

# BIONICLE

## THE LEGEND REBUILT



BOOK 1

TOA HANA

Chapter 1

*Calm Before  
the Storm*

The canister smoked, the metal crackling against the ambient chill of the stone it was now firmly lodged into. The Toa it held sighed to herself as she leaned against a dark, rocky wall, recovering from the less-than-comfortable impact.

*I was told these things are durable*, she thought, checking over herself to ensure she was unharmed. With that confirmed, she took in her surroundings. From the beach that she stood on, a vast ocean stretched out speckled with large spiked mountaintops on the horizon. Inland, the beach quickly transformed to tall, rocky walls with dark crevices spread out all over. They looked challenging to climb, but still doable with a little help. She took a deep breath of the strange, hazy air, closed her eyes, and poured her focus into the mask upon her face.

When she opened her eyes, the path was clear as day to her. The Kanohi Mask of Direction she wore guided her - or others - in subtle ways. Thanks to it, she recognized the handholds as if she had climbed these unfamiliar crags a billion times, and swiftly clambered up along the mountainside. She could feel the cold through the metal surface of her fingers, although her armor plating was more than enough to prevent the rest from bothering her too much. As her handhold slipped, she snapped back into focus, her mind focused solely on moving upwards.

It took some time to climb, and as she mantled the top of the wall she let her attention slip from her mask, now unneeded as she stood upon the peak. The moment her eyes scanned what lay before her, she could barely believe them. It was as if she was on an island suspended in the sky! These small "islands", if they could be called such, floated in the air, craggy rock poking from the haze that hid far away from where the solid ground was. *What is this place?* she wondered, her eyes pouring over the sight, *And how did I get here?* As she took in the sights, her mind drifted to a distant memory...

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"Hana." Artakha's voice was clear as day, as he presented her a large, weighty sword. "My gift to you." The blade was broad, tipped with a great hook, held together by an intricate handle and guard. Her eyes remained locked on his as she gripped the handle instinctually, causing bolts of arcing lightning to dance along the great sword's edges.

"Thank you." She said, her mask's stern brow hiding the slight smile evident in her voice. Years of training had led up to this moment. As she held the blade, buzzing with the electric power in her hands, she felt proud, and ready for anything.

"You are to lead them." He reminded her, nodding as he watched her mount the blade on her back, snapping into place with a quiet, solid click. "And you will do well."

"I take this duty bestowed upon me with honor, my lord." Hana gave a slight bow to her superior. "We will complete your mission with haste."

"I'm glad to see your determination" Chuckled Artakha, "But now is not quite the time for that." He turned to the rest of her team, each clad in the new armor that he had given them and inspecting the weapons they had received in this miniature ceremony. "Always focused on what's ahead." Hana looked over as Artakha did, watching her compatriots. Five other Toa stood, excited and proud like Hana, all looking to her to see how she would react.

"What shall we do then?" Hana asked, as her teammates excitedly whispered amongst themselves. They seemed as happy as she, some ecstatic, even. After years of training from the best in the universe, they were deemed ready to become the valiant protectors of Matoran that the Toa should be.

"You have proven your worth, in all measures." Artakha said, turning back to her. "It's time you rested, isn't it?"

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The memory faded from Hana's mind as she thought of what to do next. "*Rest*" did sound very good about now, after all. The crash had rattled her brain, most certainly, but there was one thing she could never forget - her team. And their mission...though that was a mystery for another time. As her feet shifted across the rock with a weighty whine, she knew she was in no state to find them... yet. She focused on the horizon once more, and began her search for a more suitable place to settle.

She strode across floating stone after floating stone, as the near-endless landscape of gravity-defying islands stretched out before her. After the fatigue of the crash, the unwelcome world she travelled was wearing on her more and more. As she contemplated just stopping on the next island that she landed on, she picked up a sound. A bird's cry. As Hana looked over towards the source of the sound, she struggled to identify it. Was it a lavahawk? She turned to the direction of the sound, determined to find it.

When she scrambled up the island that the sound had come from, she discovered the source of the sound - two Rahi fighting! A large raptor fought with a smaller one, pecking at it as the smaller one winced, dodging each strike and weakly screeching at its opponent. Hana drew her blade, and moved closer to the pair.

"Enough!" She barked, waving her blade to spook the Rahi. It turned to her, screeching in anger and hopping towards her. "I said *enough!*" Hana squared her shoulders and forced a burst of electricity through her sword, lighting it up with a loud *zap!* The Rahi turned and flew away in fear, with the other one weakly fluttering off in kind. Hana watched the smaller Rahi

awkwardly flutter higher up, to a small rock floating above, adorned with a mess of sticks in a makeshift nest.

*Something was off about that Raptor... Were those claws made of protosteel? I must be imagining things.*

Hana sighed in relief. Even if said squabble was largely unimportant, she was proud to have at least saved a life. She took another look at the nest, and the Rahi resting within it, and looked out on the landscape she could see. From this height, fog marred her view, but she could see some signs of Matoran civilization. She sat down by a tree. Once she had a moment to rest and recover, she could find the Matoran - and hopefully the reason why she landed on such a savage land.

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Was it thunder? Was it an earthquake? Was it the booming of a large Rahi's footsteps? Hana pondered, as she calmly observed her surroundings, and slowly put down the pile of branches she had collected to make a fire and some semblance of shelter, should a storm come. Her hand rested on the hilt of her sword, ready to unsheathe.

The ground beneath her began to shake violently, after hearing a thunderous sound, stumbling the noble Toa. A smaller floating island had crashed into the land Hana stood on. The soil cracked and the rocks shattered, isolating Hana into a now reduced chunk of land. Hana, clinging onto the tree she had made her temporary base, unsheathed her sword and thrust it into the chunk of land to anchor herself. Suddenly, the tremors ceased into utter silence. Dust and dirt filled the air because of the violent terraforming, blocking Hana's view. Unsheathing her blade from the ground, Hana stood up and observed the situation. The dust had cleared, and much to Hana's awe, she was not on the ground... so to speak.

The chunk of land she stood on was still floating. Around her, a great void of mist and floating terra formations filled her view, with no solid floor bottom to be seen. Massive rocks, enough to fit a small population of Matoran, drifted quietly and slowly through the misty terrain. Old vines hung from the rocks' feet, and deciduous trees perched on their bosom.

"An entire region of floating mountains for mios. How astonishingly beautiful..." Hana whispered to herself, as she looked down to the haze below.

"... and dangerous."

Looking around once more, Hana noticed the pile of branches she had collected were gone. The chunk of land she stood on had been reduced to a size no bigger than the canister she arrived in - and it didn't seem to be stable either.

"This isn't good." Hana exclaimed to herself as she closed her eyes, and activated her Kanohi Fokunu.

*Find me solid land, oh Great Mask. Lead me.* Despite her snark, her mask did its work, the gentle response in her mind as familiar as ever. The glow on Hana's mask faded as she opened her eyes and looked to the distance to her right.

"Thanks, I guess." sighed the exasperated Toa as she looked to the large floating boulder, topped by a large tree with fruits on it, half a kio away from her current position. The crumbling underneath her signalled that she needed to act fast.

"Artakha, this is where your training pays off." Hana whispered as she looked to the sky, snapped her eyes shut, and gripped her large sword.

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"She's gonna kill herself trying to do this." a Toa clad in silver armor exclaimed, sitting far away from the action, spectating his fellow Toa rocketing through the room and slamming into the dark, solid wall again and again. Sounds not unlike thunderclaps echoed through the room, each causing him to flinch a little as his fellow Toa ignited the air, tiny electric blasts propelling her as she struggled with the training course.

"Of course she can do this! Have some faith, brother." replied a Toa in slimmer, light green armor standing next to him.

"Again, Hana." The Toa's mentor said, his voice calm and measured.

"But!" Hana whipped around in frustration, her voice full of emotion. "My lord! It's impossible! My current handle of the element lacks the combustion required to prop-"

"What did I say about doubting yourself, child?" His calm, smooth voice reminded Hana to keep herself from growing too enraged.

Hana sighed as she got up from the ground, using a large, weighty, crude, and horribly dull metal sword as support.

"If I have the capacity to doubt myself, then I have the capacity to imagine what is possible."

"It's about spirit, Toa. You do not lack the aptitude to channel your elemental energy. You lack the clarity to keep focused on your goal... and some minor adjustments to your

footwork. Keep trying, Hana. Do not doubt yourself, simply act." Artakha shifted in his standing pose, still stern and serious as ever, just looking to be more comfortable. "Your spirit is intertwined with the elements that make up the world. You are the master of your environment, and you can command it. Nothing truly stands in your way."

Taking a deep breath, Hana waved her sword around, and stabbed it into the ground at a slanted angle. She laid her foot near the tip of the blade, her other foot at the guard, and her hand at the pommel.

*Nothing stands in my way.*

Hana's mask began to glow a bright blue, as her heartlight crackled with electricity, sending surges of lightning throughout her body into her hands.

*I am... the... master...*

"Launch, Hana!" Artakha's voice boomed.

With a thunderous roar, riding her broad metal blade, Hana propelled herself into the air in a bright blue trail of lightning, energy crackling in the air behind her. As she rocketed to the wall at the other end of the training room, Hana twirled in midair, stabbed the wall with her blade, and launched herself once more.

Gracefully and swiftly, Hana scaled to the top of the training room, bouncing from wall to wall. She finally made her approach to the bell at the top, and with one final wall jump, she propelled herself through the air, much to her comrades at the bottom looking on with anticipation and excitement, and punched the bell to signal her win for the day.

Breaking her fall with a final burst of lightning, Hana landed at the bottom of the training room with an elegant pose as her comrades at the bottom cheered for her victory.

"Well done, my dear Hana."

"Thank you, my lor--"

Hana was interrupted by the bell crashing to the floor right in front of her. The silver-armored Toa that watched cringed, the loud sound causing him pain.

"Now begins your brother's turn." declared Artakha as he looked to the upset Toa in the room with a smile. "Your task? Put back the bell."

The Toa he had spoken to looked to the bell, then to the top of the room, again and again in disbelief.

"Are you kidding me?!" yelled the annoyed Toa clad in silver armor, as everyone in the room broke into laughter.

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"Let's do this." Hana whispered as she stabbed the chunk of rock she stood on. Readying her stance, she stood on her blade like it was a hoverboard, and closed her eyes.

Without falter, Hana's electricity flowed smoothly from her body into her hands, illuminating her claymore. With a thunderous boom, Hana launched herself onto the large boulder kiosk away as the land she once stood on exploded into debris, and used her blade as a hook the second she landed on the other side. Scaling the boulder, she made it to the top, and rested once more under the large tree, as the small floating island slowly drifted through the night.

Using her claymore's hooked tip to pull some branches from the large tree, she gathered them into a pile and began building some shelter in case of rain, and a bonfire so she could see as the night fell. Shadows slowly fell across the landscape, strange patterns forming as the islands around her rose and fell. Looking around and consulting her mask once more, she confirmed that the place she sat upon was stable enough to establish some sort of camp. She sighed, letting the tension flow from her as she looked to find some sort of good news from the circumstances.

*Such is the life of a traveling Toa.* Hana thought, a grin forming under her mask. If nothing else, she was safe. She had confidence that her brothers were too - they were trained with the same rigor as well. Tomorrow, she would find her team - and remember the true reason they were here.



Chapter 2

*Familiarity Breeds*

*Contempt*

Finally getting some well-deserved rest, Hana stood, perched on the tip of the floating island, looking out over the landscape - or lack thereof. The steady rock where she stood seemed to float for more than a hundred bio, from her estimation. It would be a long way down, and she wasn't keen on falling. She activated her mask, searching for the quickest path out of this strange place. The Kanohi Fokunu, Mask of Direction, was known to cause tunnel vision in the Toa who used it, but she took great caution to not lose her awareness in this unfamiliar, unnatural environment. She leapt onto a floating rock above her, and scrambled on top of it to continue her journey forward.

"Unnatural" was truly the only word she could use to describe the place she explored. The stones that flew in the air were nothing like the world that she was used to, with surfaces that were at once rough yet fresh, as if it were created from whole protodermis a few days ago. As she leapt from rock to rock, they grew larger, and the miniature islands turned into shelves of stone, signs of civilization began to rear their heads. She crouched down to look at what stuck out from the monochrome stone that made up the landscape. What caught her eye were rusted metal spikes, attached to a simple assembly loaded by some sort of spring. Where there were Rahi traps, there were sentients. But Matoran didn't tend to be trappers. If this place was dangerous enough to need traps, then it wasn't safe for them. As she looked across the wild landscape, her heart sank. What could have happened here?

As she stood and began her walk forwards, she heard a scream ring through the air. The instincts of every Toa to protect the weak kicked in instantly, and she ran towards the source. As she leapt up the rocks, she looked over to see the source - a small figure cowering as a Rahi swept down to attack them! She grabbed her blade, and leapt into the air towards the Rahi. Ready to handle the landing this time, she rolled into it, gracefully moving into a run at breakneck speed.

"Have at you!" Hana shouted, rushing towards the figure that laid on the ground, cowering from the beast's attack. The flying lizard-like Rahi let out a screeching hiss as her shout caught its attention, and it decided on its next target. In turn, she raised her blade and skidded to a halt, bracing herself for an assault. The Rahi slammed against her blade, shrieking and seizing as the charge in Hana's blade coursed through its form, the distraction of the pain enough for her to toss it off of her. The beast flapped its wings as it quickly regained its balance, sharp talons now facing forward as it readied for another strike. "Come on!" She goaded the Rahi, waiting for it to slam into her once more.

As it leaned forwards to strike again, Hana heard a loud *clang*. Suddenly, a spiked projectile slammed into its head, causing it to spin and fall down, down past the clouds. With the threat gone, she looked over to the source. The figure that she had rescued weakly held a weapon in their outstretched arm, before letting it drop to the ground. There was one thing Hana instantly recognized about this figure: they were no Matoran.

"Who... are you?" The strange being asked, through labored breaths. "Thanks for... saving me." Hana's words left her for a moment, shocked at the bravery of this being. She regained her composure to reply.

"...My name is Hana. I am a Toa." She said with a gentle, deliberate tone. She kneeled down next to the being, and offered her hand. "And who are you?"

"A Toa..." The being trailed off before she sat up. "My name is Coryia. Why are you out here?" She asked, clearly wincing from pain as she adjusted herself.

"To protect the Matoran." She said, giving a half-truth, not keen to admit her doubts about her mission to a stranger. This "Coryia" did strongly resemble a Matoran, but she wore no mask. Instead, she wore a helmet to protect her soft facial features, and in place of mechanical extremities, she wore tightly-fit armor made of metal and strange, unfamiliar materials. As her eyes ran down the body of this strange being, she noticed something clearly wrong with her leg. A claw mark cut through a seemingly softer part of her armor, oozing some sort of unfamiliar substance. "You're hurt, aren't you?"

"Yeah." Coryia winced. "I'll skip over asking why you're here... and ask you to go get help." She looked up to Hana, her eyes glowing much more softly than the Matoran that Hana knew. "A Hunter lodge is close by. Send one of them back for me, would you?"

Hana extended her hand once more. "If it's close by, you may as well let me carry you." Perhaps once she gained Coryia's trust, she could try and figure out where they were. Hesitant, Coryia grabbed Hana's hand, accepting the offer as Hana pulled her onto her back.

"Tell me where to go, Coryia." Hana said, softly. She adjusted the lady on her back, giving her a better view while she gently strapped her to her armor, ensuring she would be secure.

"My lodge is straight in that direction. You'll see a bunch of... small huts similar to it as we get closer." Coryia pointed, her hand wavering with heavy breaths.

Making their way through a floating rocky terrain divided by fog, Coryia often warned Hana of traps she had set nearby for dangerous Rahi. With Coryia's help, Hana managed to hide themselves from the rest of the Rahi they came across, avoiding any more conflict that would otherwise put them both in danger. Hana had her fill of fighting, anyway. In between warnings of traps or route suggestions, the thin air was full of awkward silence.

"Pardon the intrusive question, but I must ask you-- you're no Matoran; what are you?" Asked Hana, ever politely.

"I'm an Agori. My small village of Hunters does include a few Matoran, though." Replied Coryia with a tinge of shock and concern that the Toa did not recognize what an Agori looked like.

"You are a Toa."

"That is correct."

"Why are you here? Toa aren't just someplace without a reason. We should have known about you before you were coming."

"I'm here to protect the Matoran." Hana said, plainly.

"We already have 'protectors.'" Coriya said, her voice growing more skeptical by the moment. "And they do a *fine job* fulfilling that duty." Remarked Coryia with clear sarcasm. "But that still doesn't answer my question. What *exactly* is your duty, Hana?"

Hana, still walking with the Agori on her back, grew silent as she sensed the growing tension.

"It's... safer for you if you don't know. Telling you my mission would compromise it. I am here to protect the Matoran. That is all I can say to you for now."

An awkward silence filled the air between the two.

"My village... may not be as welcoming to you, I must warn. Whether or not you share that information, I don't think they'll let you stay for long."

"That's fine." Hana's heart sank as she told a white lie. She hoped she'd find something more before they arrived, in case the Matoran she was no doubt sent to protect were hostile to her. The thought alone weighed on her, far more than Coriya's wounded body. "Let's get you there so you can be helped."

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The sun was still high, with no sign of nightfall. The two had reached the small village in no time. The floating islands faded from view, as the two drew closer to more solid, stable land. It was as if the village was in an entirely different region.

"This area... This is still...?"

"Ce-Wahi. The energy around our village is too weak to move our compact land compared to the floating mountain region we came from. Welcome to the Ce-Wahi Hunter's Lodge." Coryia answered without hesitation, tone as cold as before.

As Hana walked along a rocky path that connected multiple ramshackle buildings, she was met by emotionless gazes of Matoran and Agori alike. Some even seemed hostile, gripping their weapons tightly as Hana made her way through the small village. The rest, ever subtle, slowly fled from the scene.

The huts seemed to be made of wood, taken from trees that topped the floating islands. Hana realized her gut feeling to build a temporary shelter earlier was right, as each of these structures were beaten down by the elements, despite the relatively unweathered rock, implying that civilization had not been here for long.

"There. That one on the right is mine."

Hana took Coryia inside and helped her onto a small bed of tree branches held together by vines. Taking a look around, Hana noticed all the tools and simple furniture. It was clear to her that the locals here lived in the rough - something she could certainly respect. Tending to her wounds, Coryia spoke to Hana once more.

"Where do you go from here, Toa?" She said through her teeth, grabbing some more of the loose material that she was clad in, along with some herbs.

"I... don't know. I didn't come alone, and I'd like to find a way to contact my fellow Toa, but I don't know where to start. Have you Agori any tools I may borrow to help me accomplish such a task?"

"I know. You came with five others, didn't you? You six were the falling stars... Here, help me with this cloth." Coryia asked as Hana nodded quietly, helping her pull this 'cloth' taut. Finishing up tending to her wounds, Coryia let out a sigh and smiled at Hana. "I guess I owe you, don't I? You saved me and I'm grateful, but-"

The conversation was cut short as the two were interrupted by a loud banging on Coryia's thin, worn door, followed by an angry, shouting voice.

*"Coryia! Out here, this instant!"*

Looking past Hana, Coryia shot up from her bed. She glanced towards Hana again, and winced.

"Like I said, your kind might not be too welcome here."

Hana opened the door to the lodge and walked out, only to be greeted by another Agori. He was clad in black armor, and had two blades on his back. Noticing the other locals nearby starting to gather with seemingly disgusted and angry looks on their faces, Hana spoke quietly.

"Fellow Agori. I mean you no harm. I have no quarrel with your villa-"

"You don't get to speak first here, Toa." Rudely exclaimed the black clad Agori. "You don't belong here, simply put. Whatever business you have, you take it elsewhere."

"We've had our fill of Toa. You can't even protect *us*. Leave." Added a Matoran who stood nearby, as the locals who gathered began to chatter as well. Hana, calm as a cloud, spoke once more.

"I came here with one of your own after rescuing her from a Rahi."

"She's not lying." Added Coryia, walking out of her shelter, holding the cloth to her wounded leg. "I think she means well..." She trailed off, looking at the others.

"Please. I do not wish to cause any harm or disrupt your way of living. I need your help, in fact. Favor for favo-" Hana was rudely cut off by the incensed Agori.

"Our fellow Hunter Agori is safe in our village now." Interrupted the black clad Agori. "That means you've fulfilled your business with us. We owe you nothing. Don't make me say it again, Toa. Get out." His arm whipped out of his cloak to point her out of the area, his finger as unwavering as his glare.

The Agori's tone was harsh and cold, enough to cut through even Hana's spirit. As Hana stayed silent, she noticed that several Agori and Matoran had their hands gripping weapons, as if they were ready to attack. She looked to Coryia, who stood behind her.

"Thank you anyway, Hana..." Coryia murmured, recognizing that no minds would be changed today. She nodded sadly to Hana, signaling it was time for her to leave.

"So be it. Thank you for your hospitality." Calmly, the noble Toa thanked the Agori as she slowly walked away from the village.

"A Toa? Really, Coryia?" Exclaimed the black clad Agori in a repulsed tone, as the crowd dispersed and made their way back to their own lodges.

"She saved my life, you bonehead. You didn't need to threaten her so much. Would you prefer your '*best Hunter*' had died instead?" Angrily replied Coryia. The black clad Agori merely scoffed and walked away, talking over his shoulder back at her.

"You should know better than to accept help from a Toa." His voice dripped with venom as he disappeared into a larger structure, leaving her alone with the scowling expressions of her village. She sighed deeply as she turned back into her hut.

*I'm so sorry, Hana, She thought to herself. If only you knew what it meant to be a Toa around these parts...*

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"Do you wanna tell him together?" The uniformed Agori asked the taller, grumpier one that walked with him.

"Nice try. It's your turn today." He scoffed, his nose held up in the air, his body language demonstrating his air of self-superiority.

"C'mon, we both received the same order!"

"Your. Turn."

"Who's there?" A deep, loud voice boomed through the wooden door. The two bickering Agori looked at each other, momentarily frozen, before the taller of the two spoke up on his compatriot's behalf.

"It's Four and Six, sire!"

"Enter." The voice echoed slightly, the tinge of annoyed disinterest haunting the hall.

The wimpy Agori shrugged with a chuckle, and with an exasperated sigh, his comrade punched him in the shoulder. Both Agori entered the wooden hut to be greeted by a tall hooded figure standing in front of a map on the wall, arms crossed, and back turned to the Agori.

"Report." He said, curtly, without turning.

"S-Sire we d-didn't-" Four stammered, his limbs shaking in the presence of their guardian. He was only half a bio shorter than him, but simply being in the same room as him made Four feel like he was smaller than a sand mite.

"There wasn't a-anth-" Six chose to try and cover for him, his own anxiety bubbling over in the cloaked figure's shadow.

"Out with it already!" Roared the hooded figure.

"It was a canister, Sire..."

"But it was empty when we got there..."

The hooded figure slowly turned his head to the side, exposing his glowing red eyes through the shadows of his hood, much to the two Agori's frightened expressions.

Looking around out of panic, the two Agori noticed the objects and furniture around the small hut starting to shake. Smaller objects even started to float.

*A canister... Can it be?* The hooded figure thought. The mere inkling of what was inside incensed him.

"Then find what was inside. Lah, go with these two. Make sure they bring something back to me, or else you'll have your dinner earlier than usual." The hooded figure commanded, turning to the Raptor resting on a carved, decorated perch near the door.

With a rumbling snarl, the Raptor escorted the two frightened Agori out of the hut. As they trembled and disappeared through the door, the figure looked back to the map, tracing a finger across the points marked within. They were no longer alone, and he knew exactly what was in those fallen canisters. Under his breath, he whispered to himself in silent repulse.

*...Toa.*

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The tense air of the situation put everyone on edge, even the Raptor. The beast fidgeted impatiently as he perched upon a decaying tree. His eyes scanned the air, searching for anything interesting at all. Suddenly, a scent caught his nose. In an instant, he became highly attentive, his body shifting to a ready position to leap into the sky. The slightest sound could evoke the swiftest reaction from him. Lah the Raptor had found something.

"Four! He's picked up a scent!" Six barked, waving him close to the Raptor.

"H-He's looking off into the distance... Lah, is it far?" Four stammered, looking to Six for guidance, before looking back to Lah for his reaction. Lah let out a loud, grating screech in



response, the tip of his tail thrashing in the air with a bloodthirsty excitement. The beast was ready to hunt.

"Hey, Lah. You wouldn't mind perhaps showing us-"

Four couldn't complete his thought as the Raptor sped off. Letting out a sigh of exhaustion, Six slapped the disheartened Agori on the back, signaling that they follow suit.

After a great deal of running on rocky terrain, jumping over misty gaps, and dodging under the low-hanging branches of barren trees to catch up to the Raptor, Four and Six finally came to a stop to see Lah with his snout pointed at a tree. Lah was growling softly as his talons anchored into the soil, preparing to pounce.

"What is it, Lah? It's just a tree." Confusingly asked Four, scratching his head.

"If it was 'just a tree', we wouldn't be here." Six grumbled. "Show yourself!" Shouted Six as he readied his small blade.

As prompted, a lone Matoran revealed herself, coming out from behind a tree with hands in the air, indicating surrender. She dropped a rusty dagger on the rocks, leaving herself defenseless.

"I-I mean no quarrel... and I have information." Mumbled the Matoran, trying to mask her fear in front of the hungry Raptor. A Hunter's garb was draped over her armor, tears in the fabric corresponding to gashes in the metal plates underneath. "If you agree to help me, I'll tell you."

"It had better be good information, Hunter." Replied Six, without lowering his blade one bit. "Speak up."

"I'm from one of the village outskirts, the Hunters Lodge. Rid us of the Toa that just arrived. Someone in our village let her in. She entered one of the lodges with one of our own." Pleaded the Matoran, with a hint of resentment in her tone. The Matoran had no idea that Hana had already left the village, being one of the few who fled at first sight of the Toa. "Please. I don't know what she's planning."

The information the Matoran had shared brought sinister smiles to the faces of the two Agori. And with a deafening screech, Lah ran off once again, as his target had been made clear.

"I think we've found our target." Six grinned.

"Let's go."

The two Agori quickly remarked as they sped off behind Lah, leaving the Matoran in the dust.

In no time, the two Agori and the Raptor reached the Ce-Wahi Hunters Lodge. Greeted at the entrance by a Hunter Matoran, the two Agori stood fierce and spoke with a serious tone.

"Stand asi-"

"I already know what you two want." The Matoran said gruffly, looking up at the pair of Agori. The two were interrupted by the Hunter Matoran, who immediately pointed in a direction-- in the direction of Coryia's lodge. The face of the Matoran seemed to show compliance. Unhappy compliance, but such was the norm for those that Four and Six would go after.

"Lah, guard the door. Four? Get ready." Six ordered, just loud enough for Four to hear - the raptor's hearing could pick up the snapping of a twig a mio away. Four fell in line behind him, grabbing a weapon from inside his cloak as the two approached the raggedy structure.

Coryia was roused from her mild trance as her door suddenly went flying in. Four and Six burst in, weapons raised. As they scanned the cabin's interior, the two Agori's gazes met, as they realized the Toa wasn't present.

"Speak, Hunter. Where is the Toa?" Demanded Six, pointing his blade at the injured Coryia who was sitting on her bed.

"You just missed her. The village scared her away after she rescued me." Her voice was cold, befitting her tribe. Coryia wasn't in the mood to deal with questions, especially from the interloping Agori.

"I assume you two are... acquainted, then?" Six's voice was loud and accusatory as he glared at her, his blade now pointed towards her. "Which way did she go?"

"More or less." She snarked, refusing to comply with their demands. "Pick a direction and start walking if you want to find her."

The two Agori turned to the Raptor outside, growling over his shoulder at Six.

*Bring something back to me.* The guardian's reminder echoed in Six's head.

"Change of plans, Four. We'll find that Toa one way or another." He said, motioning to him to move toward her.

Agori and Matoran started to gather around Coryia's small lodge, before watching the two uniformed Agori walk out, pushing Coryia out the door as she fell to the rocky ground, hands bound by chains.

"What is the meaning of this?!" Demanded an incensed Agori who was clad in black armor - the same Agori who threatened Hana into fleeing.

"Business as usual, Baldrix. Your Hunter here has interfered with our business and compromised our mission by harbouring a wanted trespasser." Declared Four as he grabbed Coryia by the chain.

"You would be wise to stay out of our way this time... brother." Snarled Six.

"As chief of this village, I ask you to get on with your business and get out. That old tribe means nothing to me, 'Six', and neither do you." Baldrix barked back at his former Rock Tribe brother, much to the shock of some of the villagers gathered. The crowd murmured, but stood aside, as they watched their best Rahi Hunter get dragged away in chains by the two Agori.

"I d-did nothing wrong! Baldrix! Brothers! Anyone! D-do something!" Helplessly cried Coryia as she struggled.

Turning away, Baldrix walked slowly back to his own lodge, as the crowd merely watched, unable to move or speak up. Coryia's cries echoed but never ceased, as Four and Six forced her out of the village in bounds.

"Baldrix, you sold me out?!" A furious Coryia screamed as her voice cracked.

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*A storm's coming. I can hear it. Thunder.*

Hana slowly made her way through the thick forests that shifted in the wind as slow as the colossal rocks they rested on.

Stopping in front of a tree, Hana unsheathed her claymore, with her head hung.

"Back to square one."

Preparing to gather more wood, she ceased her swing of the sword, sensing something. Her Kanohi Fokunu began to glow in a pulsating pattern.

"That energy... can it be...?"

Coming to a realization, Hana ran off in the direction she sensed a particular energy-- a familiar energy. Full of hope, Hana ran past trees and jumped gaps, ignoring every obstacle that brushed her body as she sprinted. The glowing on her mask began to pulsate faster as she pursued the energy signature. In no time, Hana came to a stop, catching her breath as she locked her eyes onto something. The glow on her mask grew as bright as her lightning, ceased its pulse, and faded.

Thunder boomed across Ce-Wahi. Lightning flashed the gray skies. Rain as heavy as Hana's heart began to pour.

Hana's eyes remained locked onto the figure standing in front of her with arms crossed. The figure was cloaked by a dark, tattered hood. Beneath the hood-- glowing red eyes.

"And so we meet, Toa." Softly grumbled the hooded figure.

Chapter 3

*Thunder and  
Lightning*

"You're no brother of mine, are you?" A worried, yet mildly suspicious Hana asked the hooded figure, raindrops trickling down her mask.

"More or less. State your business. Why are you allied with those wretched Hunters?" Replied the figure, still as stone.

"I am no ally to them. Apparently, I'm an unwelcome visitor. What quarrel do you have with mere Agori and Matoran... Toa?" Hana remarked, avoiding the question to clarify her own suspicions.

"You are a Toa yourself. You are sworn to protect all Matoran, and spare kindness and respect for all forms of life, correct?"

"Yes."

"I am the Guardian of Pirau Nui's Ce-Wahi. The Rahi here are under my protection, and these Hunters violate the order of life. Did you not come across the various mechanisms created by these Hunters to trap these creatures?"

Hana stood silent, pondering on the sense of it all. The hostile Matoran. The metal traps. All of it. History has had its share of tales of malicious Matoran, and she was growing positive that the same was true of these Agori. These Hunters... they were no different, were they?

"You are seeking your brothers, are you not?"

Speechless, Hana merely nodded.

"Help free my Rahi from these Hunters, and I'll help you find your brothers. They capture and cage my beloved creatures, and I won't stand for that."

"I do not want to go to war with the Matoran or Agori that wronged you. That goes against my duty as Toa. Why don't you free them yourself?"

"A handful of Agori and Matoran fight for my cause, but we are not enough. These Hunters are skilled stealth killers. Like you said, Toa do not harm Matoran."

The sound of rainfall filled the void of the conversation between Hana and the hooded Guardian.

"I believe you know the way to their village."

"Yes." Hana grumbled, as she slowly unsheathed her claymore, and turned her head in the direction of the Hunter's Lodge. "Yes, I do."

Hana turned to walk away from the conversation, but stopped in her tracks to give the Guardian her final word.

"Do no harm to the villagers. Do I make myself clear?"

"I'll stay close behind as support. You have my word - and my blade, sister."

Without a second thought, the two began to walk in the direction of the Hunter's Lodge.

~~~~~

"You could've been our best asset if you weren't a Hunter."

"Could've been, but I'm not."

Six and Coryia threw darts of words at each other as Lah the Raptor walked in front of the group, holding Coryia by the chain rattling in the storm's strong winds.

"I expected more from you, Rivus." Mumbled Coryia, seemingly heartbroken.

"That name means nothing to me now. And neither do you." Four snapped back at Coryia, facing away from her.

"You lost your heart." Coryia said, her voice weighed down by a somber tone. "What happened to my old friend?"

"Enough!" Six barked as he punched Coryia across her face. "We're almost there. Keep your mouth shut, or we'll feed you directly to the Raptor."

After several minutes of weighty, unforgiving silence, the small group reached a large wooden hut. As they reached the door, Six banged on it, calling out for someone.

"Three! Five! Open up! It's Six and Four!"

A sound of metal clanging and objects dropping followed Six's loud voice, as a small Matoran clad in black and orange armor answered the door.

"What's t-the mission t-this time?" Stuttered Three.

"Sniff and trace." Six replied as he pulled on Coryia's chain, causing her to fall off the Raptor onto the ground.

"B-Bring her in."

Inside the hut was a workshop full of iron tools and bones. Across the room was a large door. The small group entered the door, leading them to a spiralling staircase. As they made their way down, sounds of growling, barking, howling, and whines of Rahi grew louder and louder.

*No... This...! This is...*

Coryia couldn't believe her eyes. A basement ten times as large as the hut they just entered was filled with caged Rahi and Spherus Magna creatures alike. Looking closely as they walked by the cages, Coryia noticed that body parts of the caged creatures weren't as they seemed... metal protrusions jutted out of the skins of the Spherus Magna beasts, and the mechanical parts of the Rahi seemed to be covered in crude, patchwork machines. A sick feeling, unlike anything she had felt before, washed over her and weighed like a stone in her stomach. Was this why Baldrix had abandoned the Ce-Wahi Enforcers? The rebuilt beasts that she, along with Baldrix, quit the Enforcers to trap... they all came from here. At the other side of the large room was a Matoran in white armor on a large command console.

"Nice to see you again, Five."

"Likewise." The Matoran said, barely even looking up. "Pick your poison, Six."

"Three Sabretooth Wolves should be enough for the Toa." Six requested as Five opened a large cage. Coryia's eyes widened as the wild beasts stepped from the shadows, eyes glittering in the low light as she took in the full sight of the beasts. No longer did they look like majestic creatures she recognized - now, their forelegs had massive blades digging out of them, and huge fangs hanging out of their jaws.

"No! You leave her out of this war!" Coryia struggled in her bounds as the Wolves began to pick up a scent from her. Seeing the Wolves become uneasy, Five opened a large trap door from the ceiling that turned into a ramp. With an awful scraping noise as the metal of their talons scraped against the ramp, the Wolves sped off, with Six leaping onto Lah, ready to follow. From how quickly their howls faded, Coryia knew that it would be mere minutes until they closed the gap to Hana.

"Four! Watch the prisoner!" Six shouted as Lah launched, the pair speeding off towards the fight to come, leaving Coryia and her captors alone.



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"Get the ropes! The ropes!"

Matoran and Agori at the Hunter's Village attempted to contain a ruckus, as they wrangled Rahi at the village center under the raging thunderstorm, trying to speak clearly amidst the thunder.

"Make sure those cages are secure!"

"Where are those ropes?!"

"We keep some by the entrance side lodges!"

"Got it!"

An Agori started sprinting towards the entrance, but came to a skidding stop after spotting something approaching the village entrance. Fear engulfed the Agori as she whimpered and cried out...

"I-It's the Toa! The Toa is here!" The Agori cried as she ran away. As everyone heard her cry, the villagers started to scatter like bugs, running back inside their lodges or out of the village.

"Toa?! Which Toa?!"

"Both of them!!!"

Hana walked slowly through the lodges with the Ce-Wahi Guardian following behind her.

"Go," said the guardian, voice quiet enough to be lost in the chaos. "I'll guard the entrance."

Much to Hana's anger and shock, several armed Agori and Matoran, led by Baldrix, started to gather to block her path.

"We knew you were on their side! You cruel war machines just won't leave us alone, will you?!" Baldrix shouted in a rage.

"Release the Rahi, Agori. Your hunting days are over. I won't let you continue to disrupt the order of life by killing these Rahi!"

With a scoff, Baldrix hung his head. Tossing his robe away, Baldrix unsheathed his shortswords, followed by the other locals unsheathing their weapons.

"You can play dumb all you want, but you Toa... You're both scum. Fire!"

As Baldrix commanded, the gathered Agori stepped aside to open a narrow path in the middle, as cannons launched Zamor spheres at Hana. Instinctively, Hana drove her claymore into the ground and crouched behind it. Impacting her blade, the spheres burst into a thick smoke, obscuring the Toa. Hana's eyes lit up with determination, the light of her eyes and heartlight cutting through the smoke.

Out of the dark cloud rocketed Hana as the locals dove out of the way. Aiming at the cannons, Hana destroyed them all in a swift, wide, lightning-charged stroke. Turning to the nearby cages, Hana rocketed off once more to destroy them and release the Rahi.

"No!" Baldrix cried, but it was too late. With a second stroke, Hana cut a cage in half. The monkey-like Rahi inside began to cower at the sight of the Toa. Hana looked closely at the Rahi and fell silent.

A particular recent memory of hers came flashing back.

*The Raptor. Shining claws. Proto... steel...*

Hana turned to the locals as they gathered behind her.

"You monsters! You violate these creatures by weaponizing them? You Hunters are lower tha-"

"You stupid, sword-swinging freak! We do not kill these creatures! These twisted beasts come to attack us, and we take them in to rid them of these infernal 'upgrades' the Enforcers put on them!" Baldrix interrupted, enraged.

"Enforcers? Under whose command?!" Hana asked, raising her voice further.

"His!!!" Baldrix began to raise his arm, pointing towards the entrance - until he was cut short by the bladed tip of a spear stabbed through his heart.

"No!" Hana shouted, but even then she knew it was too late. His eyes, once filled with rage, were now horrifyingly empty, as the Agori fell to the ground. Hana leapt forwards to catch him, the impact of him falling into her hands jostling his helmet free to reveal his pained, terrified face. With pure rage in her bones, Hana's gaze snapped up to see just who had done this.

The hooded guardian standing by the entrance crossed his arms as multiple bladed weapons floated around him, ready to strike at a moment's notice. The spear that had taken Baldrix returned to join the rest. In tandem, he was joined by three sabretooth wolves, Six, and Lah the Raptor.

"Four, this is Six. We found the Toa. Dispose of the dead weight." Six muttered on his wrist device.

"Y-You... murdered Baldrix...!" Hana stuttered as she yelled at the proclaimed Guardian of Ce-Wahi. Angrily striding past the nervous crowd to face the hooded guardian, Hana readied her own blade, charging it with lightning. "This... is your doing? You dare call yourself a Toa?! *You're* the reason these helpless villagers live in fear of us?! Our sworn duty is to the Matoran, you beast!" An enraged Hana cried out as she gripped her claymore.

"You're not as stupid as I thought. Huh." Mumbled the guardian as he turned to the Raptor at his side.

"Two? Take her down."

Chapter 4

*Symphony of  
the Knight*

The storm was loud, and the thunder louder. Yet one sound drowned out all the rest-- Lah the Raptor let out a sonic screech into the air as he positioned himself to pounce. Toa Hana readied herself all the same as the Hunters dispersed and fled from the main street of the Hunter's Lodge.

In a matter of seconds, three more Raptors joined Lah from behind as all four of them ran towards Hana at frightening speed. The four on one fight was full of close calls. Lah's bladed claws clashed with Hana's claymore as if Lah had dual wielded swords. The numbers' advantage spoke for itself-- the four Raptors' attacks were in sync, catching Hana's open spots every few seconds. Hana was weakening by the minute.

A mere minute had passed since Lah first charged at Hana. Sensing she wouldn't last any longer, Hana let go of her calm demeanor and guarded against a charging Raptor with her blade as a shield. Another Raptor backed up. And another. All four Raptors were pressing Hana into a game of strength.

"Gotcha!" Whispered Hana, as electricity began to spark from the hilt of her claymore. Sensing the trap, Lah jumped away, as Hana pushed the three Raptors, launching them in the air. With one stroke, Hana swung at all three Raptors with a heavily charged blade, sending them flying into a lodge, the force reducing it to a pile of rubble. As she dropped to one knee to catch her breath, Hana's electricity faded from her blade.

"Impressive!" Declared the Guardian of Ce-Wahi, mockingly applauding Hana. "Two, fall back. Six, take the wolves and finish this."

"With pleasure, sire." A smiling Six snarled as he leapt onto a Sabretooth Wolf and charged at Hana, with the other two following close.

"Bring it... on..." Struggling to get back on her feet, Hana readied her blade nonetheless, as her breaths grew deep and heavy. The roaring wolves and Six's war cry were met with a loud boom and a cloud of smoke. Hana's eyes grew wide as she turned around to see the source.

"Fire again!" Yelled out an Agori, commanding his brothers and sisters who were manning cannons and readying crossbows. "Get them off her!" He ordered as he slammed ammunition into his own weapon.

"Tch. Wretched Hunters." The Guardian scoffed, and launched spears at the Hunters. In the blink of an eye, monkey Rahi jumped around catching the spears. A squad of lavahawks descended from the stormclouds, attacking Six and the Sabretooth Wolves. The Rahi were backing Hana!

*Guess you're not the only support. Thank you all.* Hana collected her thoughts as she stood firm, staring down the Guardian across the street. The void between them once again filled with thunder and rain, and now, the sounds of screeching Rahi and proud Hunters.

"There are other ways to command respect, Toa. I see now. You oppress and enslave to maintain order. You're not worthy of the title of Toa!" Hana roared, pointing at the Ce-Wahi Guardian. The Guardian stood silent as his cloak rode the violent winds. His movements were measured as he began to slowly walk towards Hana, his stance showing him completely unphased by her accusations.

"You don't even respect your own allies! You call them by numbers? *'Two'?* *'Six'?* Where's *One*, you coward?" Hana mocked the Guardian, returning his attitude as she struggled to stay on her feet.

The Guardian didn't slow down his pace. Ever calmly, he unsheathed two swords from his waist and muttered four words from under the hood that sheltered two increasingly angry, glowing red eyes--

"You're looking at him."

At lightning speed, Hana and the Guardian charged at each other, crossing blades, with gold and bright blue sparks shooting out of each metal clash. The battle between the two Toa was frantic, each motion wild and near impossible for the Hunters around them to follow. The power at which they swung blades thundered like a splitting mountain - deafening in every strike. The Toa were matched in raw power, but Hana was exhausted. With every new swing, the Guardian seemed to be one step ahead, each of her strikes perfectly parried by his own, even when she thought she'd break his resolve.

"Getting tired, hero?!" He growled as he backed away, swinging his blades in a grandiose display of power.

"Dream on, traitor!" Snapped back the proud Toa of Lightning, between desperate gasps for air.

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"Copy that, Six."

"Not one bit of regret. How have you changed this much?"

"Shut up, Coryia. Your words do not sway me." Four tried too hard to be as cold as his ally Six. His facade of surety was swiftly cracking, and Coryia could tell. Was she close to getting it through to him?

"Oh, cut it out, you idiot! You're better than this! This isn't you! This never *was* you!"

Coryia's plea for Rivus to come to his senses was met by a kick to her side from Five, knocking her over. Five dragged Coryia by the chain towards a group of cages.

"What are you doing, Five?" Asked Four, clearly shook.

"You heard Six. The dead weight has done its job." Five replied through a sick smile while still dragging Coryia by the chain, without even looking at Four. "Hey, Four. Check it out. Three's new project is finished." Five said, urging Four to look on as he opened a cage. "The Nui Raptor."

A winged beast with a long neck and shining claws stomped its way out of the cage, sniffing around as if it was looking for something. It twitched with barely-concealed rage, its tiny eyes darting across the room, searching for any kind of target.

"We haven't fed him since the alterations. I'm ready for a show. Are you, Four?" Five let out a sinister chuckle as he yanked Coryia by the chain.

"No... No... Please! Don't do this! Rivus, please!" Coryia's cries echoed throughout the warehouse... and throughout Four's head, as he trembled at the thought of his old friend dying in such a gruesome manner. She cringed and backed away as the Nui Raptor began to sniff the crying Agori bound in chains, grumbling with hunger.

Four could no longer control his trembling. He looked up, with a determined face, and gripped his blade.

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"Ugh!"

With a ground-shaking thud, Hana crashed into the ground after a powerful blow from both the Guardian's blades at once. As her gaze shot over to gather her surroundings, she saw the Hunters, wrangling the Sabretooth Wolves and cutting wires that jut out of their skin. As her head whipped around, she saw Six, unconscious on the ground, the same awful stuff that leaked from Coryia pooling beneath him as he was buffeted by the rain. She snapped back towards the Guardian with terrified eyes, struggling to get a handhold as she realized how dire the situation truly was.

"This has dragged on long enough, Toa!" The Guardian shouted through the rain. He tossed the blades in the air, making them dance as he did before. He lowered his head as his mask glittered in the rain, ready to strike, but was interrupted by a voice coming from his wrist device.

"Ce-Wahi Guard! This is an emergency! All personnel report to Fe-Koro immediately!" A hoary voice barked through a tiny speaker, causing the Guardian to snarl in contempt.

"Copy." The Ce-Wahi Guardian muttered into his wrist, lowering his swords and turning to Hana. "Next time, you won't be so lucky, *sister*." With an errant flick of his wrist, one blade jabbed into her armor, nailing her into the floating stone. The pain shot through her like electricity through the air, and she shrieked in pain. Without a second thought, he sheathed his free blade and turned, rushing off into the night.

"Don't... c-call me... that..." Hana stuttered, wincing in pain as her involuntary jerks twisted the blade in her. She wanted to chase after him, to finish the fight, but she knew there was nothing she could do.

In no time, the Guardian had disappeared into the dark forest amidst the storm. Looking on in a mix of agony, despair, and relief at the ruined village and its inhabitants fighting off the beasts, Hana slumped into the cold stone, her consciousness swiftly slipping away.

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"Rivus..."

Five's helmet crashed onto the metal floor, rolling to a stop as his limp body fell. Four sheathed his blade and rushed to the Raptor's cage, angrily shoving the angry beast back in and slamming the door to its cage shut. Once it was biting at its cage, hoping to break out, he turned back to Coryia, hastily undoing all of her restraints as his hands shook.

"Coryia. Run. Three and the others will be here soon. I'll cover your escape." Four ran to a control panel to open the large trap door leading to the forest. "Don't let anyone know you're gone."

"I knew you were still in there somewhere." Coryia nodded to her friend as she stepped towards the exit. "Come see me again soon, okay?" She said with a sad smile as she leapt through to the forest floor below.

As Four turned around, intending to distract Three upstairs, he was met by a blade's blunt end against his chest. Looking up, he saw two familiar glowing red eyes under a hood. He



shrunk in terror as the Guardian lifted him, holding him up in the air without a finger. "If you want to run this outpost so bad, then be my guest." He snarled, looking down at Four's shivering form.

With one powerful mental thrust, he was slammed against the wall, and the door to the Raptor's cage that was shut moments before swung open. "I'm sure you and this beast will come to some sort of agreement." He turned to Three, who was swiftly following the Guardian down the stairs.

"W-What now, sire?" He said, watching as Four cowered in terror as the beast stepped towards him, before looking back to the angry Guardian.

"Prepare transportation. We make for Fe-Koro."

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Shooting out of a wooden bed, Hana awoke, caressing her bandaged sides and wrist. She looked to her side to see an old friend greeting her with a smile.

"Glad you're safe, Hana."

"My injuries... did you-" Hana said clearly in disbelief.

"Favor for favor. Welcome back to the Lodge, Toa Hana." Coryia cut Hana off with a smile. "You look spry enough to walk. Come on out with me."

Making their way out of the lodge, Coryia showed Hana around the village, where the Rahi were roaming around freely as the Hunters watched, clearly growing accustomed to their ghoulish modifications having been removed. "I'm taking command here, since Baldrix..." She trailed off for a moment, before picking back up. "We have a lot of work to do now. There are repairs, animals, Rahi... but you've made it easier for us, at least for now. Thank you for fighting for us, Hana." Coryia said, with a tinge of sorrow beneath her warm tone. The locals turned their gazes at Hana, with open helmets showing smiles and hopeful eyes behind masks. Hana was officially welcomed into the village.

"That reminds me," Coryia stopped and turned back to Hana. "You needed some machinery, right?"

"Yes. I need something that I can use to signal my fellow Toa from across the entire island." She said, curious.

"We scavenged these from the Rahi we rescued and from our old machinery. Perhaps they could be of some use to you? We have no power to spare, however." Coryia gestured to a small wooden shed full of metallic parts and old machinery used for transportation and crafting.

"Forgot who I am? I'm a Toa of Lightning. I can handle this." Hana said, as she knelt down to dig through the parts bin. Some of the villagers gathered around to help her, and soon enough, she held a messy device, with a lens pointed up towards the sky.

"Here goes nothing." Hana gently gripped the device, as electricity surged from her heartlight onto her arms, and into the machine. A bright blue light shot out towards the sky in a large burst, cutting through the clouds. She looked over excitedly to the Hunters, and nodded to Coryia.

*Find me, brothers. Hana thought. We're not alone.*



TO BE CONTINUED IN  
BOOK 2