Entry 1

Since we have no Chronicler accompanying us on this, our most vital mission, I am taking the time to record events for posterity. Tahu thinks this is a foolish waste of time, and I am sure Kopaka agrees with him (so rare to see those two agreeing!). But Onua understands, so does Pohatu. Maybe it's because fire and ice are both elements that are here one moment, gone the next, and rock and earth last on… but Pohatu and Onua seem to have more respect for history.

After our rescue by the Matoran resistance on Voya Nui, I thought we would surely join the Toa Inika in seeking the Mask of Life. But Axonn and Botar took us aside and told us that the time had come to prepare the universe for the awakening of Mata Nui. If the Inika succeeded in their mission, and save the Great Spirit's life, the time will be ripe for us to fulfill our mission — to awaken Mata Nui and restore light to the universe.

To do that, we had to first return to Metru Nui, at least according to Axonn. The Great Temple, he said, hid information on what we had to do to make ready for Mata Nui's return. We had to find that information and carry out whatever tasks are required, and get it done before it is our time to act. We could not tell anyone, not even the Inika what we were going to do — for if the Brotherhood of Makuta were to find out, they would surely try to destroy us. (I am surprised they have not done that already…)

At last, after so long and so many battles, we have begun the mission we exist to do. If we succeed, we will have helped save a universe from evil. If we fail… well, it may be that not even the Great Beings can save us if we fail.

Entry 2

Even as I pause to write down my memories of recent events, I find it hard to believe we Toa Nuva have done what we have done.

The information we found in the Great Temple of Metru Nui was in the form of a list. Each item on it was an action we were supposed to take to prepare the universe for the return of the Great Spirit. But the first item on that list was to free the monstrous Bahrag and unleash the Bohrok swarms on the island of Mata Nui!

Although some of us doubted the wisdom of this — Pohatu especially — in the end, we did what seemed we had to do. Even now, I imagine the swarms are descending on the island above, burning, wrecking, and destroying. I do not know how this can be a good thing, or part of the Great Spirit's plan.

Our next task demanded that we retrieve an ancient artifact, the Staff of Artakha, from its hiding place in the Metru Nui Archives. But when we traveled there, it was not to be found. Onua recalls Turaga Whenua saying that the staff was stolen long ago by the band of thieves and killers called the Dark Hunters.

It took us only a few seconds to decide our next course of action. We must seek out the Dark Hunters' base and retrieve the Staff, even if we must battle each and every one of them to do it.

Entry 3

It should be understood that it goes against a Toa's nature to sneak. Toa, by tradition, operate in broad daylight, so that the Matoran we protect can see us defending them and trust in us. So it was a little uncomfortable for some of us to be sneaking onto the shoreline of the island of Odina.

Not that we had much choice. Odina is the home base of the Dark Hunters, heavily defended and notoriously difficult to invade. Even six Toa Nuva could not count on victory on these shores.

We had approached from the north, intending to go over the mountains and attack the fortress by surprise. There were fewer guards in this region, since the natural barriers made it difficult to pass. A formidable blue and white Dark Hunter that Tahu recognized as Minion was the only sentry visible. Before we could decide how best to handle this, Kopaka Nuva had flash frozen him in mid-step.

"Now we're on a deadline," joked Onua. "We have to finish our mission before the spring thaw."

Pohatu lead the way as we climbed into the mountains. None of us spoke. Our minds were on the job up ahead — invading a fortress filled with enemies to retrieve the Staff of Artakha.

Lewa climbed up a rock, leapt off and used his Mask of Levitation to hover in the air and scout. I was about to warn him about being spotted when an energy web dropped from the sky and entangled him. It was rapidly followed by a stream of acid that just barely missed the falling Toa.

I glanced up. A winged creature was swooping down toward us, more energy webs already flying from his chest-mounted launcher. Tahu threw a shield around us and the web bounced off. Kopaka iced the creature's wings and Onua threw his Mask of Strength behind a blow that knocked him out.

"Two down," smiled Lewa. "And only 200 to go!"

Nobody laughed.

Entry 4

Approaching the fortress of the Dark Hunters on Odina is much like sticking one's face into a nest of fireflyers… hungry fireflyers… ANGRY, hungry fireflyers.

Although my fellow Toa Nuva and I had chosen the least guarded approach to the fortress, we still had to deal with our share of sentries and wandering Dark Hunters. The trick was to knock them out before they could raise an alarm — something that is much easier to do when you have Lewa along. A Toa of Air can create a quick vacuum around an enemy, and with no air, the sound of his shouts can't travel.

After making our way as quickly as we dared to the fortress, we stood at the rear stone wall. Pohatu made a stone hand emerge from the blocks to grab the lone guard and squeeze him into unconsciousness. Then another use of his power opened a way for us to get inside.

The inside of the fortress was a maze. Worse, we had no real idea where the Staff of Artakha might be hidden. We might be searching for days. I whispered this to Tahu, and he shook his head.

"The staff is valuable," he said quietly. "The Dark Hunters will keep it with their treasures, which means not far from the Shadowed One's throne. We find him, we find the staff."

"And find me you have," a harsh voice said. It came from all around us, but there was no one else present. "Did you really think you could enter my fortress without my knowledge? Did you really think you could make it this far unless I wanted you here?"

All around us, the corridor walls began to shift. Before we could react, we were sealed off in a stone prison.

"Of course, I know six Toa Nuva could break out of this trap easily," said the voice, which we all now realized must belong to the Shadowed One, leader of the Dark Hunters. But I am hoping you will take the time to listen … I have an offer to make, and a secret to share."

Entry 5

If a Chronicler told me this story, I would never believe it.

The Shadowed One's story amounted to this: he had possessed the item we sought, the Staff of Artakha, but he had given it to the residents of the island of Xia as payment for a supply of weapons. He was willing to set us free and tell us where to most likely find the Staff, if we did a service for him. It seemed Roodaka, one of Xia's "leading citizens," had been selling the Dark Hunters information — and doing the same for their enemies, the Brotherhood of Makuta. The Shadowed One wanted her eliminated.

To my surprise, Tahu agreed. It was only later he told me that he had other plans for Roodaka, plans that involved sending Lewa Nuva back to Metru Nui. Meanwhile, the rest of us headed to Xia. (Pohatu, of course, had to leave a little gift behind for the Dark Hunters. He told me later that within an hour after we left, every stone in the Shadowed One's fortress was going to suddenly crumble to dust.)

I had never been there before, but I had heard the island was an industrialized nightmare. As it turned out, the accent was on the "nightmare" part — a massive beast called the Tahtorak was rampaging through the place, and an even nastier Rahi matching the description of the Kanohi Dragon was battling him. Buildings were collapsing, factories burning, even their famed Mountain had chunks torn out of it. It was utter chaos.

Tahu sent Onua tunneling into the island to find the Staff in its underground hiding place. The rest of us did what we could to rescue the natives and get them out of the way of the beast battle. It was Kopaka who had the "good fortune" to find himself saving Roodaka.

"Toa," she spat, as if hating the taste of the word. "I don't need your help!"

"Perhaps not," Kopaka replied, with an icy smile. "But we are going to get yours."

Entry 6

As it turned out, Lewa Nuva did not have to go all the way back to Metru Nui to find who Tahu had sent him to find. The six Rahaga had heard about the events on Xia and, amazingly enough, were on their way to help the Vortixx. (I hope someday to be as generous as they are.)

Now, for the first time in over 1,000 years, they were face to face with Roodaka, the being who had transformed them from Toa into their current bestial forms.

"Your island is being destroyed by the Tahtorak and the Kanohi Dragon," Kopaka said to her. "And the Dark Hunters want you dead — odds are the Brotherhood of Makuta does too, or soon will. Help us and maybe we can help you."

"We want nothing from her," spat Rahaga Norik. "Let her meet the fate she so richly deserves."

But Roodaka was smart enough to know when she was an impossible situation. Making no effort to disguise her contempt for us, she nevertheless raised her Rhotuka launcher and fired at the Rahaga. The spinners struck all six of them, and before our eyes, a miracle happened — six twisted, mutated Rahaga transformed into six tall, strong, and powerful Toa Hagah!

"This is… amazing," said Toa Gaaki, looking with wonder at her reborn Toa armor. "Norik, it's over — we are heroes again!"

"You were always heroes," said Tahu, smiling. "Now you just look the part."

Our celebration was cut short by the arrival of Onua Nuva. He had been sent to retrieve the Staff of Artakha from a store room deep underground. But he carried no staff and looked as if he had been beaten to within an inch of his life.

"A Makuta… named Icarax… he was already there… stole the staff," the Toa of Earth gasped. "He was wearing the Mask of Shadows… said the Brotherhood was his now… and soon the realm of Karzahni will be too…"

Toa Hagah Bomonga spoke up. "It sounds like you have urgent matters to deal with, Toa Nuva. We will stay and deal with the situation here." He gave Roodaka a long, hard look. "We know how to deal with the likes of her."

Tahu Nuva nodded his thanks, then turned to us. "We need that staff, and we're going to have it — even if we have to tear it from a Makuta's dead hands. Let's go."

Entry 7

I stand amidst the bodies of my friends and teammates, not knowing they are alive or dead. Before me stands Makuta Icarax, Staff of Artakha in his claw. Only I, Gali Nuva, am left to stand between him and whatever nightmare is to come.

When we came to the realm of Karzahni in pursuit of Icarax, we found hundreds of Matoran, their spirits as crushed as their bodies were distorted. These victims of Karzahni had been inexplicably abandoned (for there was no sign of the realm's ruler when we arrived, or the Manas he was said to command). With gentle words and a great deal of patience, Lewa and Onua were able to convince the Matoran to leave their prison and head north toward Metru Nui.

It turned out we had no need to search for Icarax — he struck at us from ambush. At first we thought he was the Makuta we had fought before, for he wore the Mask of Shadows. But he was, if anything, a more skilled and ferocious warrior, felling my teammates with swift, sure blows.

Now I must make a choice — do I do what I must to stop Icarax, risking my friends' lives (if they still live)? Or do I let him escape? There really is no choice. Even as he gloats over his triumph, I am summoning every last bit of moisture from the air for hundreds of kios around. I am merging it together, bending it to my will, preparing to unleash all my elemental power in one single explosion of force.

And I do… and I hope to the Great Beings I never will again.

A wall of water a thousand feet high crashes into the realm of Karzahni, shattering buildings, leveling everything and everyone in its path. I strain to make the currents obey, but cannot snatch the Staff from Icarax's hand. I do succeed in using my mask power to allow my friends to breathe water.

When the flood tide subsides, Icarax is gone and the Toa Nuva, somehow, survive. Of this realm, nothing is left… nothing but a Noble Hau floating on the water, one which once belonged to a hero. Tahu saves it from being lost, and that is good. I look around at the destruction I have caused, and wonder if too much has already been lost today.

Entry 8

After all that, we had failed. Makuta Icarax had escaped with the Staff of Artakha and all we had to show for it was a flooded and destroyed realm of Karzahni.

Tahu insisted that we had to go on, regardless, and carry out the other tasks on the list. We decided to split up. Tahu and Kopaka traveled to an island chain far to the south of the universe to quell a series of active volcanoes. Pohatu and Onua journeyed south as well, seeking out an artifact known as the "heart of the Visorak." I was assigned to return to the surface of the island of Mata Nui, while Lewa … Lewa simply vanished. I assumed Tahu had given him orders in secret, and only later found out that was not the case.

Mata Nui was much changed from when I had seen it last. The Bohrok had done their work well, scouring it of all trees, rocks, rivers and streams. Their job had not been an easy one, as evidenced by the number of shattered Bohrok scattered about and the badly wounded Rahi dragon that lay in their midst. The beast had evidently interfered with their mission and paid the price for it.

I did what I could to ease its suffering then began my task. Very few geologic features remained on Mata Nui, but to my surprise, the cliffside and its telescope remained (just as the parchment had assured that they would). As instructed, I focused the telescope on the red star far above. I made careful note of the location of the star in space, its angle to the planet, its brightness and whether it seemed to be moving away from the island, toward it, or remaining parallel to it.

Something — I don't know what — suddenly prompted me to combine the power of my Mask of X-Ray Vision with the telescope's ability. I focused on the red star… and stumbled back, shocked. For I had seen inside the star, and where I expected there to be a fiery heart of energy, I instead saw… I can hardly even carve the words on this stone…

There was something alive inside the star!

Entry 9

Gali Nuva sprang from the telescope and started running across the sands of Mata Nui. She had to track down the other Toa Nuva and let them know what she had seen. She was so intent on her course that when Botar suddenly appeared before her, she almost collided with him.

"You are needed," said the Order of Mata Nui member. The next instant, he reached out to take her hand and they both disappeared. When Gali could see clearly again, it was obvious she was no longer on the island of Mata Nui.

She found herself standing in a vast, spherical chamber, alongside Botar and the other Toa Nuva. The place seemed familiar to her somehow, but she couldn't place it. Then the shadows in the chamber seemed to grow deeper and a female voice filled the room.

"You have done well, Toa," said the voice. "You have justified the Order of Mata Nui's faith in you. That is why we have brought you here, to Daxia, to see the fruits of your labors."

A light shone down from above on what looked like a power cradle of some kind. A massive warrior, easily nine feet in height, walked up to it carrying the Staff of Artakha. That alone was a surprise, since Gali and the others thought the Brotherhood of Makuta had the staff. Even more shocking was what happened next — the warrior placed the staff in a niche on the cradle, and the artifact began to glow and hum.

"Mata Nui suffered much due to the Makuta's treacherous attack," said the voice. "Now it is time to ease that suffering and prepare the way for his return."

The hum grew louder, and the glow brighter. Finally, Tahu had had enough. "What's going on here?"

"What you see is a but a fraction of the power of the staff," the voice replied. "Even now, its energies are reaching out from Metru Nui to the southern islands, undoing the damage that was done by Mata Nui's fall. Chasms are sealed; buildings restored to glory; mountains rise, and rivers flow once more. And when your fellow heroes sever the cord that binds Voya Nui to Mahri Nui, it too will be restored to where it belongs and the hole it made sealed behind it."

"That one stick can do all that?" asked Pohatu.

"And more," said the voice. "Its only limitation is that it cannot reach into the universe core and heal the damage there, for the walls of that place are too well-shielded. But what it can do, it will do."

Gali had a thought. "What about the island of Mata Nui? Will it repair what the Bohrok did there?"

The voice laughed. "No, the Bohrok did what they were meant to do, even as you have done. And now, Toa Nuva, you have one more task to perform… the most dangerous of them all."

Entry 10

My fellow Toa and I stood in a small chamber, waiting for the one who would lead us to our next, and supposedly most dangerous, task. In the meantime, we checked our weapons and armor for any damage and got caught up on each others' adventures. It was a good way to hide any worries we might have.

"It was a golden crystal," Onua was saying. "About as big as Pohatu's head, and suspended in mid-air — don't ask me how. We'd been told not to let it touch the ground, and it was a good thing we listened."

"Why?" I asked.

"Heart of the Visorak, they call it," answered Pohatu. "Ever wonder how the Makuta get the horde assembled? Put this crystal in the ground and they all come, no matter where they might be, no matter how far away. I guess our hosts don't want the Brotherhood able to gather them quite so easily next time."

"What about you, Lewa?" I said to the Toa of Air. "Where did Tahu send you?"

"No place," shrugged Lewa Nuva. "Some weird voice sent me up to Mata Nui — I must have been and gone just before you arrived, Gali — to deep-dig up a sundial, of all things, and bring it to Metru Nui."

"And do what with it?" asked Tahu, never looking up from his scorched armor. Kopaka looked even worse after their struggle to cap erupting volcanoes.

"Got me," said Lewa. "I was told to leave it in the Archives, so that's what I did. By the way, after quick-seeing our old island, never hire the Bohrok as decorators."

"It's time to go." The words, spoken softly, came from a Matoran who stood in the doorway. "We have a journey to make and little time in which to make it."

"A long journey where?" asked Kopaka. "I am getting a little tired of running around like a hungry stone rat with no idea why."

The Matoran just smiled. "You are being given a great honor — to set foot on the island of Artakha. Once we are there, my master will speak with you… or not… depending on his whim.

He may open his fortress for the first time in millennia and welcome you in — or he may banish you forever without a second thought."

"Sounds like a party," said Pohatu. "When do we leave?"

The world suddenly blurred around the Toa Nuva. When their vision cleared again, they were standing with the Matoran on a desolate beach. "Leave?" said the villager. "Why, you have already arrived. Good fortune to you, Toa… may you live to leave Artakha once more."