



CHAPTER 1

A wave roared onto the beach and crashed around Tsunami's talons. Her webbed claws sank into the wet sand. Her blue wings billowed in the wind.

She lifted her head, breathing in the wild sea air.

This was where she was supposed to be. This was her ocean.

"Let me guess," Glory said mockingly behind her. "You guys, that's the smell of *freedom*."

"Freedom smells a lot like fish," Starflight observed. "Which, to be clear, is kind of nose-curlingly awful."

"I love it," Tsunami said. This was what the Talons of Peace had stolen from her. They'd kept her trapped in the stale, dreary air under the mountain her whole life, when she was meant to be out here, flying and swimming and living like a real SeaWing.

Starflight glanced up at the sky and edged back toward the dark foliage that lined the beach. "Shouldn't we stay under the trees? What if a patrol spots us? I mean —" He stopped and took a deep breath. "We *must* stay

under the trees. All right. Yes. Everyone back into the trees right now.”

The others ignored him, although Sunny gave him a pitying glance.

Tsunami bent her head to study the waves washing over her talons. Small shapes, silver and green and yellow, darted through the shallows. The ocean smelled much more alive than the cave river.

Was it only a week since they’d run away from their guardians? It was hard to remember exactly how long they’d been trapped in the SkyWing prison.

But there was one thing Tsunami remembered clearly: the sound of bone snapping under her talons.

She poked a hole in the sand with her claw. *I had to kill that SeaWing. Queen Scarlet forced us to fight. There was no other way out of the arena. He was crazy. It was him or me.*

The same thoughts kept circling in her head like lame-winged dragons. She shook her head and flared her wings. This was ridiculous. Was she a dragon or a scavenger? Dragons were meant to be fierce warriors; one little death shouldn’t rattle her so much.

Besides, Glory had done worse with her deadly venom, and she didn’t seem bothered at all.

“You know what I love?” Clay said mournfully. “Fish. Lots of fish. Big fish I can eat, not these little wriggle-scrap.”