

Prologue

Through the mountain pass the Toa Fortress Gradis Aesdar defended, the Matoran village lay in a valley, surrounded by huge mountains. Its rough protodermis walls surrounded it, providing no protection at all to the threat that was approaching. The moon shone its light over the Matoran village, a witness to the events occurring. That night, a Matoran had arrived in the village. He had asked for sanctuary and was led to a hut. He stumbled inside, shrugged off his cloak, and fell asleep. In the morning, the Council had sent an Av-Matoran to bring the new Matoran to them.

All that the Av-Matoran knew was that this Matoran, a Ta-Matoran, was a newcomer. He had just arrived at the Matoran village a few hours ago. Puzzled as to how he had survived for so long, the village council allowed him sanctuary, not ones to deny a brother or sister Matoran safety.

That same morning, the new Matoran woke up and prepared the story he was going to tell the Council of the Matoran. He had to decide which details to reveal and which to withdraw. *I obviously can't tell them who I really am; no one in the world knows that. Except for...* He thought, trailing off. *But what should I tell them? I am a smith, always have been. I can tell them that. How did I survive the war that even now rages around us? I am not only a smith, but an engineer, like the great Nuparu. I could guess war was approaching and I new I would have to hide, so I built myself a tunnelling machine and dug myself a cave. I disguised the entrance and there I have been ever since. Besides, it's not far from the truth,* the Matoran thought with a shrug. *Yes, that would work.* The Matoran's mask, a great Huna, showed a small, satisfied smile. Just then, someone pounded at the door. Instinctively, the Matoran rolled off the bed he was sitting on and drew a small launcher of some sort and pointed it at the door, kneeling. The pounding came again.

"Come in!" the Matoran called. The door slowly creaked open, revealing a purple and dark blue armoured Av-Matoran wearing a mask similar to that of Tanma's. The Av-Matoran lifted an eyebrow at the Ta-Matoran's launcher and stance. Smoothly, the Ta-Matoran rose and replaced the launcher on his belt. "Yes?" He asked.

"The Council summons you," was the Av-Matoran's reply. His voice was deep and rich, like a vat of the highest quality chocolate. "If you'll follow me, we can get going. I wouldn't want to keep the Council waiting if I were you."

"Yes, of course. Just a moment, then I'll be ready." The Ta-Matoran said. The Av-Matoran nodded.

"Of course," he replied, and turned towards the door. Just as he was about to leave, he paused, and said over his shoulder, "Oh, and my name's Darfiq."

The Ta-Matoran nodded.

"I'll remember that," he said, and shut the door. Moving quickly, he quickly prepared himself in his finery. Crisp black and dark red armour replaced his original ones, and he donned a chain belt and bandolier carrying 5 small daggers and a holster for his launcher. Finally, he put his launcher in its holster, slid an ice-blue visor into his Great Huna-shaped Kanohi, and slung a hooded jet black

cloak on. Opening the door, he strode boldly out the hut. Darfiq was waiting for him.

"If it's not too much to ask, what is your name?" Darfiq asked the Ta-Matoran as they walked. The Ta-Matoran smiled.

"If it's not too much to want, I'd like to keep it a secret, at least until your council has decided to allow me to stay." He replied. Darfiq outwardly shrugged but inwardly shivered. No that he thought about it, this mysterious Matoran's voice was soft and silky smooth, much like what a snake's would be if snakes could talk. The two Matoran made their way to the Council's hut, where the Ta-Matoran would meet with the Council. Darfiq stopped by the entrance.

"This is as far as I go," he said, gesturing inside. "You must continue on your own."

The Ta-Matoran nodded, and stepped into the hut. Darfiq watched him, deep in thought. This Matoran was very strange, what with showing up here 10 years into the war, lightly but lethally armed, like an assassin, not sharing his name, and even his reflexes. *Very strange indeed*, Darfiq thought.

Inside the hut, the Ta-Matoran was aware of this way of thinking. He had expected it. As he stepped inside, he smiled inwardly.

He was the only being in the entire village who knew of the coming crisis.