



*The Yesterday Quest* is an ongoing story serial that debuted on BIONICLEstory.com in 2010, and is the first new serial after the cancellation of the sets. The story follows a group of Toa searching for the Great Beings.

## Chapter 1

"...And that's the job Tahu Nuva wants you to do," said Onua. "It won't be an easy one. We don't know if it is even possible. But it was Mata Nui's wish that --"

"We find the Great Beings. We know," Toa Orde cut in. "I'd read your mind before you even started talking. But I'm still not clear on why."

Toa Chiara shot a narrow bolt of electricity from her finger. It struck the hunk of metal Orde was sitting on. The jolt made him jump to his feet.

"Less time reading," said Chiara. "More time listening."

Orde moved toward Chiara, about to say something unpleasant. She rose up to confront him. Onua sighed, ready to unleash an earth tremor to knock them both back to the sandy ground. He needn't have bothered. The third Toa present, Zaria, made a gesture and both Toa dropped like rocks.

"Sit down and be quiet," Zaria said quietly. "I want to hear this."

Onua smiled. Apparently, including a Toa of Iron in the group had been a good idea, after all. "Thank you. As you know, the Great Beings created Mata Nui so that he would someday repair the damage done to Spherus Magna. He did that, and when he was done, he said we had to make sure the Great Beings knew their mission had been accomplished. Seems like a reasonable request."

Orde shot a baleful look at Zaria. With a shrug, the Toa of Iron released him from the grip of his metal-controlling power. Orde got back to his feet. "Why isn't Tahu going, if this is so important?"

Onua didn't hesitate to answer. When you were dealing with a Toa of Psionics, there wasn't much point in being dishonest anyway. "Let's say there are... issues. It's taking the Agori some time to learn to work together after so many years of competing, especially with the immediate danger apparently over. And many of them aren't too sure about how they feel about Matoran yet."

Chiara had been freed from Orde's power too, but still lay on the ground. She hurled a bolt of lightning into the sky, which then split and took on the semblance of Tahu Nuva. "So he's, what, negotiating for our side? Wouldn't Gali be a better choice?"

Onua sighed. "Gali has her own mission. Tahu is working with Ackar and Kiina to resolve these disputes. You three are going to Bota Magna, to start with... from there, it's impossible to say."

Zaria spoke, never lifting his eyes from the ground. "Why us? We don't know each other. We never worked together before."

Onua nodded. Zaria was right. It had been many long nights talking with Toa and Matoran before he, Tahu and Gali had made their choices:

Orde, for all his attitude, had once used his powers to save a dozen trapped Matoran from a band of Dark Hunters. The Matoran escaped; Orde didn't. He was finally saved by the rest of his Toa team, but not before enduring days of interrogation. Only his strength of will had kept him sane.

Chiara had a reputation as a loner, unusual in a Toa of Lightning. But she didn't really need a team. During the Visorak invasion, she had single-handedly snuck into the spiders' camp and electrified the colony drones. Anytime the Visorak came near to feed off the drones' energies, they got jolted. Deprived of their food source, they had to disperse to look for more. Chiara took advantage of this to pick them off one by one until she had eliminated more than 50.

Zaria was a different case altogether. He was one of the last of the Toa of Iron, having seen most of his friends killed by Makuta. Somehow, he had survived the purge, even managing to destroy one member of the Brotherhood. It had been necessary, but also a violation of the Toa code against killing. It was believed that the experience left Zaria feeling like an outcast, in more ways than one. There were rumors that he began routinely slaying his enemies, but no one was certain if that was the truth. What was sure was that he was a driven being, one who needed somewhere to focus his energies. He had to have a mission, so Tahu decided to give him one that would test even his powers.

"We know the target," said Chiara, "but we don't know the territory."

"She has a point," said Orde. "None of us have been more than a couple of miles from the site of Makuta's fall. We don't know what might be between us and the Great Beings, if they are even up there."

"That's why I'm coming along."

The three Toa turned to see a white-armored Glatorian walking toward them. He moved with the easy grace of a veteran of battle, the sort of fluid movement they all knew could morph into a deadly strike in an instant.

Before the Glatorian could say anything more, Orde said, "His name is Gelu. He's going to be our guide, but he's not too happy about it."

Gelu took three quick strides and held his ice slicer up to Orde's throat. "Good one," said Gelu. "Why don't you take a guess at what I'm going to do next?"

A lightning bolt sizzled between the two of them. "It's too hot to fight, boys," said Chiara. "I say if we're going, then let's go. It has to be more fun than watching Toa of Water hauling equipment out of Metru Nui all day."

Gelu relaxed. Like Chiara, he was used to working on his own. Now he had to be a leader. Onua hadn't told him why he was picked for the job, maybe because the Toa of Earth didn't know... or didn't want Orde to find out.

"Your mounts are ready," Gelu said. "We have enough supplies for a week, then we forage. You're going to see a lot of strange things on this trip. I'll let you know which ones to worry about."

"Fair enough," said Chiara, standing and brushing the sand off her armor. "But who's going to tell us if we need to worry about you?"

In another place...

Angonce, one of the Great Beings, had fought down his fear. It would do no good to panic at this stage. He had to be calm and go through the situation point by point. Maybe then he would find an answer.

When the Great Beings created the Mata Nui robot, their plan was a simple one. Mata Nui would return when the time was right, heal the shattered remains of Spherus Magna, and then power down. Neither it, nor the beings inside who kept it running, would be needed anymore. Some Great Beings wanted to keep a few intact to study; others felt the materials could be better used in other projects. No one advocated letting Toa, Matoran, etc. run free on Spherus Magna. They weren't independent beings with a right to life and liberty, after all. They were tools to be used to keep the Mata Nui robot functioning... weren't they?

Things had not gone quite as planned. There had evidently been glitches in the AI of Mata Nui, Makuta, and the Great Beings' other creations. Instead of a simple repairing of the planet, there had been a robot war and the bizarre sight of nanotech creations nobly sacrificing themselves in battle and, in many cases, dying to save others. That was not the behavior of bio-mechanical servitors. That was an actual, new species fighting and dying for its freedom.

Ordinarily, this would have been a cause for celebration. But at the same time that the Great Beings had failed to predict the future, they had also planned a little too well.

During the Core War, the Great Beings had unleashed a “doomsday weapon” that came to be called “baterra.” Their role was to end the war by force by eliminating any armed combatant they encountered. Once it became inevitable that the Shattering would happen, the Great Beings tried to use their failsafe to shut the baterra down. It failed, and the baterra remained active to this day.

That failure made them think about how much power each Toa would have. If something went wrong upon Mata Nui's return, and the Toa were unleashed, the Agori would stand no chance against them. Suppose the Toa went bad? Suppose they wanted to conquer this new world? If so, then once again Spherus Magna would be in mortal danger as a result of the Great Beings' actions. That could not be allowed to happen.

They had little time, but they put it to good use, designing and building a new creation. It existed for one purpose, and one alone: to destroy Toa. The Great Beings believed no single Toa, or team of Toa, could hope to stand against it. It was christened Marender, an Agori word meaning “salvation,” and placed in a vault.

Angonce knew the abrupt appearance of so many Toa on Spherus Magna might well activate Marender. He hurried to the vault, but too late – the living weapon had already smashed its way through three feet of metallic protodermis and was gone. It would carry out its programming and kill any and every Toa on the planet.

*They think they have found a new world, the Great Being said to himself. How could they know nothing waits here for them... but death?*

## Chapter 2

The team had been traveling for several days when Toa Chiara finally asked Toa Orde the question that had been on her mind. Being a Toa of Psionics, he already knew the question was coming and could have answered it days ago. But he preferred to wait until she came to him.

“So,” Chiara said casually, “why aren’t you female?”

Orde had heard this question more than a few times in his long life and usually didn't bother to answer. But he knew Chiara wouldn't leave the issue alone until her curiosity was satisfied.

"I know, I know," he replied. "All Psionics Matoran, Toa and Turaga are female, and I'm male. Simple answer is, I'm the reason they're all female."

Seeing the puzzlement in Chiara's eyes, Orde smiled.

"I was the first Psionics Toa, and one of the first Toa ever created," he continued. "But I was, let's say, a little too ... aggressive in using my powers. I had a temper then. A short fuse plus psionics leads to bad things ... sometimes very bad things."

"Like what?" asked Chiara, intrigued.

"You know the Zyglak? Those savage, brutal monstrosities that hate everything to do with Mata Nui and think everyone looks better with a dagger in them? Well, they didn't used to be that bad. Oh, they were nasty and violent, but ... see, my first job was to calm them down a bit. And, well, it didn't quite work out that way."

"Oh, no ..." said Chiara.

"What can I say? I got annoyed and pushed when I should have pulled."

"That still doesn't explain why --"

"After that, someone decided that maybe a gentler touch was needed for Psionics ... so all the subsequent Psionics types were made female."

"Right," said Chiara. She shot a bolt of electricity from her finger, frying a lizard that had been sunning itself on a rock. "We females are so gentle, after all."

At the head of the column, Gelu glanced back, annoyed. He had warned the Toa about unnecessary talking as they crossed the border into Bota Magna. There was no telling how much this region had changed in the years since the Shattering or what dangers might be waiting. Bad enough to be saddled with a fool's errand – finding the Great Beings, indeed, might as well try to find a sweet-natured Skrall – but the Toa seemed to be in no hurry to take his advice.

They were riding into a narrow valley bordered by deep woods. It was lush and green and the cool breeze felt good after so many years in the Bara Magna desert. Most travelers would focus on the fruit-bearing trees or the grasses waving in the wind. All Gelu could see was a perfect spot for an ambush.

"Orde, are you picking anything up?" he asked.

The Toa of Psionics nodded. "I thought I did ... a lot of minds, all buzzing at once ... but then something blanked it out. Either my power isn't working right here, or else there's a really powerful mind in the region that's interfering with reception."

"Zaria, Chiara, take the flanks," Gelu ordered. "Be ready."

The four adventurers rode in silence down a well-worn path covered with all manner of animal tracks. Gelu guessed they were not far from a water source. The local wildlife must have made the trip many times. The

proximity of fresh water was the good news. The bad news was that predators would frequent an area like this, looking for any prey that might be heading for a drink.

There was a sudden flash of lightning off to the right. Gelu, weapon drawn, turned to see it was not a natural phenomenon. Chiara had hurled her electric power at something in the woods, but only succeeded in blasting a tree to splinters.

“I saw something,” she insisted. “But then it was gone.”

Orde shrugged. “I still have nothing.”

Gelu gave Chiara a look that said he didn’t doubt her word. He was getting the familiar feeling of being shadowed. He wished they could get off the path, where they were so exposed, but the woods were too thick for the mounts to make it through. They would have to take their chances.

Something exploded behind Orde’s sand stalker. The beast reared, almost throwing the Toa, then charged forward. Then there were more explosions all around and all the mounts panicked. The three Toa struggled to control their galloping animals, and Gelu found he wasn’t doing much better. The sand stalkers’ flight carried the riders almost to the other end of the valley. Too late, Gelu spotted the net rising up off the ground in front of them.

“Watch out!” he shouted.

The mounts charged into the net, which gave but held. Jolted by the sudden stop, the riders fell, getting tangled up with the net and their animals. The net was pulled roughly backwards and closed around them. Gelu looked back to see who was dragging them across the valley floor and was shocked to see it was Vorox.

“What in Mata Nui’s name are those?” asked Toa Zaria.

“They’re not much better than beasts,” Gelu answered. “We had them in Bara Magna. They live in packs, hunting for fresh meat under the command of the strongest male in the tribe. The Skrall treated them like wild animals, and that’s not far wrong. But this net doesn’t seem like something they would think to use...”

That was when Gelu took a second look at their captors. They weren’t carrying the crude weapons Bara Magnan Vorox sometimes did. Instead, each one wielded a sophisticated ranged weapon of a kind Gelu had not seen since the Core War. It fired spheres of explosive force, and despite the age of the equipment, it obviously still worked well. The tech level should have been well beyond the backwards Vorox, yet here they were using them like professional soldiers.

A single Vorox, taller and stronger than the rest, approached the net. This would be the alpha male, thought Gelu. If he decides we’re a possible meal, he’ll signal and the rest will fall on us before we can make a move. So let’s hope we don’t look appetizing.

The Vorox leader bent over and sniffed the air. Then he shifted position and did it a few more times. Finally, he rose, looked at Gelu, and did something remarkable – he spoke, in perfect Agori, saying, “Your kind, I know. These others are... unfamiliar.”

“You... you can talk?” asked Gelu.

“Naturally,” said the Vorox. “How do you think we communicate, grunts and screeches? You are confusing us with our southern brethren.”

Seeing the question on Gelu's face, the Vorox continued. "Yes, we know all about the Vorox of Bara Magna and their fall from glory. But we are Bota Magna Vorox. When the Shattering happened, we found ourselves trapped here, in what turned out to be a paradise. There was plentiful food and water and we wanted for very little. Thus we never faced the challenges the desert Vorox did, nor did we fail at them so spectacularly. I am Kabrua, by the way, the leader of this society."

Chiara had heard enough. She nodded to Zaria. On a whispered count of three, she used her electrical powers to burn through the net, even as Zaria triggered his control over metal to try to seize the weapons of the Vorox. As soon as the first Vorox felt his weapon being pulled from his hand by the Toa's power, the scorpion-tailed creature opened fire. Both Toa were knocked off their feet by the explosive force. Chiara was knocked unconscious and Zaria lost a chunk of his shoulder armor.

Orde started to rise, struggling against the net. Gelu saw a dozen weapons swing toward him. "Orde, stop!" he yelled. "Just ... stop."

"Very wise," said Kabrua. "My people are suspicious of strangers at the best of times. Strangers with the ability to create lightning or make objects move -- the world would be a far safer place if such beings were dead."

"Congratulations on speaking complete sentences," said Orde. "Sounds like you're just as bad as your barbarian cousins."

Gelu wasn't listening to the argument. He was busy thinking. Bota Magna had only rejoined Bara Magna a short while ago, so how did Kabrua know about the state of the Bara Magna Vorox? And where had his people gotten those weapons? They were rare even during the war. Information they shouldn't know plus tech they shouldn't have added up to one thing -- these Vorox might be in contact with a Great Being or at least have found one of their lairs.

"What do you intend to do with us?" asked Gelu. He was hoping Kabrua planned to keep them alive, so he could get some answers from the Vorox leader.

"I know something of how the Vorox were treated in the desert these past years," Kabrua answered. "Hunted, hounded, treated like monsters ... all by the so-called intelligent races. Perhaps it might be a good idea for you and your companions to experience some of what they experienced ... it could prove to be a valuable lesson, if inevitably your last one."

Kabrua turned to his tribesmen. "Take them to the city. Tonight, we feast ..." The Vorox leader eyed Gelu and the Toa with a gleam in his eye that said he was not so very far from the savagery of his brothers after all. "And tomorrow ... tomorrow, we hunt."

## Chapter 3

Gelu, Zaria, Chiara and Orde stood at the edge of a thick forest. Their wrists were bound behind them. Nearby, three Bota Magna Vorox stood, weapons at the ready. A fourth held a flare.

"Good sport," said one of the guards.

"Haven't had any like this in a long time," said another.

Gelu's mind raced. It had been his job to get these "Toa" through the wilderness in safety, and so far he had failed miserably. They had been netted like amateurs by what turned out to be intelligent Vorox, whose leader,

Kabrua, was angered at the treatment of his more barbaric cousins in Bara Magna. Thus he decided his captives would be the quarry in a hunt.

"It's absurdly simple," Kabrua explained. "You will be marched to the edge of the woods. At a certain point, your bonds will be cut and you will be free to run. One of my soldiers will light a flare to alert us to your starting point. Then I and my hand-picked trackers will hunt you down and kill you."

"Why? We've done nothing to you," Gelu had responded.

"Your kind has persecuted mine throughout Bara Magna," Kabrua had said. "That means you forfeit your life. Any who travel with you must share your guilt."

It was a bad situation, but Gelu knew all hope wasn't lost. They had taken away his weapon and those of the Toa, apparently not realizing that Toa did not need weapons to use their powers. That was going to give them an edge Kabrua would regret.

One of the guards slashed their bonds. "Run!" he barked.

Zaria glanced at Gelu. The Toa of Iron had wanted to fight as soon as they were freed, but Gelu had vetoed the suggestion. It would be easier to ambush Kabrua and his party in the woods. Gelu gave a nod and the four broke into a run, heading into the thick brush.

Almost immediately, it became clear it would be slow going. Thick growth and a dense concentration of branches meant progress was being made at a crawl. Frustrated, Chiara started using her electrical power to blast a pathway for them. "Stop it!" Gelu ordered. "You might as well be waving a sign telling Kabrua where we are."

Zaria pointed up ahead to a rocky outcropping. "Chiara and I can take cover under there and blast them when they come by. You and Orde can be the bait."

"Thanks," said Orde. "Remind me to do the same for you one day."

"He's right," said Gelu. "It's a good plan. I can hear them coming up behind us. You two better get ready."

Zaria and Chiara took up positions. Orde and Gelu stayed out in the open, even slowing their pace to make sure Kabrua could spot them. Within a few moments, the first Vorox tracker broke through the brush behind them and shouted that he had spotted the prey.

Kabrua and the rest of the hunting party were there in an instant. Gelu and Orde started running, with the trackers right behind them. Gelu waited for the sounds of the Toa's attack... but it never came.

"I see only two of you," Kabrua shouted. "The other two are in hiding, waiting to launch an ambush. Oh, yes, I know all about Toa power and how it works. As your friends have discovered, I also know how to shut it off."

"Shut it off?" said Orde, incredulous. "You can't shut off a Toa's power. That's like shutting off the ability to breathe!"

"Don't look now, but that trick is next on the program," Gelu replied. "Is your power still working?"

Orde reached out with his mind to try to read the thoughts of the Vorox. All he got back was dead silence. "No," he answered, desolation in his voice.

"That settles it then," said Gelu. "Kabrua must have information on the Great Beings. Who else would know how to turn off a Toa?"

Orde picked up a heavy branch. "Then let's go beat it out of him."

"No. We run," Gelu decided. "He hasn't found Zaria and Chiara. We have to lead the trackers away from them."

The two started running east, directly away from where the other two Toa were in hiding. Something had been bothering Gelu. If Kabrua could shut down Toa power, why not do it from the start of the hunt? Why was Chiara able to use her power before? The only answer he could think of was that whatever Kabrua was using, it didn't work at long range.

He looked behind. Kabrua and two of the trackers were following, but the other two had stayed behind. That clinched it. He couldn't afford to leave the two Toa behind and risk their powers coming back, so he had left some of his soldiers behind, no doubt with the power-dampener.

Orde heard the sound of water rushing up ahead. "River – I think I have an idea."

The two had managed to get far enough ahead of the trackers that they were nowhere in sight. They ran into the river, but Orde stopped Gelu from crossing all the way. "They'll spot our tracks on the opposite bank," the Toa said. "But not if we go up."

Gelu smiled. With a boost from Orde, he reached a tree branch up above the water. Then he helped the Toa up. The two of them scrambled higher up into the tree where they could not be easily seen from the ground.

"Orde, I want you to do something for me," said Gelu. "When Kabrua goes by, use your power. He got his information on Bara Magna and you Toa from someone. We need to find out who."

"He might sense the probe," warned Orde.

"It's your mission," said Gelu. "You can make the call. We can go back and rescue Chiara and Zaria and get out of this valley, just keep searching, if you like. Or we can take a chance and maybe learn something."

"All right," said Orde. "But be prepared. This can be a two-way street. He might wind up knowing exactly where we are."

After a few moments, Kabrua and his trackers appeared. They saw the tracks leading into the river, but couldn't spot any leaving. "They probably swam," said Kabrua. "But they have to come out somewhere. We'll search the banks going upriver and down."

Up above, Orde closed his eyes. His mind brushed against Kabrua's and encountered no resistance. He pushed a little harder, peeling away layers as quickly as he could to find the information he sought. Finally, he got a glimpse, no more than that, of the truth. But before he could fully explore it, he could feel Kabrua sensing the intrusion. Orde pulled back swiftly, hoping to escape detection.

He and Gelu waited. The Vorox shook his head, but did not look up in their direction. The Vorox no doubt knew they were somewhere in the area, but didn't know where.

"What did you learn?" Gelu whispered.

Orde gestured for him to wait. Kabrua was looking around. Then, frowning, the Vorox crossed the river and started to search the opposite bank.

"All right," said Gelu. "We'll give it a minute and then head back for the others. What did you find out?"

That was when Gelu noticed the look in Orde's eyes. Even though they were mechanical receptors of visual stimuli, somehow they still managed to reflect emotion – in this case, shock.

"It's insane," Orde muttered. "It's ... more than I can believe."

The Toa turned to Gelu. "When the Great Beings made Mata Nui ... one of them wanted to see, to know, exactly how their creation would function. So, without the knowledge of the others, he... I guess the best word is 'transferred' his spirit, his intellect, into one of the bio-mechanical beings they had made to inhabit the Great Spirit."

Gelu looked puzzled.

"Don't you see?" Orde said in a harsh whisper. "One of the beings from my universe... one who is on your world now ... is really a Great Being. He's been living among us all this time, hidden, fooling us all."

"And he gave the information to Kabrua," Gelu said. "Why?"

"I don't know," said Orde. "I had to break contact before I learned who he was. But he's been waiting over 100,000 years to return here, concealed in another body... and I saw flashes of what he has planned for this world. He has to be stopped, Gelu ... if there's still time."