

BIONICLE: CITY OF SHADOW

Written by

Brett Matthews

ACT ONE

EXT. GREAT BARRIER - CLIFF FACE - NIGHT

We OPEN without warning on the

MAKUTA'S MASK

it encased in transparent protodermis as per the events of LEGENDS OF METRU NUI. A sickly thin finger ENTERS frame [NOTE: it belongs to an unseen ROODAKA] and cuts ACROSS the frightening face, as it does uses a wickedly sharp nail to CARVE a jagged sliver of protodermis from the larger mass. The SQUEAL of the action is awful, only ends when a

PROTODERMIS SHARD

is cleaved from the rest. It FALLS through undefined space, TUMBLES end-over-end...

BLACK OUT.

OVER BLACK: TURAGA VAKAMA speaks to us from the dark:

TURAGA VAKAMA (V.O.)
Gathered friends, listen again to
our Legend of the Bionicle...

EXT. AMAJA CIRCLE - DAWN

Day BREAKS. The radiant light distinct to dawn BATHES the six Toa stones, which are arranged in the traditional way, form a circle in a ceremonial sand pit.

TURAGA VAKAMA (V.O.)
The Makuta has been defeated. Our
six Toa have discovered a new
home.

The Toa stones begin to RADIATE energy. It creates WAVES in the sand, the surface BECOMING as water.

TURAGA VAKAMA (V.O.)
But they have a promise to keep --
to return to Metru Nui and there
fulfill the legend of the Great
Rescue. To recover those Matoran
left behind, held in deep sleep
by the dark power of the Makuta.

Shadow falls OVER the Toa stones. A moment later and we see its source -- the

SHARD OF PROTODERMIS

cut from the Makuta's makeshift prison HITS the ground amidst the Toa stones. Its crystal clear surface TURNS a perfect and impenetrable **black** on contact, BECOMES the

MAKUTA STONE

familiar to those that know Bionicle lore. For those that don't, it's enough that it's the scariest rock ever -- an inexplicably frightening and evil artifact. Camera PUSHES INTO the sinister depths of the Makuta Stone --

EXT. TOA P.O.V. - PROTODERMIS OCEAN - NIGHT

-- and EMERGES at dizzying SPEED, pushed by a towering wall of protodermis in its shimmering liquid form.

TURAGA VAKAMA (V.O.)

The legendary island city of Metru Nui, once a place of great knowledge and power, has fallen. It has become something darker -- a land of chaos and ruin, of fearsome creatures and the strange heroes that fight them, a city of light...

The wave of mercurial liquid CRESTS and CRASHES OVER the screen, makes the scene

BLACK OUT.

OVER BLACK: Turaga Vakama concludes his introduction in a whisper:

TURAGA VAKAMA (V.O.)

... a city of shadow.

BIONICLE: CITY OF SHADOW

EXT. LE METRU - INDUSTRIAL PORT/COASTLINE - NIGHT

Camera FINDS

ONEWA

as he SKIDS to a stop. A CHYRON appears, identifies the perturbed Toa. After it fades:

ONEWA

Well, that stunk.

A dark and gangly

FIGURE

RISES in front of Onewa, the shape it cuts frightening and sinuous in the lack of light. A spooky silhouette.

ONEWA

Waaaaaa!

The figure EXCAVATES itself from a skin of seaweed, ship oil, and barnacles, BECOMES the familiar form of

NUJU

a CHYRON appearing to cement the Toa's identification.

NUJU

It would appear there was an error in our transport. Pilot error.

A handsome green mask BURSTS from a pile of rubble between the two Toa, SHAKES the irritating debris away to REVEAL

MATAU

who expresses his annoyance with Nuju's accusation after his CHYRON fades:

MATAU

Hey! I was only order-taking. Vakama was the one order-giving.

NOKAMA (O.S.)

No need to be critical, Matau...

The previously introduced Toa LOOK to the voice, FIND

NOKAMA

as she EMERGES from the water, clearly in her element. Water rolls down her sleek figure as her CHYRON appears and fades.

NOKAMA

...regardless of how gracefully, we made it.

MATAU

Yeah. Well... Whatever.

Matau concedes the point, SHRUGS in as much as he can given that he remains buried up to his neck. Meekly:

MATAU

Uh, could somebody dig me out of here?

A Toa Tool JUTS into frame, TILLS the pile of steel and stone surrounding Matau. The black-armored hand that holds it then PULLS him free. Matau REGARDS his savior, a hulking Toa identified as

WHENUA

in the same manner as the rest.

MATAU

Thanks.

Whenua, responds in his good-natured if gravelly voice:

WHENUA

Hey, it's what I do.

The Toa GATHER as a group, noticeably absent one of their number. Until:

VAKAMA(O.S.)

Are we going to stand around all night...

The voice is booming, authoritative, full of bravado. The Toa TURN to its source, FIND

VAKAMA

as he steps OUT of the ruined city the littered shore gives way to, having scouted ahead. It's a grand entrance, which Vakama concludes following his introductory CHYRON with:

VAKAMA

...or are we going to rescue Matoran?

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF LE METRU - NIGHT

The Toa STUMBLE over an uneven terrain of ruined buildings, it rife with neglected growth. As they do, we see their Toa bodies are not cut out for this type of work, traversing such an unstable landscape.

MATAU

What's with all the fog?

Matau has a point -- their efforts are further hampered by a fog so thick it occasionally reduces the Toa to silhouette.

MATAU

It's not exactly encouraging my Toa-hero spirit, y'know.

(then)

Whoa...

Matau trails off as he EMERGES from the swirling mist, SEES the sprawling

SKYLINE OF LE METRU / METRU NUI

in the distance. It's changed drastically since LEGENDS OF METRU NUI -- the lights of the city are dim, the whole of it coated with thin, translucent webs that GLOW and SWAY in the multiple moonlight. A moment, and then an unlikely sight given the urban environment -- a herd of wild Rahi beasts STAMPEDE by, their figures partially obscured by the fog.

NOKAMA

What was that?

WHENUA

The Archive must have been breached...

Vakama takes charge, directs the conversation:

VAKAMA

Which means what?

WHENUA

The Archive houses a specimen of each form of Rahi ever discovered
--

A wet GROWL comes from somewhere within the city, interrupts.

WHENUA

At least, it used to.

VAKAMA

And the webs?

WHENUA

Visorak. Nasty creatures.

ONEWA

Coming from you, that, well...
it's not good.

Wild things SWING and SCAMPER about the space, owning it.

MATAU

There goes the old neighborhood.

Nokama puts them back on track, as is her way:

NOKAMA

An unexpected and unwelcome turn of events. The question is, what does it change?

The Toa MURMUR, each formulating their own answer to her question. Vakama curtails this with:

VAKAMA

Nothing. We go to the coliseum.
We rescue the Matoran. We leave.

ONEWA

Or get pulverized. That's a
possibility.

Vakama ignores that, addresses and rallies the group:

VAKAMA

We've faced the Makuta and still
we stand here. I really doubt a
few relics are going to give us
much trouble. Agreed?

A series of NODS from the Toa as Vakama's confidence
permeates the group. He boldly MAKES for the city with:

VAKAMA

Okay. Follow me --

He only makes it a single STEP when a

SPINNER DISC

shoots from the abundant shadows, HITS Vakama. It PARALYZES
him instantly.

MATAU

What the --

Five more come in quick succession, HIT each of the others.

VAKAMA

Can't... move.

Whenua's massive frame TIPS towards the immobilized others,
completely out of his control.

WHENUA

Can't... stop!

MATAU

This is gonna hurt...

Whenua TOPPLES into the rest -- they FALL like dominoes,
end up stacked atop one another in a heap. Vakama calls up
from its bottom:

VAKAMA

Is everyone all right?

NUJU

Paralyzed by some sort of
toxin... but otherwise unharmed.

MATAU

Yeah. We're right behind you,
fearless leader. Literally.

NOKAMA

Knock it off, Matau. Bickering
won't get us out of this.

MATAU

No, but think-talking before
charging straight into a trap
might have.

Vakama BRISTLES at the challenge to his decision-making:

VAKAMA

If you have something to say,
Matau... say it.

MATAU

Forget it.

We see that Whenua's butt is very much in Matau's face,
neither able to move to remedy the situation. Matau EYES
the metal rump suspiciously, decides:

MATAU

I got bigger problems...

A scuttling NOISE comes from the shadows. It gets LOUDER.

ONEWA

Wh -- What's that?

NOKAMA

We're about to find out...

Nokama's right -- in the next moment, a swarm of

CREATURES

EMERGE from the mist-shrouded wasteland, SURROUND the
paralyzed Toa. Onewa identifies them for the audience:

ONEWA

Lemme guess -- Visorak?

WHENUA

Yes. In their language, 'the
venomous destroyer of worlds.'

There's little to differentiate any one of the Visorak from
another save for color, the hues of which correspond to
those of the Toa.

Their mouths are set within gnashing, pincered mandibles, and mounted on their backs are the poisonous projectile launchers that so effectively felled the Toa. Everything about the Visorak is virile, animal. Off their sight and Whenua's last:

MATAU
 (insincere)
 Hmm. Wonder where they came up
 with that?

The Visorak CLOSE IN on the Toa. Nokama whispers so that only Vakama can hear:

NOKAMA
 Vakama. What do we do?

Vakama's mask HARDENS -- he knows there's nothing he can do, that he's the reason the Toa are in this situation.

VAKAMA
 I... don't know.

EXT. GREAT COLISEUM - DAY

THE GREAT COLISEUM

is a shadow of its former self. It's no less grand a sight, but its architecture is now dark and sharp, a facade fitting its new role as the seat of Visorak power. CAMERA FINDS: a lone Visorak as it skitters towards the coliseum, walking as fast as it can without surrendering to a run. This is TRUNDLE, who ENTERS the coliseum upon reaching it.

INT. GREAT COLISEUM - MATORAN VAULT - SAME

Trundle ambles THROUGH a towering hallway lined with silver cannisters familiar to those that have seen LEGENDS OF METRU NUI or assembled a Bionicle. The feel of the space is clinical, it lit with cold and even white light. Trundle EXITS the antiseptic vault --

INT. GREAT COLISEUM - SIDORAK'S THRONE ROOM - SAME

-- and ENTERS what is the finest of the coliseum's many chambers. His posture and attitude SHIFT suddenly, become formal. Trundle BOWS low in front of a massive

THRONE

its back turned to conceal its occupant.

TRUNDLE
 <AUDIO FX>

The throne TURNS on its swivel to REVEAL

SIDORAK

a physically imposing brute who is, for lack of a more eloquent description, the king of the Visorak.

SIDORAK
Trundle. It's nothing important,
I hope -- seeing as you're late.

TRUNDLE
<AUDIO FX>

SIDORAK
This had better be good...

Trundle takes a deep 'breath'. Then, a single word/sound:

TRUNDLE
<AUDIO FX>

It GETS Sidorak's undivided attention. He reiterates and translates between meaty lips:

SIDORAK
Toa?

Trundle NODS.

SIDORAK
So, they've returned for the
Matoran -- Matoran that now
belong to me.

TRUNDLE
<AUDIO FX>

Sidorak EYEBALLS Trundle.

SIDORAK
I assume your telling me this
without twitching uncontrollably
means the Toa have already been
captured?

Trundle INDICATES the throne room's massive viewing window. It takes up the whole of a wall, offers a majestic view of the coliseum and surrounding city. Vocalizes an affirmative:

TRUNDLE
<AUDIO FX>

Sidorak goes to the window, LOOKS out to where --

EXT. GREAT COLISEUM - SAME

-- THE TOA

are cocooned with, hang from a line of Visorak webbing. They're SUSPENDED between the coliseum and a distant tower in Ko Metru, a decidedly fatal fall beneath them. SURROUNDING THE SCENE: a bustling CROWD of Visorak has gathered. They hang from weblines, cling to the coliseum itself.

INT. GREAT COLISEUM - THRONE ROOM - SAME

Sidorak is pleased by the sight, issues a curt order:

SIDORAK
Destroy them at once.

TRUNDLE
(cheerful affirmative)
<AUDIO FX>

Trundle MAKES to carry out the order, is stopped by:

ROODAKA (O.S.)
Is it to be so simple, Sidorak?

Sidorak TURNS toward the hypnotic voice that speaks from the shadows. It belongs to Roodaka, and it's plain to see the Visorak king is infatuated with her unseen self.

SIDORAK
I'm sorry, my queen?

ROODAKA (O.S.)
No, not your queen. Not yet.

SIDORAK
Of course. Formalities.
(then)
You have something to add?

Roodaka FLITS about in the darkness -- we see only that she is long of limb, sleek and sharp in design.

ROODAKA
Only that leaders are judged in time by the quality of their enemies. History teaches us this.

SIDORAK
The Toa.

ROODAKA

A fantastic enemy, my king.
Worthy of your rule... and of a
demise that will be remembered
and spoken about for all time.

(then, spins)

For the sake of your legacy, of
course.

Sidorak CONSIDERS that -- we see that Roodaka has swayed
him before he even speaks.

SIDORAK

I suppose I could allow the
situation to become... legendary.

Roodaka HISSES her appeasement. Coos:

ROODAKA

I have always loved your
creativity.

(then)

Only be sure your plan allows
some proof. For posterity's
sake...

SIDORAK

Proof?

Roodaka's voice ends the scene. It comes hushed and cold:

ROODAKA

I want their bodies.

EXT. GREAT COLISEUM - MILES ABOVE THE CITY - SAME

Visorak of every hue have gathered, anxiously await the
inevitable. They JOSTLE for position, and in the process
one loses its footing -- it seems to

FALL

forever, much to the amusement of its peers. Less so
Whenua:

WHENUA

That's encouraging.

MATAU

Well, fire-spitter, we can't say
you didn't show us the city...

(then, escalating)

(MORE)

'Course, I ~~MATAU~~ ^{can say that} you got us captured, poisoned, and seeing as I don't think we've been brought up here for the view, imminently smash-dashed!

Onewa's cocoon GIVES a little. The webbing that encases him rises higher on him than the others, COVERS the mouth of his mask. He EYES the strands that remain warily, 'speaks':

ONEWA
Mmmppppffff!

Matau estimates the mumble, offers with artificial discretion:

MATAU
I'm not even gonna tell you what he just said...

NOKAMA (O.S.)
This is not Vakama's fault!

Each and every Toa SWIVELS in their cocoon, shoots dissenting LOOKS Nokama's way.

NOKAMA
(meekly)
Not entirely...

VAKAMA (O.S.)
Don't bother, Nokama.

The Toa TURN in as much as they can to face Vakama. He DANGLES at their periphery, isolated.

VAKAMA
I tried to lead you all as best I could. It obviously wasn't good enough. I wish I was better at it, but if I've learned one thing from all the things we've been through, it's that I am what I am. And no matter how much I might want to...

He LOCKS EYES with the rest, concludes:

VAKAMA
...I can't just change.

Vakama breaks off as a wiry

APPENDAGE

BURSTS from his cocoon. It both seems his and not -- the very un-Toalike limb has somehow become a part of Vakama's body.

INT. GREAT STADIUM - OBSERVATION DECK - SAME

Roodaka, Sidorak, and Trundle are out in the open air on the stadium's OBSERVATION DECK, from there have a perfect view of the Toa and their plight. As she WATCHES intently, Roodaka TAKES Sidorak's hand. Breathlessly:

ROODAKA
Brilliant.

EXT. GREAT TEMPLE SPIRE - SAME

Vakama's strange

METAMORPHOSIS

continues. It SPREADS to the others -- the Toa CONVULSE as additional or modified limbs SPROUT through the canopy of their silken cocoons. Their trunks and masks DISTEND as their underlying metal musculature GROWS in leaps and bounds.

MATAU
I'm not liking this!

There's a side effect to all this rapid change -- the Toa's transformation SHREDS their cocoons, the only means by which they are anchored to safety. Nuju notices:

NUJU
You're going to like it even less
in a moment...

Vakama's cocoon is DETERIORATING the fastest, in proportion to his rapid physical change. It begins to UNRAVEL partially.

NOKAMA
Vakama!

It's clear Vakama is going to be the first to fall. In the moment before he does, his heartfelt last words:

VAKAMA
I'm sorry I let you all down.

And with that, Vakama

FALLS

into the night, is soon LOST from sight. The Visorak mob CHEERS lustily. Onewa tries to follow Vakama's lead, formulate profound last words. Can't:

ONEWA

Uh... bye.

In rapid succession Onewa, Whenua, and Nuju

PLUNGE

towards the city below. This leaves Matau and Nokama alone, if only for a moment. He tries to make the most of it:

MATAU

Nokama, I want you... I need you
to know that I've always --

But Matau gets no more out before his cocoon UNWINDS and he

DROPS

from view. Nokama CLOSES her eyes, does not watch as she FOLLOWS her brothers into the void.

EXT. MID-AIR - SAME

The Toa FALL through the night, the ground rushing TOWARDS them. Vakama BRACES for impact -- but it never comes as he is

SNATCHED

from thin air by some unknown savior in a BLUR of motion.

NOKAMA

What the --

Nokama is similarly GRABBED in the nick of time, whisked OFF screen. One by one, the rest of the Toa are SAVED in the same manner. Matau is the last, and as such knows what's coming:

MATAU

Careful. Careful with me!

Matau is YANKED from view.

EXT. METRU NUI SKYLINE - SAME

The Toa's mysterious saviors are the

RAHAGA

a group of six short, wiry, and aged beings that traverse the Bionicle universe as nomads. The Rahaga have the look of frontier trappers about them, are obviously in tune with and accustomed to living off the land and the myriad of creatures that populate it.

They're a bit of a paradox -- wise yet unrefined, civilized and primal, something intangibly animal about them. Despite their age, the Rahaga are exceptionally nimble -- each CARRIES a Toa as they

SCRAMBLE

like caffeinated monkeys ACROSS the city, bounding and scampering over, about, and around the towering and occasionally fractured structures. As they DO, Vakama STIRS -- he's slung over the shoulders of TAHKON, eldest and leader of the Rahaga. As he struggles to speak, we see that the metamorphosis has made his familiar

MASK

almost unrecognizable.

VAKAMA

Wh -- What's happened to me?

Tahkon doesn't answer, just puts more distance between them and the city. This angers Vakama, who draws on what little strength the transformation hasn't drained, demands:

VAKAMA

Answer me. I'm a Toa!

TAHKON

Not exactly.

The Rahaga's portentous answer proves more than Vakama can take -- he and the scene

BLACK OUT.

EXT. RUINS OF GA METRU - NIGHT

Matau's green form is seen at distance, facedown in a gutter. He COMES TO, finds himself hopelessly ALONE.

MATAU

Guys?

No answer. The mixture of steel, shadow, and shrub that is Ga Metru seems to extend forever, DWARVES Matau. He's seen in such a way that we can't make out his detail as he begins to MOVE through the sprawling space.

MATAU

Nokama? Whenua? Nuju? Onewa?

(then, reluctantly)

Vakama?

Matua heads INTO the depths of the environment --

EXT. RUINS OF GA METRU - STREAM - LATER

-- and ARRIVES at a weakly running stream, it the result of a burst water main. It's obvious Matua, who we still do not see clearly, has been searching unsuccessfully for some time.

MATAU

What was it the Turaga used to say when we were Matoran?

(then, recites)

"If you're lost, just stay in one place."

Matau REGARDS the stream's dirty water.

MATAU

This seems as miserable a spot as any.

He CROUCHES by the stream, and in doing so SEES his

REFLECTION

in the water's ruddy surface. As Matau and the audience discover together, the once handsome Toa has been turned into a brutish creature. Homely would be the nice word.

MATAU

No!

Matau FEELS the lumpy surface of his mask, speaks softly to himself:

MATAU

But this isn't me...

NOKAMA (O.S.)

It's all right, Matau.

THE TRANSFORMED TOA

are BEHIND Matau, Nokama at the head of their column. The body of each manifests readily apparent CHANGE, an animalistic leaning -- but Matau is clearly the ugly duckling of the group. He disagrees vehemently:

MATAU

All right? You call this all right?

NOKAMA

We're all here. We'll find a way to make it be. Together.

Matau gets IN Vakama's face, challenges:

MATAU

I don't hear you saying that,
smelt-head. What's the matter --
too busy cooking up another
master plan?

Vakama's newly-minted animal qualities mark him as a loner,
physically and in demeanor. He steps AWAY with:

VAKAMA

I'm through making plans.

MATAU

Well, that's the first good thing
I've heard since I've been
hideous.

Nuju interjects, as always tries to apply logic:

NUJU

Though I'm certain this engaging
dialogue could continue all
night, it might be better if we
direct our energies towards
finding out why it is we've
become... whatever it is we are.

MATAU

(sarcastic)

Right. And how do you figure
we're gonna do that...?

Tahkon's voice BOOMS from the forest, answers:

TAHKON

If you are wise, if you wish to
be your old selves again...

The Toa WATCH as

TAHKON AND THE RAHAGA

EMERGE from the landscape, so at one with the shattered
environment they seem to appear out of thin air.

TAHKON

...you will listen.

We HOLD on the cowed REACTIONS of the Toa.

INT. SUNDIAL ROOM - SAME

Roodaka's gnarled finger TAPS at the surface of the

MAKUTA STONE

it instantly recognizable from the prologue. She speaks to it and the gloomy space familiar from LEGENDS OF METRU NUI, both extensions of and brimming with the dark essence of Makuta.

ROODAKA (O.S.)

Rest, great one. Sleep, and know
that as you do...

CAMERA PULLS BACK: we see that the Makuta Stone is embedded in the chest plate of Roodaka's armored form, functions as her heart-stone. We WIDEN further, in doing so REVEAL

ROODAKA

in imposing full for the first time.

ROODAKA

...I draw close to waking you.

Roodaka is slender and powerful, her thin limbs concluding in razor-sharp claws. There's something disconcerting about her obsidian self, it unique from all other beings in the Bionicle universe. Mystical.

ROODAKA

The Toa have returned -- as you said they would. Even now, their broken bodies are being brought to me so that I may drain them of the elemental powers they used to bind you, break the seal that keeps us apart.

She STROKES the protodermis' surface as she continues:

ROODAKA

(caustic)

And then there will be no need for these charades, for a king that would wash his hands of conflict instead of dirty them with it, for Toa and the weak-minded Matoran that call such pitiful curiosities heroes.

(then, oddly romantic)

The Great Spirit sleeps for all time by your dark hand, and while he does we will carve a new world from the burning husk of this one, and rule it together forever...

Roodaka STOPS her morbid swooning mid-stream. Asks suddenly:

ROODAKA
How long have you been here?

Trundle steps OUT of the thick shadows that dominate the space, offers in trembling tone:

TRUNDLE
<VOICE FX>

ROODAKA
And what did you hear in that moment?

TRUNDLE
<VOICE FX>

ROODAKA
Exactly.
(then)
What is it?

It takes Trundle forever to get the lone syllable out:

TRUNDLE
<VOICE FX>

Whatever Trundle says makes Roodaka SMASH some massive decorative element of the room. In this flash of anger, we see just how much power resides within her elegant frame.

ROODAKA
What of the Toa?
(then, realizes)
And why do you speak of them as if they're still alive?

Trundle doesn't make a peep, can't bring himself to say it.

ROODAKA
Speak.

That does it. He manages a meek:

TRUNDLE
<VOICE FX>

ROODAKA
Gone! But how?!

Another pathetic and monosyllabic:

TRUNDLE
<VOICE FX>

Roodaka REACTS -- she spits the word out:

Rahaqa. ROODAKA