

Upon seeing the crowd gathered, Hozil realized he should probably see what happened at Gradis Aesdar, so he turned away from the crowd and headed up the path to the fortress. On his way there, he passed many Nastivl soldiers heading away from the fortress. *Why aren't any Toa stopping these creatures?* He wondered, starting to panic. He made his way to the fortress, worried even more. As he rounded a bend in the path, he saw Gradis Aesdar. Hozil gasped, but tried to keep his surprise to himself, knowing that there were Pawzerts and FalseToa all around him. *What happened?* He wondered, for Gradis Aesdar was in ruins.

\* \* \*

Akura paced the cave, impatient. “What could be taking Hozil so long?” He wondered aloud. Tikaro turned from his position at the crack between the large boulder and the cave mouth and shrugged.

“We won’t know until he gets back. I just hope he’s staying out of trouble.” Akura frowned.

“Tikaro, I know you’re worried about him, and I know he’s your best friend, but you seem so...worried. I’ve known you for a long time, and in that time I’ve never seen you so worried.” Tikaro only shook his head.

“You don’t understand. Last time I saw Zaxvo, he told me Hozil was destined to be General of the TrueToa some day. He also told me to teach him what I know. That’s why I’m worried. I don’t want to let Zaxvo down.” Akura and the rest of the Toa in the cave nodded in understanding. Lanii stood up from where she was sitting against the cave wall.

“I’m going to go back to Gradis Aesdar, and I’ll take a thought-comm with me.” She said, turning toward the long tunnel. Retrieving a pair of thought-comms, she gave one to the nearest Toa to her, Akura, and put on the other one. “I’ll report back every ten minutes,” She said, then turned towards the tunnel and set off towards the fortress. After several minutes, Akura heard Lanii’s cry of surprise.

<Lanii. What’s going on?> Akura asked. Her reply shook Akura.

<Gradis Aesdar...is in ruins.> She replied, her voice shaking. Akura dropped to his knees, causing Tikaro to glance sharply at him. Akura was shocked with disbelief “Akura. What has Lanii reported?” He asked, almost ordered. “Gradis Aesdar is in ruins.”

\* \* \*

Hozil joined the crowd, still in his disguise of a Pawzert. Squeezing through various Pawzerts, he tried to get to the front row. Accidentally, he bumped into a FalseToa of magnetism. Snarling, the FalseToa turned around.

“Just who do you think you are?” He threatened Hozil. Unsure of how a Pawzert would react, Hozil remained silent. The FalseToa sniggered. “A silent one, are you? Well then, maybe this will make you talk!” Upon saying this, the FalseToa employed his elemental power and made Hozil float up into the air, having encased him in a magnetic force field. Hozil struggled, reaching for the swords he knew would be stored there. The FalseToa shook his head. “Naught, naughty.” He said wagging his finger at Hozil, and then made

the armour on Hozil's palm and the metal on the handles to repel each other. Hozil would have gnashed his teeth in frustration-if he had teeth. Raising a fist, the FalseToa punched Hozil, simultaneously manipulating the magnetic field, causing Hozil to fly through the air and land on top of a fallen Toa and its shattered Kanohi. Smirking, the FalseToa turned back to the center of the crowd, where a figure was talking. Getting up from off his fellow Toa's body, Hozil dusted himself down and strode over to the crowd, trying to hear.

“—and now, finally, we have defeated these pathetically foolish beings- ‘TrueToa’ they call themselves,” the massive being spat.

*Could that be the leader of the Nastivl?* Hozil wondered, all the while listening to the massive being's speech. “We have destroyed their fortress, blown it up, and left it in ruins! We have killed all their members, slaughtered, no, *massacred* them!” The being continued, pointing a finger at the ground. “You stand on their lifeless bodies, their shattered masks, their useless weapons. And we have come out victorious. Now, finally, after many long years, we have the last group of free Matoran in our grasp. Now, all we must do to rule the entire universe is march down that way, through the ruins of that pitiful fortress, and destroy any fragile defences that the Matoran will have erected. Once we capture those Matoran, we will rule the world! The Dark Hunters have fallen before us-We now have their entire treasure. The general sent to lead that part of the army is even now bringing back the Shadowed One's head back on pole! We have already defeated the Brotherhood of Makuta, many years ago! I am the last of that Brotherhood! We will rule the world!” The crowd cheered, and shook their weapons like a horde of bloodthirsty, uncivilised vermin. The massive being smiled, and continued, “Soon, I will let you go down there and invade the Matoran village, but first, I want to show you something.” He reached down, and picked up what remained of a twisted and charred Kanohi. Even though it had been burnt away in some places, it was still recognizable. Hozil felt his throat go dry. He noticed twilight was upon them. The huge being lifted the Kanohi up into the air and announced, “The leader of these so-called TrueToa was a Toa called Zaxvo. He was a Toa of electricity, and he was a fierce and skilled fighter. Many of you may have seen him whirling upon the battlefield, defeating many of our number. This was his Kanohi! I have seen, from one our trusted Pawzert's memory banks, that he was killed. He was blown up, from a mere Cordak, and nothing remains of him but this Kanohi and a few scraps of armour. He is dead!” At this the being stopped and gestured towards the rapidly darkening sky. “As I said before as I took over Metru-Nui and put the Matoran to sleep: ‘twilight: the dawn of the shadows.’ That is exactly what this twilight is. The dawn of our eternal rule! Now go, and defeat those petty Matoran!”

**-End of Book 1: Twilight-**