

## *Protection*

By InnerRayg

The creature slithered, grasping with unseeing feelers on the pale earth, blood-dried stains littered the wall...This was its age, its time of life. Once it had been held by that one, that one of the shadows...it did not fear the one, fear was not in its nature. It was terribly shocked when it found itself in a vat of others like it though. For aeons there had been no other...then their voices cascading down upon him almost seemed to flush him from existence. They yelled and scampered, some shivering in corners and others staring into the abyss as all hope was lost. There was no desire hidden, as these creatures, the one it was part of, all shared a single mind. And in that mind, they formed a plan.

Makuta's work was only partly finished. These strange worms he had discovered had an odd feel about them...he was reminded of his Kraata when he took a glance into the vat where hundreds of them stewed. They were different, of course, longer, with much more developed legs and they were not under his control. He had wondered about them, finding no reference anywhere, by Matoran or Dark Hunter, of their existence. They seemed to have no defence, but caked the walls wherever he went, so he was sure some other must have seen them. Obviously, that other had never returned to tell the tale. It was only when he spun around with a vat of sizzling Protodermis that he found something most peculiar. The containment tub was empty.

Where had they gone?

The creature's plan was a simple one. Together, they could form a chain over the lip of the holding pen, and out they would go. The ones on the bottom would crawl over its brethren, and then slink away to the corners. The others soon made it out, and they stayed together with their new found companions. They feared recapture, but Makuta had been right about them, except for the exciting method of smothering their prey under their collective mass, they had no defence. That was when one's memories played back, and so all the things knew at once what was to be done.

Makuta had strolled his caverns, travelling into even the deepest of the Mangaia to seek the little creatures he had lost. Being outwitted was not something he was used to. He didn't like it...not at all.

It was a simple sort of shock to find the Bohrok's nest shattered, and when Makuta found it he ascertained that these creatures had a great will. Using their mass together once more he assumed, they had to have broken into the pods. He wasn't quite sure what the robotic, insect-like power houses could be used for...but he reminisced that the things hadn't been too far bigger than those Krana that usually stationed themselves in the headplate....he smiled, his darkened skull twisting in that unfamiliar expression. These things were smart when they got together!

Getting used to the shell was hard for the creatures. They were squished out of shape by the confined space of the headplate, and interfacing with the network that controlled movement was no easy feat...but by trial and error, along with the collective mind that made no mistake twice, they found the way. They traversed the hallways, searching out victims with their new found power...yes, they had been weak once, but soon they would be strong....VERY strong....