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ISSUE TW
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GLATORIAN
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FARSHTEY | MHAN

THE HARSH DESERT WORLD OF BARA MAGNA.
IN SCATTERED VILLAGES, AGORI DEAL WITH THE DAILY STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE.
WHEN VILLAGES HAVE A DISPUTE, THEY SETTLE IT WITH BATTLES BETWEEN GLATORIAN FIGHTERS IN THEIR ARENAS.
ONCE A YEAR, GLATORIAN FROM ALL OVER BARA MAGNA GATHER TOGETHER, TO BATTLE FOR THE RIGHT TO BE CALLED CHAMPION.

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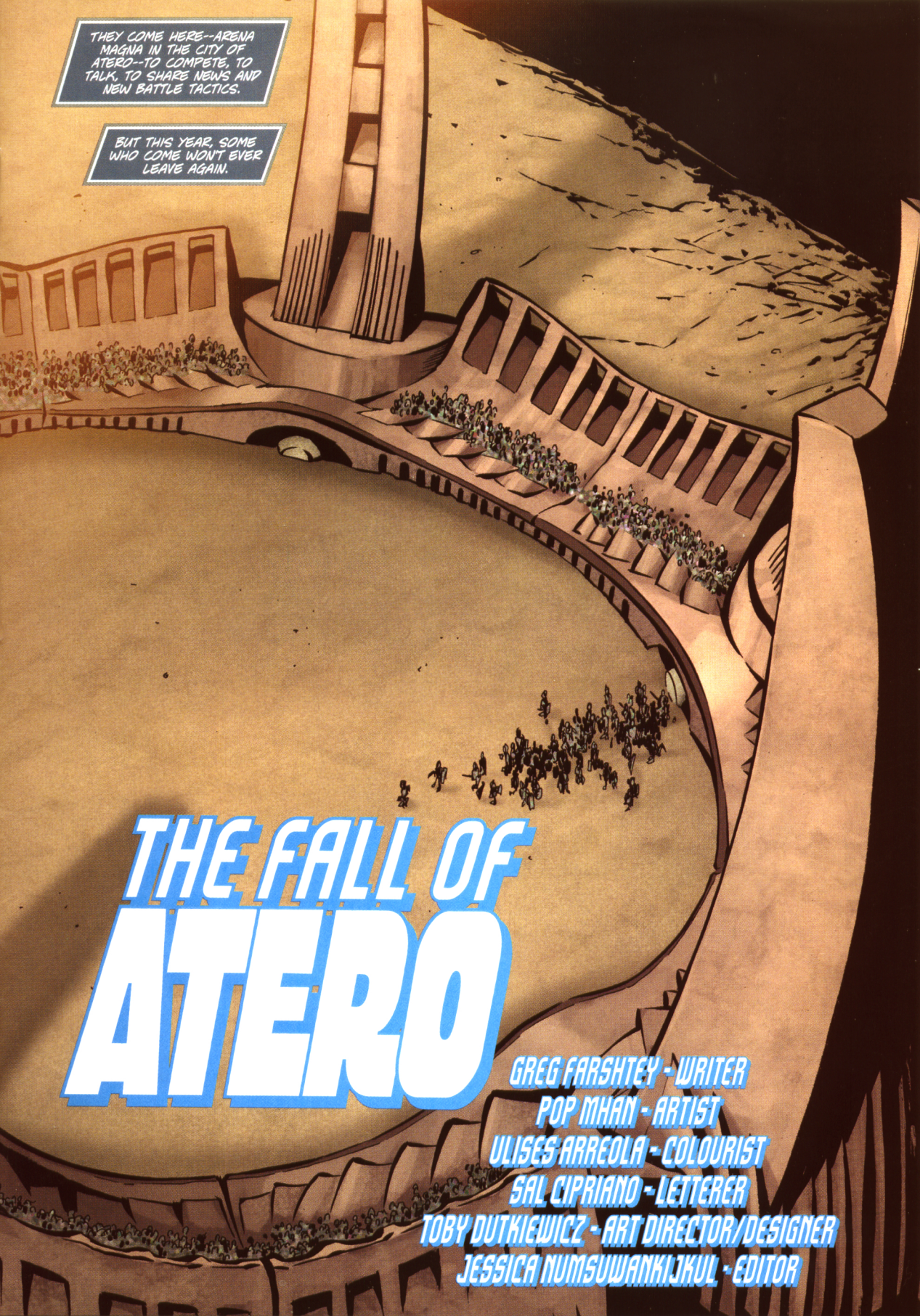
THEY COME HERE--ARENA MAGNA IN THE CITY OF ATERO--TO COMPETE, TO TALK, TO SHARE NEWS AND NEW BATTLE TACTICS.
BUT THIS YEAR, SOME WHO COME WON'T EVER LEAVE AGAIN.
THE FALL OF ATERO
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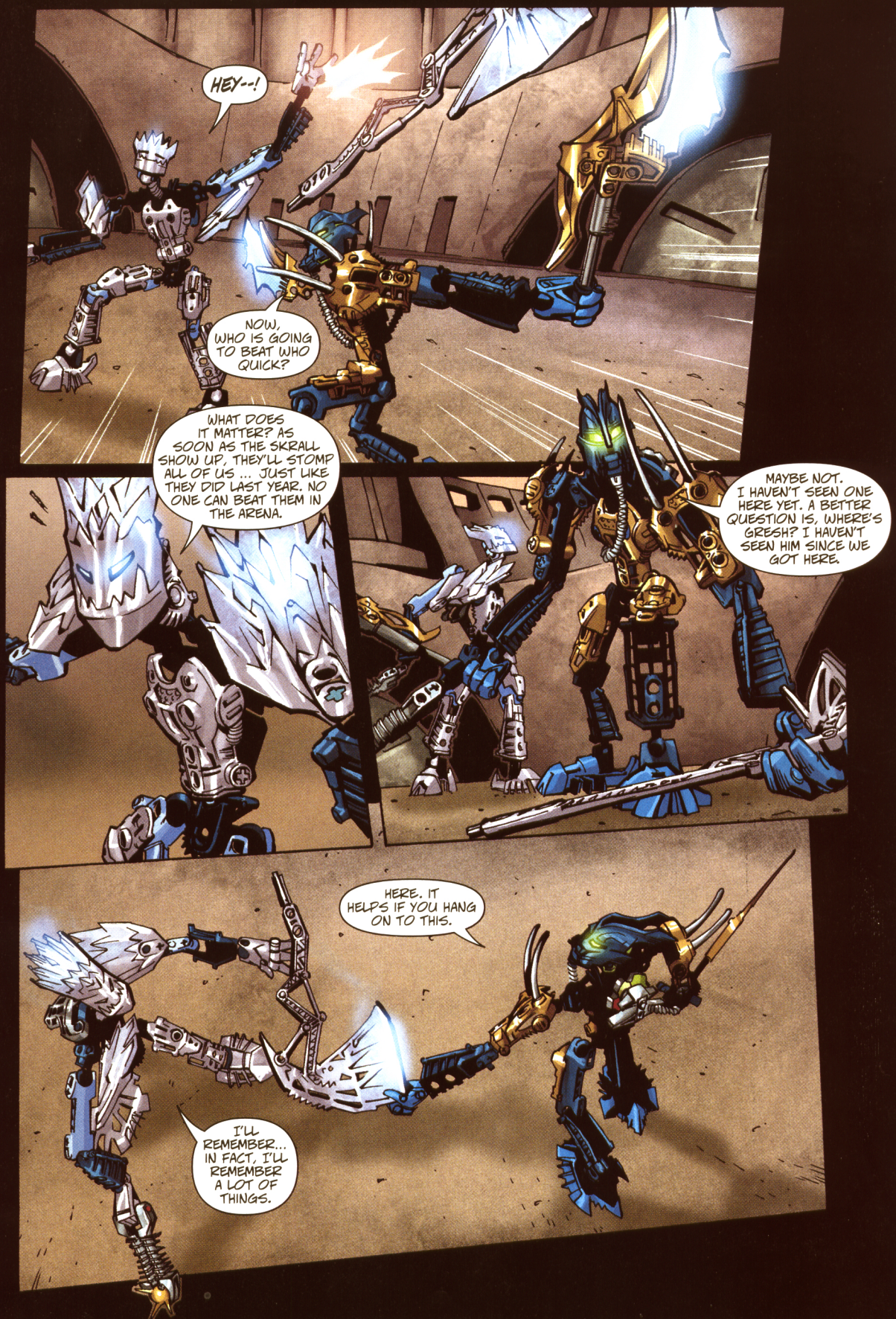
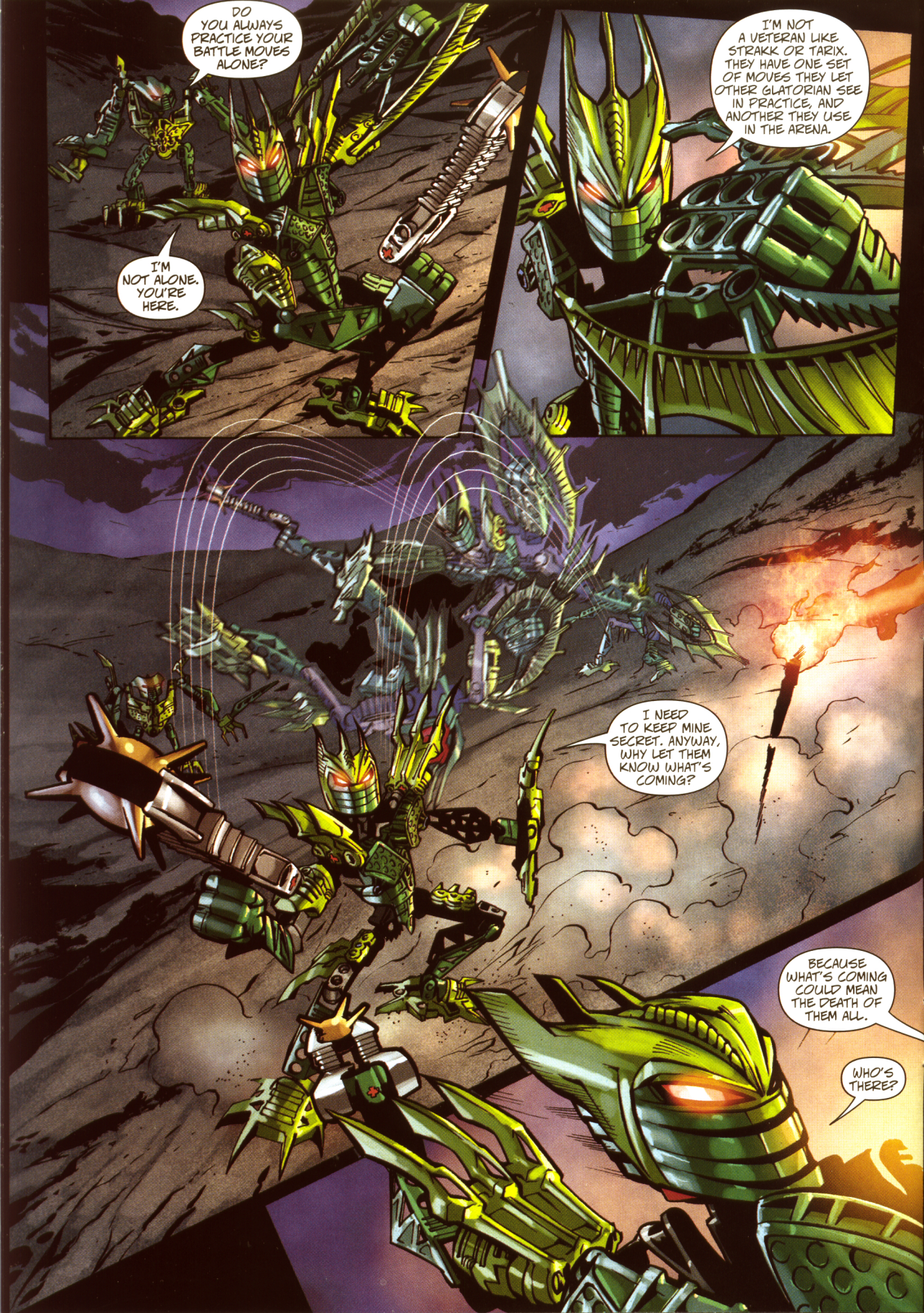
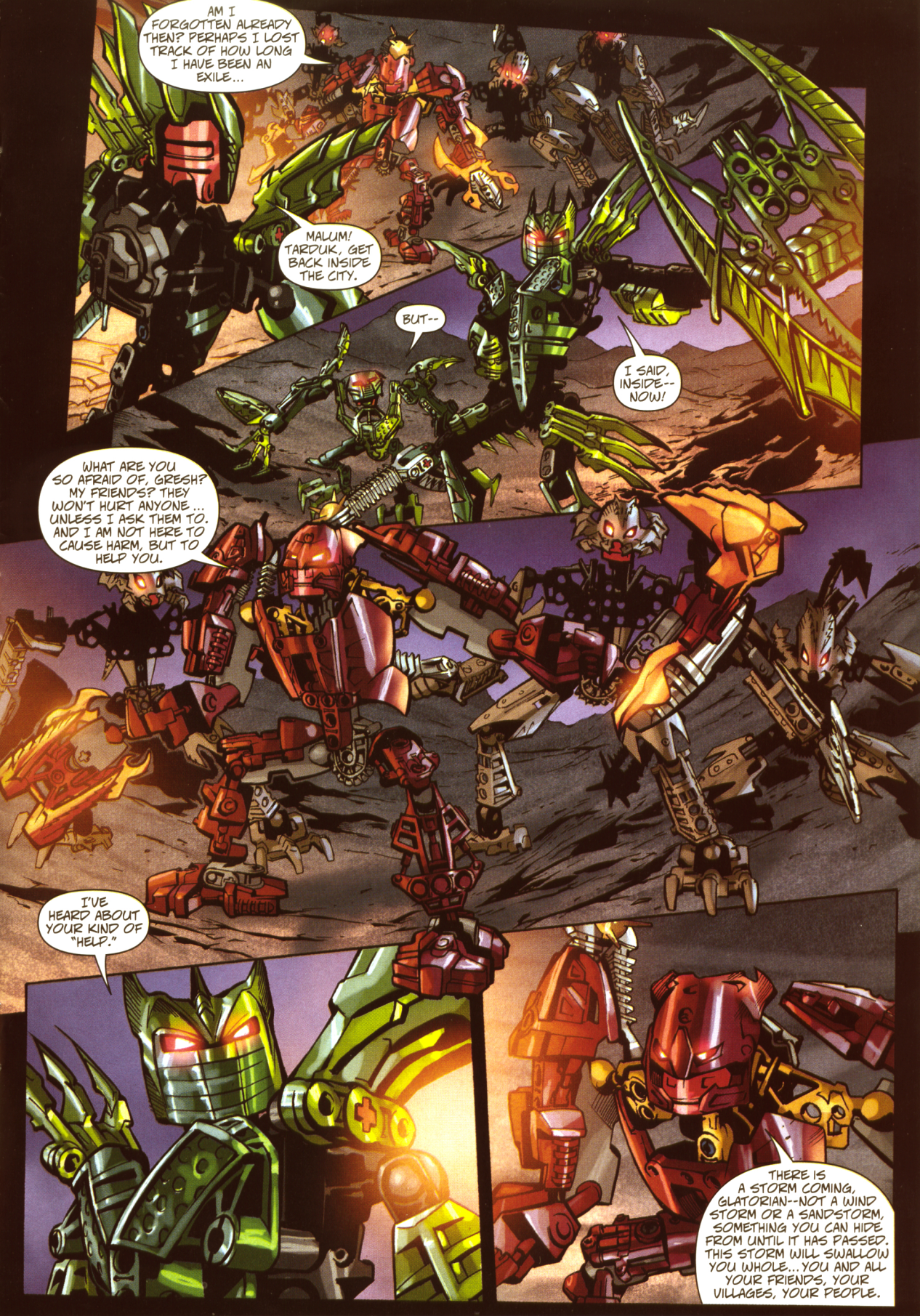
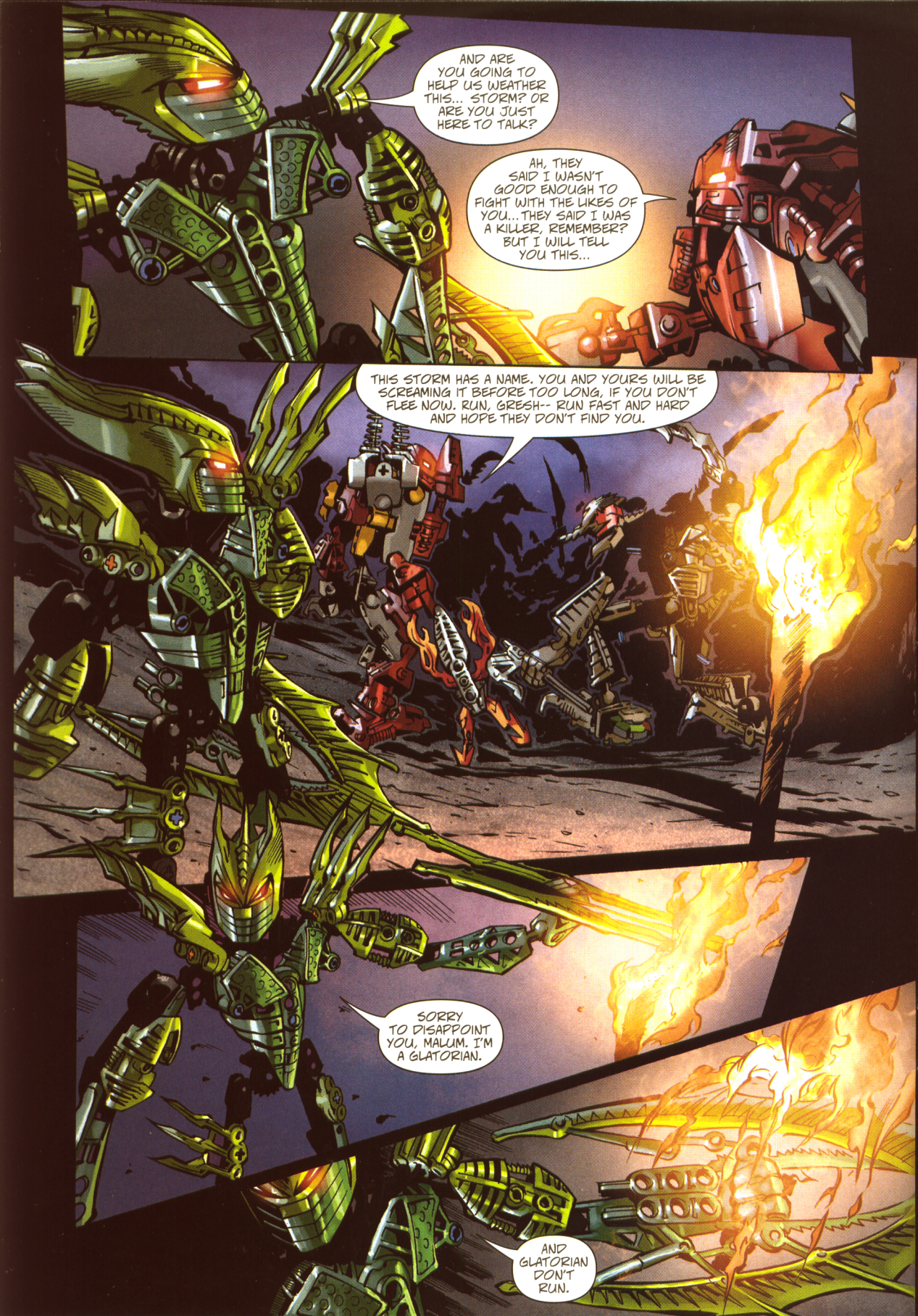
A PRACTICE MATCH BEFORE THE TOURNAMENT BEGINS...
I SHOULDN'T BE HERE.
HA! THEN I'LL BEAT YOU QUICK TOMORROW, AND YOU CAN GO HOME.
CLANG
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN... A TRADE CARAVAN TO MY VILLAGE, TAJUN, WAS WIPED OUT BY BONE HUNTERS. I SHOULD BE WITH MY PEOPLE.
ONE GOOD BLOW, AND I'LL KNOCK YOU BACK THERE!
I'M SERIOUS.


HEY--!
NOW, WHO IS GOING TO BEAT WHO QUICK?
WHAT DOES IT MATTER? AS SOON AS THE SKRALL SHOW UP, THEY'LL STOMP ALL OF US ... JUST LIKE THEY DID LAST YEAR. NO ONE CAN BEAT THEM IN THE ARENA.
MAYBE NOT. I HAVEN'T SEEN ONE HERE YET. A BETTER QUESTION IS, WHERE'S GRESH? I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE WE GOT HERE.
HERE. IT HELPS IF YOU HANG ON TO THIS.
I'LL REMEMBER... IN FACT, I'LL REMEMBER A LOT OF THINGS.

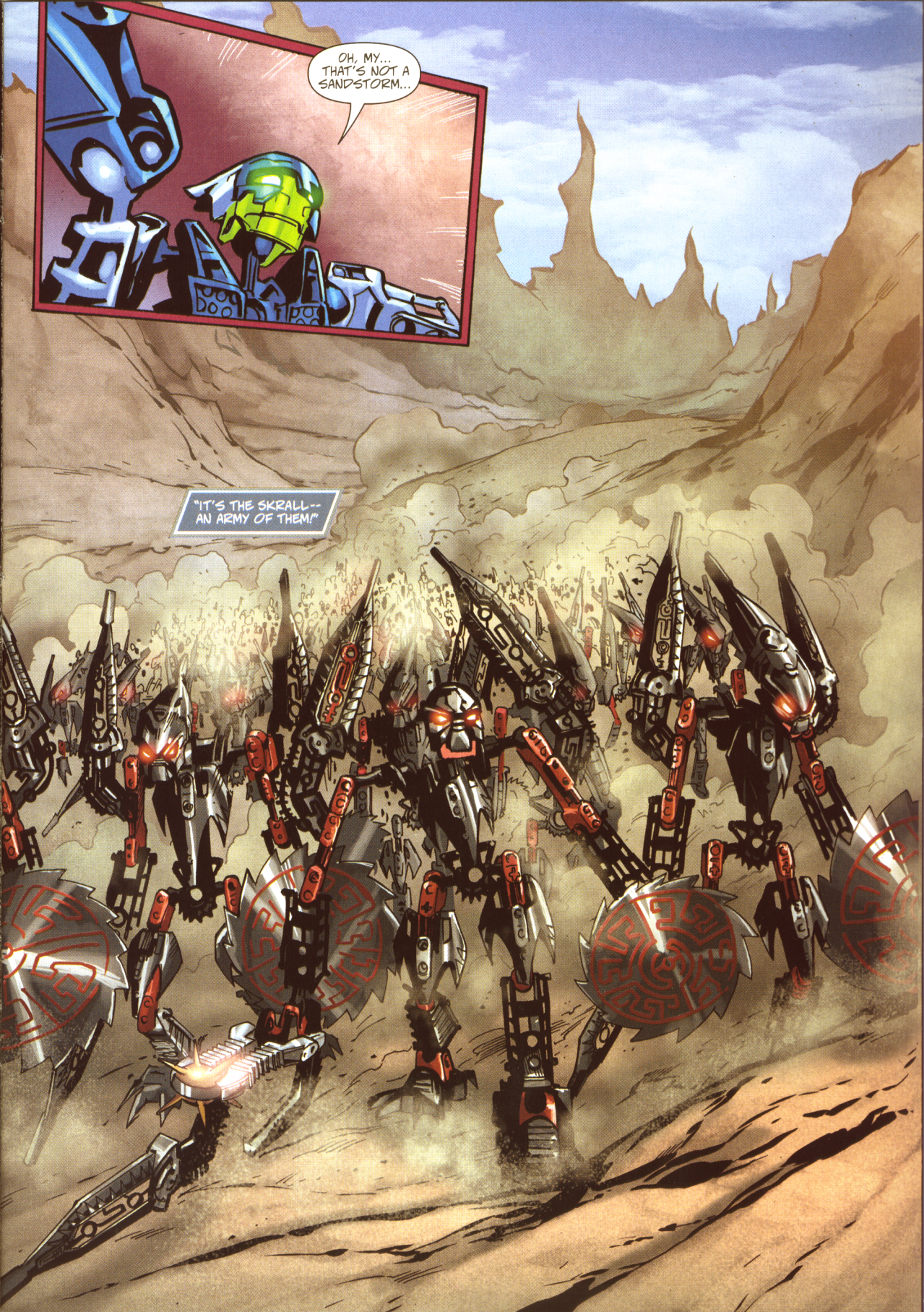

DO YOU ALWAYS PRACTICE YOUR BATTLE MOVES ALONE?
I'M NOT ALONE. YOU'RE HERE.
I'M NOT A VETERAN LIKE STRAKK OR TARIX. THEY HAVE ONE SET OF MOVES THEY LET OTHER GLATORIAN SEE IN PRACTICE, AND ANOTHER THEY USE IN THE ARENA.
I NEED TO KEEP MINE SECRET. ANYWAY, WHY LET THEM KNOW WHAT'S COMING?
BECAUSE WHAT'S COMING COULD MEAN THE DEATH OF THEM ALL.
WHO'S THERE?


AM I FORGOTTEN ALREADY THEN? PERHAPS I LOST TRACK OF HOW LONG I HAVE BEEN AN EXILE...
MALUM! TARDUK, GET BACK INSIDE THE CITY.
BUT--
I SAID, INSIDE-- NOW!
WHAT ARE YOU SO AFRAID OF, GRESH? MY FRIENDS? THEY WON'T HURT ANYONE ... UNLESS I ASK THEM TO. AND I AM NOT HERE TO CAUSE HARM, BUT TO HELP YOU.
I'VE HEARD ABOUT YOUR KIND OF "HELP."
THERE IS A STORM COMING, GLATORIAN--NOT A WIND STORM OR A SANDSTORM, SOMETHING YOU CAN HIDE FROM UNTIL IT HAS PASSED. THIS STORM WILL SWALLOW YOU WHOLE... YOU AND ALL YOUR FRIENDS, YOUR VILLAGES, YOUR PEOPLE.

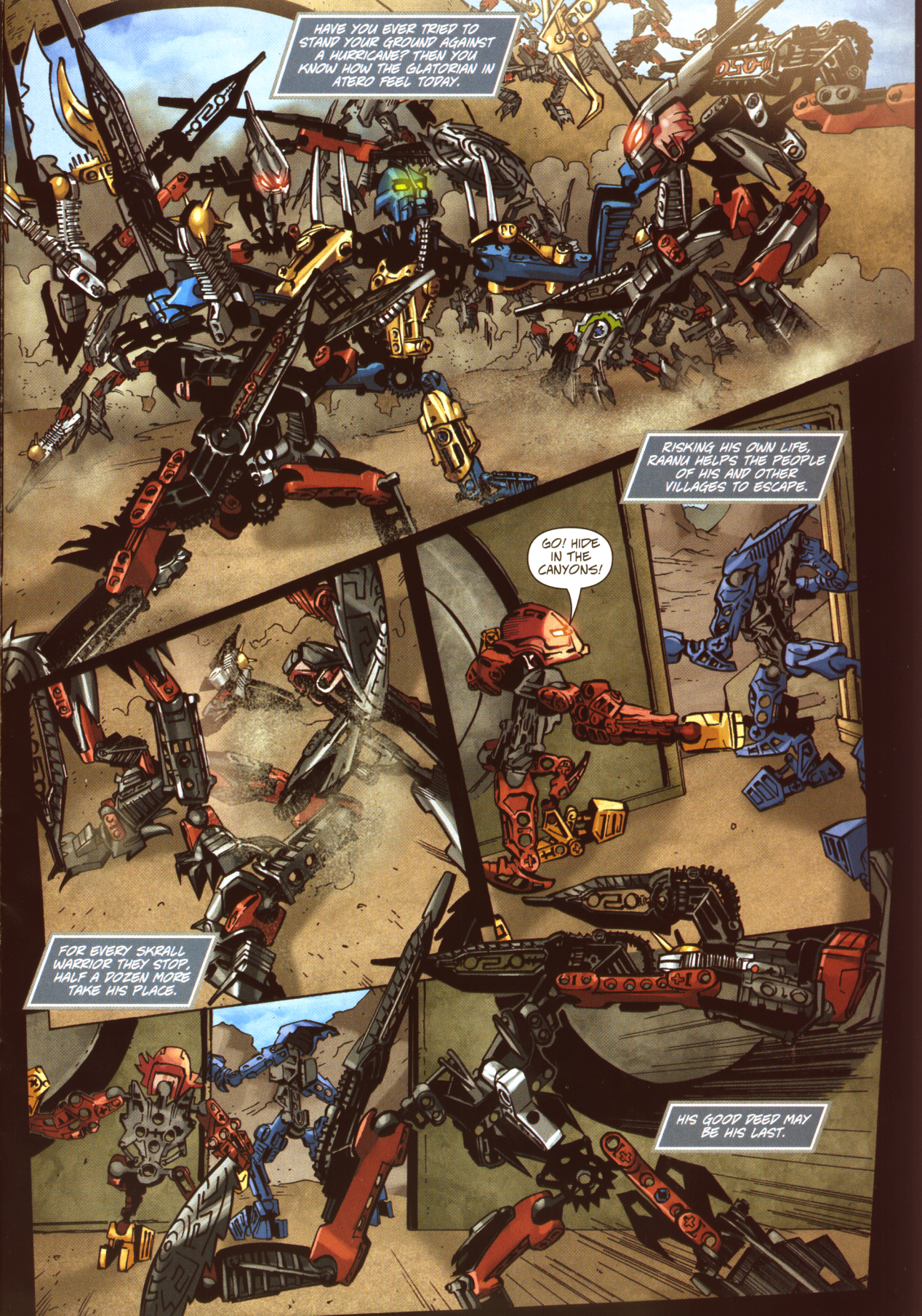

AND ARE YOU GOING TO HELP US WEATHER THIS... STORM? OR ARE YOU JUST HERE TO TALK?
AH, THEY SAID I WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH TO FIGHT WITH THE LIKES OF YOU... THEY SAID I WAS A KILLER, REMEMBER? BUT I WILL TELL YOU THIS...
THIS STORM HAS A NAME. YOU AND YOURS WILL BE SCREAMING IT BEFORE TOO LONG, IF YOU DON'T FLEE NOW. RUN, GRESH-- RUN FAST AND HARD AND HOPE THEY DON'T FIND YOU.
SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU, MALUM. I'M A GLATORIAN.
AND GLATORIAN DON'T RUN.

MORNING IN ATERO, AND THE COMPETITION BEGINS.
TOLD YOU I'D REMEMBER!
I DON'T NEED TWO SWORDS TO BEAT YOU, STRAKK.
RIGHT, YOU STILL HAVE ONE. THEN LET'S TRY FOR NONE.
PLEASE. I WAS DODGING THORNAX WHEN YOU WERE STILL SWATTING AT SNOWFLAKES.
AMONG THE AGORI WATCHING THE ACTION: RAANU, LEADER OF VULCANUS; BERIX, SCAVENGER FROM TAJUN; AND METUS, GLATORIAN TRAINER FROM ICONOX.
STRAKK DOESN'T STAND A CHANCE... I SAW TARIX BEAT MALUM ONCE WITH THAT MOVE.
IF THE SKRALL DON'T SHOW UP, TARIX MIGHT EVEN WIN THE TOURNAMENT. I WONDER WHERE THEY ARE?
NOT LIKE THEM TO MISS A CHANCE TO HUMILIATE EVERYONE ELSE.

DID YOU HEAR WHAT GRESH WAS SAYING THIS MORNING? CAN'T BELIEVE MALUM HAD THE NERVE TO SHOW UP HERE!
I HEARD. MALUM IS JUST CRAZY... I MEAN, ISN'T HE?
SURE, BUT... WHAT IF THAT "STORM" HE TALKED ABOUT IS WHY THE SKRALL AREN'T HERE? WHAT IF SOMETHING... GOT THEM?
MAYBE... MAYBE WE SHOULD GO OUT AND CHECK. YOU KNOW, JUST LOOK AROUND. MAYBE THE SKRALL ARE ON THEIR WAY, JUST A LITTLE LATE.
GOOD IDEA, BERIX. I'M SURE THERE'S SOME SIMPLE EXPLANATION FOR THEIR ABSENCE ... NOT THAT I MISS THEM AT ALL.
LOOK OUT THERE--WHAT A SANDSTORM! IF THAT HITS THE ARENA NOW--


OH, MY... THAT'S NOT A SANDSTORM...
"IT'S THE SKRALL-- AN ARMY OF THEM!"

FACED WITH A HORDE OF SKRALL ON THE MARCH, MOST AGORI WOULD FREEZE IN PANIC. BUT RAANU IS A LEADER, AND KNOWS WHAT HE MUST DO.
THE SKRALL! THE SKRALL ARE ATTACKING! GET EVERYONE TO SAFETY!
TARIX IS A LEADER, TOO. HE DOESN'T WASTE TIME WORRYING WHY THE SKRALL HAVE SUDDENLY DECIDED TO ATTACK--HE ACTS.
GRESH! STRAKK! EVERYONE! WE HAVE TO HOLD THEM OFF SO THE AGORI CAN ESCAPE.
IS HE CRAZY? THEY'RE SKRALL! NONE OF US HAS BEEN ABLE TO BEAT ONE, LET ALONE HUNDREDS.
THEN WE'LL DIE TRYING, I GUESS.
SORRY FOR ASKING. I FORGOT--YOU'RE CRAZY, TOO.
THE TIME FOR TALK HAS PASSED... AND THE TIME FOR BATTLE HAS ARRIVED.


HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO STAND YOUR GROUND AGAINST A HURRICANE? THEN YOU KNOW HOW THE GLATORIAN IN ATERO FEEL TODAY.
RISKING HIS OWN LIFE, RAANU HELPS THE PEOPLE OF HIS AND OTHER VILLAGES TO ESCAPE.
GO! HIDE IN THE CANYONS!
FOR EVERY SKRALL WARRIOR THEY STOP, HALF A DOZEN MORE TAKE HIS PLACE.
HIS GOOD DEED MAY BE HIS LAST.

GOOD THING I GOT THIS REPAIRED BEFORE I LEFT VULCANUS, HUH?
KRAAAANG
WHY? WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?
WE ARE THE MOST POWERFUL. WHY SHOULD WE FIGHT IN THE ARENA FOR WHAT WE WANT, WHEN WE CAN SIMPLY STEP ON YOU ALL LIKE INSECTS?
BECAUSE WE "INSECTS" HAVE A STING.
GIVE UP, GLATORIAN. YOU CAN'T WIN.

GRESH WOULD ANSWER, BUT AS HE SCANS THE ARENA, HE SEES THE SKRALL MIGHT BE RIGHT.
STRAKK, LOOK OUT!
KRAKKK
KA-KRAMMM
THAT DOES IT! STAY IF YOU WANT TO, BUT ATERO IS FINISHED.
"GO," SAYS TARIX, SADLY. "I'LL GET RAANU AND THE OTHERS OUT. WE'LL MEET IN THE CANYON. IT'S ... OVER."

THEY RUN, KNOWING THAT MUCH MORE THAN ATERO'S ARENA MAGNA HAS BEEN DESTROYED TODAY.
AND WORSE IS SURE TO COME.

HOW MANY DID WE LOSE?
AT LEAST HALF A DOZEN GLATORIAN, MAYBE MORE... AGORI ARE STILL SCATTERED IN THE DESERT, TRYING TO MAKE THEIR WAY BACK HOME, SO WHO KNOWS.
THE SKRALL ATTACKED WITHOUT CAUSE... KILLED WITHOUT REASON.
THEY HAD A REASON--BECAUSE THEY COULD. AND ATERO IS PROBABLY JUST THE START.
AN ARMY OF THEM... AGAINST A HANDFUL OF VILLAGES THAT CAN'T STOP SQUABBLING LONG ENOUGH TO AGREE ON WHICH OWNS AN OASIS OR A PILE OF RUSTED EQUIPMENT.
TARIX... DO YOU THINK WE CAN STOP THEM?
NO, GRESH, I DON'T THINK WE CAN... I ONLY KNOW WE HAVE TO. BUT WE SURE COULD USE SOME HELP--THE KIND OF HELP THAT CARRIES A SWORD.
COMING IN JULY: A LEGEND REBORN!