



Enemy of Oceans





Shark Wars #5: Enemy of Oceans

RAZORBILL

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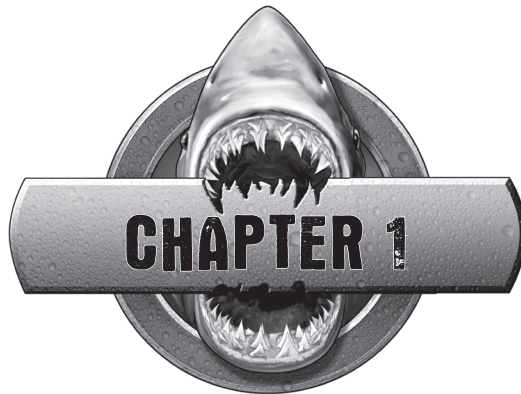
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HOKUU STRUGGLED THROUGH THE TIGHT passage, forcing himself downward into the murky black of the Underwaters. Though he was built for tight spaces, like an eel, it had taken time and skill to wriggle this far. He had made his way into the seabed at a weak point in the eastern Sific fire waters after a series of seaquakes and volcanic eruptions.

Crossing between the two oceans was so dangerous that Hokuu, who as a frilled shark was used to the depths, was probably the only one in the Big Blue who could do it. Twice now he'd had to gather power from the waters with shar-kata, the ancient sharkkind martial art, to shield himself from being crushed.

Hokuu could tell he was close to the sealed-off ancient ocean because of the different taste of the water. Soon he could glimpse the glow of the lumos that provided the only light in the Underwaters. With





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one last push he was through, dislodging a few clumps of glowing coral that sank into the depths.

Hokuu marveled at the eerie world around him. The waters were warm, hot even, and seemed to glow, turning the darkness milky white. This small ocean—well, small for an ocean—had been sealed off for hundreds of thousands, maybe millions, of years. An enormous seaquake thirteen years ago had opened a slim passageway. That was when actual descendants of Tyro and First Shiver had found their way into the Big Blue for the first time in eons. They were living jurassic dwellers, prehistores that called themselves Fifth Shiver!

The sharkkind ruling the waters of the Big Blue above were a pale imitation of the glory that was—and the glory that should be once more! The pitiful modern sharkkind were shadows of their former selves; shadows of Fifth Shiver. Hokuu would help Fifth Shiver cross into the Big Blue and erase the weak sharkkind and dwellers that lived there. It was so simple.

But Bollagan, the former king of Fifth Shiver, had complicated matters. There was talk, talk, and more talk. He wanted to live in peace with the sharkkind above. He wanted to do nothing to the same sharks that had abused Hokuu's kind, the frilled sharks, since time unremembered.

No! That was unacceptable.





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So Hokuu had organized a coup and put Drinnok in charge. Drinnok, like Hokuu, wanted to come up and conquer the Big Blue. But then came disaster. Hokuu's treacherous former apprentice closed the passage between the two oceans. However, this had given Hokuu time to think. His kind, the frilled sharks (or frills), hadn't changed like everyone else in the Big Blue. Frills were still glorious prehistores in both the Big Blue and the Underwaters! But today so few of them remained in the Big Blue.

Hokuu would not let their light wink out from the waters. The prehistores in the Underwaters would come up from the darkness and take their proper place in the ocean.

And Hokuu would be their king!

For that he needed Fifth Shiver and its new ruler, Drinnok. Hokuu scraped his tri-pointed teeth together as he sent ripples through his long body and propelled himself forward.

There weren't as many types of greenie in the Underwaters, but what did grow was gigantic. Some were carnivorous and had colorful flowers to attract prey, but most were bone white due to a lack of sunshine. He swam through the jagged spikes and spires where the white-greenie grew and into the Fifth Shiver homewaters, called Krator, the birthplace of Tyro and First Shiver. It was all sharp angles with an eerie, shadowless glow lighting up everything.





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“Hold! Who dares swim in Fifth Shiver waters?” called a prehistore mako mariner. There were four more giants behind that one. Though Hokuu could have easily used his powers to send them to the Sparkle Blue for their disrespect, he could not have bested every sharkkind that lived in the Underwaters.

“I am Hokuu. Friend of King Drinnok and Fifth Shiver,” he told them. “I wish to speak with your leader. He will want to see me.”

The guards watched closely but led him into a clearing between two volcanic spires that glowed with a light as bright as a full moon because of the lumos attached to them. Hokuu was brought before Drinnok and his Line.

“I didn’t think you would show your long and pointy face here again,” the king growled. “Not after disappointing me for so long.” Drinnok whipped his massive megalodon tail against a rock spire, splintering it to nothing.

As much as Hokuu hated admitting it, this was true. He had been stopped by his former apprentice who went by the absurd name Takiza Jaelynn Betta vam Delacrest Waveland ka Boom Boom, though Hokuu never gave him the satisfaction of calling him anything but Taki. It was Taki, a Siamese fighting betta fish, who had used his own shar-kata powers to close the first sea lane between the two oceans thirteen





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years ago. That was when Graynoldus's son Gray, now the Seazarein of the Big Blue, escaped from the Underwaters.

Then, not even a year ago, Hokuu had found another thin and treacherous passage to the Underwaters. This time he made sure that Gray and everyone else were preoccupied with other things, namely Finnivus and his Black Wave armada. It was Hokuu's unseen efforts that had caused all the strife in the waters then. He had woven that web like a sea spider. It was perfect.

Almost perfect.

Takiza had left Gray to deal with the threat of Finnivus on his own! Then the troublesome, preening betta fish had found Hokuu and destroyed his carefully laid plans again! Everything crumbled into the sand. And worse yet, Gray won his battle against Finnivus. He had grown into a leader and was named Seazarein of the Big Blue.

Both Takiza and Gray would have to be dealt with. Soon.

"Have you nothing to say? Did you come to the Underwaters to hover there like a fool?" asked the sneering Drinnok.

Hokuu dipped his snout and ignored the insult. "I live to serve you, King Drinnok. I know you're angry and I beg forgiveness." He would first prove himself to be loyal. After all, they both wanted the same thing: for Fifth Shiver to swim out from the Underwaters and





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take their rightful leadership position above everyone else in the Big Blue.

Well, almost the same thing.

Once the Big Blue was conquered, Hokuu would lead his kind, the frills, to victory. He would be the greatest ruler the oceans had ever seen. But he wouldn't breathe a word of this to Drinnok.

"It was our enemies above who kept you from returning to the wider waters. I am working every moment so that the sons and daughters of Tyro will once again swim free!"

"Empty words will not get us out of here," Drinnok replied. "Or earn you a place on my Line, if that is still your goal."

"It is! It is!" Hokuu said. "But I would help you anyway because it's the right thing to do."

"Enough of this! Do you have a way out or don't you? The earth above and below us buckles and heaves. One day—perhaps soon—the Underwaters will cease to exist. Everyone here will be turned into paste when the rock above our heads smashes to the ground beneath us."

Hokuu nodded. "It will take me a week, but I can create a passageway for you and your mariners. After that, you can take revenge on those who have struggled to keep you imprisoned here by closing the passage between the Underwaters and the Big Blue."





Drinnok scraped his huge dagger teeth together.
“That I will. We all will.”

A rumbling laugh echoed in the pale half-light and Grimkahn—a mosasaur, the largest type of jurassic dweller—glided into the clearing. “You promise this overgrown worm a spot in your Line? There must be a mistake, Drinnok. I speak for the jurassics and I’m mightier than any frill. A spot on the Line is my due in the new world of the Big Blue!”

Hokuu held his tongue. It wasn’t his place to argue in King Drinnok’s court. Besides, Grimkahn’s species was the strongest of the jurassic dwellers. Even with Hokuu’s powers, it wouldn’t be a sure thing to win a battle against him. Grimkahn was eighty feet long and had giant, clawed flippers and a gaping sea crocodile’s mouth that could swallow a twenty-foot shark whole. Well, if not whole, it wouldn’t take him more than a few bites.

Grimkahn would make a powerful ally if he could be turned, thought Hokuu.

In the Big Blue, sharkkind were the undisputed leaders of the oceans. The dwellers there, while many more in number than sharkkind, could never muster a force that would threaten a strong shiver of sharks. But in the Underwaters that wasn’t necessarily true. The dwellers here, such as giant turtles, or even crabs, were immense. And larger still were a subset of the dwellers called the jurassics. These were marine reptiles such





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as plesiosaurs, pliosaurs, and many others. While all were considered dwellers, the enormous jurassics ruled them all. And the mosasaurs were the strongest of the giants.

“You speak for the dwellers, that is true,” Drinnok told the mosasaur. “But you are dwellers, not sharkkind. Fifth Shiver rules sharkkind and dwellers, including you jurassics. The Five in the Line have always been sharkkind and Hokuu is a shark, even though he’s a frill, so he can be considered. That’s the way it’s been since the time of Tyro.”

No one noticed Hokuu’s grimace at the insult. Most sharkkind looked alike: with a dorsal fin on the back and a divided tail. Not frilled sharks. They were cousins with the eels and shared their sinewy form, which Hokuu thought was pleasing and sleek. Other sharks mistrusted them for it, though.

Regular sharkkind were afraid of them. Called them monsters. They would suffer.

Grimkahn roared in frustration so loudly that it was both painful and terrible to hear. “Tyro is gone! In the new world above, there should be new ways. The jurassics demand their due!”

“Keep a civil tongue in my homewaters, Grimkahn, or you will lose it!” Drinnok snarled.

A smaller jurassic, a plesiosaur, whipped its slender neck back and forth. “He’s disrespecting you, leader! I invoke the right of challenge!”





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There was dead silence in the clearing. Hokuu heard one of the carnivorous bladders in the white-greenie shut with a snap as it ate something smaller and weaker.

This would be interesting.

Drinnok ignored the plesiosaur and stared at Grimkahn. "If you can't discipline this long-necked fool, there will be consequences."

Grimkahn smiled his immense crocodile smile. "Unlike you, I don't control every word from my subjects' mouths. I allow them their own judgment. It so happens that Breaker's judgment is that you're unfit to rule."

"It is!" agreed Breaker. "You're an old fool, Drinnok. Fight me if you dare!"

Grimkahn swung his huge head around and hit Breaker in the side with his giant snout. "Now, now, Breaker. You're being rude. I won't order you to apologize, but you should."

"I won't!" Breaker said.

Grimkahn shook his head apologetically. "I guess you'll have to ignore the insult, Drinnok. Or teach him manners . . . if you dare."

The rest of Drinnok's Line looked at their king. There was no way he could back down from the challenge. Grimkahn was much smarter than Hokuu had given him credit for. Drinnok swam off the Speakers Rock. "You desire single combat? So be it!"





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Breaker was a large plesiosaur, fast and young, but Drinnok was a fully grown megalodon. Though the king was smaller from snout to tail, the megalodon's toothy mouth was much bigger. It was youth against experience, strength versus speed.

Drinnok swam straight at Breaker, who darted off to the side. He twisted his supple neck around lightning fast and scored a bite into the megalodon's flank. Breaker was after him again, in a flash, going for Drinnok's tail. But the leader of Fifth Shiver had swum in a thousand battles before this one. He created space by cutting a turn around a rock spire and threw himself into a spinning turn. Now, instead of chasing Drinnok's tail, Breaker was facing his toothy maw. The plesiosaur tried to slow himself but Drinnok ripped off his front left flipper. Blood streamed from the wound.

"No!" screamed Breaker. "You weren't supposed to do that! Help me, Grimkahn! Help!"

Drinnok turned to the mosasaur. "It seems this pup wants you to take him home. Do you wish me to spare his pathetic life?"

Grimkahn ignored Breaker's cries. "As you said, you lead Fifth Shiver, which rules the dwellers. It's your choice whether to show mercy."

"Yes, oh great king!" cried Breaker. "Mercy! I think this may heal. We jurassics can sometimes swim with only three flippers!"





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Drinnok snapped his giant jaws down on Breaker's slender neck, chopping his head off and ending his pleading.

The megalodon looked at Grimkahn, who was expressionless. "It was Breaker's choice to defy me, much like the sharkkind above. For that, Breaker's life—and theirs above—are forfeits." Drinnok waved a fin at the plesiosaur's body. "Besides, the crabs I rule also need to eat, Grimkahn. Remember that."

Drinnok and his Five in the Line laughed as the giant mosasaur and his jurassics swam away.

Hokuu was glad he had made the trip. All this time he had wondered how to gain the upper fin over Drinnok while exalting his own kind, the frills, so they could exalt him in turn. The answer had been in the Underwaters all this time.

Grimkahn and his jurassics were the force that Hokuu needed to make sure that Drinnok did everything he wanted once the Big Blue was conquered.

