry him with us. First we need to get the Matoran and then let's get away from here. We'll get them as far away from the city as possible then the way will be safe enough for them to go the rest to Le Aro without us."

"No, first I have to finish something." Tahu took his sword. "Our enemies are weak now. There can't be a better time."

"No", Pohatu held him back, "You can't kill them."

"Why not? Look at me, look at us all ... look at Lewa" Ruby orbs contracted. "They have to pay for what they've done."

Onua laid a hand on the fire Toa's shoulder. "It weren't them. It were the Ikuta. You know, Lewa was controlled by Makuta twice and he attacked me. I never could have attacked him back because I knew he wasn't himself."

Tahu crumbled unwillingly but still took his weapons down.

He knelt down again, took the unconscious Lewa in his arms.

"Please wake up my little angel..." he whispered.

Lewa could hear them; hear everything they were talking around him in some way. But he wasn't quite there yet, floating somewhere in between like he was wrapped in a half-sleep. Half in reality, half somewhere else. In his head the past few minutes, hours were spinning around. He felt awful, everything just felt awful, but he didn't show any sign on the outside, maybe because he couldn't, maybe he didn't want to anymore, he didn't really know. Outside was seen a calmly sleeping Lewa carried in Tahu's arms out of the village. But deep down inside of his mind he could see himself lying on cold floor, darkness around him, coiled up like a foetus, crying.

## Kapitel 22: Chapter 22: Chaos to the power of four

### Chapter 22: Chaos to the power of four

They had taken the same way as before but as they stood at a very well known crossroad they had a little problem.

"We have to take the tunnel to Ta Aro. There's no other way", Tupua explained.

"Why can't we go back where we all splitted up", Kopaka asked. "We still have the possibilities of Ga and Onu Aro."

"Why? Well, because there's a high risk the Nektann who followed us are still there. In Ta Aro there are too some of them but at least I know some secure ways out."

"I thought there was only one way into and out of Ta Aro", Gali mentioned, "How comes it that there's now a tunnel too?"

Tupua looked up and down the corridor as if he was searching for Nektann.

"Well, I can't know the whole city. Maybe this tunnel is new too but as long as lava is streaming somewhere at the side we have to be directly under Ta Aro because the lava just comes so close to the surface if we're really somewhere near the city."

"Then let's just say you have no clue at all", Kopaka shrugged, "and only keep following this way..."

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Black rocks were rising up to the sky. Thick smoke was lying over the citadel, hiding away the sun. If they didn't know it better the four travellers would have thought it was the deepest night.

They had to take a different way than the last time but also now only a few Nektann were seen crawling around.

"What is happening here?" Gali whispered. "Why is there never anyone? The Ikuta are away and where the Piraka are I don't know. Who watches over the Matoran prisoners?"

"I don't have a clue", was Tupua's answer. "But I hope it stays like this."

"Where are we going?" Sasha asked, "I don't think there's a way out somewhere close."

The Spectre took a short gaze over to Kopaka. "The ice Toa and I, we decided if we're already here we can take a quick look around where the prisoners are. He didn't want to get out of here safe while some of the inhabitants are still in danger. And neither do I.

Gali's head shot over to the ivory Toa "But that's..."

"I know this is dangerous. But so is our complete mission. All I want is to help those people. Better now than later. Or never."

"Kopaka, you don't have to ..." Prove yourself, she wanted to say but she couldn't. It felt like she would directly say him what Sasha told her several hours ago. She wasn't quite sure if her icy friend really wanted to do it for the people.

"I don't? Gali, those are your people. Mine may have gone long time ago but I don't want this to happen to others too. We don't know how long our journey will still last. Maybe years. And then it could be too late for them."

"Have you forgotten we don't have weapons? It's too hot here for ice attacks."

"Look around. The Nektann are gone. And in case I meet a few of them I still have my shield to block their attacks."

It was strange to hear something like that from a Toa who normally never lets his guard down.

Tupua reached over his bow. "Take this."

"I would gladly take it but I don't want you to be unarmed."

"Don't worry. On longer journeys I always take two of them with me in case one breaks in the middle of a fight."

"I do not have arrows."

"It's elementary based. Means, when you use the bow you will get icy arrows. Doesn't matter if it's too hot for your element to use. But remember to shoot them fast or they will melt away too."

"I will try to keep that in mind." He turned to Gali a last time. "Stay here and watch my back." Then he left off.

The three were wandering around on the place where Kopaka left them, trying to never get too far away from each other.

"What are you so worried about?" Tupua asked, "I told him his way as good as I could."

"I just have this bad feeling ... The Nektann have to be anywhere. We haven't met one in this direction and so I'm worried they're in the other direction where Kopaka headed to..."

The Spectre suddenly held something under her nose. "My second bow. Same advice to you."

"But..." Gali looked at him as if he had declared to be the founder of Metru Nui."

"Just take it and go." A little smile. "I don't need it that desperately. It's just good for a more precisely shot, but I think I will be able to hit attackers anyway."

Gali thanked him and promised to be back as soon as possible then she ran after her icy friend. She still felt a bit guilty for leaving two Matoran behind but then on the other side she knew Tupua and his strength enough to say he could protect himself and Sasha for a little while.

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The silence was nearly hammering in his ears. The white Toa sneaked his way forward, his shield in the left hand, the bow in the right, his head turning around repeatedly. It just couldn't be that they had no guards at all for their prisoners.

He couldn't go on thinking because suddenly something big was thrown right onto his chest making him stumbling back and crashing against black rocks. Or at least he felt something big. He couldn't see anything. But it still was there, hanging on his chest, now trying to slash through his armour. Kopaka just slammed his shield against it, causing it crashing against the floor and a red Nektann became visible.

'That's why we have never seen one', it shot through the Toa's head. They had been watched and followed all the time. Maybe the Nektann just waited for the moment that one separated from the group. But what was this one waiting for? It was still sitting on the floor and glowed up at Kopaka.

Then he heard it. It sounded as if at least a dozen of them came crawling over the rocks. Although he still couldn't see them he heard them close, very close.

When he used his masked he only saw mere shadows of them but that was enough for him to defend.

Waiting time was over. The Nektann that attacked him before jumped at him again and this time it wanted more than just bring him to fall.

Kopaka threw himself out of the way and took a shot with his bow but missed it closely.

A second later the hand which held his shield shot up to block a flying harpoon only to give another harpoon the chance to hit him from the other side and move its way directly through his shoulder armour.

He was slammed down to the ground and dragged a few meters over the floor. There was no chance to get free with a shot. Suddenly he felt a short and really sharp pain. The harpoon was torn out of his shoulder and the Nektann was sliding back a few meters, where it first remained for a few seconds then started running around in circles. A blue figure came flying from the rocks and landed beside Kopaka.

"You're okay?"

"Gali, watch out!"

An ice blast shot past her and hit the Defense Nektann that was jumping at her.

"We've got to get rid of them fast before they get more help", Gali called.

"Or if they can run to get more help", Kopaka answered as he saw two of them (where one was the Nektann that caught him on its harpoon earlier) trying to get out of the battle as fast as possible.

"Shall we use our old tactic?" She hit them both with a water beam and they were frozen immediately after. "Already in use."

"They're dangerous but stupid as Harakeke", the water Toa said when the next Nektann ran away from the group.

"It's now only a matter of time until the next rush will come or these will start to melt." Around them couples of frozen Nektann were lying.

Kopaka checked his shield for major damage then put it on his back again. "Thank you for helping me but you have to get back now. It's too dangerous. Maybe Tupua and Sasha need you more than me right now."

"I don't think so. Tupua's strong enough but you've seen what happened here. I think they will rather follow us than our friends because we're closer to their prisoners."

"Tupua is the last Guardian."

"It doesn't seem to me that they are searching for him. Otherwise we would have been attacked earlier. No, they just watched us to see what we will do. And as we got closer to their prisons they saw the right time coming."

"No matter what, you have to get back."

"Why?"

"Do you believe I want to put you in danger if more of them are coming?"

"I'm a Toa too, if you have forgotten."

"You are not invulnerable and not invincible."

"Neither are you."

"That is something different."

"Oh, really? Do you really think I want to lose you?"

"No that is not ... I mean ... it is because ..." He turned his head to the side finding the rocks more comfortable to stare at.

Gali sighed. Why had he always to be so complicated? Then she noticed something different.

"No ... Kopaka, you're bleeding. Your wound is open again."

His armour had blocked most of the attacks but it couldn't protect his old wounds.

He winced when Gali reached out a hand and stroke over it but then his harsh features got more relaxed again.

"It is ... just nothing", he mumbled, his head still turned sideways. "I'm sure it will heal fast I cannot let the Matoran down because of this."

Gali slightly nodded. "But I will come with you, no matter what you say. Either we're successful or we'll die but we do it together."

Kopaka's head turned into her direction again. Wasn't there a little smile on his face?

"Alright, then here we go."

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Step by step they sneaked forward the last few meters. Kopaka tried repeatedly to use his Kanohi to see invisible enemies although he knew that it was useless. He couldn't have seen them before why should it now be different.

"I hate the fact that we are running around here without our weapons or elementals."

"Wait a minute ..." Gali stopped, "We can still use our old mask powers."

"Do we?" The icy Toa looked at her a bit surprised. "I thought I already have it in use nearly all the time."

"But only your main Kanohi power. Don't say that our first missions we had down on Mata Nui were good for nothing. Even if we're Toa Nuva we still should have the powers of all Kanohi we've found combined in our main mask."

"Wait, let me check..."

He ran a few steps forward, changed masks ... and disappeared.

"Kopaka?"

"Don't worry", she heard his voice beside her. "I'm still here." He got visible again.

"Will it work for me too?"

"If you have found the right mask then."

"Yeah, I know, a stupid question. I wouldn't have gotten the golden Kanohi otherwise."

She made a quick try and changed Kanohi too. "I wonder why we've forgotten that so long ago."

"It is still working for people around you too", Kopaka's voice came out of nothing. "I have my old Akaku and should be visible again."

"That means ... Maybe we can lead out the Matoran unseen."

The Toa of ice nodded then remembered that Gali couldn't see him so he just said, "Then let's get moving."

"Do you know where this way will lead us?"

"The other side of the power plant, where we rescued Sasha and Rui from. Tupua mentioned that there were stairs to the roof on the outside but for us all the teleporter was the only possibility because they would have seen us."

"And you wanted to use this way now without knowing about your ability to get invisible?"

"Why not?"

Gali sighed. "You're impossible..."

"I am unique."

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A loud crack and the sound of slivering metal. The next door was broken open. Every

time Gali sent a pray to Mata Nui that the Nektann wouldn't find out where it came from too fast while Kopaka set his bow on lock after lock and froze it. They now were two floors over the one where the Ikuta kept Sasha when the Toa rescued her.

"Where can they be?" Kopaka whispered. "Why can't we hear them?"

"Maybe because they aren't allowed to make any noises. Maybe they found out how we noticed Rui."

Crack! Gali winced. Another door and no one behind.

"Can't you look through the floor?"

"I would have to change Kanohi."

"Do it and I can make us both invisible."

"Yes, I can see them, but we would have never thought of that place."

"Why?"

"They are in the hall where Sasha was..."

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About thirty to forty Matoran were crowded in the hall, trying to stay as close to each other as possible, no one daring to speak a word although they hadn't seen each other for months now. Before they had been imprisoned in very small cells, alone or just with one or two others.

A cracking noise let them startle. The door was moving open but they couldn't see anyone.

A blue Toa became visible in the room the next second a few steps away from the door.

"Come over here", she called, "We're here to get you out."

Now a white Toa appeared too. "Quickly. It is hard to get such a big group out of a building unnoticed if Nektann start crawling around."

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Maybe it was the longest Matoran chain the world had ever seen but a record was the last thing they would have wanted now.

As long as they stood in touch with each other they remained invisible although it was hard to get up and down stairs and through small corridors. Kopaka had taken the lead, scanned the area permanently and brought the whole group to a stop when a Nektann got too close. He held Gali's hand who had switched on the Kanohi of invisibility.

Finally they got to the roof and the last major barrier of the building, the stairs outside at the wall, when they saw ... green. Over the rocks there was a green light as if the rising sun had decided to turn emerald and rise in the north instead of the east.

"Mata Nui ..." Kopaka whispered, "Looks like bigger problems now..."

He sped up a bit but still sure not to lose one of the group.

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On the place where they had split up there was a Nektann army now trying to get to Tupua and Sasha but were always blasted away when they got closer. For now. Tupua had already stopped attacks and only shielded him and Sasha, who clung to him, when

necessary. He had fought like a berserk but now his power started fading.

"Any of you who knows the way out of Ta Aro and to Le Aro?" Kopaka shouted and got several positive answers.

"What are you planning?" Gali asked.

"The same as before. No plan, only chaos, but that is our only possibility."

He turned to the Matoran or at least at where he believed they were. "When you get visible run, but stay together and follow the ones who know the way."

"Kopaka, this is madness!"

"They are only focused on the Guardian right now and as you have seen during the attack we had before they had always tried to run for help before attacking at full force."

"So you believe..."

"That they will try to keep the Matoran back but only start with weak attacks and wait for the others to come. They will be completely confused because of this mass of Matoran, two Toa and two Guardians at the same time and not know where to start first. Thus we will have a little time."

He loosened his grip on Gali's hand. "Ready?"

She looked at where she believed Kopaka's eyes were. "Ready."

"Don't wait for us. We won't follow you to the village. Just RUN!"

A few creatures noticed the cry and got away from their fight to stop the Matoran but were held back by Toa attacks. More and more noticed what was going on around them and stopped their fight for a short time giving the Spectre the chance to teleport himself and Sasha out of the enemy's centre and over to the Toa.

"And what ... shall we ... do now?" he panted.

"Follow the Matoran." Kopaka quickly took out a Nektann jumping at them. "And then take a different way."

"But ... they will follow us." Sasha's voice sounded higher than ever before. The ivory Toa remained calm as ever. "Exactly what I want."

Now something shot into Gali's mind. "Outside when it's colder we can use our element at full power again." She shot a spider creature which was frozen by Kopaka afterwards.

"Indeed."

The Nektann got closer. More of them had finally given it up to follow the Ga-Matoran and focused on the Guardian again.

"I think now is the right time. Come." He grabbed Gali's hand and dragged her with him. Tupua and Sasha who still hung on his neck followed close behind. But same did the Nektann too.

They had no other option than running until they reached the end of the Black Valley. The spiders already came crawling over the rocks when the little group finally squeezed out through the gap.

Kopaka froze the bottom part so that the Nektann on it glided down and hit the ground hard. Part of them didn't get any further now because they didn't trust the icy path. The way they could fall down was too high for them. The rest was still on the hunt but taken out very soon by strong water and ice attacks.

Gali sighed. "Finally ... I thought we would be running forever. It seems that we are fleeing from everything since we arrived on this island."

"Because it's necessary", Tupua claimed, "The enemies may be weak sometimes but

they come in mass. Staying out of their way as good as possible is the best we can do until we reach our real goal."

"I'm just not used to it since we were fighters our whole lives ... or at least the part we remember. ... And where shall we go now?"

The Spectre looked around. "First we should get where I suppose the rest of our team is."

Kapitel 23: Chapter 23: Reunion

Chapter 23: Reunion

They would have had the possibility to get through the temple and then directly to the hidden passageway but now the Piraka knew about it, it wasn't the best idea any more and so they just followed Onua and Pohatu who went the way they wanted to go first with Tupua if they hadn't met with Reikuta and Lewa in between.

"Guys, you still haven't told how you survived the Piraka attack and why they haven't found you afterwards", Tahu said. He was still carrying Lewa but Rui alternated with him from time to time. The Toa of air was a light weight but over the time he got heavier too. Onua had offered to take him but Tahu didn't want him to. The ebony Toa might have been stronger but was still wounded.

"I might be wounded but that doesn't mean I'm helpless."

Could Onua read Tahu's mind or was he just answering his previous question?

"Pohatu was standing right in front of me, so he took most of the blast", the ebony Toa continued.

"Not that big problem", Pohatu added, "I still was at full health."

"He was knocked against me and we were sent flying deeper into the woods. And as I couldn't think of any other way to escape I just dug into the ground. Maybe the Piraka saw the hole, maybe not. I don't know. But I don't think so. It was too dark and Pohatu tried his best to close it behind him."

They now walked up a little hill. The landscape got hillier the closer they go to the entrance to Onu Aro.

Onua groaned. "Climbing was easier without that wound."

"Shall we rest a little bit?" Rui asked. "There are some other of us who would need the same too." He had come over to Tahu and slightly patted Lewa's cheek to see if he would react but had no success.

"Behind that hill I can remember some fields", Pohatu answered, "The plants are high enough to hide between. They will give us shelter for a short time."

On Mata Nui great Harakeke fields near Ga Koro were usual so Tahu had awaited the same but the sight he had when they reached the top of the hill nearly took his breath away. It was like he was looking down at a sea of gold. The grey sky with just a few sunrays falling down and the rocks of the black valley with a slightly green glow above it made a great contrast to the golden fields.

He didn't know plants like that. Harakeke was blooming red and not golden.

For a few seconds he nearly forgot the world around, just stared at the picture in front of him, wondering how a now cold and cruel world could still be so beautiful from time to time.

Then he noticed that the others were standing a few meters away from him waiting for him to follow. He heard Rui shouting his name, asking what took him that long. He already knew these fields because he used to live near them for years. Same counted for Zaktan, except that he didn't know it that long because he hadn't been on this

island for years. Onua and Pohatu had wandered through them before. They still admired the beauty but weren't as overwhelmed as Tahu. The fiery Toa slowly shook his head to get out of his thoughts again, then continued on walking, followed the others right into the fields of gold.

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"It's only for a short time", Pohatu sighed when he sat down, "maybe two or three hours. More time we won't have."

They rested somewhere in the middle of the field between the higher plants. If they sat down no one outside could see them.

"He is still sleeping", Rui noticed as he looked after Lewa who was lying on a kind of bed made of the golden plants, his head placed on Tahu's lap.

"Will he be alright?", Tahu worried, "I've never seen an attack like this on him before. What could this be."

"For Guardians it's usual. At least for the ones who are Toa too ... With exception of Tupua. From time to time I can attack like that too when I feel very, very angry, frightened, desperate, whatever, let's say when I have very strong feelings. But I never had an energy outburst like that. No wonder if he's exhausted."

Pohatu helped Onua clean his wounds a bit, Zaktan tried to make a bandage out of the plants. All Tahu and Rui had to do was sitting and watching Lewa's breath.

"You know we haven't seen anyone of the brothers for a longer time now."

The ruby Toa looked around as if he was awaiting to see one of the Ikuta walking through this field.

"That's strange indeed..." Onua now looked a bit worried too. "We haven't hit Reikuta that hard. Just to keep him away from Lewa... What are they planning?"

Zaktan swayed his head. "Hard to say if they're planning anything ... Even we Piraka didn't see them often ever before."

"But before it looked more like they were nearly hunting us."

"Not just you." The Piraka looked over to the sleeping emerald Toa. "They were more after the last Guardians. And now I think they will be wherever Tupua is."

"I hope he's still alright", Tahu sighed and therefore earned an unbelieving gaze from Rui.

"I thought you don't like him."

"Well, it's just because he's the last key to ... But ... Who do I want to fool actually... I don't want him to have the same fate his other Guardian colleagues had. The ones we never even had the chance to try to save them. He may be strange but now after all I think I overreacted a bit at first."

Lewa gave out a groan and pressed himself closer to Tahu but still didn't wake up.

"We should get moving as soon as possible", Onua finally spoke up.

"You're still wounded", Pohatu complained.

"I'm too", Zaktan helped the ebony Toa. "But do you really think the enemy will care?"

"How far away are those caves by the way?" Tahu asked.

"Just about half an hour ... behind those fields ... you can already see them if you stand up." Onua waved his hand into the direction he meant.

Rui looked over to his sleeping brother. "We don't know when he will wake up ... can be in a few hours ... can last for days ... let's get moving now and wait for him to wake up during our journey."

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Lightstones gave their cold light, let shadows dance over the rocks.

"We're near Onu Aro", Tahu whispered. "Onua, is it possible for you to dig around the city?"

"Yeah, can be made. But why?"

"I don't want you to see this", he looked down to the sleeping emerald Toa in his arms, "I don't want him to see this."

"Which direction do I have to dig?"

The ruby Toa risked a short gaze at the end of the tunnel. "Right. We better take these lightstones with us." He nodded up to the yellow shimmering stone, Onua didn't need any light. He could see in darkness as others could in daylight. A bit disturbing during nights when he wanted to sleep.

Lewa gave another slight groan.

"Is he awakening?" Rui held his lightstone closer to him. The air Toa tried to blink away the sudden brightness. "Lewa ... Lewa, can you hear me?"

Something that sounded like "Aho" came back.

The mix looked up to Tahu. "I don't know what he wanted to say but I guess it should have been an answer."

Lime-kissed eyes slowly flickered open.

"Do you feel better again", Tahu asked with a slight smile.

"Ari au..."

The ruby one looked at him surprised. "But... why? Why do you feel sorry?"

"Not able to fight any more ... again ... blacked out just because of a bit of energy ..."

"Don't think something like that. You've saved us all. And no one could have stand that mass of energy."

It didn't work. Lewa turned his head to the side, lime-kissed orbs started flickering.

"Hey, we're all going through the same, lil bro", Rui whispered and gently stroke over his cheek. "It isn't weak to fall, it's weak to give up at all. And you haven't given up when you decided to free the Matoran, you haven't given up when you convinced Zaktan to go with us, you haven't given up when you attacked our enemies and saved us all from death."

"And believe me", Onua's voice sounded from ahead, "we're all feeling as awful as you do but not all of us can show it."

A little smile went over the airy Toa's face. "We'll find this Emerald and then defend it directly ... and defeat the Ikuta. Heart-promise."

"Guys, we've made it through", the ebony Toa shouted back, "there's a tunnel behind." He dug a bit further and looked through the hole to see if there was any danger around. "And there is a door..."

"What?" Rui shouted. He rushed over to Onua and looked outside too. "Mata Nui, we're standing nearly in front of it. How's this possible." He shook his head. "They would have never been able to catch him..."

Lewa lifted up his head a bit. "We're there?"

Onua kicked away the last bit of earth. "Looks like it."

They were now in the hall Tahu and Rui saw earlier behind the cracked wall.

And again they could do nothing more than sit and wait. Lewa had now finally gotten

up and kept on walking between the door and where the others were sitting.

"Why have protection thingies fallen? Where's Tupua? Can't hardthink ... head's grounded ...", he bubbled again and again.

The others shared unsure gazes but didn't stop him. Maybe it was better for him when he could let everything out.

"Why aren't you open?! I want to defend you!" the emerald one suddenly shouted and gave the door a kick. The short pain in his foot got him back to his senses. He let himself fall down beside Tahu and leaned his head against the fire Toa's shoulder.

"I'm so tired of this..."

Ruby fingers gently stroke over emerald cheeks. "Me too... I only once thought I was a warlord and can't live without fights ... but this is already too much ..."

"Guys ...", Rui laid his hand on Tahu's other shoulder. "This door ... it started glowing ..."

The gap in the middle of the door shone emerald green and it became brighter and brigher as if it was trying to burst out.

"What is this?" The mix slowly got up. "It ... it feels strange ... so much energy ... and still..."

Lewa closed his eyes and turned his face up to the ceiling. "If you feel the same then it feels like we're dying and there's still a last defiant struggle of our survival instincts."

"Does that mean ...?" Pohatu sounded unsure.

"No", Rui slowly shook his head, "I don't think we will die ... or at least we won't die for now. It's just a funny feeling. As if we're getting and loosing masses of energy the same time."

"And there's another mighty source coming closer", Lewa said.

As if it had just waited for this sentence purple smoke shot out of the floor.

"Tupua, I said you shouldn't do that. Transporting so many people. I tell you, one day it might kill you", Sasha's voice was heard.

The Spectre had sunken to his knees but immediately tried to get back up again even if he was still standing a bit wobbly.

"Had to be", he panted, "I had to get rid of too much energy. That would have killed me earlier."

"So strong?", the blue Matoran asked. "I mean, I feel strange too, but not like I need to loose or gain energy."

"Gali! Kopaka! Finally you made it!"

The emerald Toa shot forward and now the others were able to get closer too.

"Hell, that took you a long time", Pohatu laughed, "We thought you will never come again."

"It was just a bit of a fight but as you can see we made it through it alive", Kopaka answered.

"Except your shoulder."

"Nothing to speak of. As long as it heals."

Meanwhile Tupua had stepped closer to the door. How it might open he had no idea but maybe his energy could do the rest. He placed his hand on it. The green light grew stronger. For a short moment everything disappeared into light. As it got darker again the door was gone. Instead they looked into a long hallway. Signs were carved into the walls.

"Alright now", he turned to the others, "This might be where our journey ends."

Kapitel 24: Chapter 24: Ikuta Kaita

Chapter 24: Ikuta Kaita

Gali looked up one of the walls. "I wonder what this is supposed to mean. I can read it, but this is the old language of Metru Nui. Tupua, do you think, you can translate it for us?"

Ruby eyes wandered over the signs and slowly he began to translate.

"Caught in a body that's not my own ... need to combine with the one who's predestined from his birth ... when it's time he will know by heart who he really is ... survival is only possible with my own body ... otherwise everyone who's protecting me is doomed ..." He looked back to Gali. "Now it's repeating the same over and over the whole wall."

"What is this supposed to mean?"

"I don't know. A body that's not my own ... What body? And what's the real body meant to be?"

Tahu walked past them deeper down the hallway. "I hope we will know soon. The answer's lying somewhere inside of here."

After a few minutes of walking Pohatu turned to Tupua. "I don't believe it anymore myself that it was such a good idea to brake those last walls and defend it from inside instead of keep following the Ikuta. I mean, they couldn't get into here."

"You've seen it often enough. As long as they keep using Rahkshi attacks they're much stronger than you all could ever be."

"And same counts for now."

"I don't know. I just had this strange feeling too that we have to get in here. As if the final solution was waiting deep down in this cave. I always trusted my feelings, my instincts. Why should they betray me now?"

Suddenly the earth was shaking, first only slightly, and then it grew stronger. It wasn't a continuous earthquake, it came in intervals.

"What is this?" Gali shouted.

"I don't know", was Tupua's answer, "But I have this feeling we should reach the Emerald faster than ever before."

"Mata Nui ... look!" Sasha cried out. "What is this?!"

All heads spinned around.

Something giant was walking over shattered stones into the direction of the entrance to the chamber. It looked like a Rahkshi but it was walking too upright. Its body was black with a few red stripes on back and arms. The eyes were of glowing ruby.

"Ikuta Kaita", Gali whispered.

"But why is it more black than red?"

Tahu and Rui shared a gaze, their eyes widened in horror. They now had a clue what could have happened to the dead Onu Matoran bodies. It felt like this imagination would make their stomachs turn.

"Now we have even less chances", Pohatu said in a calm and objective tone.

The Ikuta now noticed the group.

"Toa ... Guardians ...", he hissed. His voice was sounding as if both brothers were speaking the same time. "Thanks to you. With your little help we are now able to destroy you and this damned island a lot faster." He slammed his claws through the walls causing several rocks from walls and ceiling crashing down right onto the Toa and the Guardians. Quickly Tahu activated his shield around them.

"Hey, this is unfair Die at least with honour if you already have to", the creature chuckled and now came closer with fast steps. Running was impossible in there for someone with his size."

"I ... I don't want to sound like a coward or something", the fiery Toa stuttered, "but this looks like we should get away from here fast."

They started running. Behind them a wall of fire was bursting loose followed by another earthquake. Even more boulders came crashing down. Tupua and Tahu shared their tasks in shielding the others from falling rocks. Against the raging fire they could do nothing. Without the shield only Tahu might have survived the burning wall and behind it the Ikuta Kaita was waiting.

"Down there!" Rui shouted.

They nearly stumbled down the stairs. The fire burst over their heads. The farther they ran down the darker it got. Behind them they could still hear the raging Ikuta but he couldn't follow them down.

"Is this still the right direction?" Gali panted.

They all had seen that the hallway still had been leading on straight.

"Sure", Rui nodded "Why would there else have been a little stairway down right in the middle of a big corridor?"

"Maybe to confuse people?" Lewa threw in, "Maybe there would have been another stairway up after a few more meters. Or a room to the left."

"Let's hope, Lewa's wrong and this is not a trap", Tahu said.

Pohatu sighed. "Still wondering how we can fight this ... thing ... I mean, two Ikuta, alone, without Piraka, no problem, even though they use Rahkshi attacks. But the Ikuta Kaita? No way. Not as long as we can't form a Kaita Nuva."

"I'm asking myself the same", Tupua said saddened, "I had never awaited that this would have been possible. I thought, that just ..."

A loud crash made them wince. It sounded as if the Ikuta was digging his way down.

"Oh no ... not again..."

A claw came crashing through the ceiling.

"Run!" Tahu shouted, grabbed Lewa's hand and dragged him away.

The emerald Toa still had been standing, unable to move, wide opened eyes stuck on the giant claw.

For a few seconds they stumbled through the darkness then it slowly got lighter again. It was a soft green light. Was it just imagination or was it really getting a bit warmer? Crumbling rocks were heard behind them.

They now entered a glowing green room. Protodermis pools formed the sign of Mata Nui and in the middle just a few steps over the floor there was floating ...

"Is this a Kanohi?" Sasha whispered.

It was an emerald green shining Hau Mata.

They slowly got closer. Could it be that this was the mysterious Master of all Emeralds?

Tahu suddenly noticed that something strange was going on with Lewa. He had

started stumbling around like a drunk.

"Lewa, what is it?"

"I-I don't know ... I feel kinda weird ..."

His legs finally gave up carrying him.

Same happened to Rui, Sasha and Tupua. They all broke down to the floor.

"What ... is happening here?" the ruby Toa worriedly asked while he was kneeling down next to Lewa.

"The last protection ... is gone ...", Tupua pressed out while he tried to get back to his feet. "The Emerald ... it tries to keep alive Mata Nui ... and therefore it uses every energy resource it can get ... which means ... we Guardians are a resource too ..."

"And what exactly is this supposed to mean?" Gali asked unsure if she really wanted to know it.

"That if this isn't stopped soon, first we Guardians and then Mata Nui will die ..."

Kapitel 25: Chapter 25: When heroes fall

Chapter 25: When heroes fall

For a moment the time stopped only to start rushing even faster after.

"What? You will ..." Tahu's voice faded.

Tupua was standing again but it still looked a bit wobbly. "Yeah, it drains our last bit of energy..."

Kopaka had run over to the entry and now rushed back again. "It's coming closer. The small corridor can slow it down but not much. It seems like it can dig like Onua."

"Then this will be grave of us all", Rui said. He tried to sound calm and quirt but his voice was trembling.

Lewa clung around Tahu's neck. He just felt sick and sad but he didn't even have tears left anymore.

The sound of crashing rocks was coming closer but a rampaging Ikuta wasn't the worst thing right now. It was this complete helplessness.

The Spectre looked up to the glowing Kanohi; the mask looked back without eyes.

And then suddenly something shot into his mind. Something he couldn't explain. As if Mata Nui himself was trying to give a last hint. And he understood. He felt his last remaining energy rushing through his body when he suddenly jumped forward and grabbed the floating Kanohi.

A body that's not my own...

Survival is only possible with my own body...

"Tupua! Where are you going?" he heard Gali's call behind him but he first stopped and turned around when he reached the edge of one of the Protodermis pools.

"I have no other choice." He felt like somebody sent these words into his mind right now. "I'm sorry, but I have to fulfil my destiny."

With those words he let fall himself back before he could decide else. A point of no return.

He heard the other's voices and looked right into Gali's eyes a last time but had no chance for a last goodbye. Liquid Protodermis descended over his head.

When he opened his eyes he had awaited darkness but there was silver light around him as if he had fallen into glowing mercury. He couldn't breath but he didn't need to. Something prevented him from drowning.

A soft voice was whispering in his mind. It slowly got stronger.

"Put this Kanohi on. Don't be afraid. I will be with you. Trust me."

'Mata Nui?' he wanted to ask but when he opened his lips Protodermis filled his mouth.

"If you want to know, yes I am the Great Spirit", the soft vice answered, "You don't have much time. During your transformation our souls will touch for a very short time and I will try to make you understand But for now ... just trust me."

Transformation.?

Tupua shrugged. What other choice did he have while he was still floating somewhere

beneath Protodermis unable to swim up or down? He took a short look at the Kanohi then turned it and put it on his face.

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For the Toa, Zaktan and Sasha outside of the pool the world stopped another time but a loud and harsh crack made it turn again. Ikuta's giant head came crashing into the hall, the rest of his body was still stuck in the corridor but would follow soon.

Tahu readied his sword. "We won't back away anymore", he shouted at the creature. "If necessary we'll fight till death."

In the corner of his eyes he saw Lewa slowly getting up and taking his Katana.

"Lewa ... you ..."

"I don't know, but it feels like ... I'm regaining energy", he looked over to Sasha and Rui. "We all get our energy back."

"That means Mata Nui is still alive", Onua said.

"Because of Tupua", Gali added sadly.

Kopaka nodded into the direction of the Ikuta. "But he won't be for much longer if we can't remove this ... *thing*."

Purple light shot out of one of the Protodermis pools, so blinding that they had to shut their eyes but their closed lids and their hands were only a mere protection. As fast it had come it disappeared. They heard an angry scream from the Ikuta's direction and it sounded like two separate voices again.

"What's happening, Lhi?"

"We're ripped apart, you down-syndrome!"

First they all just stared at this strange spectacle, then Zaktan's call was heard. "Ikuta! Now you're at our size again. And you're just two against nine. Finally time has come..."

Lhikuta gave him a little smile. "And still we're strong enough. Want to test it?"

"Nothing I would like better than that."

"Maybe this won't be our last battle", Lewa shouted with surprisingly strong voice, "but it will be yours."

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"No way you're pulling one of us under again", Lhikuta shouted and jumped away from where he had been standing just as the dirt and rock floor carved in and Onua shot out of the earth again. The same second an incredible iciness filled the air. Kopaka's sword started glowing causing everything to turn to ice that was coming too close. The red Ikuta quickly backed away and growled in anger.

"Don't be scared Lhikuta. It's just ice", the ivory Toa chuckled.

"Oh, well, when it's fire versus ice, fire always wins." Lhikuta was covered in flames.

"Let's see how ice *really* fares against fire." He laughed and melted the frozen water around him.

"And let's see how fire really fares against water." Gali was suddenly standing beside her icy friend who was ready to block any incoming attacks with his shield.

One of them came immediately, but not from the front. She was hit from behind by Reikuta's tail, stumbled slightly but was caught by Kopaka, who glared at the creature.

"So you've sunken to using cheap tricks to win now?"

"It's not a trick, it's called skill", Reikuta chuckled while he was pulling his tail forward again, blocking off an incoming attack of Tahu and Lewa. The black Ikuta was suddenly hit by a hard kick from the side and sent sliding over the floor.

"This is called skill too", he heard Pohatu's call from behind.

'If this doesn't work, I'm dead', Rui thought grimly. In the meantime he had climbed up some rocks and was now sitting nearly over the fire covered Ikuta, in his hands he held one of Lewa's Katanas. He readied the weapon for a blow to Lhikuta's head, took a deep breath and jumped off the boulder but his aim was off. The hilt hit the middle of Lhikuta's back instead.

'No', Rui's mind screamed. Lhikuta let out a cry of pain. He quickly turned and reached for Rui's neck, but stopped short and fell to the ground.

Rui stood dumbfounded for a few seconds before shaking his head and running over to the others.

"Reikuta, don't be stupid, give it up", Zaktan called. "Your brother has already fallen." "No, I will never give up! Not now!" the Ikuta screamed quickly turning from side to side. "You should still fear my Rahkshi attacks." He pointed his staff at Rui who suddenly felt weaker and weaker until his legs gave up carrying him. The Ikuta let out an insane laugh. "And on whom shall I test my next Rahkshi ability, huh? What about destruction?" He turned around a last time then decided to jump at the one who was standing closest: Gali.

She tried to block off the attack and managed it to give a short slash right through Reikuta's side but the creature just coughed up a bit of blood, smirked and stabbed his staff straight through Gali's armour. The sapphire Toa cried out and fell backwards, eyes wide and blood turning the floor deep red.

"GALI!" Kopaka cried and ran to his fallen love as Reikuta collapsed as well. The creature watched as Kopaka knelt beside Gali and cradled her wounded body in his arms.

"Gali, come on, talk to me! Let me know you're still with me, please!" the icy Toa cried shaking her gently.

"K-Kopaka ... it ... hurts ...", Gali coughed softly a stray tears falling from her eyes as well as a rivulet of blood running from the corner of her mouth.

"Don't worry, you're going to be okay, I swear it." Kopaka placed his hand over the gap in her armour where her wound was. "This is going to be a little cold but at least it will stop bleeding. Are you ready?"

The water Toa nodded slowly and Kopaka smiled gently. He channelled his power through his hand and soon a thin sheet of ice had covered the wound, stopping the blood flow. Gali shivered as the ice patched itself over her chest. She then snuggled closer to Kopaka when she was picked off the ground by him. In the corner of her eyes she could still see Kopaka's old wound. She smiled slightly and looked up to him. "Now we're quits."

"You know, you haven't won", Reikuta coughed out again, "Maybe we're beaten but the whole fight is far from over."

Lewa readied his Katana for a last time and went over to the creature. His eyes had a strange glow and there was a cold and sharp tone in his voice. "But at least we've

finally wiped you out. That will bring us a large step closer to our final destination." He took his sword over his head. "This is for what you've done to us ... to me."

The blade drove right through Reikuta's body.

It took them all a few seconds to realize what Lewa had done right now, that this battle was really over now. Lhikuta and Reikuta were dead. A little sob touched the silence. Sasha had finally broken down to her knees, letting her tears flow. Tahu knelt beside her and put a hand on her shoulder. "It's over", he whispered, although he knew it better. Reikuta was right. As long as Makuta was still out there with unchanged hate against his brother many battles would follow. This war was far from over.

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The days passed by. Slowly the leaves had turned from green to yellow or red. Even the golden fields had taken a slight grey colour. Only the green of the deepest jungle remained untouched.

The Toa only had stayed on Aro Nui to cure their physical wounds. The next and hopefully last destination of their journey was already waiting: Karda Nui, residence of the gods, origin of all Matoran beings, now nothing more than a dark and dying underground lair made of cliffs and swamps. If they could believe Vakama a direct move against Makuta was the only possibility remaining. After he had been defeated on the Kini Nui it seemed like the Dark Spirit had retreated to his main lair.

The Toa knew their peaceful days on Aro Nui were counted and just a matter of a few more days.

Outside of the jungle city near a well-known little hut a now useless bow had been stuck into the ground. Gali's damaged armour was lying in front of it. Lewa had graved some words into it.

*Don't stand at my grave and weep*

*I am not here, I do no sleep*

*I'm the river floating through the lands*

*I'm the rocks deep in the desert sands*

*I'm the jungle treebright high*

*I'm the Kewa flying through the sky*

*Don't stand at my grave and cry*

*I am not here, I didn't die*

Nearly every day Gali visited this kind of graveyard even if she didn't know what exactly lead her there. It felt like she had lost a very close friend.

"We don't even know if he is really dead", she heard a voice beside her. She turned her head away from the memorial and looked up. Kopaka had silently stepped up to her.

"No one will survive a bath in pure Protodermis."

"We have."

Gali slowly shook her head. Only a false hope. They were the first Toa ever who had fallen into liquid Protodermis so it was possible that only Toa would survive that. But not a single Matoran had gotten out of it alive. Several miners already died because of accidents with Protodermis.

Gali unfolded the sheet of paper she had held in her hands the whole time and showed it Kopaka. It was this drawing of her she found again on one of the armour

shelves in Tupua's hut when she tried to find replacements for all broken or lost armours and weapons. It seemed like Tupua had crafted replacement sets for every single Toa. His cellar had more rooms than the one with the chest armours Gali had seen during her first visit.

"Have you seen the word on it?" she asked. "I wanted to ask Tupua about the meaning of it but I never did ..."

"It looks like a word of the old Metru Nui language. Maybe our Turaga could read it but I don't think we will meet them again before..."

"Wait, can you still remember? Tupua wasn't just a name. It also was one of those old words. And Turaga Potaka translated it." Gali stood up. "Maybe he can help us with that word too."

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Potaka read that word over and over. "Yes, I know its meaning. I still know it very well."

"And what is the translation of it?" Gali asked.

"Whanaungatanga ... it means friendship."

Kapitel 26: Chapter 26: Brave new world

Chapter 26: Brave new world

Lewa stood on the edge of the island and looked down. He could see the ocean, Mata Nui that was lying right under the floating island and another little island in the distance. He looked over the jungle of Le Koro. Once his home, now only a forgotten place for animals and rampaging Bohrok. The Matoran had left Mata Nui and moved back to Metru Nui. He didn't know why. So many things had happened since the Toa had left their island home.

Seven new Toa had been chosen. Six for every village and one Toa of Light. Jaller for Ta Koro, Hahli for Ga Koro, Kongu for Le Koro, Matoro for Ko Koro, Huki for Po Koro and Nuparu for Onu Koro. Takua was chosen to be the new Toa of Light. Strange enough that there were now seven where only six should have been but everything had its reason. Maybe. Lewa didn't want to wonder about anything anymore.

The new Toa had been sent to Mahri Nui on a search for the Kanohi of Life which could give Mata Nui new life and not just keep him alive for a few more days. The next part of that plan would have been to bring that mask to Karda Nui into the former residence of the Great Spirit.

But not all of them had survived this journey. Matoro had given his life for his friends. Lewa sighed. Matoro reminded him of Tupua. Or Toa Lhikan. Only three of the many who had to die just to save a few.

The Toa of air winced when a hand was laid on his shoulder.

"You look so sad. What's the matter?" he heard Tahu's well-known voice. "I know, there're happening so many things around. But you didn't even look like that when you nearly lost your whole village."

Lewa turned his head and looked into warm ruby eyes. He sighed again.

"I was just thinking about this war. Why do we have to fight for peace? Isn't there a more ... peaceful way?"

Tahu's eyes now wandered over the jungle of Le Koro too. "Have wondered about that often too. Some nights I was lying wide awake and trying to remember if I had ever known the feeling of *peace* but after Rui's story it's for sure that we never learned to know that."

"I wished this was already over..."

The fiery Toa hugged his love tightly. "Believe me, I wish it too ... But more than everything else I wish to see you laugh again. It hurts to see your decline. It's like watching you dying. Only sometimes since we arrived on Aro Nui it seems like a bit of your old carefree self was breaking through."

"I'm not even sure myself if I had been *really* happy again after that 'incident' with Reikuta ... Well, with that one exception that I was really glad to have you back alive ... But then ... you know, not all who seem to be happy are really happy. Some laugh just because they don't want to cry..."

For a few minutes they just stood clung together in silence then Lewa mumbled into Tahu's shoulder, "This will really be the last step of our journey. We go to Karda Nui, deliver his Kanohi of Life and finally defeat Makuta. Maybe we can also get a little help from Mata Nui himself..." He looked up and suddenly let out a bright laugh. "We will finally get the chance to know what peace is. Heart-promise."

At first Tahu looked at him surprised but then he smiled too. This time it was no unwanted cry, this time Lewa's laugh was for real.

"Yes, we will finally know what peace is, my green angel. And nothing will ever get the chance to tear us apart again."

"You're really sure?"

"Heart-promised."

And we both go down together

We'd stay there forever

Just try to get up

And I'm sorry this wasn't easy

When I asked you, believe me

And never let go

Kapitel 27: Chapter 27: Clearing up the past

Chapter 27: Clearing up the past

The sound of cracking wood was shooting through the jungle. The new Toa of water was swearing while she was fighting her way through the forest. But it had to be. She hadn't seen her friend since he had finished their training and they started their seemingly endless battle against the Ikuta. And she still had to thank him that he helped the other new Toa at all. He normally was a shy guy and avoided others when ever he could, with exception of her. That had something to do with his past. He was found and adopted by Ga-Matoran when he still was a baby. About children without parents was nothing strange during times like that. But the Matoran remained sceptic about this child, they nearly were afraid of him just because of his look. A black body and ruby eyes. For his parents it was the sign of a normal Onu-Ta-Matoran mix but for others it was something evil. Black body and ruby eyes: the normal appearance of Makuta.

They even forbid their children to play with him. At least he was allowed to visit school because the Turaga who also where their teachers didn't understand what should have been wrong about the little Matoran. And that was the first time Gali met Tupua. She shared the Turaga's opinion. There was nothing wrong with the shy little Tupua. The others avoided him, she was there for him and tried to be his friend. Even if it was a bit of hard work because she had to keep it a secret from her own parents and because Tupua had already begun to loose his trust in other people. Together with her he slowly regained his self-confidence. But that could only take a bit of his mistrust away.

If she still was on the right way the little hut at the edge of the jungle was only a few meters away. After they all had left school he started to work for an old blacksmith who lived far outside Le Aro like a hermit. Maybe the only one who would have taken him.

She could already see the hut. Tupua was sitting outside of it and drawing something into his booklet.

"Tupua!"

His head shot up.

"Gali! You startled me." A bit of reproach was in his voice but then he smiled.

The Toa sat beside him. She first always had been afraid a bit he wouldn't accept her in her new form but during the days of training she found out that being a Toa had changed nothing in their friendship.

"Long time no see."

"What should I have awaited else. You are a Toa. Fighting Ikuta isn't an easy business. You can't believe how glad I was after I heard you all haven't only survived all those battles but also defeated both Ikuta."

"I wished you could have been a Toa too so that we could have fought together."

He shook his head. "Not everyone's destiny is to be a hero. Mine is it to make armour for out heroes."

"You have heard about our soon departure to Mata Nui too? I came here to say

goodbye a last time and thank you for all you've done for us. Maybe we won't see each other for a long time."

He looked a bit sad. "No prob. I have heard about it and wished that day would never come we had to say goodbye. But there's no other way. And I wish you all the best ... And if you will ever forget about me", he placed his hand on his chest, "deep inside you'll always know there's something missing."

"I will never forget about you. Why should I?"

For a few seconds there was silence. Then Gali looked at Tupua's sketchbook.

"What have you drawn? Can I see it?"

He first hesitated but then reached it over. "Nothing too good."

It showed a nearly perfect pencil drawing of Gali as Toa Mata.

"I want to place it between my best armours so that it will always remember me about my best friend."

"It's beautiful. But those signs at the edge ..."

"The blacksmith still speaks the old language of Metru Nui. He had taught me a few words too. It's not much but it's enough for a smalltalk."

"And what is it supposed to mean?"

"It's a word called Whanaungatanga. It means friendship."

A few more seconds of silence but then Tupua broke it again. "But now you have to tell me about your last battle before you travel to Mata Nui. I have heard a bit about it but it makes a difference if you hear it from people standing outside the fire or from the ones who took part in it."

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*A real friend is who takes your heart, but touches your soul.*

## Kapitel 28: Chapter 28: A place in my dreams

### Chapter 28: A place in my dreams

They said the two were the creators of the world and of all living beings. Thinking about that could make him smile. He didn't know who really did this but even the gods first started to exist on this planet when the first Matoran did so. And still the two brothers were chosen to be protectors of the world, rulers over life and death.

They had been really great brothers once but then Makuta started to grow more and more jealous. The people admired a god of life and birth, of light and the day rather than a god of death, night and darkness.

They started their battle hundreds of years ago. Makuta didn't even spare the world he had sworn to protect. He sent out his own creatures of darkness while Mata Nui had to choose heroes of his own to protect the lands.

Once the brothers also had created their very own cities deep down in their residence in Karda Nui. A city of light and a city of shadow. Home for Matoran of light and shadow. Now everything was lying shattered into pieces. Mata Nui was only able to get part of the Matoran out and to other cities on the surface.

After years of fighting Makuta had become stronger while Mata Nui was spending his strength on protecting the lands. Makuta had inflicted so many wounds on Mata Nui's body and soul that it could have killed him if he hadn't been a god. The pain was too much to continue his fight. But instead of killing his brother Makuta put him into a deep sleep. A sleep that protected him from his pain. He could see what was going on in his dreams but he wasn't able to do anything against it. He wasn't even able to wake up. All he could do was watching how Makuta slowly destroyed the world and killed the people. He couldn't even create new Toa.

But after years of healing he at least was able to use his telekinetic ability again. The first Toa he contacted was the Toa of fire, Lhikan, the only survivor of the battles. He knew that the Toa didn't have much time anymore so he gave him the instructions how to chose the next generation of Toa and lead them to the Kini Nui, the former entrance to Karda Nui. It was the only way to send out the power that made Toa out of them.

And then after some further years of sleep he was finally able to break out of it with a kind of astral body. His real body was still wounded too much. But it was enough to create nine heroes with his own hands. One for each of the six villages, one should be a mix form and then for the first time there should be Toa from the two former cities of the gods.

They should be born and grow-up as Matoran so they could learn more about life than just the duties of a Toa, then they should become Toa on their own when the right time had come. He wanted to explain them everything when this time had come, wanted to be their teacher for the first few fights.

His other Toa were able to push Makuta's attacks back but they would never have the chance to defeat him. These Toa should have it, with the help of Mata Nui. Even if it was tearing up his heart whenever he thought about defeating his own brother.

After each one of his future Toa he had to wait some months to regain his strength so it took him nearly eight years until he saw the birth of the last of them.

But not even the half of them got the chance to grow up before something completely went wrong. It seemed like Makuta had noticed what he was planning and attacked their homelands Aro Nui and the isle of Mata Nui. The Great Spirit had raised most of his Toa on Aro Nui because Makuta had nearly ignored the little flying island. The only threat on there had been the Ikuta so far.

Now only one or two of them would even get the chance to become a Toa on his own like planned so Mata Nui had to make them to Toa immediately the same way he had done it with the others. As soon as the last Toa on Aro Nui had died they should get together at an ancient temple. The only soon-to-be Toa on Mata Nui should go to the Kini Nui and meet with the others later on.

He felt sorrow in his heart. They were still too young for this. The youngest had just reached the age of twelve. There had been no time for explanations or training. The god of light couldn't show himself any more without his brother seeing him. But he made the promise to protect them as good as possible.

But when this important day finally came something went wrong again. Only seven of them changed. The other two hadn't even gotten the message that they were chosen to be Toa. One of them got the strength; the other one was a Toa at heart but nothing more changed on them. His experiment with a Toa of light and a Toa of shadow had completely failed.

He had to focus on the others. They had beaten their first few enemies. Even his little one had done his job better than he had awaited. They were able to defeat the Ikuta and beat back Makuta's creature again.

Then there was this call from the isle of Mata Nui. Makuta now focused more on it again and the Great Spirit wanted to send six of his heroes. At the same time the Ikuta returned. They had somehow learned the attacks of Makuta's sons. Mata Nui was able to protect his Toa but unfortunately it led them to a loss of memory.

When the six of them were on the island, closer to him than ever before, something strange happened. The wounds his body had for so many years, those wounds that never could heal, suddenly started healing.

Lewa's deep friendship to Onua, Tahu's beginning feelings for Lewa; it all was like Mata Nui was feeling with them. He could feel friendship and love rushing through his body, making him heal even faster. During that time he could think of another possibility to get his last two Toa. He had to drive his power directly through them. For one he had to create a new Kanohi, for the other he could use an old and long protected energy storage. This storage had kept him alive for a very long time because it was providing him with energy as his wounds couldn't heal. It might have sounded strange but it was made by his brother. It was like he wanted him out of his way but something in him still prevented him from killing Mata Nui.

His wounds had healed up now enough that the six Toa could really awaken him but he just showed up in his astral body. His real body still remained in his prison in Karda Nui.

But then there was this pain again. His old wounds were breaking open. His old energy storage was in danger. He sent the six back to Aro Nui not just to let them find out the truth about themselves, more to protect his storage and get one of the two remaining soon-to-be Toa close enough to it.

While the others had been on Aro Nui Takua finally had discovered the new Kanohi and found out that he should be a Toa.

Mata Nui now finally knew that even if his body had healed fully he just would have

been able to send out his astral body. His real body couldn't break out of the Vortex Makuta had created around him. He would have needed his old Kanohi of life that had sunken down into the ocean decades ago so he sent out the next generation of Toa and Takua to find it.

Meanwhile his pain was growing stronger. He heard Makuta speaking in his mind. No, not Makuta himself, just the part in him that wasn't filled with hate. He asked him if he should put him back into his healing sleep. Mata Nui didn't want to.

Even if the Toa had found the Kanohi of life there wouldn't be enough time to get it to him. His body was dying and he needed a new one just to keep his soul alive. Matoro was the one he had chosen. The Toa needed to die but he wasn't really dead. He was caught together with Mata Nui's body in the Vortex, carrying the Great Spirit's soul.

Nearly the same time he felt that his storage was in safety. His plan had worked. The last Toa had come to him. And Mata Nui's body started healing again.

After some time when he had regained most of his strength he could switch into his old body and bring the Toa of ice back to life. The only thing he still needed was his Kanohi. His Toa team should bring it to him before Makuta could find out again that his brother was planning something.

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His crimson eyes wandered through the darkness, his cold voice was speaking to someone who was standing hidden in the shadows.

"Only one day left until the Toa will come into my lair. You will get the green one and kill him immediately."

"Why just him?" the one in the shadows asked.

"I feel it, there's a special bond between him and my brother. He has this special kind of protection around him. Killing him will harm Mata Nui more than anything else. I know how deep he feels for that black and that red Toa so just follow them and they will lead you to him in no time. You can kill them too if you want to but concentrate on Lewa."

Tahu's eyes snapped open. He was shivering although it was warm around him. This dream again. It always was like he was in Makuta's body. He wanted to kill Lewa and he would follow Tahu and Onua because they would lead him to the one he wanted.

Ruby eyes wandered to the figure at his side. His green angel was still sleeping not knowing what would await him in Karda Nui. Tahu hadn't told him about his dreams. He didn't want him to hear it at all. The Toa of fire sighed deeply. He never wanted this to happen. They had to split up again as soon as they reached Karda Nui. He had to prevent Lewa from going with him or Onua.

Kapitel 29: Chapter 29: Broken apart

Chapter 29: Broken apart

A last time the Toa came together in Le Aro for a last goodbye. Only Tahu wasn't showing up. He had behaved strange during the last few days and even tried to avoid Lewa more and more. It was hurting the Toa of air but he pushed it aside. Maybe Tahu was just worried about their journey and needed some time alone to think about it and make plans.

"Why do you two have to leave?" Lewa asked, "You can come with us. I'm sure we will need every help we can get."

"Vakama mentioned just six. I don't even know if I will be able to enter the residence of the gods. But I won't stay here where it's safe as long as the Matoran down on the surface are in danger. The first part of your journey I will go with you but I will leave for Metru Nui then and join the other Toa and the Matoran there", Rui answered.

"And I will continue to travel with my colleagues", Zaktan said, "I have forgiven them because they didn't know what they were doing. Besides I don't think you want to have a Piraka and former Dark Hunter with you much longer. We used to be the bad guys, remember?"

"It doesn't depend on who you were in your past. It's more important who you are now", Lewa said, "But I don't want to stop you if you want to go."

"The Kewa are ready. We have to go", a voice called over the place. The first time since several days Tahu showed up again. He nodded. "Turaga, Matoran, farewell. I hope Makuta will ignore this island for the next hundreds of years to come. Don't know if I will ever be able to visit Aro Nui again. Rui, Zaktan, thanks for your help."

The Toa left the village and headed for the edge of the island while Zaktan went off into the other direction.

Rui was just flying with them for a few minutes then he headed to Metru Nui while the others took course to their former home Mata Nui. The Kewa landed somewhere in the jungle. They couldn't go with them any further because now the Toa had to enter the Kini Nui again. Hopefully for the last time.

It looked like someone or something had carved even more tunnels and all of them led down. Deep down under the surface.

How long have they been walking? For hours or just for a few minutes? Time had now completely lost its meaning and importance. They were entering eternity. The lair of the gods.

Since their departure Tahu hadn't said a single word. His heart was hammering in his chest and he felt sick. Still he didn't know how to explain why they should split up without revealing his dreams.

"It's getting a bit brighter", Gali finally said.

The tunnel was coming to an end. It wasn't very much brighter. The light looked like dusk on a cloudy day. They could see that they were standing on a platform. Several

hundred meters under them there was something like a swamp that ended on the left side just after a few meters where the ground harshly fell down again. The ground of this gorge disappeared in the darkness. It looked like they were standing in a kind of cave but neither could they see the other side of it nor a ceiling. Everything was so giant. Tahu nearly felt a bit relieved. He now had found a reason for a split-up.

"Okay", he said, "we have to find something in there that looks like it could be Mata Nui but it can be in the swamp or down there so we may have to form two teams."

"But to get down there we would have to fly", Pohatu said. "And Lewa's the only one."

"If you change your masks you can at least use levitation powers and for flying I can create wind you can glide on. So I'm in the team that will go down." Lewa looked at Tahu. "You will come with me?"

"No, I would say I will go to the swamp with Onua and ... and Gali. You other take the way down."

Lewa went a few steps closer to the edge of the platform and looked down to the swamp. A rain that smelled like rotten eggs had started there right now. "Don't be silly. I thought you hate wetness like that. I think Kopaka would be better for that job."

The relief was gone. Again Tahu felt this panic in his heart. It was as if something was around there and watched them. Something evil.

"No ... no, it's like I said, I'm going to the swamp and that's it."

He still tried to keep up his self-control while panic threatened to freeze his heart.

"Tahu what's wrong with you? You're evading me for days and now it seems like you don't even want to go with me. Have I done something wrong?"

"No, it's not ... you've done nothing ... it's just ..." It was like he was stumbling over his own words.

"Then let me go with you to the swamp. Swamps used to be my home even if they smelt better. And three of the others can glide down until they reach the bottom of the gorge. There won't be need for flying all the time."

"Can't you listen?!" Tahu suddenly yelled at him. Lewa winced. "I said I don't want you with me! Stop whining like a baby and do what I said!"

The second it was out the fiery Toa stumbled back a few steps and wished he had rather punched Lewa than shouted those words at him. He could see pain and fear in his eyes.

"Lewa ... I didn't mean ... I'm ..."

But the emerald one just turned around and ran over the cliff.

"Lewa, come back!" Onua wanted to run after him but Tahu held him back.

"No!" He tried to soften his voice a bit. "No, let Kopaka and Pohatu go after him. We have to stick to our plan, no matter what."

Kopaka shortly hugged Gali and placed his forehead on hers. "Take care of you."

"You too", she whispered.

The ivory Toa changed his Kanohi and left together with Pohatu.

"What's wrong with you, Tahu? You never acted so strangely", Onua asked again.

"I can't say it. Let's move on."

"You really should go after him."

Tahu shot around. "Listen, we're here for another mission not our love problems. He will be alright but it will be better we won't see each other again." With that he ran to the edge, jumped down too and used his lava board like an air board to glide down to

the jungle.

"Something's completely wrong here", Gali said, "We should better catch him up before he runs head-on into trouble."

They had to use levitation to get down so Tahu already was further ahead.

"Where in Makuta's name is he?" Onua looked around but couldn't see or even hear the ruby Toa.

"He could be anywhere between the trees, but I think he had been gliding into that direction. Let's get going but always stick together. I have the feeling we're not alone in this swamp."

"But what the heck could be there?"

"Only Makuta knows."

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Tahu was stumbling through the swamp. He had hit the ground harder than he thought but neither did he care about his hurting limbs nor the rain that had already raised the swamp water a few centimetres. He didn't want the others to find him. Not in this condition.

*I'll never let you see  
The way my broken heart is hurting me  
I've got my pride and I know how to hide  
All the sorrow and pain  
I'll do my crying in the rain*

He didn't see where he was running anymore. Just away, as far away as possible. The smell was making him sick but he didn't want to stop running. His thoughts were just spinning around Lewa. Why hadn't he just explained his plans more calmly instead of hurting his green angel? What if Lewa would run into even greater danger? Panic was tightening its grip again.

*If I wait for cloudy skies  
You won't know the rain from the tears in my eyes  
You'll never know that I still love you so  
So though the heartaches remain  
I'll do my crying in the rain*

His feet nearly slipped away. He was sliding down a hill. Down there the water was even higher. It now reached to the half of his shins. He couldn't run anymore and walking was hard too because he was sticking in the mud on the ground from time to time. Even if he was exhausted he didn't want to stop.

*Raindrops falling from heaven  
Will never take away my misery  
But since we're not together  
I'll wait for stormy weather  
To hide these tears I hope you'll never see*

Too late he noticed that shadow in front of him that came rushing closer. He wanted to avoid it but before he could even move he was hit by it. He stumbled backwards a few steps and fell. The water closed over his head.

## Kapitel 30: Chapter 30: A nightmare comes true

### Chapter 30: A nightmare comes true

The swamp was just of a shallow depth but still Tahu had to struggle to get up again. He was sticking between mud and underwater plants and his already existing exhaustion did the rest.

Finally he was able to stand on his feet again. When he slowly turned around he could see something standing just a few steps away. It looked like nothing more than mere shadow with glowing red eyes.

"Who ... who are you?" Tahu panted. "*What* are you?"

"Maybe you don't know me but I know you very well", a dark voice answered.

"Makuta ..."

"Just part of him. The rest of me is attacking your friends and hunting your precious Lewa."

"But how..."

"Toa, Toa ...", the dark spirit's shadow chuckled, "Can't you tell the difference between dream and reality? Actually I was the one who planted that little dream in your head to get all closer friends away from him. The closer the ones around him were bound to him the harder it would have been to get through to his mind. But I would have never awaited help from you. Your little catfight with him will make it even easier."

"You ... you ... bastard ..." Tahu was shivering. His swords started glowing.

"And what will you do now? Fight against me? That's not the best idea in your condition. And remember, it's your work that made everything easier to me."

The fiery Toa roared and sent a blow against the shadow but it dodged the attack as if there was no water surrounding his legs. It countered the attack and Tahu was sent flying back into the mud again.

This wasn't Makuta it was just a part of him and so the ruby Toa might have stood a chance but not as long as he was still worn out and standing in knee-deep water.

If it only would have stopped raining. Water came flooding down the hill he had been sliding down. Or if he just had Gali with him. She would have no problems moving through the water.

The shadow wasn't attacking any more. He was just watching Tahu's moves. The Toa wasn't sure what he should do. If he attacked now he would be doomed but he also didn't think this thing would just stand around and let him get his energy back. Besides he would lose it again very fast if he was trying to fight in the swamps. If he really had time to regain enough before he would drown. And if he just turned around and left he would be shot in the back. As he quickly thought his possibilities over he found just one hope left. He still had his pride as a warlord but he had to call the others for help. The shadow still wandered around him like a hungry Muaka and sceptically watched him when he drew his sword.

'I hope he won't see it as an attack', the fiery Toa thought then he shot a fire ball into the air. A bit bigger than he wanted it to be, maybe too big because now the shadow charged at him again.

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"Look! Have you seen that?" Gali pointed at a fire ball that shot up between the rotten trees down in the valley. "It looks like it comes from Tahu."

"If that's really Tahu's fire he must be in grave danger", Onua said. "He never called us for help before."

The Toa of water looked down into the deepness. "We somewhere have to get to him."

"You won't get to anyone", a dark voice said.

The two Toa shot around. Behind them two shadows with glowing red eyes were standing.

"Now don't say you want to stop us, whoever you freaks are", Onua said.

"We are Makuta", the first one said.

"Actually we're part of him", the second corrected.

"Oh man, now this megalomaniac has splitted up into three parts. What will come next? World dominance?" Onua sighed.

"Not just three. Eight. Six shadows, one more or less possessed and the real Makuta."

"Okay ... now he really lost it ..."

"Hey, don't even dare to speak about the dark spirit that way", shadow number one shouted.

"Calm down", number two said, "We need to think about a way to get rid of them."

"Why do we need to make a plan? All we have to do is to blast their damn heads off!"

With those words number one formed a kind of energy ball and blasted it against Gali. It hit her chest and made her stumbling backwards. Onua jumped between them.

"Is everything okay?" he shouted over his shoulder.

"Yeah ... I think so ..." The sapphire Toa touched her chest. It had been as if she had felt a very strong electrical shock and now it still hurt a bit.

After his colleague's too quick attack shadow number two had no other choice than getting ready for a battle too. "This was a warning Toa", he said, "Leave Karda Nui and don't return again or die in the swamps."

"We won't go away that easily." Gali stood up again and drew her axes.

"Then you'll have to die! Die! Die!" number one shouted and formed another blast but this time shot it against Onua. The ebony Toa stumbled back two steps but it didn't seem to have any other effects on him.

"I see", number two just said, "Then I would say you should take the water Toa and I'll try to get this one down."

Gali never had any problems moving around in water quickly but this swamp water slowed her down a bit. And the shadow was moving through it as if there was no swamp at all. Again and again he shot his blasts. The sapphire Toa felt as if she was standing in the centre of a thunderstorm. She had just hit him a few times with her own attacks but she was rather defending herself now than doing any more counter-attacks. But now the longer the fight took the less chances she seemed to have for winning it. Her arms hurt from blocking the rest of her body from blasts that had gone through. She finally managed a weak attack against the shadow which was answered by a big blast that sent her flying against a rotten tree that nearly crashed down on her. Gali tried to get up but was torn down again. Something had grabbed her ankle and was dragging her away. She wanted to call Onua's name but when she opened her mouth she swallowed swamp water.

The Toa of earth had noticed Gali was in trouble but he couldn't get away from his fight now that both shadows started attacking him.

Gali was now sliding faster down the hill. Plants were slashing against her face and scratching over her back but they couldn't stop her and she couldn't grab one of them. At the end of the hill she splashed into knee-deep water. If the rain didn't stop soon the valley was about to become a lake. At first she couldn't breathe but then her Kanohi slowly started filtering the rare oxygen out of the swamp water. And now she couldn't feel the grip around her ankle any more. Maybe it was better to stand up because her lungs felt the desperate need for oxygen in an amount this water would never have.

Her upper body was breaking through the surface and she spitted a flush of muddy water. There was still danger around. Gali could feel it. As if it was for a proof another shadow suddenly rose in front of her.

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"Where could he be? We lost too much time with that gliding thing. Lewa could be anywhere. Can you see him?"

Kopaka tried to use his Kanohi and looked up but couldn't see anything through the darkness. They would have needed Onua with them. Besides the contrary wind was hurting in his eyes so he could just open his eyes half.

Pohatu was racing through the half-light. The icy Toa had no other choice than cling to the other one's back otherwise he wouldn't have been able to keep up with Pohatu's speed.

After Lewa was gone they had no other choice than to glide down hoping to reach the ground soon. They had never glided down somewhere so deep. The mount Ihu was just a hill in comparison to those heights and depths in Karda Nui. They had lost too much time. Lewa could have been miles away as long as he had kept on flying. Or had he slowed down or landed in between and was already very close? Onua would have had more experience in seeing in darkness, with or without his Kanohi. Kopaka had already tried changing his own but it was nearly useless. He just saw a few steps further. And with that speed it was even harder to catch something with the eyes.

"Pohatu, can't you race a bit slower? I just can see about ten meters. You will crash against something. And I don't think Lewa will be flying that fast in that darkness. Maybe we already have passed him by without noticing."

"I don't think so. If Lewa is in the mood to fly fast then he'll do so. He's too much of a cloud-head to think about it. And right now he doesn't even have a destination he has to keep an eye open for. He's just flying as far as possible. I'm wondering what was wrong with Tahu. He had always been a hot-head but since he had been together with Lewa he had never yelled at him any more."

Kopaka kept his eyes closed not just because the wind was hurting. He tried to remember the scene on the platform.

"I think I heard fear in his voice", he finally said. "Not just fear ... it nearly was panic."

"But what should he be that much afraid of? I mean, for years I'm waking up every morning with the thought that today me or someone else I know can die. We don't have the easiest life."

"Maybe Tahu knew something we didn't but he couldn't tell us. It seemed like he

wanted to keep Lewa away from him."

Kopaka couldn't get any further with his thoughts because the auburn Toa stopped suddenly and the drive was pressing the Toa of ice against Pohatu's back. He had never believed that someone that was racing so fast could also stop so fast. He tried to look ahead but couldn't see anything.

"What's the matter?"

"I thought I felt something gliding through the rocks under me. It seemed like it was following us."

"Through the rocks? Was it digging as fast as Onua?"

"No, it was fast but it really felt like it went through the rocks without digging through them."

Kopaka jumped off Pohatu's back. He could now feel the earth slightly shaking under his feet.

"It's coming closer again ..."

Before they could even prepare to fight the ground cracked open. A giant gap that came closer to them. The two jumped out of the way trying to protect themselves from flying rocks and earth. Two dark figures came jumping out of the ground right at the place where the Toa had been standing before.

"What the Makuta are those two?" Pohatu shouted.

"Makuta would fit it quite well", one of them answered. "Although we're just shadows of him. We're sent out to stop you."

"Try and your plans will be put on ice and I mean that for real", Kopaka said with a slight grin.

"You can only freeze us if you're able to get us."

The next things Kopaka saw and felt were two black blurs rushing over to where he was standing and driving right through his body.

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Lewa had sat down on a rock spur. He was tired of flying and moreover he felt lost, more than he had ever felt in his life before. Why had Tahu said things like these? He didn't want him with him. Why the Makuta was the Toa of fire so overreacting? Or wasn't he himself at that time? Lime-kissed eyes widened. He remembered the time Tahu was under Lhikuta's control. Was it the same this time? Was he controlled by Makuta?

Since the time they had started their journey down to Karda Nui Lewa had this feeling they were being watched. It could really be possible...

He suddenly felt horribly stupid. Running away ... leaving his friends behind ... the acts of a little child. Controlled or not, Tahu was right after all.

"What do we have here? A little Toa who isn't paying attention to the happenings around him."

Lewa's head shot up. He knew this voice. "What the ... Lerahk? But I thought we killed all Rahkshi."

Lerahk's colour was darker than it used to be but it was him without any doubts.

"Not all of us. Remember that I still needed recovery from that battle with your fiery friend? And now I've come to kick your ass for what you've done to my brothers."

"We've already killed the rest of you why should I fail in killing you?"

"Haven't you seen my change in appearance, Toa? I'm not just a Rahkshi anymore. I carry part of my father's soul and strength in me. If he wanted he could attack you through me. And you would never have a chance defeating a god."

Lewa thought about Makuta's last appearance. He had been able to defeat him ... kind of. But this energy that had been floating inside of him, that had created the light beam, it had disappeared the time the Master of all Emeralds and the last Guardian had been gone.

He wanted to take his weapons but then he thought 'What for?' This Rahkshi didn't seem as if he wanted to attack. He was just floating up and down in front of the Toa. And on the other side everything just felt hopeless. 'The fight against Makuta had lasted for hundreds of years. Why should we be able to stop it? We are just some Toa out of so many who had been and who had failed', he thought, 'And if I set any other actions now I won't just be attacked by a normal Rahkshi.'

"You don't have to be afraid of me or Makuta", Lerahk suddenly said, "We don't want to harm you. At least my father doesn't want to. He sent me out to find you because he wants to talk to you."

"Talk to me?" Lewa looked at the Rahkshi as if he had wished him a happy new year. "Is this supposed to be a trick or what?"

"What for? If he wanted to kill you he would have done it already. But he said I shouldn't harm you more than necessary to make you come with me."

The Toa of air stood up. Should he really willingly go to the dark spirit? This feeling of hopelessness was still there.

"Alright", he said, "take me to your father. If he wishes to talk to his enemies I will listen."

When they were flying through the darkness Lewa thought he heard someone calling his name but he couldn't see anyone and then he wasn't sure anymore if it really had been his name or one of the many sounds in the darkness.

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In the middle of his battle Pohatu lifted his head because he suddenly felt a breeze. Two figures were flying over them and one of them looked very much like a Toa.

"Lewa?" he shouted out.

But he didn't get a response. Whatever the figures had been, they had disappeared in darkness again.

## Kapitel 31: Chapter 31: Green with evil

### Chapter 31: Green with evil

Lewa still couldn't believe it. He was willingly flying with the enemy into the dark spirit's lair. But what else could he do? Maybe he could use his time there to find Makuta's weak spot, beside brightest light. It still felt so wrong. Everything felt wrong.

In the corner of his eyes he noticed something bright. When he turned his head he saw something like a ball of light floating in the distance. In this area it looked so wrong like a Christmas tree in August.

"What is this?" he asked his Rahkshi companion.

"It's called the Vortex", Lerahk answered, "I think it can be used as kind of prison but I never was closer than that. The energy field around it is too strong." He pointed at something hidden in the darkness. "Right now Makuta uses these caves. We should be there within a few minutes.

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"I hope no one has followed us", Lerahk said when they landed inside of one of the caves. He turned around quickly, maybe a bit too quickly because he still had his staff in his hands and now had scratched it over Lewa's back.

"Hey, watch out what you're doing with that thing!"

It wasn't a deep scratch but it still was burning.

"Whoops, sorry", Lerahk said with a sarcastic grin.

Lewa just gave him a dirty look. He knew that the Rahkshi was searching for a way to provoke him. He still was mad because of what the Toa had done to his brothers but he wasn't allowed to attack openly.

There were lightstones hanging on the walls but they just gave a dim and dark light. At least it was light after all. And it proved that the dark spirit couldn't see very much in complete darkness as well.

"The last few meters you will have to go alone", Lerahk finally said. "I'm not supposed to hear what he wants to talk with you. Just go straight ahead."

With that he turned tail and left off into the darkness.

Lewa's heart was hammering. What if he was running right into his doom? But now he couldn't return anymore. As if there had ever been a chance for returning... His back started hurting again. 'Damn Rahkshi', he thought.

He had reached something that looked like an empty room. There were windows carved into the walls. Through one he could see the Vortex glowing, through the others he just saw darkness.

"I have awaited you although you came earlier than I thought."

The emerald Toa's head shot around. Makuta was standing to his right, just a few steps away. How had it been possible Lewa hadn't noticed the dark spirit so far? He

tightened his grip around his Katana. Makuta must have noticed this quick movement because he said, "You don't have to be afraid, Toa ... Lewa. I just want to talk to you."

"How can I be sure this is not a trick?"

The dark spirit chuckled. "Look, if I wanted to take you out, why should I send my son to get you here? I can look through his eyes now and completely take control over his body if I want to. If he had wiped you out it would have felt to me as if I had done it."

"Alright then ... forget it. So what do you have to say?"

"It's more a question. And I wanted to know the answer for a very long time. Why do you believe I am the evil?"

This question caught Lewa completely off-guard. He had awaited everything but not that.

"W-Why?" he sputtered. "You need an explanation *why*? You destroy this world, kill living beings, why shouldn't we believe you're evil?"

Makuta lifted his hand. "Would you mind if I corrected you? I'm not destroying the world. Just the things the Matoran have built up. And tell me, when I have killed a living being other than the inhabitants. I mean all those, animals, those creatures living on the islands too?"

"You had them under your control and made them attack us."

"But you were the ones who killed them. Haven't you found out that you just had to remove the infected Kanohi from a Rahi to stop it?"

"Y-yes ... but ...", Lewa stuttered.

"And haven't you seen that the Bohrok can be stopped by removing the Krana?"

"Yes ... " Lewa now sounded a bit meek.

"But you've done nothing like that or less than you could have done. And it also were you who have killed my sons."

"Yes ...", the Toa of air now said it so quietly that he nearly couldn't hear his own voice. The scratch on his back was hurting stronger now.

But then he raised his voice again. "If you hadn't sent them into battle nothing like that would have ever happened. Why do you even want to destroy our people? There's no reason for it."

The dark spirit laughed but it sounded bitter. "All people have the ability to build something up but look into their hearts and you can also see that they have the power to destroy. I am that power. I was formed by hate over thousands of years. Formed by people's hate. It's their own fault how strong I have become. Sure that I was jealous about my brother but my hate would have never grown that much if I hadn't had the hate of people to suck up in me. People who hated others, who hated the world. And if they hated the world around them they also hated Mata Nui and me because we're the protectors of it. But I'm the only one who can suck up the negative feelings. If my brother had this ability too he also would have started hating me. And fighting me."

"You can only absorb negative feelings?" Lewa asked in between.

"I could absorb positive feelings too but only if they are concerning me which is hardly possible anymore. I'm not an evil god. I am what people made me to." He paused and looked into Lewa's eyes. "I can see you still have doubt in your heart. But why should I talk to you if I was just an evil megalomaniac? I'm talking to you because we have something in common, Toa Lewa. We're both misunderstood. I because they think I'm pure evil and you because they just see you as a child. Or did they ever really listen to your ideas? They just think you as childish; they think you're too weak."

The emerald Toa looked down at the floor. He was right. Everything he said sounded so right. And it was hurting.

"But I see you as equal", Makuta continued. "You've been through so many and still you are alive and fighting and I can say you had to bear more than any Toa before you. But no one of your friends seems to notice that not even your love. No, instead he yelled at you and called you childish after all he had promised you."

Lime-kissed eyes shot up again. "How do you know that? Was it ..."

"No, it wasn't me. I didn't have him under his control. I had no possibilities to control him through that distance or did you see an infected Kanohi on him? A Krana? A poisoned scratch by Lerahk? Besides I'm not the one to use psycho-drama. If he really had been under my control he rather would have attacked you all. No, he did it all by himself. He knew what he was doing and after he saw that he had hurt you he didn't even go after you. He didn't even think it was *worth* going after you."

Sadness and hate were welling up in Lewa's heart but the hate was overweighing. "They all should be punished", he whispered, "They should feel the same I did..."

The dark spirit smiled. "Then I can help you if you want to. I can give you part of my powers and you will be able to make them suffer. And to eliminate them once and forever."

Before the Toa of air could even say a word he felt something strange rushing through his body. It felt evil as poison. His skin was changing colours from light and emerald green to several shades of darkest green. The rage inside of him was burning stronger than ever.

"Now you can go and do with your 'friends' whatever you want", the dark spirit said. Lewa just nodded and left.

"This was incredibly easy", Lerahk's voice came out of the darkness.

"I know, but I think he had given up fighting before he even met you. And I guess he won't fight against my control. He won't even get the idea that it's me who lets his hate burn high, will think it's his own feeling." He smiled his evil smile. "The others won't be able to attack him because he still is their friend."

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Gali jumped up again, axes drawn.

"Hold it, Toa", the shadow suddenly said. "I'm not here to attack you. Those two might have killed you if I hadn't brought you away."

"What's with Onua?" the sapphire Toa asked, "Now he's all alone."

"I'll check him next but he's doing pretty well so far. He can stand their attacks better than you. Gali, this is far too dangerous for you all. Whatever you wanted to do down here, forget about it. Go back as long it's still possible."

She shook her head. "No way. We have to do that, even if it costs our lives."

The shadow sighed. "I can't force you to but you should think about my advice well. You're giving your lives for something you can hardly win."

"But at least there's a chance of winning."

"Fine, whatever, but you shouldn't stay here. Go to your fiery friend. Maybe he needs you. I'll get Onua to him as well." He turned around and was about to leave.

"Wait!" Gali called.

"What is it?"

"If you are one of Makuta's shadows, why do you want to help us?"

"Not everything of Makuta is evil. He still has something good sleeping inside of him." With that he left and went up the hills again.

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Tahu sent off a fiery blow, hit his enemy hard and pushed him back again but his attacks grew weaker and weaker the longer this fight was lasting. He already couldn't feel his legs anymore.

Another time he was hit and fell back into the water but this time he was unable to get up again. His muscles refused to obey him. He could nearly hear Makuta laughing. One Toa gone for good, only five to take down next. His lungs were screaming for air but he couldn't get up any more. He felt movements beside him. 'Strange', he thought, 'it seemed like this thing used to glide through the water so why can I feel it move?' His mind slowly drifted away.

But then his arms were grabbed and he was torn back to the surface. Tahu coughed out muddy water.

Someone was dragging him up and tried to put him back on his own feet again, supposed him when his legs threatened to give in.

"Tahu, are you okay? Man, I thought this thing was going to kill you."

It needed some time until the ruby Toa noticed it was Onua's voice.

"Exhausted...", Tahu just mumbled. He tried to get a look at Onua without lifting his head too much. He now felt his muscles again, they had started to hurt. The Toa of earth looked worn out but he seemed okay else.

"I would have never made it ... I mean all those shadows, two on the hill, this one here", Onua said. "But I got help from – believe it or not – another shadow. He didn't talk too much, just that Gali is in safety for now and that we should leave as long as we are still able to."

"Where ... where is Gali?"

"I don't know. We were separated during the last battle but I hope this strange shadow was right and she's trying to get to us as soon as possible. First we should get you out of too deep water and back up the hills. At least the rain has finally stopped. When we've reached a place that looks safe enough we can set another sign so Gali can find us."

They got forward really slow. Tahu still had to be supported by Onua and the ebony Toa couldn't carry his friend because then he would have sunken into the mud so deeply that it would have been impossible to move, even for a Toa of earth.

Onua suddenly dragged Tahu behind a group of rotten trees and down into the swamp water as far as possible.

"What ...?"

"Shhh ... there's something flying over us", Onua whispered.

The Toa of fire looked up. Something dark green had been flying a circle but now after it didn't see anything strange it had disappeared again.

"Wasn't that ... a Toa? Tahu asked when Onua helped him up again.

"I don't know. I've never seen a dark green one. But I hope he hasn't noticed us. Even if it was a Toa I don't believe he's on our side. It's just a very bad feeling."

"He was flying like ... like Lewa ..."

The ebony Toa shook his head. "This Toa was of very dark green. I'm sure. And besides, what should Lewa be doing here? Even if he wanted to search for you he wouldn't

leave the others alone."

"Maybe you're right. Whoever it was, I hope we don't meet him again."

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"Kopaka, can you hear me? Please, wake up."

The icy Toa slowly opened his eyes. His head was hammering.

"Pohatu ... w-what happened?"

"I can't say ... at least not exactly. Those things just drove right through you. For a moment I thought they had killed you. And then there was this other shadow and it helped me to get rid of the attackers. Or maybe it was just someone looking like one of those shadows. I couldn't really see him, just his glowing eyes. And he said that we should try to get to the others because they could be in danger and that we should get outta here as fast as possible. What do you think 'bout that?"

Kopaka rubbed his temples. "I don't really know, but I have a bad feeling too. Maybe a good idea. But we will not leave Karda Nui before we have fulfilled our mission, that's for sure."

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He was flying through the darkness faster than ever before, didn't care anymore about that absence of light because his master gave him the ability to see better than before. He spotted Toa but those weren't interesting right now. The colour he was searching for was red, not white or brown. The swamp came in sight. Trees were rushing by. He was flying in circles. Hadn't there been a movement? Maybe not, all he saw were roots. Toa can't just vanish in thin air. He already had searched the whole swamp for a sign of red. Nothing. But he didn't want to leave without an attack so he scanned the territory for another victim. And he found blue.

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Gali fought her way through the mud, plants and water. Her legs hurt but she had just walked for a few hundred meters. She wasn't the one to march through this kind of territory, she was a swimmer but swimming was nearly impossible in this water. Maybe Kopaka would have had fewer problems. He had training in walking through thick snow. 'Or maybe not', Gali thought when she remembered the snow splitting up in front of the icy Toa. She hoped he was alright.

A sudden breeze brought the smell of wood, leaves and water, the smell of a swamp but not this one, a particular swamp on Mata Nui. After being in a rotten smelling area for so long time the swamp of Le Wahi scented like a perfume. Only one person she knew could bring up this wind. She looked up and saw something flying closer.

"Lewa! What are you doing here? Where are the others?"

The green Toa stopped a few meters away and slowly sank down. He had tilted his head to the side as if he was thinking about the words.

"Lewa? Yes, I remember, my former name. Now I don't want it any more. I take whatever the master calls me. This old name reminds me of my old life too much, about my pain, about false friends."

"What are you talking about? Who's that master?" She now noticed that Lewa looked strange somehow. His colours were much darker than usual.

The Toa of air looked at her as if he already had forgotten that she was still existing.

"You Toa are the reason for my anguish. You shall be destroyed."

He lifted up his Katanas again and suddenly jumped at her. Gali threw herself out of his way but still her side was hit. She now drew her axes but only for defence not for attack. Whatever had caught him, this was still Lewa. She couldn't fight him.

"Lewa, what happened to you? Please be reasonable. Don't you know me anymore?"

"I know you very well." The green Toa shot her a glare that would have frozen Kopaka.

"You are a Toa, my enemy. You shall be destroyed."

"I am not your ..." She was hit by a mighty blast of wind and a lot of mud. Lewa laughed. It was awful to hear his bright laugh in a situation like this.

"You won't have a chance against me no matter how weak I am if you can't even fight."

Another blow but this time he was able to take plants and roots with it. They hit Gali like shrapnels. A few of them she was able to block off but only a few.

"Listen Lewa, I don't want to fight you ..."

"Then you'll have to die!"

He charged at her. Gali blocked his stroke with her axes. Pain shot through her arms. She never would have believed that Lewa's attacks could be so strong. Or was it because she already was exhausted and now had to fight with mud and a Toa who had just started the battle and was still floating in the air a bit so that he didn't touch the swamp water?

Lewa was fighting like a berserk, as if he had held back his anger for years just to let it out on her now. A few blows she was able to evade or block but most of them hit her. Gali stumbled and fell against a giant root. This was it. She couldn't even lift her arms any more. But before Lewa could reach her something dark shot over her head and crashed against Lewa.

Whoever this other one was, he was fighting like a berserk too. He had no problems attacking the other one. The battle only lasted for a few minutes then Lewa had to retread but not before he had sworn to return. The other one turned around. He was as tall as a Toa, black with a few green shades and crimson eyes. An appearance like Makuta in Toa form.

"Are you okay?" His voice sounded rough as if he hadn't used it for months but it sounded familiar somehow. Gali looked up and into his eyes. They held nothing of Makuta's coldness. No, this wasn't the dark spirit. It was strange but she somehow knew this gaze.

## Kapitel 32: Chapter 32: Old new friends

### Chapter 32: Old new friends

*A little Ga Aronan girl was running over the market place. She still had a lot of time but this was her first day at Turaga Tarja's school and she didn't want to miss a single thing. Only a few meters away from school something suddenly caught her eyes. She slowed down a bit and went closer. There was another little Matoran, a black one, about her age. He was sitting on a stone and stared at the building as if he was afraid of entering. "Uhm ... hello, are you new here too?" the little sapphire girl asked.*

*The boy winced and shot her a look. His crimson eyes held scepticism and fear as if he was awaiting an attack.*

*She now remembered something her parents told her before she left. In her grade there would be a boy she shouldn't speak to. A strange mix form with red eyes and black body. But they didn't want to tell her why she should avoid him. She was only able to go to this school because her parents trusted in the Turaga.*

*Could this be the one?*

*They were staring at each other. The boy now looked a bit unsure but after she did nothing to attack him he at least had lost his fear.*

*But why should she stay away from him? This was just a little boy, a child like her.*

*She reached out a hand. "Shall we go in there together? My name is Gali. What are you called?"*

*He looked at her a little bit longer with his unsure gaze then he slowly took her hand and answered, "Tupua."*

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Gali's thoughts slowly returned to the swamp and the Toa in front of her.

"Tupua ... is that really you?"

He slowly nodded but before he could say anything something else came flying over Gali's head. A Toa of golden and white crashed against Tupua.

The dark Toa was trying to get the attacker off him while trying to push away the sword held close to his neck the same time.

"Get away from her and back where you came from", the golden one growled.

"Stop it! Both of you!" Gali was surprised by the strength of her own voice. Both Toa looked at her with astonishment too.

"He is not an enemy. He's a Toa who saved me from ... from an attacker before. And besides I know him for a very long time. So get off him, whoever you are."

The golden Toa got up again. "It's me, Takua. Sorry for that attack, pal." He reached out a hand to help Tupua up but he ignored it and got up without assistance.

"So you are Takanuva, the new Toa of light", Gali said, "We had not time to get to know you. But why are you here?"

"Vakama said that you might need my help down there so I tried to find you. The swamp looked more appealing to me than that gorge with its darkness. Not even my light got through it very far and I didn't want to go there all alone without knowing if I would even find one of you." He looked over to Tupua. "But it seems like I'm not the only new Toa."

"I'm Tupua, just Tupua. Don't get the idea of calling me Tupunuva or something cheesy like that. I was chosen to be a Toa of shadow."

"So you're a rookie too, huh?" Takua said and pointed at his Kanohi, "Have you found out how to use it yet? I only know how to use my other powers."

Tupua shook his head.

"It often takes a long time to find out the Kanohi's power", Gali said, "Often it reveals it the first time in case of danger. But you can also try to train it."

Both new Toa looked at her waiting if she knew something more should tell them.

The Toa of water now suddenly noticed how tired she actually was. Her limbs were hurting and without the supporting root in her back she would have fallen down into the water. Tupua noticed it and rushed over to her or at least it looked as if he was trying to rush but was blocked by mud.

"Are you alright? I hope this creep hasn't hurt you too much."

He picked her up even if he sank deeper into the mud now and waded back to Takua.

"What creep? What actually happened here?" the Toa of light asked with a gaze at Gali. He had noticed her wounds for the first time now.

"I tell you later", Tupua said, "First we need to find a place where she can rest."

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Gali woke up to the sound of a voice. It had been there for a longer time but she still had been in a half-sleep and not really noticed it. Although it still sounded a bit rough it was now more recognizable as Tupua's voice.

"It can bring light to even the darkest places. Mine is not a Kanohi of shadow because that can't be used as storage for a god of light so it's ... let me take a look ... here, this looks much like it, a Kanohi Manawa, the Kanohi of heart. It's said that it can make you look behind the façade and directly into people's hearts. Wondering why I got that."

Tupua and Takua were sitting close to her. The dark Toa was holding something that looked like a very old book. Gali now noticed that the floor under her didn't feel wet. Around her there was a kind of wall or more a ruin of a wall. The others now saw that she had woken up.

"I hope you feel a bit better now", Tupua said, "You still shouldn't move too much though you've healed fast during the past few ... hours? ... days? I can't tell. It seemed to be so long but still so short since we brought you here. Down here I've completely lost my sense for time." He looked around. "I have found those ruins earlier. They are on a kind of hill and much drier than the rest of this place. Matoran used to live here. Matoran of shadow." He lifted up the book. "I was trying to find out some more about those lands and have started to translate some of the old texts. Had to be very careful because this looks like it could fall into pieces every second. But at least we now know a bit more about our masks. And I know what the people here would have looked like. It says that the Matoran of light were very colourful while the Matoran of shadow were more like Makuta himself in Matoran form. Now I finally know it. I'm not a mix form. I'm one of the last remaining Matoran of shadow if not the last. And Taka seemed to be a Matoran of light."

Gali sat up a bit. She still felt weary but at least her limbs didn't hurt as much as before.

"There had been other Matoran too? But where are they now?"

"I don't know. I haven't gotten that far by now but I don't think I would know it after finishing because the last few sentences of it tell about a war between the gods and that Mata Nui is trying to get the Matoran out of Karda Nui. That's all and we won't find anything more about it in Karda. I now want to find out more about the land. Maybe there's something that can help us find Mata Nui or defeat Makuta. I know that we don't have much time and should find the others and that I can't take this book with me, but Taka can copy most of the pages into his Book of Chronicles. Then I can read it again later."

Gali now looked into the book too. She was able to read the letters but she didn't understand the words. On the page Tupua had stopped now she could see a kind of drawing that looked like a beautiful garden in a cave.

"What is that?" she asked. "Does the text say something about it?"

"This once was part of the light village. It was surrounded by gardens like the shadow village always was surrounded by forest. It used to be where now that gorge is Taka had seen. The land once was flat with just a few hills." He turned a few pages as if he was searching for something. "I think I've read that during the war between the gods Mata Nui took away part of the land and created an island, a kind of sanctuary where he wanted to get the people to and then lift it up that high that only flying enemies would be able to get up to it. But flying evil creatures were rare back then. That could explain that gorge. But this book ends before the Matoran started to move on that island. It isn't even known if it started floating after all."

"Could it be ...", the sapphire Toa started. She and Tupua shared a gaze and it was obvious they had the same thought.

"Aro Nui...", the dark one said, "It is Mata Nui's sanctuary."

"Wait a minute", Takua suddenly said, "You said the village of light was where now the gorge is. What if Mata Nui never left this place? I mean when I was looking down there I just saw darkness. Not even the light of my sword could get through it. This is like Makuta has taken this place as his new home. And I don't think he wanted to move away too far from his brother."

"And that means", Gali continued, "we will have to go down. The swamps are the wrong place to search."

Takua stood up. "I will go and look for the others. I think some of them are down in the canyon right now. They shall stay where they are. As soon I've found them I'll get back and lead you to them."

"But how will you find them?" the Toa of water asked, "Have you looked around you? This is a giant place."

"Whenever a Toa needs to find the others he will find them. Otherwise I wouldn't have found you so fast. You two should better search for the others who are somewhere in the swamps too. If you want to, try following me into the darkness afterwards. We will meet again." He smiled. "Do you still remember Gali? 'Look for me in your dreams.' Maybe today this strange connection will work again."

"Good luck, chronicler", Gali said.

He just nodded, then turned and left the ruins.

"We should still stay here for a bit longer", Tupua suggested, "At least until you feel fit enough to walk longer distances."

The sapphire Toa laid back again. She still felt tired. So tired.

Had she slept for a few hours or just minutes, she didn't know but she felt much



better now. Tupua was standing beside her, his bow glowing in his hand.

"What's the matter?"

"Something fiery shot out of the trees just a few seconds ago. I didn't seem to be very far from here."

"Fiery? This could be Tahu's sign. I'm wondering if he's in danger again or just wanted to tell us where he is right now."

"If he's in danger he has brought it up here too. But this didn't look as if he needed help."

The Toa of darkness reached out a hand and helped his friend up.

"If you're already strong enough we can get to them."

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"It never seems to rain on those hills", Tahu said. He was sitting on a stone not far from the ruins and tried to get some wet plants off his body. "Do you have any clue how long we have already been in Karda?" he asked Onua who was sitting next to him and observing the landscape, "I meant, it feels like many days and just a couple of hours the same time."

"I know as much as you. Even if I used to live under the earth and never had suns, moon or stars as help to count the time. But under the earth an hour at least just feels like an hour and a day feels like a day. Whenever we have stopped to sleep a bit I couldn't even tell how long we slept. Seconds? Minutes? Hours? Maybe days? Sometimes I felt like I've slept a day and still felt tired, sometimes I thought just a few seconds have passed but I felt fit like I've never felt before."

Tahu lifted up his head. "I hear someone coming." His hand wandered over to his sword then he relaxed again. "They are Toa."

Gali waved them as soon as she saw them but she didn't dare to call in case enemies were around. But the shadows hadn't been seen for a very long time now.

When they finally reached Tahu and Onua the sapphire Toa started speaking again. "Holy gosh, Tahu, what have you thought running away like that? You could have led us into even greater danger. You are lucky that you're still alive."

But Tahu's and Onua's eyes now wandered over to Tupua.

"Who the Makuta is that?" the ruby Toa asked.

"Sorry fire-spitter that I've forgotten to put my name tag on", he got as answer.

"You? That pesky Matoran?" he asked surprised but it didn't sound as if he wanted to start and attack with it.

"Pesky Toa, if you wouldn't mind." The Toa of shadow grinned.

"But why ..."

"Like you I was born to be a Toa but I needed some extra kick in the ass to change. Just like Takanuva."

"Oh, yes, Takanuva is down here too. He is out to inform the others", Gali said, "And we should meet them because in this swamp we won't find anything."

Tahu lifted up his hands. "Whoa, slow down. My head is overloading. Tell us from the beginning on, not somewhere in the middle so that we can follow you too."

The Toa of water sighed. She would have wanted to break up to the gorge immediately but then again the others should be informed about the plans that have been made before too so she sat down and told from the time on she and Onua had been separated. And this time she said Lewa's name when she came to the part with

his attack. "He was controlled somehow that's obvious and when Tupua came and attacked him he fled into the direction where the gorge is. But that's not the only reason why we should go into the darkness."

When it came to Lewa Tahu wanted to know so many more things but he didn't interrupt Gali because he wanted to know the whole story first before getting into details. His thoughts were drifting away more and more although he tried his best to listen to every detail Gali had to tell. He was asking himself if his little green angel was alright.

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Lewa was stumbling through dark caves. His whole body was hurting but it wasn't from the fight. It felt like he was ripped apart from inside. He just wanted to get to his master fast. For sure he could heal him.

The Rahkshi hissed at him somewhere in the dark but he didn't care. Right now he had more important things to do than starting an open fight with a colleague.

Makuta was standing in front of one of the strange windows staring into the darkness but he turned around when he heard Lewa coming.

"You are back already? What has happened?"

"I attacked one of the Toa like planned", the green Toa pressed out. The pain inside was getting stronger again and he didn't know why. "But then another Toa I've never seen before come out of nowhere."

"There you see how tricky a Toa can be. You can never trust them because then they will attack you from behind."

Lewa didn't say anything. He thought about the fact that the other Toa hadn't even tried to attack him and he didn't believe that she had called the other one for help. His thoughts were torn back to Makuta's words. No, the last thing he should do now was thinking good things about other Toa. His loyalty belonged to his master.

"The darkness can heal your wounds", he heard Makuta say. "Just wait a bit then you will be able to go out again. You have strength, I know it." He looked out of his window again. "There are a few Toa very close to my lair. I don't think there's another one who can attack you from behind again. Rest a bit, then you can take care of them."

Lewa nodded then turned and disappeared into the darkness.

"Why are you so nice to him?" Lerahk's hiss came out of nowhere, "All your other creatures you treat like a Hikaki in your flower bed."

"He's strong willed. If I make a mistake I'll lose control over him again. I'm just giving him what he's longing for. Someone who's treating him good, someone who doesn't think he's a child or weakling, someone he sees as a 'friend'. I just can keep him as long as I show him how cruel the others can be to him and how nice I am."

"But it's still risky. What if the others try to concern him that they are his friends?"

"If they don't do it right now they won't have a chance later on. The word 'friend' for a Toa vanishes more and more the longer he stays in darkness until it's erased completely. And where will the Toa get light from to stop this process?"

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In which direction do we have to go?" Kopaka turned around and tried to look through the darkness.

"I don't know. Everything looks so similar. It seems like we're lost."

"We are lost if we both say so. For now we should not lose hope."

But also the ivory Toa didn't know how they would get out of the gorge. They didn't know where they came from or in which direction they wanted to go before.

"I-I think there's something coming towards us but I don't know what it is. It doesn't look much like a shadow because I don't think shadows would use light." Pohatu pointed at something a few hundred meters away. Indeed it looked like a little flying light ball. The closer it was coming the better they could see that it was someone who was flying into their direction, holding a glowing sword like a torch in his hand.

"Should we make him know that we are here?" the auburn Toa asked.

"I don't know. We should stay cautious but on the other side someone who uses light can never be Makuta's friend."

The glowing sword was useless if Takua would have wanted to see more but it was keeping harm away from him. More or less. A single shadow would think about it twice if he really should attack. The Toa of light just hoped that not more than two shadows were around. In groups they would have been tougher and even might have attacked someone with light.

Suddenly he heard a familiar voice under him not very far away.

"You with the light, whoever you are, can you help us? We're Toa, Makuta's enemies. We're lost and could need some help."

Takua slowly glided down until he saw two figures.

"Pohatu, Kopaka, thank goodness I've found you so fast."

He landed close to them.

"Do we know you?" Kopaka asked, "Wait, can it be that you are one of the new Toa?"

"Yes, Takanuva, Toa of light", the golden one answered.

"But ... what are you doing here?" Pohatu asked surprised, "I thought only we six were supposed to go to Karda."

"I can explain later while we're waiting. First of all you have to know that we mustn't leave this gorge. The swamp would lead us nowhere but I have the feeling our destiny is lying here."

Before he could get any further with his explanations a voice was calling out of the darkness, "Your destiny lies in your death, Toa."

The three startled and looked around.

"No, not again", Pohatu whispered. "There's something coming through the rocks. I can feel it under my feet."

This time the floor wasn't breaking apart and no rocks were flying around. The shadows around them just came out of the floor like they were standing in invisible elevators but now it were four of them.

"Who has spoken? That voice sounded too bright for one of them", Kopaka meant.

And now someone different was stepping out of the darkness. A very familiar looking young Toa with lime green eyes. But his body was in the darkest shades of green they had ever seen.

"L-Lewa? What ... what the hell are you doing?" Pohatu sputtered in surprise.

"What I am doing?" Lewa tilted his head, "Helping my friends, defeating my enemies. Too bad for you that you're on the wrong side."

"But ... but why? We are your friends, remember?"

"Friends? No Toa could ever be my friend. They are just treacherous creatures that have to be eliminated." He was speaking with a coldness that could have been Makuta's.

"Boy, be reasonable", Kopaka tried to convince him, "We have fought against Makuta for years together. He is not a friend. Destruction and death is following him."

"Lies! Nothing but lies!" the Toa of air shouted, "Shadows, attack!"

It wasn't that the shadows would have ever listened to a Toa's command; they just did it because it was their plan anyway but they avoided it to attack Takua for now. His sword didn't have much light energy but still enough to weaken them.

Kopaka and Pohatu had learned to know the shadows' way of attacks as quick and able to knock a Toa out within a second but now they were fighting with something that looked like swords made of shadow but still were able to leave deep cuts if they hit their target.

"Why the Makuta are they fighting that way?" Pohatu asked and blocked a strike with his claws.

"Wondered about that too but I think the first attack was just a warning. Something that could just weaken but not kill. Now they seem to go for all or nothing", was Kopaka's answer.

The two were fighting back on back to minimize the risk of an attack from behind.

Meanwhile Takua had to face Lewa. The two Toa were circling around each other, one not wanting to attack at all the other just waiting for the perfect timing.

"Listen, Lewa, I don't want to attack you. I can't say we're friends, for that we haven't met often enough but you're a Toa like me. I can't fight with someone who should be on my side."

"Why do all Toa I meet just want to talk? I *am* on the right side, on the side where my master is. You are a new Toa, aren't you? There's still hope you will learn what's right and wrong."

"And right can never be *Makuta's* side." He said the god's name as if he wanted to spit it out. Therefore he earned a slash over his face.

"But my hopes won't come true. I can't teach you a better thing. You Toa are spoiled from the beginning."

Takua avoided a few other strikes but wasn't sure how long he could keep that on. Lewa was fast and even if the Toa of light had tried to attack him the other one had more experience in fights and it would have been a short battle.

The longer they were fighting them back the more hopeless Kopaka felt. They never had fought enemies as fast as they were. They nearly never missed and avoided most of the Toa's attacks. Just a bit longer and the Toa could be history.

'Wait', Kopaka suddenly thought, 'Are those really your thoughts? You have been in many tricky situations but never thought about it so negative.' He tried to ban the negative feelings, tried to think about something worth fighting for, the people on the islands, his former home, the Mount Ihu, his fellow Toa and friends – the feeling of hopelessness seemed to grow weaker, he possibly had found a weak spot. He tried to fight while concentrating on each of his Toa friends, Tahu, Pohatu, Onua, Lewa – although he had gone insane right now, Gali – mostly about Gali. The fire of hope was

burning stronger. He now knew they could make it out there alive – somehow – they just hadn't found the right way for now.

"I – I can't hold on any longer", he heard Pohatu's weak voice. "We don't have any chance." The Toa of stone had sunken to the floor. He still tried to fight but more attacks were hitting him now than before. Kopaka lifted his shield for defence and quickly looked over to his friend. He didn't have more wounds than the Toa of ice, not enough to bring him down.

"Try to think about something positive, about your friends", the ivory Toa shouted. He knew that this was too general and he needed something more specific to get the auburn Toa to start thinking.

"Remember your last Koli training with your Matoran. Think about the time when you still were able to visit Onua in his own village ... and his useless try to teach you to dig through the rocks with you hands and not to kick them around like big Koli balls."

For a short time Pohatu stopped in his moves and slightly smiled. It seemed to work. He jumped up again and helped Kopaka who had done the fighting for a few minutes against four shadows he couldn't even freeze after Pohatu's breakdown. But with that fire burning inside of him right now he felt as if he could have fought eight of them at the same time, half-godly or not.

The shadows suddenly stopped the fight and looked at each other.

"Uh-oh, I don't think I like that", Pohatu whispered.

"Whatever they are planning, we've found a weak spot. As long as we stick together and hold on to the thought what we're fighting for they're not stronger than we are." Suddenly the shadows were gone and they just saw a big black energy ball shooting into their direction. Without thinking about it Kopaka lifted his shield with the call, "For the sake of friendship!"

The shadows had gone through his armour and his body. How would his shield alone withstand them? But he had no doubt in it. The energy ball hit the shield ... and was thrown back.

Takua already had several wounds but he wasn't giving up. The next strike he could block again. Steel was slamming against steel. At least Lewa hadn't used any of his elemental attacks. They seemed to be too Toa-like for him. A sudden kick in his stomach made the Toa of light stumble and fall to his knees. A second kick against his arm and his sword was flying into the darkness. Takua lifted his head panting heavily. Lewa was standing above him, Katana ready for the final strike. The golden Toa never felt so helpless. His sword was out of reach. He didn't see Kopaka or Pohatu but he presumed they were still fighting against four enemies, half-godly enemies. But even if everything seemed so hopeless he knew he had to do something. He had never given up fight before in his life.

And suddenly his Kanohi started glowing. A light spread out of him brighter than everything he had ever seen, flooding the whole area and made him think that even the suns had to hide away from him otherwise they would have been burned or blinded or whatever by it. For a few seconds he saw nothing but white even when he closed his eyes, then it slowly faded again but still a bit remained. It was like someone had turned on a lamp in a dark room. He now could see a desert made of rocks and sand around him. In the distance something was glowing but it seemed to be very far away. The shadows and Lewa were gone.

The others were looking around too.

"What was that?" Pohatu asked, "And where are those creeps and Lewa?"

"It seems like my Kanohi has activated for the first time. Maybe that killed the shadows. I don't think it harmed Lewa much but after he's on Makuta's side now he probably fled the light." Takua looked at his fellow Toa." We now have a good reason to stay where we are. We have to heal up before we can go any further. And now I can finally tell you what had happened before I met you."

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The dark spirit never had felt so much pain in all his existence before. It felt like someone had killed a part of him from inside. He knelt on the floor, surrounded by his healing darkness but somehow he knew that the pain might go away but not the wound inside of him.

The same time Lewa was lying on the floor somewhere in the tunnels coiled up and screaming in pain. It felt like he was ripped apart again but he was afraid to go to his master because of his repeated failure. The light hadn't reached the tunnels but still he didn't feel as safe there as before. Right now he felt as if he belonged nowhere, not to the light and not to the darkness, not to the Toa and not to Makuta. The pain slowly faded but still it felt a bit as if something inside of him tried to burst out. He turned on his back and breathed heavily. Desperation filled his heart again while he was staring into the darkness.

'What should he fight for? What should he even believe in?'

## Kapitel 33: Chapter 33: Holding on

### Chapter 33: Holding on

"Holy gosh, my stomach hurts as if I haven't eaten for years", Tahu whined.

Gali stopped her meditation and looked at him. "We just have the things we were able to load on the Kewa without getting too heavy for them which is already less enough. You can have something now but we don't know how long our journey will still last. Maybe we have to starve at the end of it."

"At least it wouldn't kill us. A lack of water would rather be our death." He looked over the landscape behind him. "I'm not going to drink that."

"You can call yourself lucky you have a Toa of water with you", the sapphire Toa said and closed her eyes again.

Tahu watched her for a few seconds. "What the heck is she doing?"

"Trying to get contact to Takanuva or something like that", Tupua answered and pushed over the little victual bag. "I thought you Toa could live without food."

"We can live without it for a very long time, but after some times our bellies start feeling empty too", Onua explained while Tahu looked for something he would like to eat. "And the longer we starve the worse fighters we become. Tahu, don't be so picky. Take what you get we don't have anything else."

For some time they remained silent until Gali got the word again. "I saw them, fighting against shadows or something like that and then everything was covered in light. I don't know what those pictures are supposed to mean but I know that he has found them now."

"Shall I initiate teleportation?" Tupua asked.

"If you can carry us all", Gali said.

"I was able to carry all of you Toa when I still was a Matoran and now you are just three and I'm a Toa."

The Toa of water looked over the swamp. "It's a very long distance."

"I can only teleport as far as my energy longs. If I don't have enough we will land somewhere between our start and our goal. Then we still can walk."

"Alright then", Onua stood up, "Tahu, get out of that bag, we have to get going."

The dark Toa took Gali's hand. "Just hold on to each other."

It was a feeling as if they were dragged up and whirled around very fast like they were in a tornado but they couldn't see much because it was hard to even open the eyes. When Tupua still was a Matoran, teleporting more felt like very quick flying. Then they suddenly lost contact to each other and hit the ground.

"I'm sorry", they heard Tupua, "It looks like that still needs more practice. Damn, everything is so complicated when you are a Toa."

"That didn't look very elegant", someone said and reached out a hand to Gali. She lifted her head and looked into Kopaka's icy blue eyes.

"I wished you would have come sooner. You already have missed all the fun."

Pohatu came over to them too. "Where do we have to go next? I mean this area is gigantic. How will we ever find something, if we don't know what we're looking for?"

"We will find Lewa first", Tahu said and looked around. Now he noticed how bright everything looked. Not much brighter than the swamp, it still was a bit dusky but

brighter than they had seen it from the platform. "Is that even the right canyon?"

"I have used my Kanohi", Takua said and sounded a bit embarrassed, "And now it doesn't want to go away anymore."

"That's great, that's really, really great". Tahu rejoiced, "Now the dark spirit has to retreat to the only places the light can't reach: the caves. And we can continue our journey without too much danger. Even if he sees us there's not much left he could do."

"Don't get too over-excited yet", Kopaka said, "We still haven't found Lewa or even started that last part of our voyage. When Makuta has retreated to the caves Lewa must have done the same. We have to meet him in the shadows."

"No matter how great the danger is", the ruby Toa said, "I will get him back." He sighed "After all it's my own fault, he got into that misery."

Since they wanted Tupua to save his energy for case of danger they had to walk. It looked farther than it really was. The caves soon came in sight. But now there was another problem: Which entry should they take?

"I'd suggest we take the one we're standing closest", Onua said. "Those types of tunnels tend to have connections to each other."

Pohatu looked up the wall. Over their heads there were entries over entries.

"Alright", he said, "You're the underground building master. We just have to believe you."

So they entered one of the lowest caves. No one dared to speak and they all stayed close to the ebony Toa. The absence of sounds was sending chills down their spines. Could Onua have been wrong and they had entered a completely empty cave with no connection to one of the other tunnels? No, now they heard something. Steps were coming closer. They were echoing through the corridors. The Toa were unable to locate where they were coming from. And suddenly he was there, standing in front of them, only a few steps away. A young Toa in darkest green with lime coloured eyes.

"What are you doing here?" he asked, "This is my master's lair. You are not allowed to enter. I have to kill all the ones who are here without my master's agreement."

Kopaka couldn't hold himself back any longer and let loose a blast of ice, a move he for once didn't think through. His attack was melted in the air though, thanks to Tahu. Lewa laughed. "You won't stand a chance if you keep on like that. Even if you refuse to fight I won't have mercy." His voice got colder. "Defend yourself", he ordered, body poised to strike.

The others wanted to get ready too but Onua said, "No, let Tahu take a try to get through. All we can do is to hurt him. He doesn't seem to know his friends anymore but maybe their love can overcome it."

"That's good", Lewa said and looked at Tahu. "You were the one I had been searching for."

The Toa of fire was unable to raise his weapons. He couldn't strike him – he wouldn't strike him.

"Well, your choice." Lewa shrugged and lunged forward. Tahu dodged to the right, avoided the blow but the agile Toa quickly turned and slashed with his blade, scaring the others chest plate. The next downwards swing was caught in the fire Toa's left hand. The blade was cutting into his palm and drawing rivulets of crimson liquid. He ignored the pain, caught and held the others gaze with his own instead. When their eyes locked the dark green one let out a small gasp, body moving to pull away but Tahu grabbed his arm and held him in place.



*Look into my eyes  
You will see  
What you mean to me  
Search your heart  
Search your soul  
And when you find me there  
You'll search no more*

"Lewa, I know what I've done and I've never regretted something more. I'm sorry for what I've said and I wished I could turn back time. I should have told you about my worries earlier. Before we left Aro Nui I had those visions that Makuta's creatures would be on search for you and that they would follow me and Onua first because you're always near us. I was so afraid to lose you and this fear completely blocked my thoughts. I'm so sorry. Please say you still remember your love. Please fight Makuta's control, Lewa."

*Don't tell me  
It's not worth trying for  
You can't tell me  
It's not worth dying for  
You know it's true  
Everything I do  
I do it for you*

Tears spilled from ruby eyes. If his love didn't remember what was left for him? "I ..." Something in his voice caused Lewa to search his mind desperately but he couldn't get to the part of it that once had worried about Tahu, had once loved him. It had been locked up by an outside force, desperately trying to get free but to no avail. "... don't."

Time seemed to stop then, Tahu's heart shattering within his chest. But he couldn't give up though. He had noticed the hesitation in his voice; saw the way his eyes flickered.

*Look into your heart  
You will find  
There's nothing there to hide  
Take me as I am  
Take my life  
I would give it all  
I would sacrifice*

"My green angel, please don't let him take you from me. I love you too much to go on without you." He wrenched his eyes shut and pulled a now stunned Toa of air into his arms, holding him tightly. "And if you still insist on killing me ... I would die for you."

*There's no love  
Like your love  
And no other*

*Can give more love  
There's nowhere  
Unless you're there  
All the time  
All the way*

"I love you, Lewa", were Tahu's whispered words, face buried in the crook of the other's neck as the green one stood completely still, arms hanging at his sides. The younger one's body gave a jerk suddenly and his fingers twitched, dropping his Katanas. His arms slowly – shakily – reached up and encircled Tahu's torso, his forehead coming to rest on his shoulder tiredly.

"I love you too ... Tahu."

The fire Toa's head shot up and he gazed with widened joy-filled eyes as colours melted away in his arms, changed to emerald again.

For a moment they stood silently, just holding on to each other until ...

"You smell like a rotten egg, did you know that Tahu?" Lewa looked up again. Tahu smiled, the corners of Lewa's mouth just twitched.

"It's so good to have you back again, my little angel."

"But where will we go now? Do we have any clue how to awaken Mata Nui, if we will ever find him? It all feels so hopeless."

*Now we've travelled far  
But are we any nearer?  
There's a feeling we're reaching for  
In the fields where it all began  
Listen, do you hear?  
I thought I heard a promise  
But that empty feeling grows  
And I'm scared that I will forget*

Tahu never had thought what to do next after they had Lewa back but now it came over his lips as if he had planned it for a very long time. "We will follow the light and reach the Kanohi of life through the walls of energy." He didn't even know what he was talking about.

Recognition came to Lewa's eyes. "The Vortex ... When I was brought to the caves I saw a light in the distance and the Rahkshi said it is a kind of prison. But when Makuta gave me more powers I saw through the darkness and it's a very long distance. It must be a very large prison otherwise we wouldn't see it. How will we ever reach that? We're just a few Toa, not gods."

*Just some boys and girls  
Trying to change a cold world  
I don't expect that you'll understand  
When you look at this empty land*

The ruby Toa turned his head. "Can you teleport us over part of the distance already, Tupua?"

The dark Toa shook his head. "My energy is full but I can't teleport. We're at Makuta's territory now. Somehow my ability is blocked."

"Then we'll have to walk."

Lewa's gaze shot over the Toa standing behind Tahu. "Tupua?" he asked surprised.

"Yes, he is it but we will tell you everything later. First we have to get out of those caves."

They followed the path they had come back again. At first they were all wrapped up in silence then Lewa spoke again. "Makuta told me many things to convince me that his ways are true and right. Most of it might have been lies but I think when he talked about himself and why he got evil he said the truth. I had a look into Makuta's heart for a few seconds. Just for a little moment he showed me his truth. He still loves his brother and deep inside of him there still lives the protector of this world he once was."

"This could explain the shadow that was on our side", Gali said.

"Shadow?" Lewa asked.

"Alright", Tahu said, "I think now it's time to tell you what had happened since your left. There will be time enough even for a very detailed story on our way to the light."

*But I, I can't remember  
Look around and round  
Cause people still hanging on  
And I, I can't remember, babe  
Being light all day  
Like lovers left holding on  
See it's me, I'm the one  
Believe in me, I've just begun  
We'll be here when the lights come on  
When it all comes down to me and you*

## Kapitel 34: Chapter 34: To the Vortex

### Chapter 34: To the Vortex

"Why have you never said anything that we knew each other before – that we have been friends?" Gali asked. She finally had found a chance to ask Tupua what she had wanted to ask since she had remembered that little part of her past life.

The Toa of shadow didn't answer immediately as if he was still thinking about how he could tell it then he finally said, "You know me ... more or less ... After we had seen each other the last time three years had passed. People can change very much over that time. I was afraid you didn't want to be my friend anymore at first but when I saw you couldn't remember anything about your past life I first wanted to see how much your personality had changed. I soon noticed that you haven't changed a bit and still took me as I was even if I was a stranger to you now and I wanted to tell you that we once were friends but I never got the chance. Things happened so fast, I just needed a time of silence where we just could wander around without enemies interrupting us, a time like now."

"I always had this feeling inside of me that I must have known you. And it might be that you now have found more than one friend. We Toa share the same destiny. There are some things you can't get through without becoming friends. Even Tahu accepts you now."

Tupua sighed, "I know. Since you have come to Aro Nui again I never had been in so many dangerous situations and still walking with you Toa feels better than staying between the Matoran."

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Tahu hadn't guessed wrong. Time was still impossible to count but they all felt they had walked for a very long time. Their victuals slowly drew to an end and Gali could just produce very less water. The landscape was nearly completely dried out. Springs were rare. They had walked for miles and just slept when they only had the choice left between stumbling forward and sleeping but still the Vortex looked as if it just had come closer a very little bit.

Finally all of the springs were gone. To become a real desert only the heat was missing in this land. To get a bit more water than Gali could make Kopaka created ice which was melted by Tahu then. They talked as less as possible. Lewa had even given up flying to save energy. At least there was no sign of Makuta or one of his creatures. Whatever he was planning it wasn't concerning this land or the Toa anymore.

Although they tried to think positive one thought was stuck in their minds. 'What if we will never reach it? What if our journey ends in this desert?'

"Have you ever thought about what will happen to us when we really will be the ones to fulfil our destiny?" Gali once had asked, "A Toa's destiny is to defeat Makuta but what will be if we really have made it to that point. The Toa before us died or became Turaga when it was time for the next generation of Toa. The next generation is here already but we still are Toa. Will we still be Toa when this all is over? Will we die? Will

we be changed to something different?"

But the others didn't know the answers as well. They hadn't even thought about it until now.

From time to time Tupua read in his book again to find any clues what to do after they had reached the Vortex. He still hadn't been able to leave the old book behind although Takua had already scanned the pages.

"The Vortex is mentioned here, not as a prison but as a place only the gods were able to enter."

"Oh great", Tahu said, "But unfortunately we are no gods."

"A mortal being can get into it when it was allowed or ordered there by the gods ... but it doesn't say how this mortal being can get out again."

The landscape slowly changed, got hillier and then they were walking on paths between the mountains. The glowing light had disappeared behind them but now the Toa knew which paths they had to follow. Like a migratory bird will always know its way to the south and back they had the feeling they knew the Vortex' position. And now it was coming closer very fast.

"Is it just me or are we really closer than it looked before we entered the mountains?" Lewa asked. It was the first time he was speaking since they had left Makuta's caves.

"It's no surprise if you think about the land in which we are", was Onua's answer. "The Vortex is a private space for the gods but now one of them has ordered us there. There's less need for it to stay away from us for much longer, although it should have come closer a bit earlier."

"I can't walk anymore", Lewa moaned and leaned against the rock face. "This is too much for me. My legs can't carry me anymore."

"Come on, it's not far anymore. Just two or three mountains to walk by and we'll be there", Tahu tried to convince him, then he sighed and said, "And if your legs can't carry you anymore I will do it."

With Lewa on his back he moved on. His own legs now protested but he didn't care and even refused the other's help. At least this he wanted to do for Lewa after letting him down too often.

Their road now led upwards but still between the mountains not upon one of them. Then after some more time, maybe hours, they didn't know, when all of them began feeling weak and tired again and wanted nothing more than resting a bit their path slowly came to an end. A basin was opening in front of them. A small path led down to an enormous lake surrounded by mountains. Bridges of wood or stone were built on it, leading away like solar rays from something floating in the middle of the lake just a few feet over the water, a gigantic glowing orb. The sight was so overwhelming that the Toa forgot about everything even to breath.

Tahu was the first one to find his speech again. "And I thought the swamp was big ..." He noticed the little path beside him. "So he really wants us to go down. But what next?"

"I could go anywhere", Lewa mumbled into his back, "as long as the water is drinkable."

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Gali had checked the water. It was of a better quality than they would have presumed in this land.

They now were resting near a stone bridge. There still was no food but at least they had found water.

Onua and Pohatu had gone exploring the area around them. Tahu and Tupua kept watch while the others were sleeping, although they didn't think an attack would come to this place. They were both staring at the Vortex all the time.

"What would happen if Mata Nui gets back his old Kanohi?" Tupua asked, "Maybe he needs a lot of energy to get himself free of that thing. I wouldn't want to be near that thing when that happens."

"I don't think there's any need for us all to enter that thing. I mean, what if that would really keep you in there forever. Your book said nothing about the people who came out of it again, didn't it? ... And why hadn't Mata Nui come out of it earlier so that we could give him his Kanohi outside. This mask can't restore his energy. He has to do it by himself. But all he still wanted was the Kanohi of life."

Tupua was staring into the water as if he had found the solution in there. "No, he hasn't gotten all of his energy back." He looked at Tahu, "I'm wearing the last storage. So what if the carrier of the Manawa will bring the Kanohi of life with him?"

"Do you mean you want to enter this?"

"Who else will you send in there? And I don't think that I would die or be captured forever. It's Mata Nui we're talking about."

Onua's and Pohatu's return ended their little discussion. They both were carrying round orange and red fruits.

"We have found plants growing just a few meters away from here. Don't know what it is but after the water wasn't poisoned we didn't think the fruits would be. I don't think anything dangerous would want to grow around Mata Nui", Pohatu exclaimed, "We have tried them and didn't drop dead. They taste a bit sour but not too much. Shall we wake the others now?"

"Yeah, maybe. I think now you should get a bit sleep", Tahu said and gently shook Lewa. "Hey, wake up, dear. Breakfast is ready."

The emerald Toa yawned and opened his eyes. "Food? You have really found something?"

"Yes, but don't ask me what those things are called."

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They slept and kept watch by turns now. The fruits soon were gone but they also didn't need more of them now. Tupua still hadn't said a word about his plans.

Then finally when all of them felt fit enough again he explained his earlier thoughts.

"No, you can't do that", was Gali's first reaction, "There has to be another solution than sacrificing one of us."

"And who will go instead of me? Because we already know that at least one of us has to go in. And then I will have to live without my Kanohi because he needs that too. Maybe I have already found out how to use it without noticing it because I feel this strange connection to Mata Nui right now as if I can read his mind, as if I can take a look into his heart, maybe it's just there because part of him is still inside the Manawa but I know that he must have both Kanohi." For a moment he held Gali's hand then took a step back as if he was afraid she still would try to stop him at any case. "I will

come back soon. Don't worry about me. The way over the bridge will be long so there will be enough time for you to get out of here. And you have to get out because I don't know how much energy Mata Nu will need to set free."

"But how are we supposed to get out so quickly?" Takua threw in, "We had a very long travel through wastelands, much longer than this bridge is."

"There has to be a second way. Mata Nui had to open the ceiling decades ago. I don't think he could squeeze a whole island through the Kini Nui. And Makuta had to find a way down there too. He couldn't enter through the Kini Nui because it's a sacred place.

Gali bit on her lower lip. She wanted to keep him back but the same time she couldn't. Kopaka took her hand and dragged her away with him. "Come, we need to fly up and search for an exit before whatever-it-will-be starts." To Tupua he said, "Good luck and try to reach the Vortex not too early."

They all wanted to use levitation, carried up faster by Lewa's gust. The dark Toa watched them taking off then he turned around and walked over the bridge, not too fast but also not too slow. He suddenly felt incredibly stupid. What if he really was running into death willingly? 'What are you afraid of?' he asked himself over and over again. 'You theoretically have died once. Just trust in Mata Nui again. And if this is really the last thing you do then why do you worry about it? At least you wouldn't have to care about anything that happens after that,'

After a too long and too short time he reached the glowing thing. He didn't know how high it really was because he was afraid to lift his head but he guessed a few hundred kilometres. He just went over to the part that was lowest over the bridges – it was just flying high enough that a Toa could walk under it – reached up a hand and touched the surface.

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Lewa had finally found a gap that looked big enough for a Toa. They only hoped that it was leading out of Karda Nui and not suddenly ended somewhere.

Behind them something started that sounded like many explosions. Blinding light spread over the land even filled the caves and tunnels. The walls around the Toa were shaking. More and more gaps opened but nearly all of them seemed to lead up.

Through all the light they could only see very less, most time they had just to feel their way but still they tried to fly as fast as possible. And then they felt the cold fresh wind, saw the stars over their heads. They landed a few steps away from the gap they had exited and looked around. In the distance they saw the city of Ta Metru.

Their landing place was the coast of Metru Nui, the island where the Matoran of Mata Nui now lived.

Snowflakes were falling. Lewa tried to catch one of them. Snow hadn't been usual on Mata Nui as long as the place where it fell wasn't called Mount Ihu. They must have spent many weeks, maybe a few months in Karda Nui. For a few seconds everything remained silent.

Then the water around the isle of Mata Nui exploded. The island broke into parts and a giant body rose out of the water. The god slowly opened his eyes but they weren't of the awaited light blue. They were of a cold crimson. Mata Nui's body had Makuta's eyes.





## Kapitel 35: Chapter 35: Winter of hope

### Chapter 35: Winter of hope

Snow still was gently falling and on the ground it was covered with blood.

Swarms of Bohrok and Rahi flooded Metru Nui. The Matoran had retreated into the remaining cities. Ga and Ko Metru already had fallen. At least the dark spirit who had taken over his brother's body had just reached the coast and stayed there while his swarms did the destructions. Most time the Toa had to split up because two or more cities were under attack the same time. Fortunately they now weren't a team of just seven anymore. The five new Toa Jaller, Hahli, Kongu, Hewkii and Nuparu had joined them and Rui was there as well. It was the first time since two weeks now that they had the chance to meet all together in the great town hall of Ta Metru.

Most of them were sitting around the table. No one wanted to speak beside Jaller and Tahu who were standing a bit to the side and talked to each other whispering. Lewa had crossed his arms on the table and placed his forehead on them. It looked as if he was sleeping. Gali looked as if she felt sick. From time to time one of them gazed up to the two fire Toa but they showed no reaction so far that they wanted to sit down soon.

Finally the two stepped over to the table.

"We have thought about it a lot", Tahu began. "It looks like we could never beat them. Makuta wants to rip us apart and drive us into desperation. The only reason why we were able to get together might be that he's planning the next attacks and wants to regroup his armies."

"But there still can be hope", Jaller continued. "The only thing we have to do is, we have to rip them apart before they can do it with us."

Surprised murmur between the Toa. Tahu needed some time to get their attention again. "It's the last thing Makuta would await. He's prepared that we only defend the villages. But what if we're wrecking havoc at different parts of the land ... and water ... maybe the air too? Makuta just sends out his creatures and they do the dirty work for him but if we attack from different sides he would have to split apart if he wants to get rid of us and regain the order between his troops. After he had already split a few times ... I don't know if it would be too good to do it again. Even if he's a god."

"No Toa should go alone", Jaller said, "and at least one of us should stay close to the cities, or at least one city, in case of danger. Tahu thought it would be best when the Toa of the same element get together so they can wreck havoc in the same area without problems."

This time not even Gali said anything against it. The plan sounded as if many things could go wrong but what else did they have?

Lewa lifted up his head. "So another time we can't go together?"

"This time not", Tahu said, "I just thought it would be good if Toa of the same element get together so they can enter the territories they have advantages in, but if you want me to go with you..."

The emerald one just shook his head, "No, I'm fine with it, thanks. I think I should take care of flying enemies and you can't fly. But I think that Kongu is at least a good Kewa

pilot."

So every Toa had a partner of the same element with exception of Rui, Kopaka and Takua.

"Looks like you freaks will go together", Kopaka grinned, "And I will stay here."

"I don't think so. Who else will be our master for the snowy regions, which is nearly everything right now? I have thought we two can check out the mountains as I'm not so vulnerable to coldness as half fire element." Rui laid an arm around Kopaka's shoulders and made a gesture as if he wanted to point at the tops of invisible mountains. "And beside I think Gali would want someone to keep an eye on you."

The icy Toa crossed his arms but still there was a little smile on his face.

"So then it's me who will stay at the town. Oh well", Takua shrugged. "I hope that there won't be too many attacks."

"There won't", Tahu sounded as if he wanted to promise it. "They will be too busy fighting us back."

"Will we go to the volcanic area?" Jaller applied to the other Toa of fire, "I think you're a very good lava surfer."

"As long as I won't have to swim through the lava. Listen", the ruby Toa rose his voice again and the others who had been talking and discussing about their upcoming mission were silent again, "When you're ready you can leave. I don't have anything more to say than good luck." He nodded over to Jaller to show him they were ready to leave.

Takua was the last one who remained in the room. At first he didn't know if there was even the need to leave it but then he sighed and decided to go out as well, looking if there was an attack earlier than awaited or if his help was needed somewhere. Maybe he would also meet Matoran he knew.

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The ropeway up the mountains was still intact. Rui and Kopaka could use it.

"Some of the Bohrok and the Muaka might prefer higher regions", the icy Toa explained, "That's why I wanted to go up there."

"So not just because you wanted to see the mountains again?" the mix scoffed.

The other one only responded with a glare.

"How deep is the snow?" Rui looked out of the cable car sceptically. If we need to fight we also need to move."

Kopaka jumped and landed on the snow. The trace he left was just a few centimetres deep. "It's not that deep..."

The other Toa now landed beside him and sank in up to his knees.

"... as long as you are a Toa of ice", the ivory one continued. "But I don't think it would be too hard for you to melt it away in front of you. Come on, I feel our enemies aren't far from us."

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It got warmer and warmer on the way the Toa of fire, earth and stone took. Maybe because they were now closer to the desert and it never snowed there but also because now they were coming closer to a volcanic region. The first part of their

journey they travelled together but then Onua and Nuparu took a path that led deeper underground and Pohatu and Hewkii headed for the road to the desert.

"I think soon it's time to get on my lava board", Tahu said, "There won't be many paths to go on when we're getting deeper into it."

"In some cases I can run over lava", Jaller said. "But I never tested how long. I thought it would be better to bring a board as well. It's just a Matoran board but it should be enough to carry a Toa's weight."

The paths really stopped very soon and now they were standing in front of a net of lava streams. Some of them were floating onto lakes of lava, others were leading into tunnels.

"The Bohrok and Rahi which love heat could be in one of those tunnels", Tahu said, ran over to one of the streams and jumped on his board. Jaller followed him close behind.

The only light was now coming from lava and fire.

"We should have brought a light stone with us", Jaller meant, "It would be hard to see an enemy even if he's standing right in front of us."

Suddenly something big shot over their heads.

"What was that?"

Tahu had turned around and was now staring into the darkness. "I don't know for sure but it looked as if we have found the first Bohrok."

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While Lewa and Kongu wanted to try to lead a Nui Rama swarm away from Aro Nui, the two water Toa headed to the sea. Gali really had missed the times she could be under the water. Hahli rather preferred to run over the water. They were keeping an eye out for Tarakava because they were bigger and had it harder to find something good to hide than the water Bohrok. But so far they had only seen Takea which seemed to be fleeing from something. Tarakava normally were loners and a Takea would never flee from a single Tarakava. Was it possible that the water Rahi had formed groups or were there Bohrok as well?

"Can you feel it too?" Gali's voice was coming out of the water so clear as if she was standing right beside Hahli.

"Yeah, I think so. There's something hiding in the deep. Something the Takea are afraid of. But so far it's just watching us."

"And maybe planning an attack..."

Kapitel 36: Chapter 36: An old alliance

Chapter 36: An old alliance

Takua wandered through the empty streets. The Matoran were hiding inside of the buildings, of course. The Toa of light sighed. Not that he wished an attack on Ta Metru or any of the other remaining cities but the last he wanted was this feeling of having nothing to do than wandering around empty streets like a prisoner in a very big cell.

"Takua, hey Takua!"

The golden Toa stopped. Who would still call him by his old name beside his best friend Jaller? Or the members of the little group he once led to defend the Kini Nui but that couldn't be possible. He turned around and saw a few Matoran running over to him. It could be possible.

Maku was the first one to reach him. "Oh, we're so glad we've found you", she gasped. She sounded as if she had run through the whole city. "Vakama said that you are the one who stayed to protect the city, so we searched for you."

"But why did you want to see me?" Takua was surprised but not unhappy. His gaze wandered over the Matoran in front of him. Hafu, Taipu, Tamaru, Kopeke, Maku, nearly all of his old group. Only Kapura was missing but he never was one of the fastest and Takua was sure that he would come as well sooner or later.

"We have something we want to show to you", Maku said.

"Fight with you like in old days we want", Tamaru continued.

"We all thought that you Toa just can't do everything all alone", Taipu meant.

"We once were a defender team and we always will be", Hafu threw in.

"...", was Kopeke's opinion.

"Whoa, wait, not so many of you at the same time." Takua lifted up his hands. "What do you mean, you want me to help? It's true that we once were a team but now there are so many different enemies out there which not even we Toa can handle and you are ... I mean..."

"Don't say, we're just Matoran", Maku stood with her hands on her hips. "You were once the same as we and you had no problems leading us into fights back then."

"Those were just a few Rahi and I was always supposed to be a Toa."

"Maybe we're supposed to be Toa as well. Everything could happen."

"I don't want to lead any of my friends into danger. A Toa won't have any other choice but you are Matoran."

"And we have chosen not to sit on our asses and wait for the death to come. Listen, we have seen that Makuta has given you Toa a really hard time. You can't fight like that forever. A Matoran might be weaker but together we can be strong. We have proven it often enough during times when we had to fight back enemies until a Toa could come for help."

Takua sighed but still a little smile wandered over his face. This was giving him memories of his past life. "Alright, I give it up. But do you have any plans how you will fight?"

"Come with us then you'll see what exactly we've planned. Kapura is still staying with the Kewa. We have trained them for a long time because they once were the best animals we could use to ride into battle, fearless as they are. And we also have chosen

discs as our weapons. We fought with them on the Kini Nui, can you remember?"

"But discs on a Kewa were just good for battling the Rama swarms"

"Discs and Kewa aren't the only things we wanted to use. That's why we needed training with them. But you will see when get there."

Now the Toa of light was curious as well. What could his old team have planned?

Normally Kewa lived in the jungle but the Matoran had brought some of them close to the city of Ta Aro. Standing on the snowy ground close to a city near a volcano instead of sitting on jungle trees they looked as out of place as a Kane-Ra in the ocean. And they all looked as if...

"Are they burning?" Takua asked, eyes widened.

"No, burning discs they carry", Tamaru answered, "Once I not good was at flying. But I learned while Kewa training. Like the Kewa not to fear fire learned. Show you we can, Kapura and me. Always together we trained."

Kapura who already had been sitting on a Kewa's back waved his hand as he saw the group coming and jumped off. "Good to see you again, chronicler, although you aren't the chronicler anymore. You have come with my friends. Does that mean we will be a team again like we once were? The defenders of ... whatever is to defend."

Takua still couldn't take his eyes off the Kewa. "First I want to see how your idea works. A bird with a flaming disc shooter on its back might look amazing but I don't know if the enemy can be impressed just by looks."

"Alright, show you we will. Kapura, your position."

Tamaru and Kapura climbed on one Kewa, the red Matoran took place at the shooter while the other one took over the steering. The bird started moving its wings and lifted off. Because of the wind the flames now grew a bit higher. It was like a Phoenix was flying over the city.

"We won't show you how the discs will work because they are just shot the same way like always", Kapura shouted down to Takua, "And I think you already know how that works. The only difference is that they are burning."

The Kewa was flying a few circles over their heads then landed again.

"Nearly all of our enemies fear the fire", Maku explained, "That's why we got the idea to use burning weapons. And the ones which are living in fire hopefully won't come out of the volcanic regions as long as there's still coldness and snow."

At first Takua was still standing stunned then he suddenly laughed.

"This idea is a great one. We should be able to create an army of fire beard riders. How many have you trained so far?"

"Just the six you see here", Kapura answered. "Kewa normally aren't too fond of fire as well. We would need more time to train more of them."

"Six is good for a beginning. If we always need one pilot and one shooter then we would need six more Matoran in our team so that all of the Kewa could be in action."

Takua couldn't think his plans any further because another Kewa appeared on the horizon, flying to the city very fast. The pilot jumped off before the bird had fully completed its landing process and ran over to the group. "Toa, Le Metru is under attack."

"What? But weren't Kongu and Lewa on the way to the jungle? Haven't the creatures there seen that two Toa are running around in their territory?"

"They were on their way, but then they changed their route and headed for the flying island instead."

"Then they must have had a reason." The Toa of light turned around. "It looks as if I'm the only Toa now but I won't fight alone. Take three of your Kewa and come with me."

It's time for the old alliance to test their new weapons. And I hope you all have learned how to fly."

Maku nodded. "We have always trained together. Maybe we're not as good as Kongu was but it still is good enough. But what's with you? Don't you need a Kewa as well?"

"I'm a Toa now. I want to use my own weapons and my own flying ability even if one of those birds would want to carry me. The last three should rather stay at the city and guard it as long as I'm not there. And they can give incoming enemies a peck from me."

The Matoran climbed on their Kewa and the team headed for the town in the jungle.

Kapitel 37: Chapter 37: Flight of the Phoenix

Chapter 37: Flight of the Phoenix

Takua couldn't think of a time when he had seen snow in the jungle though it was lesser than it might have been on other parts of the land except the desert.

The walls of Le Metru looked as if they could break down each second. A swarm of about twenty Levahk kept spitting acid against them. The Toa of light had awaited a Rama swarm as well just because the jungle was their natural home. And besides they might have been better to attack a city with walls around it because they would have been able to fly over them. But there was no sign of them at all.

One of the Bohrok looked around and screeched to warn the others. Was it just imagination or were they really happy to see a Toa all alone?

"Fire birds, ready for battle", Maku called. She, Taipu and Kapura climbed behind the shooters. The Bohrok tried to spit acid after the Kewa but the birds avoided the attacks. Not a single Bohrok tried to fly. 'They don't have the right Krana', Takua thought, 'But why would Makuta send a creature unable to fly into a region where flying is needed? Where else does he need those Krana?' A burning disk shot closely over his head and hit a Levahk. The screech was hurting in the Toa's ears.

If he really wanted to get rid of them Takua had no other choice than landing between them. He had no experience in flying and fighting the same time. It was exactly what the creatures wanted. While the others were still spitting at the Kewa and trying to avoid the flames about ten of them charged at the Toa. Takua whirled around his sword just to block the incoming attacks. "Kapura", he shouted without knowing if the Matoran could hear him or if Tamaru's Kewa was still close enough for a shot, "I need a disc!" Another flaming disc shot over his head. The Levahk screeched and jumped apart. Takua ran forward, just tried to hit as many Bohrok as possible. His ears were filled with the mechanical screeches; all he could see was fire, blood, from time to time a Bohrok which tried to attack him. A sharp pain shot through his left shoulder. He had been hit by acid. He turned around, just slammed his sword forward and heard the sound of cracking metal.

And then the attacks were suddenly over. The last remaining Bohrok had fled. Takua stumbled forward a few more steps until he was standing in front of the part of the wall the creatures had attacked. It was dripping of acid.

Behind him he heard the Kewa landing but he couldn't turn around.

"A good work, Takua", he heard Taipu's voice, "You've fight like at least three Toa."

'Just because I had no other choice', he thought but instead he said, "It really seems like your Kewa training has paid off. Alone I would have never been able to beat them back."

"Stay in this town we should. Walls broken are. If Bohrok that know attack again they will."

"A good idea, Tamaru", Hafu said, "Beside we need to get discs again. Our Kewa doesn't have so many anymore."

The Toa and the six Matoran left the battle field and entered the town. Their Kewa

followed them. Takua still didn't know what the place behind him looked like now and he also didn't want to give it a look but one thing he knew for sure: he hated this war. And now for the first time he started to hate being a Toa.

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It happened at the time when Lewa and Kongu had nearly reached Le Metru. Kongu gave a surprised call and pointed at something that came flying out of the trees. It was a very big Rama swarm but it wasn't heading for the Toa. Instead the insects were flying higher and higher.

"They are flying to Aro Nui!" Lewa shouted. "They want to attack the island."

"Lewa, our mission is to stir up enemies. The protection is Takua's part right now."

"This isn't just a town. We have a whole island to loose. I'm not sure if Takua thinks about it if he even knows it."

Kongu piloted his Kewa up as well, "Alright, let's get them away from the island first then we can always come back. Hey, Lewa, wait for me!"

But the emerald Toa was shooting up like a rocket. The first few Nui Rama had already reached the island's surface. The Matoran there had no time to prepare for an attack. He was now flying between the Rama but he tried to get to the top. A few of them started minor attacks but when he didn't react they started ignoring him as well. Lewa tried his best to reach Aro Nui before the Nui Rama did even if he had to make a stand against them all alone. He had already lost his home Mata Nui but at least he wanted to be able to fight for the place where he once had lived.

His landing place was this burned wood they had landed in when they had reached Aro Nui for the first time a few months ago. Kongu was still far behind so he would have no other chance than fight the first few of them alone. Lewa readied his Katanas. Now the Rama saw him as real enemy for the first time and charged at him. Lewa was buried in a flood of claws and stings. His Katanas went wild, slashing through every Rahi he could reach. More and more of them were reaching the island and there was still no sign of Kongu. The emerald Toa desperately struggled to get free of them.

"Hold on, little Toa!"

A flashing and the sound of metal driving through metal. A Rama's head was separated from its body. For a second Lewa was stunned but then felt new energy rushing through his body now that he knew he wasn't alone anymore.

When Kongu arrived he saw this green guy as well but at least he was fighting against the Rama and not against Lewa and that was enough to count the stranger as an ally. He jumped off his Kewa, drew his weapons and ran to help Lewa.

Rama never were an enemy hard to defeat. Their only strength was that they always attacked in large groups. The fighting power of the three defenders was enough to get rid of the Rahi though it was hard enough to do so.

"Zaktan, I have to thank you. A second time you have saved my life", Lewa said when the battle finally was over.

"No big deal, little Toa. You have also saved us from the Ikuta control."

"But why are you still here and not with the other ones of your kind?"

"They moved on, but I had the need to return because it felt as if something was going on and it seems I was right. Don't worry, I will find the others again some day. I only need to stay on this island for a while. At least until the major attack waves are over."



"I think that still could take some time", Kongu said, "But at least we now know someone who will watch over this place while we're in Metru Nui."

"How is it going so far?" Zaktan asked.

"Not too well. We just can't fight a god so we try to split him up again like he already did once and hope this will make him weaker", Lewa explained, "But so far it looks like he has enough creatures and doesn't need to jump into action at all."

"By the way", Kongu looked at his Kewa, "I think we should get back again. Right now it doesn't look as if the island is in danger anymore..." But the same time he had spoken the last word he saw a strange cloud rapidly coming closer. "Oh no ..."

The other two looked at him. "What is it?"

"Rama swarm again..."

## Kapitel 38: Chapter 38: The flaw in the plan

### Chapter 38: The flaw in the plan

The desert Pohatu and Hewkii knew was a plain sand field with just a few more or less bigger rocks and canyons. This desert only contained canyons made of rock and sand. There were so many hideouts for enemies and their nervousness was growing.

"This area would be perfect for an ambush", Hewkii said, "The only problem is that we can't find someone to attack."

"It would be better to fly over them instead of walk between them", Pohatu said.

A noise beside them made them startle. A little Kofo Jaga was crawling over the wall and tried to hide behind a rock.

"No, this is not what we've been searching for", Pohatu sighed relieved, "Ours is a bigger one."

"Like this one?" a voice snarled behind them.

The two shot around. A Nuhvok was standing behind them, a Nui Jaga came climbing down the wall.

"Just the two of you?" Pohatu laughed, "Have you really planned to attack us or have you just fallen down the rocks?"

"Same question for you, Toa", the Bohrok answered, "But do you really think we are all alone? Can't it also be possible that a whole army of Nui Jaga and Bohrok have already watched you for some time? It was a very stupid idea to come here without bringing your friends, Toa."

The Toa looked up. Wasn't there something else crawling over the walls or standing on top of them? It sounded as if there were dozens of Nui Jaga around.

"What shall we do?" Hewkii whispered, "Fight?"

Pohatu laughed humourless. "We won't stand a chance against this mass of Nui Jaga and if the Bohrok is right he brought his colleagues along as well. Even Tahu would notice that this fight won't take a long time. All we can do is trying to get away from here as fast as possible."

"But how? We would have to run that Bohrok in front of us over and they will all follow us."

"If he's not getting away fast enough I would have no other choice than running him over. Nothing will stop me so easily once I have started racing. Jump on my back, else you won't be able to keep up with me."

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Onua was now crawling slower through the tunnel. His senses were alarmed. There was something that shouldn't be there at least not in this mass and not in Onu Metru. Nuparu looked back. "Why have you stopped? Is there something wrong?"

"Can you smell that? Can you hear it?"

"Well, it smells like wet earth ... maybe a little too wet. But this could be because of an underground spring."

"No, it's more like a whole underground lake. I've never heard of something like that so close to the city."

He started moving again. "Come, we need to know what has happened."

Only a few minutes later the tunnel ended. They now should have had a look over the huts of Onu Metru.

"Oh no ..." Onua whispered when he reached the end of the tunnel and looked into the great hall. "Who has let the water Bohrok in?"

"The next fallen city"

"No, it's rather ... swimming."

The whole area was flooded. In the dark water shadows that looked like Bohrok were swimming around.

"Oh great, what shall we do now?" Nuparu sounded desperate. "I hope the people were able to get out of here."

"I have seen many Onu Matoran in Ta Metru. Maybe all of them have left the city already before this happened. "Onua wasn't really sure about that but at least it was calming him down a bit." The Bohrok have to notice us somehow. The plan was to wreck havoc but that's not possible as long as they don't even see us." He leaned out of the tunnel a bit and let his hands run over the wall. "Maybe I can climb out, close enough over the water."

"Be carefully."

"Don't worry. I've been doing this for many years and never managed to fall off a wall."

He carefully glided forward and tried to find a stand. Climbing over rocks was so much different than climbing over wet rocks and water not too far under his feet. The stone slipped away under his fingers and feet but he always somehow managed to find balance quickly enough.

Something big jumped out of the water, tried to snap at his feet and fell back. Water splashed against Onua's back and the wall. The stones slipped away under his fingers. A hand closed around his wrist and dragged him back against the wall. Nuparu was hanging beside him. He looked as if he had seen the hell breaking loose.

"We have to get away from here. There must be a few dozens of them. I've seen them coming from tunnels around and there already had been so many of them down there."

Onua looked down. His feet were already standing in the water.

"They are trying to flood the whole area. We can't get back to the tunnel we came from otherwise we would be trapped. We have to reach one of the tunnels above us." They started climbing up, the water slowly followed.

"When we reach the tunnel we would be able to fight at least a few of them", Nuparu shouted.

"I don't think they want to fight us directly", was Onua's response. "It rather looks as if they want to drown us. We have to leave the underground as fast as possible."

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Tahu was a master of the lava board but this was driving even him to his limits. He would have been able to fight during surfing but those creatures were just shooting around them and the two fire Toa had to try their best to avoid them.

A Bohrok hit Tahu hard. He tried to find balance again but it was useless. Fire was no problem to him but lava was too hot to bear. He would have screamed out in pain if

the burning liquid hadn't already closed over his head.

"Tahu!" Jaller had no time to concentrate but it still was enough that he didn't sink in when he ran over to the place his friend had disappeared. The lava was burning his soles, a Bohrok winged his head but he didn't notice any of it. He only focused on one thing. He reached out his hands into the liquid, was able to grab Tahu and dragged him out. His body was burned badly and he was barely conscious. Jaller knew that he had no time for searching one of the lava boards so he had to carry his friend and run the way back, a few Bohrok close behind him. He knew that the city wasn't far anymore when he felt hard ground under his feet again but he had to get rid of the Bohrok first otherwise he would have led them directly to the Matoran. Where was his weapon? He couldn't fight them bare handed. But then he noticed that Tahu's swords were on his back again. Hadn't he used them as lava board before? But then again the board had mysteriously disappeared after its owner had fallen off.

Jaller tried to lay Tahu down carefully and quickly the same time, grabbed his swords and stepped in front of the creatures.

"Get back or die! I won't let you through!"

There were only five Bohrok that were left. All others seemed to have lost their trail or just lost interest but that also meant that still five of them could attack him the same time. And those bastards were tough. The fire blades had to drive through several times before at least one was taken down. The fact that the creatures were immune to fire was no big help. Jaller knew that he only would have needed to destroy the Krana to wipe them out immediately but a greater strength than his right now would have been needed to break through those head plates. His limbs were hurting awfully when he finally brought the last one down. For a moment he just stood there and stared at the bodies around him without really seeing them. He felt blood running down his sleeves, saw blood dripping from his arms; he didn't know if it was even his own.

'Tahu', it finally shot through his mind. He stumbled back to his friend and picked him up again. His limbs protested but what else could he have done?

Some Matoran noticed them when he finally stumbled out of the caves and into the city and ran over to them.

"Bohrok attack ... he needs ... help ...", Jaller only brought out before he broke down to his knees.

## Kapitel 39: Chapter 39: Death of a Phoenix

### Chapter 39: Death of a Phoenix

A Tarakava shot out of the darkness but had to change directions really fast if it didn't want to swim right into an axe blade.

Hahli had sunken down into the water as well to help Gali fight even if she couldn't move as fast under water as her friend.

The Tarakava were swimming around them in circles like hungry sharks, some of them starting attacks from time to time.

"They want us to get tired", Hahli presumed.

"We have to concentrate on the infected Kanohi", Gali said, "It might be like the last time. If we get rid of them the Rahi might regain control over their own bodies and just swim away."

"But have you already tired to hit one of them? They can avoid your attack really quickly."

The Tarakava were getting nervous. Normally their prey was fleeing and not swimming on place ready to fight. Those two were also tougher than the normal prey. It was only a matter of time until the creatures would start the real attack.

Two of them were rushing into the Toa's direction. This time they didn't even try to evade the weapons. Blades were scratching over their skins but missing the infected masks.

Gali was able to dodge the claws but still she was pushed down where already some more Tarakava were about to begin their attacks. A purple light ball was shooting out of the darkness and hit the Tarakava above her then shot over to some of the other creatures like a ball-lightning gone crazy. Gali was finally able to hit the Kanohi of a completely distracted Tarakava.

"Hahli, are you alright? Where are you?"

"I'm okay. Just a few scratches but it didn't really hit me."

Hahli was swimming closer to the other Toa of water again while the light was still whirling around and hunting Tarakava. Was it just imagination or did the Toa really hear laughter coming from it? Some unmasked creatures were already fleeing.

After the last one was finally gone the light shot up to the surface. The two girls were following.

"Have you missed me?" was the first thing they heard after they surfaced. "As you can see, I kept my promise."

"Tupua!" Gali shouted. "How did you get out of that thing?"

The dark Toa was floating some centimetres over the water but it seemed as if he wasn't really there because he was flickering. The reason was that he couldn't fly and repeatedly teleported himself back to the same spot when he started falling.

"When this thing was rising up I was catapulted out somehow. I could feel it, something had completely gone wrong but, heck, what should I have done? I was drifting somewhere in the ocean, my connection to Mata Nui was cut off after I gave him what had been in my Kanohi, didn't even know if you all were still alive. This all is Makuta's handwriting, isn't it?"

The two other Toa just nodded.

Tupua slowly sank down into the water. "Well then, we have to get back to the island over there. Metru Nui I think."

"Can't you just teleport us?" Hahli asked.

"Darling, I would have to get past a god. He would notice Toa energy around him and catch me out of the air before I could even react. But swimming is nothing too Toa related. He wouldn't care if three – compared to him – tiny things are swimming to the land.

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The Rama hadn't been able to storm the jungle on the flying island, now they tried to take over the one on the surface. And the last remaining Rahkshi had decided to come with them. Using burning discs sure was a good idea – the Nui Rama feared the fire – but the major disadvantage also was that the Phoenix riders had to watch out not to burn down the trees by themselves.

Takua's sword had hit several Rahi so far but not wounded them so badly. The Toa of light didn't want to see more dead bodies than absolutely necessary and so he tried to get rid of the infected Kanohi first. As he was flying between the Kewa riders he had to watch out for flying discs as well.

A Rama suddenly hit its claws into his back, trying to bring him to fall. He was not a Toa of air and flying and fighting the same time already cost him enough concentration, besides this Rahi was not a lightweight. He was losing height too fast, couldn't catch himself up again.

"Watch out, boy!"

The Nui Rama was hit by ... a Koli ball?

Before Takua could even realize that the Rahi had let go of him and he could try flying again, he was caught by someone.

"You should better learn flying, pal", Hewkii said with a grin and let him down to the floor again.

"Before I learn flying you should rather learn swimming", was Takua's answer. "Heck, thanks, but why are you here? Have you shot the ball?"

"Nope, it was Pohatu. I didn't know he still had it in him after years without practise. He's taking care about some other Rahi right now. We had to leave the desert after we had run right into a Bohrok and Rahi camp. As long as there were just two of us we would have had no chance. And it looks like we're not the only ones." He pointed up in the air where two of the last Kewa they had left in Ta Metru were flying. They carried Onua and Nuparu, Kopaka and Rui.

"We couldn't even get up the mountains very far. Everything was crowded by those stupid bugs. At least we could sneak away undetected thanks to my invisible friend", Rui shouted when they were flying over the place.

"The tunnels are flooded. We couldn't get anywhere else than back through another tunnel", it came from Onua.

"Oh great..." Takua sighed. "We've planned to tear Makuta apart but right now it seems as if he had the same idea." He watched Onua's and Nuparu's Goku Kahu. Both weren't used to flying in a greater height than they would reach through jumping but at least their bird was an experienced one and prevented them from a crash.

"Why have they all come here?"

"Someone in Ta Metru must have told them that the jungle is under attack", Hewkii shrugged.

"They should have stayed in Ta Metru. Just in case..."

"It's a citadel. No one would bother fighting against those walls. It must be decades ago or maybe a few hundred years that there were fights in there, if ever. Well, I will get myself some good things to kick and you should go kickin' some Rahi butt as well. And try to stay in the air this time."

He gave Takua a quick grin and a thumbs-up then ran off. The Toa of light turned around as well, took a few steps start-up and took off.

Discs, balls, other things used instead of balls, Rahi attacks – Lewa might have had fun flying through this chaos but it slowly got a bit too much for Takua. He had just taken down two more Rama when the Rahkshi appeared. At first it was following him, jumping from one tree to another then started flying as well.

"Isn't it a good night to battle, Toa?" Lerahk chuckled when he was close up to Takua and pointed his staff towards him. "Maybe it's also a good night to die."

The Toa of light evaded the green beam shot at him. The tree behind him was cut into two pieces.

"Oh, you're familiar with the air I see. But can you also fight while flying?"

Takua dodged another attack and now readied his sword as well. But compared to him the Rahkshi was very skilled fighting in the air. He was able to evade the light beams and blocked the blows.

"Is that all you've got, little Toa? Now I will show you what real fighting means."

Takua had to let himself fall down. The beam only missed this head by a centimetre. Now he had only one thing in his mind: get away as fast as possible. Up here he would never have a chance. He shot away like a golden lightning, followed by green beams. A Rama suddenly appeared in his way and he crashed right into it. Behind him Lerahk had already readied for another attack. It was too late to avoid it, not as long as he was still fighting to get the Rahi off him. Giant wings grew into his sight, behind them he could see green light coming. His head shot up to the rider.

"Get away, Tamaru!"

Too late. The Matoran was hit in his chest and fell backwards.

Takua stabbed his sword into the Rahi's body and kicked it away as hard as possible – he didn't care anymore if the creature would die or not – and raced behind Tamaru even though he knew he couldn't catch him anymore. The Kewa had panicked after its rider was gone and Kapura tried his best to get it down to the ground again.

"Who do you think you are?" the Toa heard Lerahk shouting. "You can't quit a battle and run away just for a little Matoran. Do you hear me? I'll get you anyways. We'll meet again. I'll be waiting for you. On the highest spot in the red city. Come if you're Toa enough and want to get revenge." The Toa of light barley listened to him. His eyes were only fixed on Tamaru.

The green Matoran disappeared between the leaves of the jungle trees and Takua had to slow down if he didn't want to crash into a few plants. He could see Pohatu and Hewkii running to that place as well but they couldn't get any further because the swamp was getting deeper and their weight would have dragged them down.

"Are you sure, you want to fly into there?" he heard Pohatu's voice. It was merely a whisper.

"Yes, as long as there's still the slightest bit of hope." The golden Toa's voice was trembling. He had seen what Lerahk could do with this staff. How much hope could there be left?

He didn't have to search for long. A trail of blood was swimming on the water. Leaves had prevented Tamaru from sinking in. He still was breathing but he was barely alive anymore. Takua sank down and carefully picked him up.

"This Rahkshi ... gone is now?" Tamaru whispered.

"Don't speak. Spare your energy. You shouldn't have done this."

"Would have killed ... you. Toa here ... to save the cities ... me just ... unnecessary ... easy to lose ..."

"No, for us you are worth thousands of cities. You're more than just an ordinary Matoran. We've fought on the Kini Nui side by side, your idea saved this city twice and now you've saved my life. And you'll be alright. I'll get you out of here."

Tamaru's eyes started flickering. "Kick this ... Rahkshi butt ... for me ... you will?"

"Please hold out, Tamaru", Takua pleaded, "You can't die. Not now."

But it was unsure if the Matoran had still heard it. His eyes had closed and his head slowly sank back.

Takua stopped and floated on the same spot. He lowered his head. Tears he couldn't choke back anymore were slowly running over his face. The second time he cursed his destiny, cursed Mata Nui for choosing him to be a Toa.

Kapitel 40: Chapter 40: A world without heroes

Chapter 40: A world without heroes

Since I became a Toa I'm not a chronicler anymore. But still I'm sitting here in Ta Metru library, writing down our fate just in case we won't survive this shit. Le Metru is safe again but this price was still too high. We all came back to the red city after we got the message that Tahu was wounded badly. All beside Gali and Hahli. We still have no clue where they are or what happened to them.

Takua lifted his head from the book of chronicles. Was it sunset or were the suns rising? He didn't know it anymore. Already too many nights without sleep, where he was just writing down his thoughts and too many days where he was wrapped up in a half-sleep, although just three days had passed since Tamaru's dead. Since he had come into the city.

Tamaru dead ... Matoro dead ... Jaller nearly had died for him as well. He thought about his past life and it seemed as if he just had been hiding away behind everyone. And that everyone would have risked his own life just to protect him. What kind of Toa was he? And even when he still was a Matoran... always out to search for adventure and when he finally found it there was always someone to save his ass.

I'm sure not a good Toa, he wrote down again, but why bother now? There's no one who still believes in winning a lost war. Believe ... What can you believe in when no one believes in you? Who can you trust in a world without heroes? Where do you begin when you don't know where you're going? Is there anything crueller than hope that can't be fulfilled? A hunger that can never be sated? What do you wish for when all your dreams have beaten out of you?

Again he stopped. What had he once wished for? He always wanted to be a hero like the Toa but now there wasn't anything heroic left. It was just a fight for bare life.

Be careful what you wish for.

Before Takua could continue writing Jaller stumbled into the room. He looked as awful as Takua felt.

"They have gathered around the gates of Ta Metru", he said. The Toa of light had never heard so much despair in his best friend's voice. "I think we've lost. Lost everything beside our lives and I'm not even sure if I want to keep that anymore." He sat down on the floor, leaned his back against a shelf and closed his eyes. "I mean, it's useless. We can't defeat a god. Maybe ... maybe Hahli's already dead ... Why shouldn't I just follow her?"

Takua had sat beside Jaller. He could do nothing than stare at him in shock. And he thought he felt awful. But he never had those thoughts.

"Jaller ... we have fought for so long. We can't give up now."

"Don't tell me what I can or can't", Jaller shot back. "Suicide would be a painless way. But I can't kill myself with my own weapons. I'm resistant to them. And no one wants to give me their weapons. Maybe if I really want to die I'll just have to sit there and wait until the hordes storm the city. ... It's ... such a strange feeling. On one side I want to be dead, want to follow Hahli, but on the other side... there's still a will to survive and I don't know why. What should I live for?"

"But ... why do you wish your death? Sure, we had a few losses but the other side had

even more. Tahu's already recovering...."

"Haven't you noticed that the other side has a damn god who can fight for them and we haven't? Have you noticed that the Toa are the only ones who are able to fight for longer than just a minute against a Bohrok and Rahi army?"

"Can you hear me, Takanuva?"

What was that? Could it really be? For a moment Takua thought he had heard Gali's voice.

"Where are you?" he thought.

His vision got blurry. He could still hear Jaller's voice, but not really what he was saying. Now he was seeing through Gali's eyes. She was still underwater. As she turned her head he could see Hahli swimming beside her. Takua snapped out of his vision.

"Jaller! They are alive. I mean Hahli and Gali. I just saw them. Another vision again."

"You saw them?" Still there was desperation in his voice but in his eyes lit a slight bit of hope.

A beam shot through one of the windows, glass was bursting. Takua dragged Jaller down to the floor. They were covered with little splinters.

Jaller carefully got up again. "What the heck ... We have an intruder."

"I know this attack." A fire had suddenly started burning in Takua's gaze. Hadn't the Rahkshi said something about the highest building in the red city?

He slowly got up as well. "Jaller, please come with me, back to the others. I don't want you to stay in this library all alone. I will send Gali a note where they can find us ... provided that they will find a way to get through the hordes."

"Well, I won't be alone as long as you stay here with me ... Wait, don't tell me you want to leave our base."

"I have to. And I have to go alone. I want you to stay with the others and make sure that the girls are alright if they will ever be able to arrive, captain."

"Oh please ... I'm not the captain of the Ta Koro watch anymore."

"No, but you're the captain of a Toa team."

"And I'm your friend so why should I stay and let you go out into danger?"

"Because there are some things not even friends can do together. This is just between me and the Rahkshi. He said I should come if I want revenge and here I am."

"So you really want to take the challenge?"

"Trust me, I'm a Toa."

Jaller couldn't help but grin. "Now that's something new."

"Hey, you're smiling again."

"Well, maybe I've seen light on the horizon again ... even if it's not that", he nodded over to the broken windows where the suns could be seen rising (or setting?), "Hahli is still alive, Tahu is recovering ... now do me just a favour and get back in one piece as well."

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The fire of revenge was still burning hot inside of him when Takua left the building but now there was also another thing. The Rahkshi was a strong enemy. One strong enemy less was always a good thing. And moreover he was Makuta's son, was part of the dark spirit, once even carried one of his shadows or maybe still carried. If the Rahkshi was destroyed part of Makuta was destroyed as well.

The first time Takua would face a very dangerous enemy all alone. But there comes a time for each of us when we must face our demons. When we must gaze into the abyss and navigate the traps of our own soul. There we shall find out what we are made of. And either return with the spark of salvation or lose ourselves in the chasms of despair.

*What do you wish for?*

The answer was so easy: hope.

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Takua also could have flown up to the clock tower but he decided to get inside and walk up the many stairs to the clockwork. If someone had attacked him from above while flying he wouldn't have been able to keep himself up in the air and this time there was no Hewkii around to catch him.

This place was the highest in the whole city. The Toa of light looked over the handrail. A flying enemy had unfair advantages on this place.

"We both are equal up there", a voice answered as if the owner of it had read Takua's mind. "We both can't just stumble back into the abyss and fly immediately. Even I have to take my time to get ready to fly."

"So it seems you want to kill me really desperately or why else would you have ordered me here?"

"No, *you* desperately want to fight me. I would have come here anyways because this is a nice place to watch an upcoming battle and I only *suggested* you could come here if you really want your revenge. But it also would be nice if I eliminated you. Do you really think this would be a long fight? You're too inexperienced."

Takua lifted up his sword and pointed at the Rahkshi. "And still I'm taking my chance because this is for a friend. This would be called honour. Something you'll never have." Lerahk hissed and tried a quick attack but the Toa of light parried it. He already had seen it coming that the Rahkshi would attack without too much warning.

"You're good, little Toa. The question is, how long."

Takua blocked the next slash but he couldn't see the following attack coming. Lerahk turned around quickly and used his tail like a whip. The Toa stumbled back and crashed against a part of the handrail, tried to keep balance and not to fall over it. Only centimetres behind his head giant rack wheels were clicking. A beam of green light shot out of nowhere. Takua had to jump out of its way. Metal pieces were crashing down beside him. He took cover behind them to avoid the next beam.

"Come out wherever you are", he heard the Rahkshi cackle. Lerahk was now sitting on a higher platform and looked around, eager to find the Toa of light again. "You can't hide from death forever."

This might be his chance. While the Rahkshi still was looking into other directions, Takua jumped over the handrail, let himself carry up a bit by one of the giant rack wheels, jumped onto the platform and took a slash into the Rahkshi's back. Lerahk let out a cry, jumped away and quickly turned around. "You have missed everything important", he said and coughed up blood.

Takua now had no other chance for an assault. The Rahkshi attacked him more furious than ever before. He only tried his best to defend himself and stepped back more and more until he couldn't get any further. This platform had no handrail and he was standing at the very edge of it.

"Stop!" he suddenly yelled.

Lerahk really held his blow and blinked at him stupidly.

"Alright, I give up. Please let it end", Takua panted and dropped his sword. "But make it quick", he added, "I've already planned something afterwards."

For a moment Lerahk hesitated. He was confused and wounded and he wanted to end this battle fast as well. Part of him tried to warn him. This was too easy. A Toa wouldn't give up so easy. But it was the other part that made up the final decision. He let out a cry, raised his staff and jumped at the Toa. And Takua jumped as well and dodged under the Rahkshi's staff and arms. This wasn't the reaction Lerahk would have awaited. Normally enemies should flee or huddle up in fear. They only would attack if they had weapons and this Toa was completely unarmed. Takua's shoulder hit his chest. The Toa felt the staff scratching over his back when he jumped up again, hitting the Rahkshi off his back and the platform. For a terrible moment he believed Lerahk would be able to fly fast enough or just land on another platform. The Rahkshi landed on the cog of a rack-wheel, only seconds away from connection with another cog.

A terrible metallic voice sounded through the tower then there was silence again apart from the continuous ticking and humming.

Slowly and with shaking legs Takua got to the edge of the platform. Something crimson and sticky was dripping from the wheels. A hero would now have proven his wit and coolness in any situation by saying something like "Now he's really lost in time". No hero would have sunken back to his knees and vomited on the floor.

Kapitel 41: Chapter 41: The only one who ever loved him

Chapter 41: The only one who ever loved him

When Takua finally reached the bottom of the tower again he was already awaited.

"Jaller! Shouldn't you stay with the others?"

"Sorry, bro, but waiting would have killed me. I wanted to be first to know whether the Rahkshi or you was the first one to leave the tower again.

"It wasn't the easiest thing I've ever done."

More Takua didn't want to say. He only wanted to be able to forget about it.

Jaller took a long look at his friend.

"I know", he finally just said.

On their way back they both were wrapped up in silence. That was one thing why Takua loved Jaller as a friend. He wasn't asking too many questions when the Toa of light didn't feel like talking at all, he just seemed to understand without words.

The former council hall now was a kind of hospital. Or at least a place where the wounded could get some help and rest.

Jaller walked over to the red Matoran guarding the door. Takua's heart made a little jump when he recognized him.

"Kapura, have the two water Toa arrived?" Jaller asked.

"Yes, captain, and a Toa I've never seen before was with them as well. I sent them to Tahu as you said."

"Kapura", Takua now got closer too, "We haven't seen each other since ... I hurriedly left the jungle. Do you know something from the others of the old alliance? Are they alright?"

"They are ... okay", Kapura looked at the floor, "As okay as you can feel after such a loss", he looked up again, "But we haven't given up hope yet. Not after two missing Toa had come back and a new Toa had been found."

The hall never had looked emptier although all of the Toa and a few Matoran were in it but they had all crowded around the same place. Everyone wanted to hear the story of the two water Toa and take a look at the new Toa who didn't seem to be too happy about so much attention at all.

Another melee started when Jaller and Hahli tried to squeeze through the crowd and finally get into each others arms again.

"Can you all please shut up?" Tahu finally yelled. Takua noticed that his wounds had healed really fast within the past three days since he last saw him for real. Only some scars were still remaining and maybe might stay his whole life.

Slowly it got silent again in the hall.

"Good", the fire Toa sighed, "now we also have a chance to hear what the three have to say."

Hahli and Gali alternated in telling, beginning from their fight with the Tarakava, up to when they got closer to the city and Tupua finally could teleport them over the army of creatures.

"Don't wonder too much about our new friend", Tahu said after they had ended and nodded over to Tupua who had silently stared at the floor the whole time, "He's as talkative as Kopaka."

"I've just been thinking", the dark Toa said still staring at the floor. "When we passed by I noticed that Mata Nui's body is just spiritual. If we want to face Makuta we have to enter the body."

"Enter the body?" Tahu asked bewildered.

"It's just spiritual. We could jump through it like through mist. There are two gods inside now, one caught, one free. The only way to win against a god is when you send another god into battle."

"But we are no gods", Tahu said, "And the only other god is a prisoner."

"But we are Toa. Mata Nui created us. He lives inside each of us. Have you never wondered why Makuta never could have killed us even if he was close often enough? Deep inside his heart he still loves his brother, still wants to protect him. It's this love that protects us as well. Maybe I now understand why I carry the Manawa. I was inside the spiritual body, together with two gods and for a few seconds I had the chance to look into their hearts. Lewa already mentioned something back then that Makuta can suck up negative feelings. The longer this war is going on the stronger he will get and the more creatures he can create. It's a circle that can only be stopped by another god."

"So all Toa have to enter this body..."

"Only if they want. I don't think it will work if they are forced to. But in the end it doesn't really matter because if my thoughts were right Mata Nui can draw all our power also if only one of us enters but if my thoughts are wrong it won't work at all, no matter how many Toa are there and we all would be killed during a long lasting war. All other plans will fail sooner or later. This is the only one with at least 50-50.chance."

For a moment everyone remained silent then Lewa started speaking. "As Makuta himself said, negative things make him stronger. It would only be logical that the opposite weakens him. But as he said as well they must concern him otherwise they will just pass him by without effect. And this would be a positive feeling concerning him. If we have to choose between certain death and death with a little chance to survive I would take the second way."

"So it seems like our decision is made", Tahu said, "The only question is, who will come with us?"

There never had been heard more Toa voices the same time. Even some Matoran started calling.

"I think I speak for all Toa", Tupua meant, "when I say they all want to come."

"It's make up or break up now", Pohatu shouted, "Better all of us go now, than some of us stay back and fight in a lost war if it goes wrong."

Kopaka lifted up a hand. "I have another question. How will we get closer to him? Won't he notice a group of Toa coming closer?"

"We already swam pass him", Gali explained, "He was too focused on his swarms and the cities."

"Let me just concentrate a moment", Tupua said, "When you all are ready get around me. I will teleport you over the swarms but no further. Else he will really notice Toa energy." He looked into the other's faces. "Everyone ready now? Let's head for the ocean."

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The giant god was still standing in the ocean, not too far away from the coast, at least not for him. The Toa still had to swim a few hundred meters. The ones who couldn't swim just let themselves sink down and walked. A quick change of Kanohi and they all were able to breath under water.

The energy could clearly be felt, an energy that was tingling on the skin.

"We have to touch the energy field", Tupua said, "I was sucked inside when I did this the last time."

Gali could feel someone swimming beside her. She turned her head and saw Kopaka. The Toa of ice shyly reached out a hand, wrapped his fingers around Gali's and returned her gaze. She tried to smile but her face felt like frozen. Her nervousness was growing with every second.

From afar they would have thought it as a giant rock formation. But now they saw it was metal and slightly glowing. Farther away something not less giant was leading up to the surface, one of the god's legs. They now were close to one of his feet.

"Let's all touch it the same time and see what happens", Tahu said. And after a short pause, "Gali, why have you never told how strange it feels when you talk and the same time you know that you're still under water?"

He drifted closer to Lewa who had started shivering and put an arm around him. Tahu on the other side never had felt calmer in his life. What should he be afraid of? He had already faced death and it hadn't been that bad.

Tupua held his hand closer to the god's foot. "I hope this works... You all are ready?" He touched the glowing metal.

It was like a storm was breaking loose around them. They had to hold on to each other otherwise – as they feared – they would have been dragged apart and maybe teleported to different parts of the body. Gali felt Kopaka's hand slowly slipping out of her won. Her fingers closed tighter. The same time it also felt as if she was lifted up; she couldn't feel the floor under her feet anymore.

And then a shock wave rushed over them, caused them to stumble or fall backwards. Their eyes were filled with a blinding light.

"Are you ... are you okay?" Tahu's voice sounded louder than normally, as if he was standing in a giant empty hall. Gali opened her eyes and only saw white. White with a few Toa in it. As far as she could feel she was lying on the floor. But when she looked around she wouldn't have been able to tell the floor from the ceiling, if there really was a ceiling. Everything was bright white, there weren't even shadows.

At first they couldn't hear him coming. His appearance in light couldn't have looked more wrong.

"Oh, you have decided to come too?" The dark spirit was talking with mild surprise in his voice. As if he had just found out that some of his favourite relatives were planning to have a tea party at his house. "If I had known about this I would have made cookies." Now his voice held a bit more sarcasm. "So what are you doing here? Tired of your own lives?"

"We are here to directly face our enemy", Tupua said as calm as possible.

Makuta laughed. "You and which army?"

"We have a god on our side."

"Have you found a new one or do you talk about my brother? In the second case I would have to say this is the funniest thing I've ever heard. You're asking someone for help who has been locked away."

"He lives inside of us and he's protecting us", Tupua calmly explained. "You can't destroy him and you won't be able to destroy us."

Makuta's eyes narrowed. The aura around him was getting darker. "And you really believe that my brother's love for losers will keep you alive?" he scoffed.

"It's the same kind of love that kept you from killing him. His love is strong, not just because it's godly. It's strong because it was able to survive through all of these years, no matter what you did. A love that would forgive everything. Makuta, have you never realized that this is a positive feeling concerning you? A very, very strong feeling."

For a second Makuta's eyes widened but then...

"Die!"

A strong blast of dark energy shot through the area covering everything with darkness, shot through the Toa's bodies. A feeling as if their insides were ripped out. And then something different was breaking loose. This force was slower, not as aggressive as the darkness but still mighty enough to compete with it. It shielded the Toa, took away some of their pain and filled the area with a strange mix of light and darkness.

And then all out of sudden the forces were gone. The Toa felt as exhausted as if they had taken part in a giant battle. They could barely stand straight anymore. Everything around them was in several shades of grey and black and white. And only a few meters away two gods were standing; the dark spirit looked barely conscious and only still stood because Mata Nui was holding him in his arms.

"Don't worry", the spirit of light said, "He won't be any harm anymore. Even after he has recovered."

"And that was it?" Tahu finally brought out, "That was all? If we had done that from the beginning on..."

"It needed a long time until I finally found it out myself", Mata Nui said, "and a lot of preparations. None of your fights was useless if it's that what you wanted to say. Beside this winter's war. I wished I could have sent Tupua back to you faster."

"What will happen now?" Takua asked, "I mean, this war is over, will we now change back to Matoran or stay Toa forever and what's with Matoro? And ... with Tamaru."

"It's your decision if you want to change back or stay that way. The danger from Makuta's side might be over but who knows what still waits for us. You have learned to know the Ikuta. It's always good to keep a few Toa. But you don't have to decide right now. Go home, think about it and then call me again."

"I'll stay like that", Tupua said immediately, "I never felt more accepted and liked than in this body."

"So will it be. As for Matoro I can say he will be sent back to his home as soon I have taken over my body again and the rest of you who doesn't belong inside here are transferred back out. But I'm afraid I can't bring Tamaru back to life. He was taken by one of Makuta's sons. What the god of death has taken not even the god of life can bring back. I'm really sorry."

Takua looked down at the floor. After this last hope was gone it felt as if he had lost the Le Matoran twice. Jaller put a hand on his friend's shoulder.

"I know", Takua said, "We have lost many people in this war. At least he died like a hero after he wished to be one his whole life."



"We all have to go now", Mata Nui finally said, "The creatures that have sieged the cities also will have wandered off by now. I will teleport you back on the beach. Farewell. For now."

With that the whole area was bathed in bright light again.

## Kapitel 42: Chapter 42: Forever

### Chapter 42: Forever

They had fought side by side for so long. It was a strange feeling that it had ended now. Sure that they still were friends and could meet each other whenever they wanted to but there was no need to stick together all the time anymore. And that bothered Gali the most. As far as she could think back she had always tried to keep the team together and now ... she had never felt more alone. Matoro wanted to see the Mountains again after such a long time in a god's body, Rui returned to Aro Nui, Pohatu and Hewkii wanted to see after the village in the desert, how many damage there still was to repair, Nuparu and Onua had to find a way to de-flood the tunnels. Where the others were she had no clue but they all have said goodbye as well. Well, all beside Kopaka. He still stayed in Ta Metru as well as Gali. The Toa of water didn't feel like getting back to her new village but she also didn't want to stay in the red city. After getting tired from wandering around through the streets for hours she decided to give her icy friend a visit.

It seemed like Kopaka was preparing for his departure as well.

"You have decided to leave too?" Gali asked him.

"Well, I want to head back to Aro Nui. With no snowstorms or Ikuta the mountains might be a nice place to visit. I want to know if there are still people living. I want to find out something about my past."

"I wanted to do that as well, but now ... I'm not sure if I still want to know. But I'm sure I won't have to look for clues very long. I just could ask Tupua after we spent our whole childhood together."

"Oh yes, him", Kopaka smiled a bit, "Seemed like he had the hardest time to say goodbye to you."

"I know it was his dream to explore the lands of Metru Nui. Sure, I didn't want him to leave as well but we can meet again whenever we want. Being friends is not all about staying together all the time." She sat down on the bed. "So then ... I think I should wish you all the best as well."

Kopaka left alone his bags for a moment and looked at her.

*I gotta tell you what I'm feeling inside*

*I could lie to myself but it's true*

*There's no denying when I look in your eyes*

*Girl, I'm out of my head over you*

"Actually ... I wanted to ask you if you wanted to come with me", he said.

Gali blinked at him for a few seconds. "You're sure you want someone with you? That would be the first time then."

"I'm serious about that. If you aren't coming with me then I won't go as well. I know what you would say. That I should follow my dream. But I don't want to do it without your accompany. And besides ... I would need someone to look after me." He smiled again.

*I hear the echo of the promise I made  
When you're strong you can stand on your own  
But those words grow distant as I look in your face  
No I don't want to go it alone*

Kopaka not wanting to go alone, that was like an "I love you" from anyone else. No, it was more than that. It was rather an "I will give you my whole heart and soul".

"And I would be glad to come with you. Who knows which trouble you could get into when I let you out of my sight for a moment", she chuckled. "Besides Ga Metru won't need me that badly. They still have Hahli if they need a Toa."

"And my people won't need a Toa for helping them to build up a city. As far as I know them a hole in the snow would be good enough to be called home."

"Alright", Gali jumped off the bed, "Give me a few minutes to pack my bags. I'll be back soon and then we can leave."

When she ran through the streets she couldn't understand anymore why she had felt bad just a few minutes ago. Now she had a new destiny. She would walk on the path of history but what was more important she would do it together with Kopaka.

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Lewa was standing on the beach, watching the waves. Everything was so peaceful now. After the last bit of snow was gone new plants had started growing. They were even growing on the ruins of destroyed villages.

"There you are. I have looked for you like forever." Tahu walked up to him.

"It's really hard to get used to this feeling", Lewa sighed. "Not to be in danger or have to fight anymore. I have seen so many deaths and finally I can see life again."

"Let's hope it stays that way for a very long time. I'm grateful for peaceful times but I also feel a bit of emptiness inside of me."

"This war has cut many wounds." Lewa carefully stroke over a scar in Tahu's face.

"Some can be seen, some are invisible. And even if not all of them can fully heal, they will get better through time."

For some time they just stood and watched the waves.

"What have you planned to do now?" Tahu then asked.

"Don't have a clue. All I thought about so far was that I might want to stay a Toa."

"Me as well. And I also have thought about getting back to Aro Nui for some time together with you. I still want to show you the fields of gold. We still have our whole lives before us and never seen much of the beauty of the lands."

"Fields of gold? That sounds beautiful. And I'm also thinking of that bamboo wood I was running through while trying to escape from the Piraka. I've never seen a whole wood made of bamboo it would be interesting to visit. Oh, and I also would want to know if Zaktan is still on the island."

Amused Tahu watched Lewa's growing excitement. He was glad that Lewa's depression now started fading away. He also might finally be able to keep the promise he made. Never let anything harm his green angel anymore. Maybe the carefree Toa he once was would never return but at least he should be able to laugh again.

*I see my future when I look in your eyes
It took your love to make my heart come alive
I lived my life believing all love is blind
But everything about you is telling me this time
It's forever
This time I know it, there's now doubt in my mind
Forever
Until my life is through
I'll be loving you forever*

Tahu now knew it. The Toa were created to fulfil a destiny. This was the explanation to the now gone emptiness in his heart. Unity. Duty. Destiny. The team didn't split up because of stupid fights. They still were friends so the unity point was fulfilled. They also still had their duties: protect and help the people in the villages. And with his promise towards Lewa Tahu now had also found his new destiny.

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The Ta Metru library had been fully rebuilt; only the window glasses were still missing. Takua stood at one of the windows and watched the streets. In this city there wasn't much to do after there had never been an attack and the only damaged building was the library.

"You seem to love this place." Jaller had entered the room and now wandered through the shelves as if he was looking for something. "Shouldn't the Book of Chronicles be there now that the wars are over?"

"I still have it. Needed to correct a few things and I'm still thinking about a good ending."

Jaller laughed. "A good ending? This is a history book, not a novel. Isn't the end of a war good enough?"

"Not for me. It might be a history book but I also want people to read it. When will children remember historical things better? When it's all about dates and important people and field tactics they don't understand or when the teacher can talk about it as if he had been through it? When our history will ever been taught I also want to make sure it will be remembered."

Jaller sighed but still grinned. "Alright. Make an action hero book out of it. By the way, do you have any plans what you will do now? All other Toa have hit the road. I'm not someone who wants to wander around that much so I thought about getting back to my old place as captain of the Ta Metru watch. Maybe I also want to be Matoran again. Toa isn't the best form you could have."

"I think I want to do the same as usual", Takua replied, "Wander through the lands, get myself into a lot of trouble and this time I have my own personal Toa with me to save my ass again. I asked Tupua if I could come with him. I don't know much about him but he didn't seem to be a too bad guy and he also reminds me a lot of myself: he never fitted in somewhere and had to become a Toa before he finally knew who he really was."

"So I wish you good luck then. I have to go now. Duty is calling. And remember to pay the Ta Metru watch a visit from time to time. You're still an honorary member there."

"I'll keep that in mind ... especially when I need a whole army to get myself out of

trouble.”

After Jaller had left Takua sat down and wrote in the Book of Chronicles for the very last time.

*We've faced the darkest night and somehow found our way through it. And now we head into a wide open future and we will face that too, together. Out onto the open road. Riding in the shadows between dark and light, between magic and memory. The quick flickering light that dances along the razor's edge. That is my destiny, our destiny. And it feels good to be home.*