

SMOKEY LONESOME THE SEA TURTLE

Chapter 1

A beautiful full moon reflects upon the warm ocean waters off the shore of Makaka Beach in Maui, covering the waves with the sparkling of a thousand singing stars. Out from the softly crashing ocean emerges Mama Lani (meaning *Heaven* in Hawaiian), a beautiful green sea turtle who has traveled over a 1,000 miles to find the perfect nesting place to lay the eggs of her babies in the middle of the night.

The ancient lava rocks upon the silky shores and far off rushing of waterfalls tell her she has returned to the white sands where she was born. With her powerful front flippers, she drags her gigantic self out of the sea to a quiet place in the sands, tucked between two red volcanic rocks, which is the only time she will ever leave her ocean home. She flings the sand up into the air, as she digs herself a giant hole in to safely nest and lay her 100 soft leathery eggs.

Once settling into her nest, Lani sheds tears of love as her babies are slowly but surely laid gently into the sand. She knows only one in 1,000 usually survive to adulthood, yet she prays for each one to be given a chance. As Mama Lani sheds more and more tears of love for each and every one of them, she suddenly feels a soft hand caress her head.

Looking up with her wild, wise, and ancient eyes, she is startled to see she is visited in the night by Akamai (meaning *clever* in Hawaiian), a beautiful mermaid with long, wild hair and a shimmering tail, sent by Neptune, God of the Sea, to soothe her and to protect her as she lays her eggs.

While stroking her leathery head, Akamai sings softly to her a soothing Hawaiian Mermaid chant of love and protection. As Lani sheds one last tear upon laying her 100th egg, she whispers to Akamai, "Watch over my children, for I am old and must return to the deepest mysteries of the sea." With sparkling eyes and a reassuring smile, she bends down to kiss Lani's head and reassure her that her keikis (meaning *children* in Hawaiian) are safe.

As she kisses Mama Lani, she notices a heart upon her gigantic shell, which tell her that she is the mother destined to have one, just one, of the thousands of babies she has borne in her lifetime to be an extraordinary little turtle. Akamai remembers to tell him of the heart upon her mother's shell, so she will always know who she is.

Consumed with gratitude, Lani smiles and rests her head for a moment on Akamai's silvery lap. She sings softly to her again, soothing her ancient spirit.

Yet, suddenly the sound of shuffling footsteps interrupts their sweet peace. "Move quickly," says Akamai, as "danger is near." With her strong swimmer flippers, Lani flings a mountain of sand upon her 100 eggs to protect her precious babies from poachers of the night, who are known to steal baby sea turtle eggs.

Akamai, who is not just a mermaid but also a sorceress gifted with magical powers, blows gently onto the palm of her hand to create a flaming ball of light which she then casts into the darkened shadows of the beach, freezing any predators or prowlers in their tracks. Glowing with radiance and beauty, she smiles down at Lani reassuring her, “You’re children are safe now.”

Ms Lani nods her ancient head with appreciation while flinging more of the protective sand upon her children, says a prayer for them to safely make it to the sea. She then pulls her giant self as fast as she can back into rise and fall of the vast, wide ocean.

Sea turtles can’t see very well, especially at night, so Akamai holds up her slender, beautiful hands to reflect the light of the moon to guide her to the warm lips of the ocean. Lani turns her ancient head around one last time to say goodbye to her babies and to say “Muhalo” (*thank you* in Hawaiian) to Akamai for giving her love and solace through the night of nesting, before catching the next wave to carry her back out into the deep, deep indigo sea...leaving her babies forever. Although she must travel far from them, she will always carry them in her heart.

Under a sky of a billion stars, beautiful Akamai lays down and cradles the nest of baby sea turtle eggs with her shimmering silver tail fully knowing that there is something special about one tiny honu (Hawaiian for *sea turtle*) out of all of them. Already, under the sand, she can hear his teeny tiny heart beating in his shell.

Neptune, the God of the Sea, told her that there would be a sea turtle whose powers are of the most magical and mysterious, a great warrior turtle and lone ranger of the sea, who therefore must be given extra love and protection in the dangerous journey out of the egg and into the sea.

Sea turtles and their ancestors have graced our seas for over 200 million years, yet this baby honu is something special. Curled up next to the mound of sand where the tiny sea turtle eggs lay, Akamai casts a protective spell upon them by singing to them a chant of the ancestors:

*Nâ `aumâkua mai ka lâ hiki a ka lâ kau.
Guardians spirits from the rising to the setting sun.*

*Mai ka ho`oku`i a ka halawai.
From the zenith to the horizon.*

*Nâ `aumâkua iâ ka hina kua, iâ ka hina alo.
Guardians spirits to my back, to my front.*

*Kâholo i ka lani.
Running across the heavens.*

*Eia ka pulapula a `oukou, `o Smokey Lonesome a honus.
Here is your offspring, Smokey Lonesome and little ones.*

*E mâlama `oukou ia`u.
Take care of them.*

Akamai caresses their nest with her graceful fingertips, then rises to swim back into the ocean, for she must not be seen by any humans. Yet, throughout the day, Akamai and her merpeople of the sea now and then peek out from the coral reef or nearby volcanic rock on Mulaka's beach to check up on Lani's babies, to be sure their nest remains safe for two entire months.

Every single day and night, she fulfills her promise to protect the 100 sea turtle babies from dangers of the night such as the appetites of wild pigs and hungry stray dogs who would love to dig up the sand for a tasty treat of sea turtle eggs.

One particularly greedy wild pig is suddenly swept up into the air and thrown high up into a tree when Akamai and her merpeople find her snorting and rummaging through the sand to find the clutch of eggs for her dinner. Akamai promptly whacks her on the head with a tree branch and drop kicks her with her powerful tail, sending her snorting and flying away from Mama Lani's precious eggs with a stunned look on her face. How she ever got down from the tree, we will never know.

Scandalous poachers of the night meet a similar fate when they try to steal Mama Lani's babies. Some cultures that still believe sea turtle eggs are a delicacy that have magical powers, and that eating them will give you eternal youth. They are willing to commit the crime of stealing them for the magic they believe them to possess. With a furious glare, Akamai fumes in quiet rage while hiding behind a lava rock on the beach, watching a little, bald fat man creep over to the mound with a shovel.

"Stupid man," she whispers while conjuring, with the sorceress powers the God of the Neptune has given her, an army of vicious red ants to suddenly crawl up the man's shorts, making him scream and drop his shovel, howling in pain from their stinging and biting. She casts a spell to make the shovel levitate on its own in the air and then another spell to cause it to whack the man on his behind over and over again, making him scream with terror of angry spirits on the beach as he runs and runs away, never to try to steal another sea turtle egg again! Akamai smiles and then swims back into the warm sea, satisfied.

Finally, after two long months, under a full moon, the eggs begin to tremble. The hatchlings are ready to emerge into this world! With powerful little egg teeth and baby beaks, they begin to break open their shells under the sand. Although hundreds of miles away, Mama Lani's heart melts and tears of love gush forth, as she feels the tug of her children being born. The merpeople begin to murmur with excitement, the stars shine and twinkle, the waves rise and crash more wildly, as the nest begins to shake.

All the commotion under the sand intrigues a mischievous dog, a giant Irish Wolfhound, who has run away in the night from his owners for a prowl along the Makaka beach looking for trouble. He spies the excitement of rumbling and stirring under the sand, and playfully runs over to see what might be a tasty midnight snack!

Where is Akamai?

She hears the call of Mama Lani's babies being born, yet is stuck in a troller's fishing net fighting with all her might to get free. Her magic can only be used to protect the sea turtles and not against anything else. Thus, the troller fisherman has been admiring her beauty, keeping her writhing in the net all night, as she fights and plots her escape on the night when she hears the call of her Smokey Lonesome being born. She twists and turns in the net, doing everything in her power to fight for her freedom.

Yet, nothing can stop all the little hatchlings now, who are beginning to slowly but surely crumble away their shells. With his little egg tooth, Smokey Lonesome pecks and pecks excitedly at his shell, anxious to be free to breathe in the salt sea air and to make the mad race to the sea.

Egor, the Wolfhound, runs around in the circles around the vibrating mound of sand, licking his lips, starting to dig to discover what tasty treasures lay beneath the sand. The teeny tiny baby sea turtles, unknowing of the danger that lurks above, start to triumphantly break free of their shells and crawl with their itty bitty flippers up and out of the sand...much to Egor's pleasure and delight. Smokey's excitement over seeing the world makes him furiously peck and peck at his shell, as do all his siblings...whose first glance at the world with their baby sea turtle eyes is not the shimmering moon or the vast wide ocean as it should be, but the deep, dark eyes of a drooling Egor, licking his chops and taking delight in his evening feast.

Just as he starts to bat around an innocent little baby turtle like a toy, Smokey Lonesome explodes out of his shell, furious at the dog for upsetting his cute brothers and sisters. "You ugly beast!" he squeaks in his tiny baby voice. Egor ignores him and continues to bat around his siblings, chasing and tormenting them around the sand as they blink dazed and confused in their new world.

Smokey Lonesome squeaks, flaps his flippers, and jumps up and down to get Egor's attention away from his siblings. He squawks, "Come and eat me! I dare you, you big bad wolf!" Egor, amused with the taunting and bravado of the baby, bends down on the sand and stares right into little Smokey's baby eyes. Smokey trembles yet remains strong as they stare each other down.

Egor laughs at Smokey's bravery, licks his chops, and opens wide to eat him up, only to suddenly howl in pain as Smokey leaps up with his tiny yet powerful flippers. He bites down hard with his little egg tooth and sharp, little beak on Egor's wet nose while furiously batting him in the eyes with his little flippers. He stumbles and howls in pain, shaking his head wildly to become free of Smokey's ferocious bite. He flings him around in circles, tries to tear him off with his paws, as Smokey holds on for dear life so his brothers and sisters are free to make their mad dash safely into the sea.

Confused and crazed by this little fighting baby turtle, Egor takes off running down the shore miles and miles and miles away from Smokey's siblings. Still latched onto his nose and trying his best to poke him in the eyes with his baby flippers, Egor is blinded from Smokey's fighting. Confused and dazed, he promptly runs head on into a tree, sending Smokey flying through the air, and Egor on the ground unconscious.

Our brave little honu catches his breath, and smiles with relief knowing his tiny brothers and sisters made it safely now to their home in the sea.

Shaking off the dog's drool, he takes in the world at last. Alone under a sky of a billion stars, our little brave turtle follows the light of the moon, pitter patter across the white sands into the warm embrace of the sea. He is wild, happy, and free trying out his flippers for the first time, not knowing they would take him on a journey of a million miles across the world's oceans in his lifetime. Unlike other babies, who immediately zoom into drifting bracken together to hide from predators, our fearless Smokey Lonesome decides its time to catch some waves and body surf as dawn begins to break.

He squeaks, squeals, and laughs with delight, playing all by himself, using his baby shell as a surfboard into vast, wide ocean, unafraid of the sharks and the creatures who would love to eat him up. He doesn't want to hide in the Sargasso sea of bracken in fear like the others, he wants to ride the waves, flip over on his back and paddle while gazing at the moon. He wants to do acrobatic somersaults under the water for the first time. He wants to explore the beautiful coral reefs and say hello to all the colorful fish he sees as his friends and not foes.

His Mama Lani would be aghast over his rebellious ways, but Smokey is too blissed out and astonished with the world to care. All he wants to do is surf the day away, as his baby laughter echoes across the sea.

Meanwhile, our beautiful Akamai is weeping over the nest in disarray where she had promised Mama Lani she would always protect her children. She is angry at the troller fisherman who had held her captive, yet who now is swinging high up in the air and yelping for help in the net after her brave battle.

Without magic but with free will she intrepidly fought him off, yet still weeps as she sees the shells have been crushed and dog paw prints and drool in the sand. She cries and prays for Neptune to forgive her for not being there to protect them from the evil dog as they hatched. Her heart aches with grief and worry for the special turtle she was called to protect, for Smokey, the one who was meant to be the great Lone Ranger of the Sea.

Yet, suddenly in the midst of her weeping and crushing waves of grief, she hears high pitched baby laughter and squealing...and a baby turtle, drunk with delight in life, fearlessly and freely riding the waves surfs by. "Who is that? Could that be? Could that be our Smokey?" She shakes her head no, for why would the enlightened, wise, and magical one be surfing when he is supposed to be hiding in plankton! Yet, still the high pitched laughter tugs at her heart. "Could it be him?"

Too excited to be mad at him for being mischievous, she swims back out into the ocean, with hope rising in her chest, following the sound of his bellowing laughter, as he is too tiny to spot in the waves. She searches and searches, as he is seemingly impossible to catch, as he practices breathing and diving, breathing and diving in between each wave he tries to catch.

Laughing hysterically, he entertains a shark, thinking he has made a new friend. The shark smiles and laughs with a huge mouthed grin, flashing all his dagger sharp teeth, as Smokey thinks he is brilliant and funny with his acrobatic leaps...which he is, of course, for a crowd of octopus, dolphins, sting rays, sharks, and blowfish laughing with delight over this courageous little creature. He flips and somersaults and leaps wildly into the air above a wave, tumbling down unexpectedly right into Akamai's loving hands at last.

Noticing the little star on his face, she exclaims "Smokey!!" as she embraces him close to her chest with so much love and tenderness. Smoky Lonesome's audience of other animals dart away squeamishly as she casts her spell of protective powers around him. They wouldn't dare upset a mermaid sent directly from the fearsome Neptune. Holding his teeny tiny self up in the palm of her hands, she kisses the star on his cheek and holds him up in the sun to admire him.

"Smokey Lonesome!!! You naughty little turtle!!! You are supposed to be hiding, not surfing, charming a shark, and entertaining creatures much bigger than you! You could get hurt, little one! Only one out of a 1000 hatchlings survive, and we couldn't lose you, sweet Smokey!"

He wanted to yelp, "Who the heck are you and why would you care?! I can do whatever I want! I play by my own rules, babe!," yet he finds himself speechless and in awe of her beauty. His tiny heart pitter patters and nearly beats out of his chest, as she gazes at him lovingly with twinkling eyes. He is enchanted by the stars in her eyes, in her hair, the way her entire body twinkles in the sun, and he feels his tiny turtle face turn red. "Now let me take you to where you should be hiding, little honu, for you should not be surfing until you are much older, bigger, and wiser. One day you will be 600 lbs! Yet, now you are smaller than the palm of my hand. Creatures of the sea will eat you up if you're not careful," lovingly warned Akamai.

He wanted to say, "I still don't care! I don't have to do anything you say!" but he just blushed, gave her a shy smile, and held on to her fingers with his tiny flippers as she swiftly takes him deep, deep into the sea. She is just so beautiful, so loving, so kind, that he might as well pretend to do whatever she says to make her happy.

Chapter 2

Akamai whisks him away into the secret world of the merpeople, just miles off the coast of Haleakala National Park, home of south Maui's volcano that first erupted 1.1 million years ago. With Smoky Lonesome in the palm of her hand, and with strong thrusts of her mermaid tail, she takes them deep into the secret underwater cave dwellings of her magical people. The sounds of music, laughter, and merriment echoes throughout the merpeople village. "We won't stay long," she whispers to an astonished Smoky, "Yet there is someone I want you to meet before we take you back to where you belong."

While taking him through the enchanted tunnels, passing mermen and mermaids smile and exclaim, "Akamai! Is that him? Is that the chosen one? He's so cute!!!" Smokey Lonesome rolls his eyes and wishes he was surfing. He didn't think there was anything special about him. He just wanted to be a little honu and explore the amazing seas. He feels Akamai hold him tighter in

the palm of his hand, and sighs wondering where this strange yet beautiful mermaid was taking him.

As they pass more and more cave dwellings flooding with light, some filled with dancing merpeople playing harps and accordions, others chanting to ancestral spirits, some building works of art with seashells, he wonders what his siblings were doing and why he ended up in such a strange place for a sea turtle.

Yet, all worries are forgotten when a zippy little merboy, swims along with them giving Smoky a friendly smile. The merboy asks, “Hey, so where did you come from?” Smokey shook his little head and wasn’t sure. He thought of the most beautiful thing he saw after he conquered the wolfhound. “The stars I guess,” the merboy looks at him strangely, yet then gives him a huge grin as Smokey asks, “Hey, you know any good surfing spots?” Only to then receive a spank on his tail from Akamai.

“Smokey!!! Will you ever stop!!!” she exclaims. He smiles mischievously and waves the merboy closer so he can whisper in his ear the best surfing spots of Maui. “Smokey!!! I’m going to have to put you in your place little one!” said while smiling, for she couldn’t possibly truly be mad at him. However, Akamai furrows her brow, thinking she had no idea he would be this rebellious.

Smokey laughs and asks the merboy about everything in his mysterious underwater world, they talk and talk and talk as they swim until suddenly Akamai stops. The merboy looks up and his jaws drop open. They find they are hovering in front of an underwater castle, one of astonishing proportions. “You are going in there???” with disbelief.

“Where???” said Smoky Lonesome. I never know where I’m going, I just swim.”

The merboy laughed nervously and gives him his baseball cap for good luck. He puts it on tiny smokey’s head backwards, and gives him a high five with his flippers before he swims away to avoid what he knew was coming.

Suddenly from above them, comes the explosion of a chariot pulled by wild winged horses - who possess powers to both fly in the sky and swim deep into the sea - driven by a wild-haired, bare chested God with a streaming silvery beard beholding a three-pronged spear. Akamai holds Smokey Lonesome close to her bosom to protect him from the wild, powerful rush of Neptune’s arrival.

The wild underwater horses make him tremble, as their eyes blaze red and they blow bubbles in their untamed desire to keep galloping through the seas. He buries himself deep into Akamai’s embrace, his little shell trembling against the beautiful sea shells she wears upon her bosom.

Through the blanket of her long, flowing hair, Smokey can’t help but notice the gorgeous goddess sea nymph, Amphitrite sitting next to Neptune in the chariot, who gives Smokey a reassuring wink. He blushes and smiles, wondering what this wild-haired God wanted from him.

“Do you have the chosen one???” Neptune demands of Akamai.

She whispers, "Are you ready?" to Smokey.

He wonders, "For what?"

She kisses him on the head and proudly brings Smokey Lonesome out from under her bosom, holding him up in the palm of her hand. Amphitrite beams with joy over how cute the little honu is, yet Neptune furrows his brow. In his thunderous voice he asks, "And why is the chosen one in a baseball cap???"

Akamai laughs, "Well, your Majesty, this one is a character and definitely has a mind of his own."

At last smiling, Neptune congratulates Akamai on doing such a phenomenal job protecting him and bringing him safely to the sea. There is an awkward silence. "Well, I didn't actually. I was stuck in a troller's net, and Smokey was left alone to fight a hungry dog while a little hatchling today," she whispers while hanging her head in shame.

"WHAT?" Thunderous rage races across Neptune's face, and electric shocks of fury explode from his trident. "What do you mean you left Smokey alone? I trusted you, mermaid! I gave you powers of sorcery! You've disappointed me!! I shall banish you from the kingdom of merpeople forever!!"

His wild horses eyes blaze with fire and Neptune looks crazed with anger. Before Akamai can even open her mouth to apologize, little Smokey comes barreling out of her grasp, fearlessly swimming right up into Neptune's dark and stormy face. "Hey, you big bully. You don't talk to Akamai like that!!"

All the merpeople were hushed with awe and amazed, for no one talks back to the God of the Sea. No one dares to challenge the fearsome Neptune. Yet Smokey stands his ground, flapping his little flippers proudly, pushing out his little chest, trying his best to stare down Neptune, god of not just the sea but of earthquakes, thunder, and volcanic eruptions.

"You say one more thing about my sweet mermaid and you'll have to deal with me!! I think she was really courageous fighting those fisherman, without any help from you!" Smokey squeaked, just a few inches long and a day old, challenging an immortal God of Olympus, who was showing nothing but fury in his eyes toward the tiny turtle.

Yet, Smokey does not dare tremble or waver. He stands his ground, amongst hushed silence, until Neptune's hard gaze erupts into a smile and jovial laugh. "I'm sorry, Akamai," he at last mumbles, much to Amphitrite's amusement yet also annoyance as the brute never apologizes to her for anything. "Tell us, Smokey, tell us about your journey."

With zeal and wild enthusiasm, Smokey Lonesome launches into his story of saving his hatchling siblings from the drooling Egor. He tells the tale with acrobatic flips, dramatic bravado, and such charisma, that merpeople gather to listen to the little one, spellbound by his

courage and his dazzling sense of humor. He entertains them all with his stories of surfing and making friends with a shark, sending them all into laughter and delight.

“Who knew you would be so entertaining, little Smokey!” exclaims Neptune, “I was going to teach you powers of sorcery, yet I think you have what it takes to accomplish what you have been chosen to do. For 200 million years, your people have been nomads of the sea, and now you have been called by their ancestors to save them.”

Smokey is confused. “Save them from what?”

Neptune does not answer. “May the ancestors be with you little one. Take him back to the upper world, Akamai. It is time for him to begin!”

Smokey still looks confused, for all he really wants to do was go surfing. Neptune pats his head, kisses Smokey’s little star (making Smokey grimace), and whispers, “Muhalo and God Speed, little one,” letting him go from his grasp.

Akamai smiles and holds out her long slender hands, into which Smokey swims. With his tiny little flippers and baseball cap still on backwards, he waves goodbye to nasty Neptune and his beautiful sea nymph. Akamai begins the journey with him cradled in her hands out of the labyrinthine merpeople tunnels, up and above their mysterious, glowing underwater city, up and up with graceful thrusts of her shimmering mermaid tail.

Suddenly, they burst up above the ocean’s surface. As Smokey’s tiny head pops out, he exhales and then breathes in the salt sea air.

Adult green sea turtles can go for 40 minute deep dives on one breath alone, yet Smokey’s first day journey of diving all the way down to the village of the merpeople for such a teeny tiny turtle was extraordinary. Most baby turtles don’t make a single dive for the first fragile months of their lives. Yet, Smokey was unaware of his strength and unique powers. Despite the cute star on his little face, he just wanted to splish, splash and flip flop wildly in the water like any young hatchling. He looks out across the sea and feels a longing to explore it.

With the next oncoming wave, Smokey frees himself from the mermaid, wanting more than anything to body surf it. Yet Akamai’s motherly hands swoop him up. “Little one, it is time for you to rest and to sleep. You must hide in this drifting plankton beds for several weeks, until you grow big and strong. Eat, sleep, soak up some sun, and then you can adventure out in the wild seas. Yet, you must not promise before then, Smokey, or big predators could eat you up.”

He wanted to say, “I’m not promising anything to you,” as he wanted to explore the seas with all of his heart. Yet, Akamai looked so beautiful under the twinkling stars.

“Promise me you will not leave the plankton bed, Smokey. You mean the world to me, and we need you to be safe. You have many adventures ahead of you. Promise me you will stay here.”

Smokey looked sadly at the plankton bed, thinking it looked so unappealing. He didn't want to just hide and drift, he wanted to swim and roam! Yet wanted to be a surfer and nomad of the sea! Akamai held him close to her eyes, "Promise me," she whispered urgently.

Sleepily he yawned and nods his head, as he had already had quite the busy first day of life as a sea turtle. "Whatever you say, Akamai." Smiling, she tenderly wraps him up in the floating bed of seaweed and bracken, tucking him into sleep under a billion twinkling stars. She tenderly caresses his tiny shell, kisses the star upon his cheek, and whispers "Good night, Smokey" before swimming off deep into the dark indigo waters of the night.

Chapter 3

Sleepily, Smokey drifts with the seaweed bed along the shores of Haleakala Park, tucking his little flippers on top of his shell, yawning with his tiny turtle beak as the waves begin to rock him gently to sleep. He wonders what on earth Neptune meant when he said he was meant to "save his people," for he was just a little guy, just a sea turtle, here to ride the waves and roam the ocean.

"Save them from what?" he wonders again yet quickly tries to forget as the great womb of mother earth, the ocean, breathes in and out with the tide, Smokey surrenders to sleep, feeling cozy and comfortable in the drifting brown algae as his bed.

As the palm trees dance in the evening, sultry, tropical winds, lovers walk hand-in-hand along the shore, the mermaids carry on their merriment late into the night in their secret merpeople village, Smokey sleeps. He even snores a teeny tiny snore under a full moon, still wearing his little baseball cap, tucked away in the seaweed.

In his dreams, a giant, ancient sea turtle, with wild, wise, and loving eyes, appears before him. Upon her shell is a heart, and she smiles before him with infinite love. Smokey knows in his soul it is his mother. Together, they swim through the vast, wide ocean in perfect harmony and synchronicity. He does acrobatic leaps and twirls to show off for her mother, who lovingly smiles at his vivacity.

Yet, he notices something strange growing upon her shell, something odd upon her flippers, like white marshmallows growing all over her beautiful self. She grows tired easily and needs to pause and rest. When they surface to breathe, she is raspy and nearly chokes. "Mama? Mama, are you okay?" Smokey asks, beating his little flippers quickly, wondering what could be wrong. After barely being able to take in a breath, she coughs and sputters, her wild, wise, and ancient eyes blur.

Instead of gracefully diving back down after her attempts to breathe, she begins to sink...to sink down, down, down into the deepest depths of the sea. Smokey cries, "Mama!!" while desperately trying to pull her giant 600 lb self back up with his teeny tiny flippers.

She gazes at him lovingly whispering, "You can save us," before closing her eyes and sinking deep into the sea.

“MAMA!” Smokey screams, waking himself up from the dream.

“Dude! Keep your flippers to yourself!” squeaks another sea turtle in the drifting seaweed.

“Yeah, man, what the heck is the matter with you?” complains another sleepy turtle.

“You are floppin’ and flippin’ around like a fish outta water! What’s your problem?” squawks another grouchy baby sea turtle.

Smokey had unraveled his seaweed bed covers Akamai had created, while wildly tossing about the bracken in his dream. He had no idea other turtles were quietly sleeping with him in the bracken, especially a very cute girl turtle who defended him with, “Give him a break, he was probably having a bad dream!” Smokey blushes with embarrassment, dying a thousand deaths in front of this cute little girl turtle.

“Nah,” he says. “I just was just dreaming about surfing” which was true to a certain extent, as there was a part in the dream where he showed off his talents to his mother.

“Surfing!!!” they all shrieked. “You aren’t serious,” exclaims the cute girl turtle, with both fascination and horror that he would be so bold and daring, risking being eaten by a shark, a whale, a bird, or any other predator hungry for a baby turtle.

“You could’ve been somebody’s afternoon delight! They would’ve eaten you up in a second!”

Smokey waved his flipper, “Nah! They thought I was funny. You oughta try it sometime. Your shell makes an excellent surfboard...Until a mermaid scoops you up and takes you to her underworld city.”

The other sea turtles exchange glances and snicker over Smokey’s comment. “A mermaid!” laughs the beautiful girl turtle. “That’s amazing!”

The other turtles roll their eyes, and decide to ignore the crazy new turtle while munching on the seaweed and basking in the sun. “What? You guys have never met a mermaid? Didn’t you see the one that brought me to this place last night?” They all solemnly shake their heads, now seriously concerned for Smokey’s sanity. “The one with the stars in her eyes who shimmers in the moonlight?”

The sweet girl turtle whispered, “Smokey, I think we were all asleep.” While one of the other turtles with a crooked egg tooth bellows, “Are you sure you weren’t dreaming again?” The boy turtles laugh while Smokey splashes his flipper in frustration. He wants to whack the other far off the plankton into the waves, yet the cute girl turtle made him want to launch into his storytelling magic.

Pacing up and down the bed of seaweed, all the turtles – even the most disbelieving and scoffing ones – were held captive by his tale. With animated vivacity, somersaults in the air, wild gestures of his flippers, and the occasional song and dance, Smokey tells his story of conquering the

Wolfhound, being enchanted by Akamai, by staring down the fearsome sea god Neptune. Soon he realizes that not just the sea turtles, but other creatures are gathering around the plankton bed to listen to this great entertainer with a taste for the spectacular.

He finishes with a flourish, saying he awakened to the sight of the most beautiful girl turtle ever, making sweet little Bella bat her little turtle eyelashes and blush most bashfully and making the other turtles, baby dolphins, and sea lions who had gathered around to applause with much splashing and flapping of fins and flippers.

“Yeah, yeah...Lonesome...that’s a good one,” growls the crooked-toothed turtle, still thinking Smokey was insane or a really entertaining liar. “You met the God of the Sea, my tail!!!”

Smokey puffs out his chest, feeling emboldened by sweet Bella’s admiration. “You want proof? I’ll give you proof,” as he saunters over to the other side of the plankton bed, ready to smack him off the pad.

The crooked tooth boy spits out his seaweed, puffs out his little chest, and snarls at this lunatic turtle who is carried off by mermaids in the middle of the night, teasing sharks, and defeating dogs a hundred times his size.

Yet, just as the two come face to face, a strange, moaning sound arises from several feet away. Suddenly Smokey and the boisterous crooked-tooth boy search the waters for the source of the cry, to find the splashing of a sea lion’s tail in distress. The cry is repeated over and over again. They see a little seal struggling in a net next to a fishing boat hundreds of feet away from the plankton bed. Smokey said, “Guys, we should do something!!”

“Forget em, Lonesome, just somebody caught in a net,” complain the other turtles. Yet, Smokey’s heart thundered and broke every time the when the cry was repeated, echoing across the waters. He looks around the other tiny turtles stunned that they continued to chew their algae and not seem to care.

“Well, aren’t we going to see what’s the matter?”he demanded of his new friends.

“You must be insane, Lonesome. You told us yourself what the mermaid said. You leave this bed before we’ve grown stronger and grown up a bit, and then we’ll end up being somebody’s dinner.”

Yet Smokey didn’t care. The piercing cry of the “Ilio Holo Kai” (Hawaiian for monk seal, or the dog that runs in the sea), was too much for him to ignore. Something deep, some ancient, something much older and wiser than him called him to take the risk and see if he could help him. With one last look of longing and blushing admiration at sweet Bella, he notices that she too has a teeny tiny heart upon her shell. He shakes his head, thinking he must be seeing things in the sweltering hot afternoon sun, then plunges deep into the waves to follow the call of distress.

“Smokey! You’ll be killed!” she shrieks. Yet, still with his backwards baseball cap on, he pops up from the tropical ocean waters to wave goodbye, reassuring her that he’ll be just fine. “I’ll find you again, sweet Bella!” he yelps before swimming away like lightning, his little flippers carrying him like a rocket to the seal, creating a little wake filled with twinkling blue stars in his path.

While watching him swim like lightning, her heart sinks out of sorrow and fear that she would never, ever see that courageous, entertaining, handsome little turtle again. “He is too brave for his own good,” she worries.

Although, a part of her still wonders what the sparkling star on his face was all about, and whether or not it was true that he did the unthinkable and stared down the God of the Sea. As she watches him brave the wild waves, hungry sharks lurking below, and fisherman in the approaching boat, she feels as though she has just met someone extremely special to her, someone who might just change her life, who will live in her heart forever after just a playful afternoon.

Swimming just as fast as an adult turtle, 30 feet per second, Smokey zooms straight to the little Hawaiian Monk Seal in distress, twisting and turning, flipping and flopping in the net. “Hey, hey guy, you’re getting yourself more and more tangled!” Smokey squeaks.

“I’m stuck! Those fisherman want to eat me alive or skin my hide or..or..or..” the monk seal angrily fumes, thinking of the worst case scenario as he continues to twist and turn.

“It’s okay, relax. I got you covered!” Smokey soothed the seal.

“Covered!!! You’re just a tiny thing. What are you going to do? Flip their boat over with your teeny tiny flippers!” the monk seal fumes. Smokey furrows his brow while watching the monk seal, thinking this guy with his little whiskers was not exactly nice.

“Okay, fine. Good luck trying to get yourself out. So long,” as he starts to swim away.

Yet, just as he reached the tail end of the fishing boat, a giant roar explodes. The jet engines were fired on the boat, sending Smokey flying back right into the sea lion who yelped, “They are going to pull the net up any second!! Help!!!”

Although this monk seal was seemingly a jerk, Smokey’s calling to rescue overtook him. He frantically bites at the net with his little turtle beak. With each bite, he snaps open the fishing net lines, breaking them open one by one with lightning speed. The monk seal frees his whiskered face, then his flippers, pushing his all his might to break free as the net is being slowly hoisted up by the fisherman.

“Hurry, little fella!” he pleads. As the fisherman reels in the net, the sea lion is carried out of the water, with the net still tangled around his tail. Brave little Smokey refuses to give up. As the seal is being lifted up, he bites his flippers, coming out of the water with him.

As the seal dangles, Smokey uses all his strength to pull up the seal's body and to then continue biting and breaking open the net, much to the fisherman's jaw-dropping amazement. "Hey guys, will you look at that? A baby turtle is trying to free our seal!!" The fisherman looks closer, "What the.. Is that a tiny baseball cap on his head?"

Smokey heroically bites the last bit of fishing line off, and the seal flings himself free into the sea. Just as he smiles jumps with joy over the seal swimming off free, he suddenly feels a human hand rip him off the net.

"HEY!" Smokey shouts, as he looks right into the big brown eyes of the fisherman, "What do you think you're doing, you big burly ape!" Yet, to the fisherman's human ears, Smokey's ranting and raving just sounds like tiny turtle squawking, as he laughs with amusement over Smokey flapping his flippers, writhing and twisting in the fisherman's tight fist striving to get free. "Put me down, you stupid ogre!" he squeaks, as he beats his flippers on the man's fingers, mustering his toughest and most ferocious look possible.

"Hmm.... Too tiny for turtle stew. Yet I wonder how much I could sell him for at the local zoo?" the fisherman ponders.

"Hey!" shouts his shipmate "You know those things are endangered! You could get arrested just for touching him!" Yet, the fisherman could care less. He was already dreaming of keeping him in a tank, and growing him into a full sized adult of 600 lbs, so he could sell Smokey's beautiful turtle shell on the black market.

As though reading his mind, Smokey glares at him and suddenly bites him on his hand. "Oww!!!" yelps the fisherman. "I thought these little suckers couldn't bite." Smokey grins menacingly, and bites him again. "Oww!" He bites him again. "Ahhh!" The dreams of selling his shell fly out the window with the final bite, "AHAHAH!" causing the fisherman not just to yelp but howl in pain, as he gladly fling Smokey over the side of the ship and back into the sea, shaking his hand out. "That was a feisty little devil!"

Back in the ocean, Smokey shakes his head, straightens his baseball cap, and bounces up out of the waves to stick his tongue out at the fishermen as they sail away. Maybe Bella was right, that he could have been killed. A shiver went up and down his little body, yet quickly melts away when the seal monk lion he had saved comes wildly swimming in playful circles over to him.

"Hey, thank you! What's your name?"

Smokey smiles and said, "Well, they call me Smokey. Smokey Lonesome."

The Hawaiian monk seal playfully dives toward Smokey, balancing him on his whiskered mouth, tossing him playfully up into the air and catching him on his belly, as he surfs the waves on his back. "Hey, hey, hey!" yelped Smokey.

"You know I'm your friend for life, now Smokey. You saved me and I owe you the world. My name is Ke Akua."

Smokey thought for a moment, “Ke Akua? That’s a weird name. What does that mean?”

The Sea Lion bounces Smokey off his belly onto his tail, while still swimming on his back, twirling him around. “It’s Hawaiian. For God. My name is God.”

“Shut Up!” says Smokey. “Your name is NOT God...and stop it! You’re making me dizzy!” as the monk seal spins him around and around and around with his tail.

“I think your name is Uka, meaning Flea!” The seal flung him high up in the air, making Smokey belly drive with a crash back into the warm, tropical ocean. “Or maybe your name is Momona, Hawaiian for fat and pudgy!” as he splashes the monk seal in the face, who then dances in circles and splashes Smokey right back in face with his tail.

“You’re a funny little pokole, meaning shortie! You’re the tiniest little turtle in the entire sea.” Smokey acknowledged this was true, yet splashes him in the eyes once more. “One day I will be 10 times the size of you, *Lohi*,” as he darted off like lightening deep into the coral reef, zig zagging across the ocean’s labyrinthine terrain with the monk seal panting to keep up.

“Lohi, he thought? Doesn’t that mean retarded?”

Humbly accepting his new name, the seal monk laughs as he desperately tries to keep up with the little guy, who he knew in his heart was a great Koa, Hawaiian for Warrior, who had saved his life.

Smokey swims fast as lightening, looking back only to tease the monk seal who says his name is God, with his speed demon flippers. “Hahaaaaaa! Kazzoom!” as he zooms through the waters as though he had a jet engine strapped onto his tiny shell hundreds of feet ahead, then over, around, under, behind, and back in front of his new friend, who he decides to call Lohi, until he knew his real name. The monk seal stopped, panting while holding on to rock, wondering how that little guy could swim so fast.

He begins to wonder if maybe Smokey Lonesome had a touch of magic in his fins. He looks closer and notices a trail of tiny, twinkling blue stars in Smokey’s wake as he does an acrobatic speed dance above him in the sea. He shakes his whiskered head, thinking he must be imagining things.

An octopus, sting ray, butterfly fish pause and look up in wonder at Smokey, who is suddenly delirious and in a state of bliss while trying out his powers. They approach Lohi shyly, asking him if he knew that wild little turtle, who was dancing in the sea and emitting sparks like a firecracker.

The monk seal puffs out his chest in pride, saying that little warrior turtle had actually saved his life earlier today.

The butterfly fish gasps and octopus began asking questions, wanting a detailed beat- by- beat description of the turtle’s heroic deeds, so he could spread the news More creatures of the sea

gather around Lohi, awestruck at his tale of Smokey's courage and heroism, while now and then pointing at Smokey's smooth moves in the air like a little fighter jet entertaining the crowd below.

As Lohi captivates his audience, Smokey enters a trance while exploring his powers, his speed, his tricks of diving, dancing, and somersaulting through the ocean. He thinks of the beautiful mermaid Akamai, what Neptune might have truly meant about "saving his people", and wonders if the other baby turtles on the bed of bracken were right. Maybe he was crazy, or perhaps this is all just a dream. Yet, if it is a dream, it is a beautiful one, as he think of beautiful Bella, and how he'd love to show off his speed demon acrobatic tricks for her...not realizing how far away had begun to swim from the monk seal and his audience below, who were too enchanted by Lohi's story to notice their fighter jet turtle had drifted off.

As he continues his dance through the sea, he closes his eyes and hears the most angelic voice singing to him. He swims on his back, belly up, mesmerized by the voice... "Guardian spirits from the rising to the setting of the sun, Here is your offspring Smokey Lonesome and little ones..." It sounded like the music of the merpeople, a song he had heard before, a song that....

"OUCH!!!"

Smokey's little head suddenly rams hard into a metal cage, making his baseball cap tumble off and drift away across the ocean floor. He rubs his little head with his flippers, with his back to the cage, easing the pain.

"What the heck was that?" Suddenly, a thunderous bang explodes behind him. He flips around and is stunned, his tiny body trembling with fear. His eyes wide open in shock and he finds his hovering, face-to-face, with a killer shark in a cage that divers have captured.

The great white shark then furiously bangs her nose again into the cage, showing all of her sharp, pointy teeth, making Smokey tremble even harder even though he was outside the metal bars. Again and again and again she rams her entire body against the cage with a ferocious bang, sending Smokey flying backwards.

Any turtle would swim, swim, swim far away from such a creature that would devour him in a flash second, without a moment's hesitation. She was ferocious, terrifying, and mean. Her jaws were gigantic.

This was what Akamai warned him about! He could be certain to meet his death is she were to break free. She growls, beats her muscular tail and pounds her long, pointy nose against the cage, rattling it and shaking it to break open so she would no longer be held prisoner.

Ever so gallant, he tries to control his shaking flippers and tries compose himself to talk to her, yet knew his tiny voice would come out all warbly and squeaky in his terror. He knew he should swim away and go play with Lohi like any other turtle. Yet something much older, much wiser, and more ancient that he compels him to stay.

As the great white shark roars with rage, he looks deeper and sees fear in her eyes and desperation. Perhaps she has babies somewhere who need her, it occurs to him. His heart suddenly aches for this monster, wondering what he could do to save her.

He spies a latch to the cage. A latch only human hands could most likely undo, with a lock upon it. He looks at his tiny flippers wondering how talented they could possibly be. Looking around he realizes, that without agile flippers such as his, no one could save her but him. He swallows and slowly begins to swim up to her, shaking and quaking with fear.

Meanwhile... "Hey, where's your friend, Lohi?" asked the concerned sting ray. "He seemed to have wandered off during your story."

The monk seal clears his throat, "Just because he calls me Lohi, meaning retarded in Hawaiian, does NOT mean you have permission to. For your information, my name is Ke Akua, meaning God."

The butterfly fish rolls her eyes. "Yeah, well whatever. But you better go after him cause he is tiny. Maybe he's a warrior turtle, but he still would be a tasty appetizer to any of those big guys out there."

The sting ray expresses concern, "Rumor has it, there's an angry mama shark in a diver's cage a few miles from here."

Lohi's whiskers twitch. Knowing his friend and his fearless bravado, he hopes with all his heart Smokey wasn't up to his tricks of trying to rescue someone. Yet, he wouldn't be so reckless as to try to rescue an angry mama shark, would he? Lohi feels a shiver of fear go through him. He decides to trust his instincts, and dashing off away from the creatures by the coral reef, following the trail of blue stars still twinkling in the waters that Smokey had left behind in his ocean dance.

"Um.. Miss?" Smokey almost whispers.

"Grrr Grr Grr. WHAT?!" growls the shark, as she barrels into the side of the cage once more with all her strength, "AAAARRRRRRRRRRGGH!!!" making it tremble and shake.

Smokey darts away, hiding behind a rock, as the entire cage swings back and forth, and creaks from her banging. He trembles again, wondering if this was a bad idea. Yet, the thought of a baby shark alone and stranded without his or her mother overwhelms him. The shark could be an angry mama desperately striving to break free to her little one.

With that thought, he feels himself puff out his chest and gather enough courage to slowly swim back to the great white shark, a thousand times bigger than he and definitely dangerous. He clears his still very high-pitched voice, "Miss Shark?"

She ignores him and continues to fume and fuss, swimming back and forth and back and forth, like a crazed jailbird. "AARGGGH" as she suddenly whacks the side of her head against the cage striving to get out.

“Miss Shark, I’m afraid you might hurt yourself.”

With this, she careens around, glaring at the tiny sea turtle, her deep, dark eyes looking sinister and her jaws dangerously close to the side of the cage.

“GRRR GRRR GRRR” as she thrusts her pointy nose through a crack getting it stuck in a hole in the cage. Smokey begins to wonder if she was capable of formulating a sentence. Maybe his predators were pretty stupid afterall.

“Um... Miss, I would like to help you” he piped up tentatively, then darted back down behind the rock just in case she would ram her mouth out any farther from the cage. She snapped her face back out from the hole in the cage, peers through the indigo waters to the itty bitty sea turtle, flings her giant head back and howls with hysterical laughter.

“HAHAHAHAHAHA. Help ME? HAHAHAHAHAHAHA. I’d rather EAT YOU. GRR GRR GRRRR.”

Boy, she is stupid, confirmed Smokey. “Okay, well listen,” as he tries to reason with her, “I know you are used to eating things like me. Yet, you think you could restrain yourself if I get you out of the cage?”

“HAHAHAHAHAHAHA,” she boisterously continues, “Something like you help ME? HAHAHAHA.”

Smokey now feels himself blushing, not this time with admiration like he did for Bella. Now, he is blushing with frustration. This was the second time someone underestimated him when he’s trying to do them a favor! He begins to wonder if he should just forget it, that he was crazy, trying to rescue a shark. Maybe the crooked-tooth boy on the plankton bed was right, he was a nutcase.

“ARRGH” she growls again while banging her head once more. Smokey turns around and sees the pained look in her eyes, the bruises and scrapes on her long nose and tail she had given herself in trying to escape. Her eyes look baggy, as though she has been crying and hasn’t slept in days.

“Look, Miss Shark, if you could calm down for a minute, I want to show you something!” he piped up enthusiastically, his flippers moving up and down excitedly, trying to get her attention. She didn’t respond. “Miss Shark?”

Having been stuck in the cage for days, she was starving. Although this tiny turtle wasn’t much, she wanted to swallow him whole, she was that hungry. Yet, as he twirls around and begs for her attention, her heart sinks as she is reminded of her own baby shark, little Harry, who was somewhere out there all by himself. She wanted to growl at the tiny turtle, yet finds herself suddenly sobbing.

“I haven’t seen my little boy in 3 days!! Who knows what could have happened to him by now. I need OUT of this cage, turtle! My heart would break if anything ever happened to him,” she sobs.

Smokey gently swims up to her, tenderly stroking the top of her head with his tiny flipper as she cries. “My name is Smokey. Smokey Lonesome. Miss Shark, I’m going to get you out of here.”

She wails and howls even louder. “That’s just so sweet, little turtle, but you can’t do that. Those divers have me locked away for good. I’ll probably be shipped to some kind of aquarium and never see my Harry again.” Rage flashes through her eyes again. Smokey quickly darted back, as he realized she couldn’t control her temper and started thrashing and beating the cage once again.

From behind the rock, he shouted out vainly, “That’s not helping, Miss Shark!!”

She pauses, panting, then beats the cage once again, making it swing from its chain, back and forth. Her head scratched and bleeding, she is defeated. With despair, she sinks to the bottom of the cage, her head drooping, her body exhausted. “I give up!!” she wails and sinks deeper into the corner, crushed and sobbing.

Smokey spies a fishhook drifting along the sandy bottom of the sea. He dives down vivaciously, carefully holds the hook in his flippers, and approaches Miss Shark’s cage with determination...headed directly to the latch on the side of the cage. “What do you think you’re doing, little one?” she sighed.

“ I’m going to free you!! All I have to do is shimmy this lock, and you’ll swim free!” Hope flickers across her dark eyes. She lifts her head with curiosity, as Smokey works diligently with his little flippers to unlock her. As he works and works, Miss Shark feels her tummy growl at the sight of the turtle before her. Yet, she shakes her head NO ,she will not eat him, as he was saving her!

She swims closer to the latch to watch him work. With great skill he never knew he had, he bends the fish hook with his strong little beak, biting it and twisting it into a key.

Just as he is about to slip the hook into the lock, Lohi the monk seal rushes up behind him, slapping the hook out of his flippers. “ARE YOU INSANE????”

“Lohi!! There goes my key!!” cries Smokey as he darts away to grab it.

“You are NOT saving a killer shark, Smokey!! She’ll eat both of us alive!!! Are you CRAZY?” Miss Shark’s tummy rumbles even harder now at the sight of the plump, juicy monk seal. Although he is still just a pup, she could feel her mouth watering at the sight of now both the turtle and the seal.

Retrieving the hook he says, “Yes I am too going to save her! She has a baby named Harry out there all by himself who needs her.”

Guilt washes over Miss Shark. No, she tells herself again, I must not eat them. “Little turtle, what is your name?” asks Miss Shark in suddenly the most polite and sweetest voice she could muster while flashing a smile.

The suddenly sight of all her gigantic pointy teeth as sharp as knives jolts Lohi, who swims for cover behind a rock trembling. Yet, Smokey stands strong working with all his might to shimmy the lock. “My name is Smokey. Smokey Lonesome, Miss Shark.”

“Well, my name is Gracie, and I promise not to eat you or your friend,” while flashing yet another wide toothed alarming smile.

Lohi whispers, “Smokey, don’t do it! You can’t trust a killer shark!!” He waves at him to shut up while he works the lock faster.

“Lohi, she has a baby and needs to be free.”

Lohi pulls on his whiskers in anxiety, shaking his head over his friend’s craziness.

At last, Bravo! Smokey breaks open the lock!

Gracie exclaims, “Strong work, Smokey!!!” All that remains is the latch.

“Now, Miss Gracie, do we have your solemn promise not to eat us? I know you are hungry, but there are lots of other fish in the sea.” Lohi trembles, hiding his eyes with his flippers, shaking his head fearing this would be last he would see of his crazy little warrior turtle friend.

“This is a BAD IDEA,” he shouts.

Gracie suddenly glares at him, at the brink of freedom and this stupid monk seal might mess it up for her.

“Will you shut up?” implores Smokey to Lohi. “Now, Miss Gracie, welcome back to the sea,” yet as he tries to dramatically open the latch, he finds it is stuck. He pushes and pushes and pulls with his tiny flippers, yet just can’t seem to make it budge.

“Lohi, I need your help!” Lohi rolls his eyes, not about to recklessly become a killer shark’s dinner.

Gracie clears her throat, “Sir monk seal. I promise to be on my best behavior. Although I am starving, I promise not to eat your undoubtedly delicious, plump, juicy self, ” then flashing a terrifying smile. Lohi rubs his temples with his flippers, still shaking his head no.

“Hey, didn’t I help you out of a jam, mister?” squeaks Smokey putting his flipper on the side of his shell, as though it was his hip, frustrated over his Lohi’s hesitation. “You said you owed me the world. Now, come on, show me some courage, big guy,” waving the seal over.

Suddenly a splash like a cannon ball descends upon them. All three turn in horror to see a diver with flippers, goggles, and an oxygen mask coming straight toward them shining a blinding spotlight on them, catching them red handed at the scene of the crime.

“Quick Lohi!” yelps Smokey, frantically trying his best to push and pull the latch open. Lohi’s thought of his friend’s gallantry when he was near his end in the fisherman’s net, sends him barreling up to Gracie’s rescue. Together, Lohi and Smokey forcefully break open latch, opening the trap door, sending Gracie booming out like a rocket, much to the horror and terror of the diver who immediately pulls out an automatic bow and arrow...aiming right at Gracie to tranquilize her.

Without a moment’s hesitation, Lohi and Smokey swim right in front of Gracie, blocking her from receiving the blow of the arrow, causing the diver to lower his arrow for a moment in surprise and astonishment at such a sight. He shakes with terror. Yet he collects himself in a flash. Just as he raises his arrow to shoot Gracie, she opens her big huge terrible jaws, taking Smokey and Lohi deep in her mouth. With a powerful thrust of her tail, she sends the cage crashing into the diver, knocking the bow and arrow out of his hands, sending him spinning as she swims away in a dash toward the deepest depths of the sea.

“You see? You see, Smokey? I told you she would eat us!!! Look at where we are!!! In the jaws of her killer mouth. She LIED,” wails Lohi.

Wiping the shark spit off his face with his flipper, Smokey exclaims, “Well, at least she hasn’t chewed us up yet. Maybe we can still get out,” as he vainly tries with all his might to push her mouth open with his little flippers.

“You see, I told you. It won’t budge! Be careful who you rescue, Smokey. ...Yet, what does it matter now. It’s all over. We are going to be her dinner, you crazy turtle,” growls Lohi.

Smokey tries pushing open Gracie’s mouth one more time, yet his flippers slide on her slippery tongue, and he loses his balance. “Oh Miss Gracie!!” he shouts! “What about your promise with us?” He slaps the roof of her mouth and big swollen tongue, trying to do everything to get her attention.

“Get a grip, Lonesome, she doesn’t care about any kind of madhatter pact you made. If she doesn’t eat us now, she’s going to spit us out and let her son rip us to shreds and go to town on us. Sharks are nothing but liars and thieves,” preaches Lohi. Smokey was missing his baseball cap right about now, as it would have worked nicely to prevent Gracie’s shark spit from dripping into his eyes.

He turns away from Lohi, suddenly overcome with regret, thinking perhaps he might have made a big mistake after all. His bottom lip quivers as he thinks of beautiful Bella and how he may never see her again. He wonders what happened to Akamai and why she wasn’t there when he needed her the most.

He thinks of his mother and the dream that she is falling, falling, falling into the abyss and only he can save her. He remembers the moment Neptune held him high up above his head and pronounced he was meant to save his people. "From what?" he still wonders, while wiping away another round of shark spit.

"Well, you got any genius ideas Lonesome, on how to get us outta here?" barks the lion. "Shut up. I'm thinking," fumed Smokey, slapping his friend with his flipper in frustration.

"Hey!" roared Lohi, who slaps him back with his much bigger and stronger flipper, sending him careening into the side of Gracie's large pointy teeth.

Smokey scampers frantically away from the teeth, thoroughly annoyed Lohi keeps breaking his concentration. He glares at Lohi, and yanks whiskers with his beak, only to then be smacked right back into the jaws of death.

"Grr...grr," now little Smokey was downright annoyed with his friend. He jumps on his seal friend, and they wildly wrestle like two scuffling little boys in a playground, rolling and rolling around Gracie's mouth, banging and beating each other with their flippers.

Other creatures of the sea give Gracie a strange looks as she gracefully swims by and the sound of barking, yelping, squeaking, and arguing emerge from her giant jaws. She politely smiles with her mouth closed, trying her best to keep the two still inside of her until finally as the two boys deliver whooping blows to each other's heads, she spits them out sending them flying back out into the sea.

With a stern motherly glare, Gracie says, "Now you boys need to settle down. I was just taking you safely away from the divers and other sharks to my home to meet my little son! Yet you are causing such a commotion inside my mouth that I can't possibly keep carrying you both like that."

Smokey and Lohi exchange astonished glances at one another. "Now apologize to each other. You are each other's best friends. When you're older like I am you will understand that big vast ocean can be a lonely place, and you are lucky to have each other. Come now, apologize to each other."

Too overwhelmed and astonished to follow her orders, Lohi complains, "Yet, you put us in your jaws. We thought for sure we were going to be your dinner! Lonesome over here put us in the line of fire by trusting you, he –" Gracie cut him off.

"He saved my life. Did I overhear him saying he saved yours too? We owe Mr. Lonesome a huge thank you. Although you are being petulant, I thank you too, Lohi for your bravery. I owe you both the world."

"Now apologize!" her deep black eyes widening. "Don't make me mad!" as she pretends to growl, flashing her razor blade teeth with a horrifying grin.

Just as Lohi is about to open his mouth to Smokey to apologize, out from an underwater cave comes zooming a little shark, just a few weeks old. “MAMA!” Harry cries. Tears of joy and rapture pour down Gracie’s face, as her little son swims under her belly in a warm embrace. “I thought I’d never see you again.” They hold and rock each other in happiness, and Smokey’s heart fills with love and longing for his own mama, somewhere out there with a heart on her shell.

“Okay, okay,” Lohi admits, “I’m sorry. I guess this is worth it.” Smokey smiles ear to ear, confident that even though Akamai and Neptune’s prophesy seem like a faraway dream, this moment was worth almost being eaten alive by a shark. “You know, she’s a great white shark, and not a killer shark like what you were calling her,” he says as he feels something slide onto his little head.

Harry has flung off his little cowboy hat and placed it on Smokey to thank him for saving his Mom. “Hey, you rock. Wanna play?”

Although just a child himself, Smokey felt ancient compared to the little boy shark. He felt so tired and as though he hadn’t slept for days. There was no other place he wanted to be at this moment than by beautiful Bella’s side in the bracken bed of algae, floating blissfully with her under the moonlight. “Thanks, little guy, yet my boy here and I gotta rock n roll. See you again, sometime, heh?”

“Oh just stay the night, you two. You’ve traveled far, you’re already off the island of Oahu, and it will be a while before you return to Maui.” Smokey and Lohi look at each other, holding their tongues, astonished she would ask them to sleep with a den of other sharks...as they nervously watch them circling one another in a pack about a hundred feet away.

“Thank you Gracie, yet we must be leaving now,” Smokey gallantly smiles as he tips his cowboy hat, and thankfully swims away with Lohi by his side, leaving blue stars in his wake.

Chapter 4

They swim up and up and up and up to the surface for air, and are dazzled by a night of a billion twinkling stars and a beautiful moon. Smokey’s heart aches for Bella, and his brow furrows again over what it is he must do about the merpeople and Neptune calling him the Chosen One.

“Where to next, Cowboy?” playfully asks Lohi, without a care in the world, thinking this was nothing but fun as he stretches his tail and does somersaults in the water.

Smokey wonders if he should tell Lohi about his adventures with Akamai, his dreams, the mystery of Neptune’s prophesy.

“Hey, you okay?” asks Lohi.

“Yes, I just was thinking about a girl,” he decides is best to confess or else his seal friend might question his sanity once and for all.

“A girl!!!! Now this is something I want to hear all about! Haha! Lonesome in love. haha!”

“Not funny. I left her on a bed of bracken and I never know if I’ll see her again. She’s sweet and beautiful, and somewhere off the coast of Maui, by Haleakala and the volcano. We have to find her,” Smokey pleads.

Although exhausted, he is convinced he could still swim like a rocket and get there overnight.

Lohi yawns, “Dude, we haven’t slept for days. I think a girl can wait.”

Smokey furrows his brow, preparing to fight again, yet pauses, reminding himself that he did get his way earlier with Lohi. He almost always gets his way. Maybe he’s right. Maybe they should sleep.

Together, the two friends thought about sleeping at the surface of the open ocean. Yet, considering all they had been through that day, with both Gracie and the fisherman, they decide to swim inland to find a secret ledge of rock to safely sleep upon on the shores of Oahu. With sleepy eyes, Smokey, looks out at the waves thinking about night surfing, yet finally surrenders to sleep with a yawn, pushing his cowboy hat over his little face and Lohi curled up on the rock with his flippers covering his eyes. Together, they snore under a peaceful moon.

Smokey slips into another dreamscape with a giant, graceful, beautiful sea turtle with the heart upon her shell that he knows to be his mother. Her ancient, wild, wise, and loving eyes are shimmering with love as she whispers, “I’m so proud of you, my little Smokey Lonesome.” She caresses his shell with love, giving him a warm embrace. They dance together under the sea, yet as his mother surfaces to take a breath, he hears her breath to be raspy and her entire body shakes.

“Mama, what is on your shell?” he asks, noticing the strange growths covering her gorgeous, twinkling shell. She looks at him with eyes of warmth, compassion, love, and a hint of sorrow.

“Don’t worry about me now, Smokey, go roam the seas. You are my little lone ranger of the ocean,” as she swims off leaving him alone and concerned for his mother again. He tries to swim after her, yet Neptune blocks his path, with his wild, long, gray white beard and hair flowing, his trident glimmering, his eyes burning into Smokey’s soul. “Don’t forget what you have come here to do.”

Smokey protests, “Will you please just tell me? If you’d tell me, maybe I could figure it out. Hey! Hey, come back!” as Neptune races away in his underwater chariot...and Smokey comes tumbling down the rock ledge into the shallow pool of water from his dream.

Lohi sleepily asks, “You okay, little buddy?” Smokey shakes his head, wishing he could just dream of Bella. “Yeah, sure,” as he flops back down and drifts back off to sleep under a warm and radiant moon.

Time passes as Smokey and Lohi roam the seas surrounding the islands of Hawaii rescuing countless creatures and searching for Bella who remains a mystery, but always a sweet memory, forever tattooed on Smokey's heart.

Within 6 months, they are half their full size with Smokey already having grown to be 3 feet long and 300 lbs. His beautiful reddish brown shell and strong green flippers are now tremendously strong, and still emit blue sparks as he flies through the water like a fighter jet. The star on his face still twinkles in the sun, and he's rumored to be the great lone ranger of the sea. He lost his baby cowboy and replaced it with a human sized one that had blown off a tourist's head into the sea.

Lohi has grown to an impressive 5 feet long, weighing 300 lbs. He's pudgy as ever, with long handsome whiskers, eating reef fish, octopus, eels, lobsters all day long when not stirring up trouble and rescuing others with his Lonesome pal. They are inseparable best friends, who have each other's backs and make a dynamite team.

One night as the famous buddies were cruising the waters, body surfing the waves, laughing the evening away, they hear a mournful cry from the beach. It is a deep, deep ancient sound, one that echoes across the sea. It was soft and low, as though the creature is trying not to be heard, but its grief is unbearable.

"That's about the saddest thing I've ever heard in my life," thinks Lohi. Smokey's eyes fill with tears just with the sound.

With their powerful flippers, they swim quickly to a red sand beach, rocky shore off the coast of Molokai. As Smokey crawls and Lohi rolls onto the shore, they are awe-struck at the sight of a Godzilla of sea turtles, a leatherback, hopelessly stranded! Smokey whispers, "She's gotta weigh about 1400 lbs!"

They came upon either side of her, to see her infinitely sad face, as she lay beached upon the shore. Under the glowing light of the moon, Smokey sees a huge gash, an open wound, bleeding upon her leathery shell. Unlike him, leatherbacks do not have his hard, indestructible surface. Their shell rips and tears easily.

"Sweet Lady, you seem to be in distress," says Smokey gallantly tipping his cowboy hat to the Godzilla of sea turtles.

"Can we be of assistance?" asks Lohi, with much better manner than his early pup years.

With a sad face, the leatherback (with a Brazilian accent) recounts her long, strange journey along the South American and California coast, all the way to Hawaii searching for her long lost soulmate. "We promised to mate for life, yet he disappeared on me 30 years ago, and I can't seem to find him since. I've lost my way, and am losing my sight in my old age."

She went on about how she thought she finally saw her long lost love for a moment, feeding on jellyfish. "My heart nearly exploded out of my chest. I got so excited that I bumped into the coral

reef, ripping and tearing my leathery shell. As I chased after my love, frantic and hoping that might be him, the sight and smell of blood left a trail for a shark to be on my tail, chasing me and chasing me. There was nothing I could do to escape but to crawl on this shore, yet now I am stuck and am ready to die.”

“My dear lady, I’m so sorry to hear of your woes. My heart goes out to you. However, the last part does not make sense to me. There’s no reason why you cannot survive this and swim back to the sea,” soothes Smokey.

“What about my gushing wound? Every shark from miles away would come and eat me alive,” moaned the Lady Leatherback. Smokey wipes the sudden sweat from his brow.

“Lohi? Any ideas?” Lohi peers at the gaping wound with a sad and sullen look in his eye, “Well, the only solution I can think of it to sew it.” The giant Lady Leatherback turtle turns her ancient head first to Smokey, peering at his big, awkward flippers and then at the flippers of Lohi, and bursts into tears yet again believing only human hands could fix her wound.

“I’m doomed,” Lady groaned, as she sinks deeper into the sand with the rising tide.

By now, Smokey and Lohi had done many heroic things, the seemingly impossible even beyond that which they accomplished as little children. They had freed countless sea turtles from drowning in shrimping nets. They had saved dolphins, hawksbills, olive ridleys, and even more sharks than Miss Gracie. They had fought off more divers and fishermen since early childhood. They had stopped poachers and rescued countless fish and creatures from being trapped for aquariums and personal collectors.

Smokey puffed out his now enormous chest and remembered how he once stared down the God of the Sea when just a day old. “Lady, there’s no reason why my friend Lohi and I cannot sew you back together and push you back into the sea,” reassures Smokey as Lohi laughs and shakes his great whiskered head wondering how his friend was going to do this one. “All we need is a fishing pole. Its as simple as that, Lady Leatherback.”

Now where was he going to find a fisherman this time of night. They had spent so much time fighting them off, and now he needing one fast. He scans the shores of Molokai looking for a fisherman in sight. He knew they had to act quickly, or humans would find Lady Leatherback in the morning. Yet, looking at the way the wound was gushing, she may not last till morning. She lays her ancient, sad face into the sand, closing her old eyes.

”Don’t let go, Lady,” says Lohi quickly stopping the wound from bleeding anymore by pressing down hard with his flipper. “Go Smokey.”

He watches his lone ranger friend pull his swiftly growing 3 ft long body back into the sea, taking off like a racehorse emitting a lightening crack of blue stars to fly up from the waters as he dives deep, then emerges swimming with his head above the waters scanning the entire island for a fisherman who might be out fishing before dawn.

He circles all 6 islands in just an hour, buzzing around like a giant firefly on a mission, looking on the shores with laser beam intensity for a fishing pole. Finally he comes across a yacht burning brightly with party lights late into the night. Music is blaring, and there is much mischief going on in the boat, so much so that they had forgotten they attached their poles to the side of the boat still with the line outcast as their yacht was anchored and they rocked the night away.

“Perfect!” he thinks.

With a look of fierce determination, he was about to speed off into the night to get his Lohi to help him with this, when an adorable dolphin passes by fluttering her eyelashes, smiling, and doing somersaults. “Why Smokey Lonesome, you handsome fellow, what brings you here this time of night!” she cooes. Smokey had saved her from drowning in a shrimp net just a few weeks before, and she’d been thinking of him ever since.

“What? Cat got your tongue?” she teased as Smokey blushes.

“Sweet Sally, would you do me a favor?”

Her eyes open wide and she shakes with excitement.

“Why, of course, Smokey! You saved my life. Anything for you,” as she nuzzles his head for a second, knocking his cowboy hat to the side, making him blush even harder.

He points upward, “Come up with me.”

Surfacing together, they both peer at the yacht, with all lights ablaze and everyone wildly dancing. “You see those fishing poles that are hooked to the side of the boat with their lines still outcast? I need one of those.”

Sally giggled. “Smokey, you are so funny. What are you going to do with a fishing pole? I thought you were a vegetarian and ate sea grass. Hee hee.”

“Sally, it is not for me. There’s a giant leatherback turtle stranded and bleeding to death on a shore 3 islands away. I’ve got to sew her back up and bring her home again before the sun rises,” Smokey patiently explains.

Sally is dizzy with awe over Smokey’s gallantry, batting her eyelashes again, “What do you need me to do?”

Smokey explains his plot to Sally of taking off like a fire engine hundreds of feet away from the yacht, building up more and more and more speed until he is a rocket. The instant he is right under the fishing pole, he needs her to do one of her acrobatic jumps, butting him up into the air so he can grab the fishing pole with his beak and swim away with it. Yet as he tells it, suddenly he blushes even harder, having forgotten how huge he had become.

Considering how fast he can swim, he never thinks of how he weighs 300 lbs and isn't a teeny tiny turtle anymore. Maybe he might asking too much of sweet Sally, all feminine, petite, and slender for a dolphin.

"Of course, Smokey! I can do it. I'm stronger than most people realize," as she swims away and does a triple flip in the air on her way to the boat without even questioning his madhatter plan.

Smokey wishes Lohi would have faith in him like that and stop questioning his plots to save the day. If only sweet Sally was a turtle and not a dolphin, he thought. Yet always, always in the back of his mind was the laughter and sweet smile of the beautiful little girl turtle, Bella, he met that day on the sea of bracken. "One day, Bella, I'll find you again," he promises to the stars above, as he takes off like lightning, preparing to gear up for his jump.

Sweet Sally is right, he ponders, she might be dainty but she is strong. What if she's so strong that she sends me flying into the yacht, and I go flying into their windows, crashing into their party and end up on TV as the flying sea turtle that became their pet or ends up stuffed on display in a museum? He shakes his head over such thoughts. "Lonesome, just have faith," he tells himself.

Swaggering his tail back and forth, he peers out of the water once more, focusing on his destination. Sally is poised right underneath the fishing line beside the yacht, waiting for the lone ranger to come. Like a bolt of lightning, he streaks across the sea, sending explosive blue stars in his trail, gaining speed and momentum the closer and closer and and closer he gets. He sees Sally in the distance, and swimming harder and harder toward her as she bends down to catch him, bounces him up with all her strength, sending him flying into the air with his flippers flapping in the wind, just missing the fishing pole by an inch or two, as then comes crashing back down into the sea. "OH MY GOD!!"shouts a woman on the yacht. "I just saw a flying turtle!!" sending everyone over to peer over the balcony.

"A flying turtle? Is she crazy?"

Smokey fumes in frustration, upset with himself for just missing.

"Sally you were awesome, but we gotta try it again. Now I'm afraid I have an audience." Sally furrows her brow, knowing that could mean trouble. "Yet we don't have time to find another fishing pole. Time is running out for Lady Leatherback." Sally solemnly nods, yet then smiles encouraging him. "You're my hero, Smokey." Yeah, yeah, whatever, every girl says that, he thinks. Bella just thought he was a normal turtle. Maybe a little crazy going after Lohi in the net, but just another turtle in the sea.

A couple hundred feet away, he swaggers his tail again. He visualizes flying up and catching the pole right in his beak. With thunderous speed, he zooms through the water, awakening fish and all manner of creatures from their sleep in his wake. Like a gymnast running up to a horse, he pounces on Sally's back who then jumps with all her might, sending him flying up onto the ledge on the yacht, careening and sliding across the edge much to everyone's amazement.

He bites the railing to stop from himself from sliding off, and then takes a moment to straighten his cowboy hat. Humans drop their drinks right onto the ground, a woman passes out, they all stare in a stupor at the cowboy flying turtle, motionless with awe.

Smokey takes off his hat for a second to say hello, and without pausing says, "Hello folks. Hope you don't mind. Need this pole for a friend of mine," as he grabs the fishing pole before anyone can stop him in his teeth and pushes himself off the ledge, jumping back into the sea.

"Well that went very well," he thought. Swimming away with the fishing pole in his beak, not realizing the tip of it was still sticking out in the water for all to see.

"Thank you, Sally, you were amazing!" he beams. "Aww...anytime, Smokey," as she nuzzles his neck with her nose. They smile and then Smokey says, "Well, I must be off as there is –"

He's interrupted by a cannon ball splash, underwater spotlight, and human diver with a tranquilizing bow and arrow he knows all too well. Too late to run for cover, Smokey deflects the arrow by spinning around and hitting it back with hard shell. Sally jumps away unnoticed like a deer in the forest.

Before the diver could prepare another tranquilizing dart, Smokey launches into full force speed all the way back to Lady Leatherback and Lohi, getting anxious as the night wares on. "Stupid humans," Smokey thinks, "Just when I think I can trust them, they go and try and mess things up again."

As he pulls himself up to the shore, Lohi is ecstatic. "Smokey! What took you so long!"

Smokey blushed, knowing he probably spent a little too much time talking to Sweet Sally, yet to prevent Lohi from getting jealous (as he liked her too despite being 5 times her size and a monk seal to boot), all he had to say was "Stupid humans," and he understood.

"Uh, Smokey, I'm afraid you have a little friend on your line." He looked at the tip of his pole, looking anguished and mortified that there was a butterfly fish who had accidentally caught the bait as the hook attached to his pole. He feels terrible for being in too much of a rush to reel in it. He sets the pole down, and pulls himself over to the poor little fish looking terrified with the hook in her mouth.

"Oww oww owww," she says. "What the heck are you doing with a fishing pole, Smokey?" she tries to say yet her words are muffled with hook deep in her mouth. "I'm so very, very, very sorry," he says, while lovingly freely her gently with both his flippers and the tip of his beak. She flips and flops wildly around, struggling to be free. "I'm so sorry," he says again.

As she is freed, he caresses her wound with the tip of his flippers and suddenly the wound vanishes. She squeals "Thank you so much, Smokey, but don't you dare ever do that again!" she happily exclaims while flopping back into the waves.

That was strange, he thought. Her wound...her wound...it just vanished with his touch. Maybe he was imagining things, he mused. Maybe he just couldn't see in the moonlight covered by misty clouds, he chuckles. Or maybe she's a fish with superpowers, he laughs. He decides to shake it off.

"Okay, got our fishing pole. How are you Lady?" he asks. Lady Leatherback moans in despair.

"She's lost so much strength in the night, Smokey," Lohi worries, pressing harder into the wound to stop it from bleeding. "I don't know how much more she can take. Then we have to push her back into the sea," and under his breath, "She must weigh 1400 lbs."

Smokey rolls his eyes. "I already told you that LOHI. Remember what your name means in Hawaiian?"

Lohi growls, "Shut up. I'm famished. Haven't an octopus to eat in hours." Smokey grimaces, as he can't bear to watch Lohi eat his people of the sea, yet he loved his friend anyway.

"Okay, Lady Leatherback, if you can hear me, I got you fishing line I'm gonna use to sew you back up again. Just hold still." Lohi looked at him, this time being his turn to roll his eyes. She's a Godzilla turtle, stranded and dying. She can't even lift her head anymore, but he shut up and waited for Smokey to work his magic with the fishing hook just as he did as a little guy when they saved Gracie the shark.

Smokey's flippers were so much bigger than they were as a baby, of course, but still he worked the hook into a line, bending it with his sharp beak, making it into a needle the best he could. With both his tongue and his beak, he fumbles and fusses, trying his best to thread the needle with the line. "Arrgh, my flippers are just too big. I can't seem to get it in!" he tries and tires and until the night sky begins to brighten and lavender paints a symphony across the sky, warning them of the rising of the sun.

"Hurry, Smokey!" Lohi cries, "We can't risk humans seeing us doing this!"

Smokey fumes, "I know, I know. I just can't do it. I can't! Why don't you try?" He flings the pole across Lady Leatherback next to Lohi. "Well, you have to hold her wound to keep her from bleeding anymore," he tells Smokey. "I know, I know" Smokey pouts all grouchy and frustrated. There's nothing I can't do, he thinks.

With a furrowed brow, Lohi removes his flippers from the wound and Smokey quickly places his own upon the wound. He presses down, suddenly filled with so much love for this ancient, gigantic turtle and her heartbreak. He closes his eyes, and sheds a tear of compassion for her as he presses deeper.

"LONESOME!!" Lohi yelps with amazement. "Open your eyes, Man!!"

Smokey opens his soulful eyes, looks Lohi, "What?"

“You healed her. You healed her wound. Look!” Lohi removes Smokey’s flippers completely from where it was a lethal gash only to be her leathery shell perfectly intact. Smokey blinks and blinks again, taking his cowboy hat off to scratch his head, and then to place it on again, looking completely confused.

“I didn’t know you could do THAT!” shouted Lohi.

“Neither did I,” whispered Smokey completely baffled.

Lady Leatherback suddenly lifts her head, her eyes suddenly sparkling with new life and light. “Oh my heavens, I feel so much better!! I don’t know what you boys did, yet I don’t feel injured anymore. Did you sew me up?” Smokey and Lohi didn’t know what to say.

Smokey was still speechless, so Lohi spoke up, “Lady Leatherback, I do believe you are healed. You can go find your soulmate now without any worries about sharks again. Just watch out for the sharp coral again!” he nervously said, hoping she wouldn’t question it.

“Oh, thank you so much! Now, if only I could get out of this sand. I seem to have sunk in the night with the tide.”

Smokey came to his senses. “Oh yes of course, my Lady.” Fast and furiously to beat the rising crimson sun, they both dig her out with their flippers, sending sand wildly flying in all directions. The ancient Godzilla of turtles beams with so much attention, feeling she had a new lease on life due to these sweet boys. Having dug her out, they offer a push. She slowly but surely begins to turn around, heaving and pushing her gigantic body in the sand, “Why thank you gentleman, but I think I can do it on my own.”

Lohi and Smokey exchanged astonished glances, as just moments ago, she was on her way out the door, too weak to even lift her head or speak before Smokey placed his healing flippers on her wound. Giving her encouragement, she tugs, pushes, and pulls her enormous body back in the right direction.

Before they gave her one last gentle push back into the waves, she pauses to thank them both from the bottom of her heart. “We all would be lost without you, Smokey. We thank you too, Lohi. You were with me through my darkest night. I owe my life to you both.” Smokey tipped his cowboy hat and smiled, with his star sparkling in the rising sun. Lohi gives her a whiskered kiss on the head, and off she goes into the wild, indigo, crashing sea... With Smokey still perplexed as to what just happened.

“So what was that, Lonesome? How come you’ve never shown me that before?” asks Lohi, as they frolic back into the warm salty waters. “I have no idea,” whispers Smokey, wishing Akamai was here to talk to. He had never touched anyone’s wounds before. They had rescued dozens upon dozens of creatures, yet he kept his flippers to himself.

Chapter 5

“Is there something you’re not telling me?” asks Lohi. Smokey doesn’t answer and just keeps swimming. “Hey. Ding bat. Talk to me,” implores Lohi, “Did you take a magic class when I wasn’t looking? Where did you get that star tattooed on your face? How come you never explained me why you have stars that shoot out of your butt when you swim like a firecracker?”

Smokey sighs, “They do NOT shoot out of my BUTT, Lohi. You ask too many questions.”

Lohi swims ahead of him and tries to block him with his giant belly. “No, seriously. I’ve always wondered about you these 6 months. You’re my best friend, my best pal. When somebody comes to me and want to write your biography as the great Lone Ranger of the Sea, I gotta know the answers. You don’t want Lohi to look like an idiot.”

Smokey smirks, “You already are an idiot,” not really meaning it about his dear friend, but saying it anyway to get him to shut up.

“No, really. You have these weird dreams where you’re talking to some dude named Neptune. You always have some far off, dreamy, distant look on your face. I used to think you were dreaming about that cute girl, Bella, but I think you’re hiding something,” insists Lohi.

Smokey swims faster, not like lightening, but hard enough that it makes Lohi pant to keep up. “Will you slow down, I’m trying to talk to you! I wanna know why we are always on these quests to save creatures. We’re not normal. Other dudes our age are just chilling out under the sun, flirting with the girls, not taking anything seriously. Here you’ve got me saving the entire ocean from one drama after the other. We hardly ever sleep. We’re always rescuing somebody.”

Smokey stops swimming. He looks at his friend at first quizzically and then with tremendous sadness, “Well, if you don’t like me, don’t like this life we are living, then you don’t have to pal around with me anymore.”

They stare at each other, Lohi suddenly crushed that his friend would take his comments with so much sensitivity.

“Dude!” as he slapped Smokey’s shell playfully, “I didn’t mean it like that. I love what we do. It’s exciting. It’s awesome. It gives me something to brag about to the girlies,” as he puffs he chest out with pride.

“No, I think a part of you meant that. I caught you looking at a group of seal lions lazily lounging on the shore the other day, soaking up the sun together. You want to be fat and lazy just like them,” teases Smokey, yet with still a trace of sadness.

“No I don’t!! I am not fat! I could never be lazy!! Take it back!!” Lohi exclaims, all riled up by Smokey’s teasing. “Shut up!! I am not fat!!! And I love roaming the seas and the adventures we have. I love you!!”

Smokey stops swimming again. Looks at Lohi after his comment is total silence and furrows his brow. "Shut up!" and whacks Lohi promptly on his big bald head playfully with his flippers, feeling love for his friend too but is not about to admit it. Lohi yanks Smokey's tail, only to playfully get whacked in the head again, as they circle each other and playfully argue across the waves.

And so it went for another 6 months, as the pair of two endangered yet heroic creatures save their friends of the sea together from one dramatic circumstance to another. Playfully, peacefully, and happily they frolic through the ocean, showing bravery, brilliance, and bravado everywhere they go with everyone whispering across the ocean floor of the legendary Smokey and Lohi, always to the rescue, and Smokey just now and then revealing his secret talent of healing skark bites, fishing accidents, and any other kind of wound with the touch of his flippers.

He grows to be 6 feet long and 600 lbs once he reaches his first year, and Lohi finds himself 7 feet and 700 lbs.

One tranquil night, as Smokey munches on sea grass and Lohi devours one lobster after the other, the moon seems exceptionally clear and bright. It was springtime in Hawaii, and the surfing was phenomenal and the weather sultry and hot. Lohi ponders, "So, did you ever realize we'd get this big? I remember when you were only about 3 inches long. Haha!"

Smokey swallows his grass, "Shut up. I was never that tiny."

Lohi laughs, "Yes you were! That day you freed me from the fishing net, you looked like a bug in the sea."

Smokey frowns, "I was not a bug. I was a warrior turtle. Dynamite comes in small packages."

Lohi insists, "A midget warrior."

Smokey rolls his eyes, "I was not a midget. I was a hatchling, LOHI. Sometime I think you forget Lohi means retarded."

Lohi tosses his lobster shell down, "You know what? I'm sick and tired of being called retarded. I told you from day one my name is God, Ke Akua."

"Yet don't you realize that's the dumbest thing I've ever heard? You're a monk seal, not God," complains Smokey Lonesome.

Lohi tries to look mysterious, "How do you know? I could be God in disguise. God dressed as a big fat Hawaiian monk seal, here to bring you friendship and company."

Smokey rolls his eyes, "I would hope God would have better things to do than to keep me company," yet just as he said it playfully, he wish he hadn't. He loves Lohi with all his heart and couldn't imagine his world without him by his side. He had become a part of him, a part of his

soul. It sometimes worries him that Neptune never mentioned on that fateful day about having a buddy to partner with in his destiny.

Yet why was he getting all sentimental, however he wonders, Who is he, really?. “Hey turtle, you got that dreamy, far away look in your eye again. You ever gonna tell me what is the matter with you one of these days, and why you shoot stars out of your butt?” trying to get Smokey’s mind of his mysterious world of troubles.

“How many times do I have to tell you, Lohi, they do not come out of my butt!! I don’t know where they come from. They come from my wake, which is gonna leave you in the dust,” as he takes off like lightning and Lohi splashes after him from behind, determined to one day catch up with him as they race.

Smokey slows down just every now and then to give Lohi the delusion he might actually win, and then speeds up as they race across the waters, with the other creatures of the sea waving hello to the famous pair always racing or rescuing somebody. Smokey dashes ahead and hides behind a rock, laughing as Lohi races ahead not knowing Smokey is now behind him, creeping up behind to grab his tail and pull him down by surprise.

Yet, suddenly Lohi stops right in his tracks. He’s breathless and speechless as he sees the most gorgeous female Hawaiian monk seal he’s ever seen in his entire life. He has to push his jaw back up as it drops open, while she gracefully peruses the coral reef, beautifully hunting for her dinner.

Smokey laughs at his friend, slapping him on the back, “Come on. Let’s race!” with stars in his eyes that quickly fade as Lohi says, “No, no wait a minute. I have to...I want to... I.. I...” Oh great, thought Smokey, now he’s mumbling like a blithering idiot.

“Dude, the tide is changing, there are gonna be some awesome waves to surf under the stars.”

Lohi doesn’t hear him, as he is in a trance over this absolutely gorgeous girl, who is singing to herself as she hunts for her fish, which Smokey is sure is sounding like the music of angels in his friend’s ears. Lohi smiles sheepishly at Smokey, his heart beating wildly, his face burning red, then hides behind the coral to gaze at her some more.

Smokey wonders how long this is going to last, as he taps his flippers impatiently, yet knew he should be supportive as one knowledgeable dolphin had told him in a gallant rescue that there were only about 1200 monk seals left in the entire world, so it is very, very rare for his friend to spot another one.

“Yeah, she’s a cutie.... Yet, she’s way fatter than you,” whispers Smokey.

Lohi turns to his friend indignant and furious, harshly whispering, “She is not fat!” while smacking his friend hard but playfully on the back of his shell. “Okay, okay, sorry. I just love the folds of skin that drip down from her neck.” Lohi now is truly annoyed as he smacks his friend even harder with his powerful flipper, sending Smokey into a somersault and laughing.

“Will you shut up! You’re causing a scene,” he whispers harshly, trying to still hide from the girl. Yet, it was too late, as she heard Smokey’s laughter echoing across the reef, inspiring her to peer around the corner to see what the commotion was about...only to be floored that before her were Smokey and Lohi, the great Lone Rangers of the ocean!!

In a sweet musical voice, she laughs, “Oh my heavens! I can’t believe it’s you two!! I’ve always heard about you, and dreamed of meeting you two one day, yet never did I imagine you both to jump out behind a rock!” Then suddenly it dawns upon her, “I’m not trouble, am I? I’m not in need of a rescue?”

Lohi laughs nervously, shaking a bit in front of the girl, as she was everything he ever dreamed to find in another monk seal. Her eyes are soft and gentle, seems so at peace, she is beautiful, kind, and warm. “No, no, of course not. We...I mean I...could not help but notice how gorgeous you are,” stammered Lohi. “Oh my gosh!” Holding her flipper to her chest in surprise, “Me? Hee hee. That’s so sweet,” as she looks down at the sand in bashfulness and blushing admiration in front of the famous monk seal she had always dreamed about.

Smokey wanders off, letting the two talk, thinking it would be minutes yet then turns into hours. They talk and talk as though they were separated at birth, as though suddenly nothing in the world matters except each other, as though they are...could it be...Smokey thought, meant for each other? If it is true, he is happy for his friend, as he often dreams of how excited he would be if he ever saw beautiful Bella again.

The two wander off together under a starry moon, and Smokey, for the first time in an entire year spends an entire night without his friend. He shakes it off, believing his friend will come back in the morning, as they were knights in shining armor, they were a team, they were legendary.

So, Smokey spends the night surfing the wild waves of Bonzai Pipeline, enjoying his solitude knowing his friend would return in the morning from his wild escapade with the girlie, and all would return to normal the next day.

The next morning Smokey waits outside the monk seal cave, going to surprise his friend with a giant lobster he was conversing with. Yet the hours pass, days pass, and Smokey begins to wonder if he will ever see his friend again.

“Well, Lohi...or shall we say God...could have at least let me know where he was going!” fumes Smokey, beginning to wonder if he should just swim away without saying goodbye, as he knew there were creatures out there in need of his help. Waiting around for Lohi was wasting his time.

Yet how was he to do it without his right hand man? How could he possibly rescue anyone without Lohi by his side? He never thought there could be a day like this. Well, he always wondered what would happen if a girl would show up and whisk him off his feet, yet never did he imagine his friend wouldn’t even bother to talk to him one last time.

He talks outloud to himself in the night, “Maybe if he had a clue I was the Chosen One, he wouldn’t just leave me in the dust. He wouldn’t just give up on me. He would see how important it is to keep going,” as he flings seaweed across the shallow pool reflecting the moon light, “ I was going to take him to the merpeople, and ask that he be given the special powers too,” muses Smokey not even realizing he is talking to himself, “And where the heck is that mermaid who swore she would always be there for me, not to mention my own mother. Does everybody have to disappear? ARRGH”.

“I knew it!!” Lohi shouted from behind the rock where Smokey was sulking. “I knew you had a secret.” Smokey jumps up with surprise.

“Where the heck have you been? I’ve been twirling my flippers, just sitting around waiting for you. Where the heck did that girl take you?” Lohi doesn’t repond. He just gazes at Smokey with a curious look. “Well, listen don’t worry about it. I hope you had fun. We really gotta get a move on! We’ve been outta practice. Wanna chase me?” Lohi still doesn’t respond. “Lohi, you’re my man. We’ve got creatures to rescue! Waves to surf! New oceanscapes to explore! Ready?”

Lohi furrows his brow, “I’m your very, very best friend. All this time you’ve been hiding something from me, haven’t you?”

Smokey pretends to me amazed, “Me? Haha. That’s funny. Not me. You know everything about me.” Lohi gives him a stern glare. “Okay, almost everything. Yet you know, what happened before I met you doesn’t mean anything. We’re meant to patrol the seas together, man. Time is wastin’! Let’s go!”

Lohi splashes his flipper in frustration. “Merpeople? The Chosen One? Special powers? I heard everything you said to yourself. You can’t hide from me, Smokey. I’m your brother in spirit. I spent a whole year with you, risking my life for others with you, the least you could do is tell me who heck you are. Who are you, Smokey? Who ARE you?”

Although everyone else in the ocean knew him to be the bravest, strongest warrior turtle, Smokey took off his cowboy hat, and let the tears roll down his cheeks. “I don’t know, Lohi. That’s the problem. I don’t know who I am.”

Lohi splashes water in his face with his gigantic tail. “Smokey yes you do. What’s this talk about being the Chosen One? What the heck is that? Are you gonna be a man and tell me or are you gonna sit there and whimper.”

“Shut up. I don’t know,” yet after a year of hiding his secret from his friend, finally Smokey let is all spill out. “Neptune, the God of the Sea, told me I was a “chosen one” when I was a day old, meant to do something extraordinary and heroic. A beautiful mermaid took me to the merpeople village, where he held me up and said I would save our people. From what I will save them from, I still haven’t figured out. ... I know... It sounds insane. Yet it’s been driving me crazy for a year now. Then, I have dreams of my Mom dying from something, from what I can’t figure out, and I think she wants to tell me, but she can’t. I have to find out for myself... I know, you hate me now,” Smokey rambles on without stopping until Lohi puts his flipper on his shoulder.

“Stop. It’s okay. Is that all you’ve been hiding from me?”

Smokey laughs, “Yeah, that’s all.”

Lohi smiles lovingly and with compassion at his friend. “That’s a lot to worry about for one little sea turtle.” Smokey is too tired to yell back that he’s not tiny anymore. “Yeah,” he says softly.

“Well, Smokey when you find out what it is, who you are, and what you’re meant to do in this lifetime, then come and find me,” says Lohi.

“WHAT???” shouts Smokey. “Yet, you’re my right hand man. You’re... you’re like my other half,” said Smokey with his bottom lip quivering, not believing he would ever say such a thing, not understanding what he is talking about.

“Smokey, I had the best year of my life with you. Yet, my people are endangered too. I have to create a family, and I found the most gorgeous, enchanting, brilliant, beautiful girl ever to have it with. She’s amazing, Smokey. You will love her.”

“Yet I was gonna surprise you,” says Smokey, “Was gonna treat you to a trip to the merpeople village. They are really cool!” Lohi suddenly looks ancient and wise, shaking his head no. “You need to find yourself, Smokey. You can’t do it with me there with you all the time. You have got to go wanderlust. Explore. Aren’t you turtles used to solitude?”

“Solitude my butt! You and I are a team!” shouts Smokey. “Everybody knows us as legendary. I can’t do this without you!” Lohi shakes his head again, “My friend, I will be here waiting for you when you come back. You’re always in my heart. Of course you can do this without me. You always have. I was there to give you laughter and company, yet now your true calling awaits.”

Smokey shakes rolls his eyes in disbelief. He wonders what the heck did that girl do to him! He wanted his old Lohi back. “You said I saved your life. You said you owed me the world,” pleads Smokey.

Lohi says, “I am giving you the world...and Akamai says she is proud of you.” Smokey looks at his friend confused. “You know Akamai?” Lohi smiles, gives his friend one last slap on the back with his flippers, saying, “I’ll always be with you in spirit.”

Chapter 6

Smokey watches his very, very best friend swim off into the deep, dark indigo until he entirely vanishes. “Always be with you in spirit... What kind of crap is that supposed to mean? In spirit. Yeah, a lot of good that will do when I’m trying to rescue a shark or push a Godzilla loggerhead back into the sea.”

Smokey swims away, feeling angry for the first time in his entire life. He was a peaceful, loving spirit of the sea. Never has he truly felt angry before, yet now he is. Lohi is LOHI, retarded,

Smokey defiantly thinks, yet memories of their laughter and heroism still cause him to never truly be mad at his friend.

As he aimlessly swims, he wonders, perhaps he is right. Perhaps we are meant to be courting, dating, bringing more babies into the world to save our endangered species. Maybe that's what he meant. Maybe that is what the calling is all about!!! His heart starts to pitter patter with excitement, and he begins to burn with longing to find Bella at last.

He grabs his cowboy hat, and shoots off like a rocket from Lanai, to where he first found Bella a year ago, sweetly floating on a sea of bracken and twinkling in the sun off the coast of Maui. Although in his heart he senses she must be somewhere else by now, somewhere maybe even far away, perhaps the gentle swimming creatures off that island might have clues as to where his beautiful went swam off too. We are nomads of the sea.

She could be in Japan by now, he muses. He smiles, thinking of his girl, who must be at least five feet now all cute and wrapped up in a kimino. Although Smokey has yet to jet off and explore the world, he does know of many different cultures from all the many creature he and Lohi have rescued already this year. He's learned all manner of creatures, languages, and cultures just by perusing the seas around the Hawaii's islands alone.

Blue streams of shimmering stars are singing, leaving a trail behind him, as he zooms to Haleakala, dreaming of what Bella must look like now with a beautiful reddish – brown shell touched with green like his own tattooed with a heart just like his mother. As he swims like lightening, he remembers her loving eyes and how they spoke to his soul, making him feel brave, powerful, and though he could do anything back before he knew he could.

He wonders what he would say to her, if she would still like him, and dreams of dancing with her in the sea. He forgets all about cruising the seas, looking for other creatures in distress to rescue and becomes consumed with a heart that only belongs to Bella, that wants only Bella, that can think of only Bella when suddenly he hears a voice singing to him, a voice he once knew yet could not place for it had been so long.

*Nâ `aumâkua mai ka lâ hiki a ka lâ kau.
Guardians spirits from the rising to the setting sun.*

*Mai ka ho`oku`i a ka halawai.
From the zenith to the horizon.*

*Nâ `aumâkua iâ ka hina kua, iâ ka hina alo.
Guardians spirits to my back, to my front.*

*`O kîhâ i ka lani.
Whispering in the heavens.*

Bring to me my Smokey Lonesome, my sweet Lone Ranger of the Sea.

Akamai!!! Her voice was so sweet and pure, like honey. She sang and sang upon the silky white sands of the shore, calling him to rise like a great submarine out of the water.

He navigated his now giant self toward her, and slowly in a trance, emerging from the wild, crashing waves. Akama's singing suddenly stops, and her breath is taken away. She holds her hand on her heart, to prevent it from flying out of her chest, as the Smokey Lonesome that could once fit snugly in the palm of her hand is now a 6 foot long gentle giant.

Her eyes sparkling with stars, and Smokey smiling wide, he takes her into his flippers in a warm embrace. Taking his face in her hand, he feels like a little guy all over again, as she takes off his cowboy hat, and lovingly whispers, "Howdy, Cowboy." He is speechless and bashful like he was on the first day he met her, and his little flippers were half the size of her fingers.

She smiles, then grew solemn. "Neptune needs to speak to you. You're in trouble, Smokey."

He waved his flippers, "Oh, the old guy can wait. I haven't seen you in ages, and I have a girl I need to find. She's beautiful. Maybe you can help me. Maybe –" Akamai cuts him off, "That's what Neptune needs to speak to you about, young man. You have a case of the springtime voodoo."

Blinded by his longing, he starts to excitedly ramble off like a giddy teenager, "Would he know where he is? I'm assuming he does. If he could just tell me her exact location, I'd really –"

"Smokey! You are just as incorrigible as you were the day you were born!" He blushes bashfully. She says, "This time, you take me to the merpeople village." Like before, Smokey just couldn't possibly resist her. It was as if she put a spell on him, and anything she wanted, he would do.

She grabs on to the back of his shell, and he takes her for a wild ride down, down, down back to the twisting tunnels and secret caves of the merpeople, with her long hair streaming and blue sparks dancing behind them. As they dive deeper into the hidden world, the merpeople promptly drop everything they are doing in shock that Smokey Lonesome is in their midst once again.