

*To CATCH
A THIEF*

Martha Brockenbrough

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Map by Erin Wallace

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A thief stood at the edge of a charming but run-down village. Cars sped by. The thief took a deep breath. From one direction came the scents of salt water, washed-up kelp, and dead crabs. From the other, fresh bread, crackling fires, herb gardens, and even a few rosebushes.

The town smelled good. As if it could be home.

The air smelled of something else too. Rain.

All the better, the thief observed. Rain drives people indoors. Rain is almost as good as the cover of darkness when it comes to thieving.

The first drops spiraled downward. Then more. Soon it became a downpour, drumming the gravel on the shoulder of the highway, gathering in murky puddles.

The thief, now drenched, left the road and passed a sign that read
WELCOME TO URCHIN BEACH.

Below that, a second sign read COUNTDOWN TO THE WORLD-FAMOUS
DRAGONFLY DAY FESTIVAL.

And below that, a third sign showed the number 7. A lucky number, as just about anyone will tell you.

The thief paid no attention to the signs.

That's because the thief had spied something wonderful.

Something they wanted.

Something they would take.