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TUI T. SUTHERLAND

ART BY MIKE HOLMES

WINGS OF FIRE

THE GRAPHIC NOVEL



BOOK EIGHT

ESCAPING PERIL

 SCHOLASTIC



WINGS OF FIRE

ESCAPING PERIL
THE GRAPHIC NOVEL

For Gwynnle and Bridget, with love from all the dragons!
—T.T.S.

For Nancy, Holly's mom — every time we talked, you
told me my art was going to take me somewhere special.
I've never forgotten how much that meant to me,
—M.H.

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Adaptation by Barry Deutsch and Rachel Swirsky

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Library of Congress Control Number Available

ISBN 978-1-5461-1005-7 (hardcover)

ISBN 978-1-339-00123-4 (paperback)

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

25 26 27 28 29

Printed in China 62

First edition, January 2025

Edited by Amanda Maciel

Coloring by Maarta Laiho

Lettering by E.K. Weaver

Creative Director: Phil Falco

Publisher: David Saylor

WINGS OF FIRE

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AND RACHEL SWIRSKY

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COLOR BY MAARTA LAIHO



AN IMPRINT OF

 SCHOLASTIC



ESCAPING PERIL

THE JADE MOUNTAIN
PROPHECY

A close-up, dramatic illustration of a dragon's head in profile, breathing a powerful stream of fire. The dragon's scales are dark and textured, and its eye is partially visible, glowing with a yellow light. The fire is depicted with bright yellow and orange flames, creating a sense of intense heat and power. The background is a dark, smoky grey, which makes the fire and the dragon's features stand out.

*BEWARE THE
DARKNESS OF DRAGONS.*

*BEWARE THE
STALKER OF DREAMS.*

*BEWARE THE TALONS
OF POWER AND FIRE.*

*BEWARE ONE WHO IS
NOT WHAT SHE SEEMS.*



*SOMETHING IS COMING
TO SHAKE THE EARTH.*

*SOMETHING IS COMING
TO SCORCH THE GROUND.*

*JADE MOUNTAIN WILL FALL
BENEATH THUNDER AND ICE*

*UNLESS THE LOST CITY
OF NIGHT CAN BE FOUND.*

PROLOGUE: SEVEN YEARS AGO...

NO DRAGON WAS SAFE IN THE SKY PALACE, BUT THOSE IN MOST DANGER WERE QUEEN SCARLET'S DAUGHTERS, TOURMALINE AND RUBY.

OR IS IT DAUGHTER NOW, SINGULAR? AM I THE ONLY ONE LEFT?

I HAVEN'T SEEN MY SISTER, TOURMALINE, IN THREE DAYS...

TOURMALINE, YOU CAN'T CHALLENGE MOTHER! YOU'RE ONLY TEN!

SHE KILLED HER MOTHER, ALL THREE OF HER SISTERS, AND ELEVEN OF OURS. NO ONE CAN DEFEAT HER.


SHE CAN'T BE QUEEN FOREVER, RUBY.

SHE HAS BEEN QUEEN FOREVER

TWENTY-FOUR YEARS IS A LONG TIME, BUT NOT THAT LONG. QUEEN OASIS WAS QUEEN FOR LONGER THAN THAT AND LOOK WHAT HAPPENED TO HER.

RUBY, WE'RE THE ONLY HEIRS LEFT—THE ONLY HOPE THE SKYWINGS HAVE FOR A DECENT QUEEN.

IF I DEFEAT MOTHER AND BECOME QUEEN, WE CAN GET OUT OF THIS WAR.



THE PROPHECY
WILL TAKE CARE
OF THE WAR! THE
BRIGHTEST NIGHT IS
IN FOUR DAYS...

RIGHT. I'LL JUST WAIT
FOR A BUNCH OF EGGS
THAT HAVEN'T EVEN
HATCHED YET.

I DON'T WANT TO WAIT
FOR THINGS TO HAPPEN. I WANT
TO MAKE THEM HAPPEN.

I DON'T WANT TO
WATCH YOU DIE.

DON'T WORRY. I WON'T DO
IT YET. AFTER ANOTHER FEW
MONTHS OF TRAINING, WE'LL SEE.

OH, I ALMOST FORGOT!
I GOT YOU THIS.

AN EARRING? IS THIS
SUPPOSED TO BE A
GOOD-BYE PRESENT?


NO! BUT I WANT
YOU TO WEAR IT
AND THINK OF ME...

NOW TOURMALINE'S GONE,
AND IT SEEMS LIKE I'M THE
ONLY ONE WHO'S NOTICED.

IT'S LIKE SHE JUST
VANISHED. NO PATROLS,
NO SEARCH PARTIES...

IF MOTHER FOUND
OUT TOURMALINE WAS
PLANNING TO CHALLENGE
HER—WHAT DID
MOTHER DO?

AM I NEXT?



PRINCESS RUBY!
THE QUEEN REQUESTS
YOUR PRESENCE IN
THE THRONE ROOM.
IMMEDIATELY.



TOURMALINE SAID:
NEVER LET THEM SEE
YOU'RE TERRIFIED. ACT
LIKE A QUEEN.

MAYBE THAT'S
EXACTLY WHAT GOT
HER KILLED.

QUEEN SCARLET
WOULDN'T KILL ME IN
FRONT OF ALL THESE
DRAGONS, WOULD
SHE?



AH, RUBY. AT LAST.
COURT, MANY OF YOU DON'T KNOW MY
DAUGHTER, RUBY. SHE'S BEEN AWAY IN
TRAINING. IF YOU EVER HAVE SEEN HER, SHE
PROBABLY HAD HER NOSE IN A SCROLL.

STAND BY ME, RUBY.
I WANT YOU *ESPECIALLY*
TO SEE THIS.




WELL, NOW EVERYONE
IS HERE! I HAVE SUCH A
THRILLING ANNOUNCEMENT!




YOU MAY ALL HAVE
HEARD OF A CERTAIN
PROPHECY ABOUT
SPECIAL DRAGONETS.
APPARENTLY THEY'RE
SUPPOSED TO HATCH
ON THE BRIGHTEST
NIGHT—THAT'S
TONIGHT—AND STOP
THE WAR.

ISN'T THAT
EXCITING? TINY LITTLE
HEROES CRAWLING
OUT OF THEIR EGGS
ANY MINUTE NOW!




WELL, QUEEN BURN AND I DON'T ESPECIALLY LIKE TINY LITTLE HEROES, ESPECIALLY ONES THAT MIGHT TELL US WHAT TO DO! SO WE HAD A MARVELOUS IDEA.

GUARDS!




WE'RE GOING TO MAKE SURE THERE ARE NO SKYWINGS HATCHED ON THE BRIGHTEST NIGHT.

NOT EVEN ONE.




THERE SHOULD BE EIGHT.




WE'LL FIND IT, YOUR MAJESTY. SHE WON'T GET FAR. AND IT WAS A RUNTY ONE ANYHOW.

HMPH. FINE.



NOW I HAVE SOMEONE JUST WONDERFUL I WANT TO INTRODUCE TO YOU ALL.

OOO, THE SUSPENSE!



MOTHER IS TERRIFIED! WHAT COULD POSSIBLY SCARE HER?

BEHOLD, MY NEW AND
FUTURE CHAMPION! MY MOST
FABULOUSLY WONDERFUL
NEW TOY!

GASP!

HELP!

SAVE US!

**WHAT IS
THAT?!**

**IT CAN'T
BE REAL.**

KILL IT!

AHHHH!

**WHY IS
IT STILL
ALIVE?!**

FIRESCALES!

**DON'T
QUESTION THE
QUEEN!**

THIS DRAGONET LOOKS
LIKE SHE'S BURNING UP
FROM THE INSIDE.









I HOPE YOU KNOW HOW
TO CONTROL YOUR NEW
CHAMPION, MOTHER.
BECAUSE SHE'S NOT JUST
A THREAT TO ME.

THAT DRAGON COULD
DESTROY THE WORLD.



PART ONE: SCALES OF FIRE

CLAY'S BEEN GONE FOR HOURS! THREE MOONS! HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR SKYWINGS TO COLLECT A BODY?

HE SAID HE'D COME GET ME AS SOON AS RUBY WAS GONE. HA! AS IF I SHOULD BE AFRAID OF RUBY.

WHY SHOULD I HAVE TO HIDE ANYWAY? CLAY SAID IT HIMSELF! "YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO BE HERE."

...IS THAT TRUE? DO I HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE ANYWHERE AFTER EVERYTHING I'VE DONE?

I JUST WANT TO BE WITH CLAY. THAT'S SAFE AND HARMLESS OF ME, ISN'T IT?

AND IF ANYONE TRIES TO KEEP ME AWAY FROM HIM, I WILL MELT OFF THEIR HEAD! UNLESS CLAY TELLS ME NOT TO, I GUESS.

WHEN PRINCESS RUBY TOOK OVER, I THOUGHT EVERYTHING WOULD CHANGE...

AND EVERYTHING DID CHANGE FOR THE BETTER, FOR EVERYONE BUT ME.

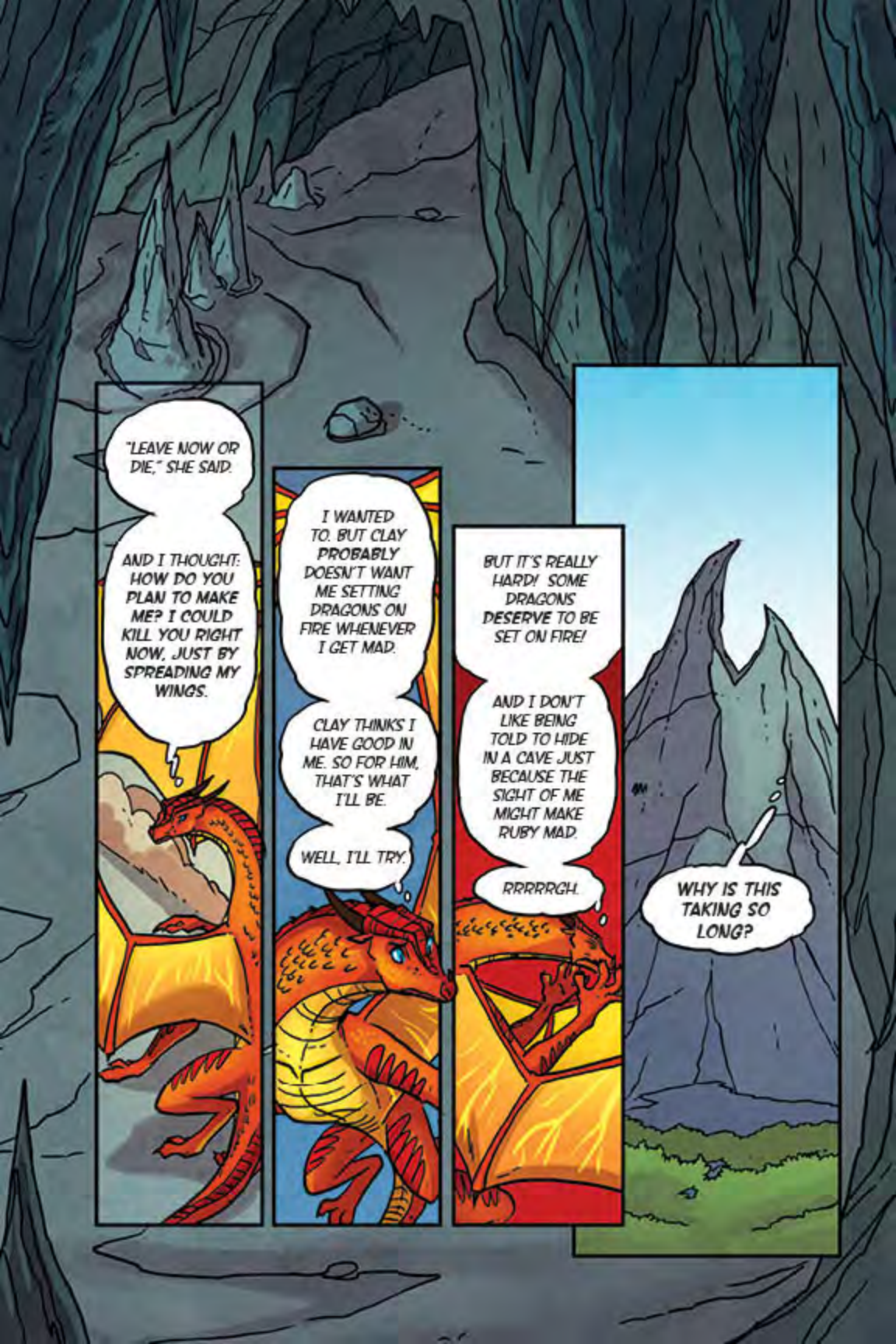
I CAN'T BELIEVE HER FIRST ACT AS QUEEN WAS BANISHING ME FROM THE SKY KINGDOM.

AND WHEN I ASKED WHY, RUBY SAID...

BECAUSE YOU'RE A MURDERER.

BUT AREN'T WE ALL? DIDN'T WE ALL DO TERRIBLE THINGS BECAUSE SCARLET TOLD US TO?

THEN I LOOKED INTO HER EYES AND I REALIZED... IT'S PERSONAL. RUBY HATES ME.

A comic book page with a dragon in a cave. The dragon is orange and yellow with blue eyes. The cave has grey rock walls and stalactites. The dragon is shown in four panels, with its thoughts and actions depicted. The background of the panels is a mix of grey, yellow, and blue.

"LEAVE NOW OR DIE," SHE SAID.

AND I THOUGHT:
HOW DO YOU
PLAN TO MAKE
ME? I COULD
KILL YOU RIGHT
NOW, JUST BY
SPREADING MY
WINGS.

I WANTED
TO. BUT CLAY
PROBABLY
DOESN'T WANT
ME SETTING
DRAGONS ON
FIRE WHENEVER
I GET MAD.

CLAY THINKS I
HAVE GOOD IN
ME. SO FOR HIM,
THAT'S WHAT
I'LL BE.

WELL, I'LL TRY.

BUT IT'S REALLY
HARD! SOME
DRAGONS
DESERVE TO BE
SET ON FIRE!

AND I DON'T
LIKE BEING
TOLD TO HIDE
IN A CAVE JUST
BECAUSE THE
SIGHT OF ME
MIGHT MAKE
RUBY MAD.

RRRRRGH.

WHY IS THIS
TAKING SO
LONG?

IT'S SO HARD BEING HERE IN JADE MOUNTAIN ACADEMY. IN THE SKY KINGDOM, EVERYONE KNEW TO AVOID ME. HERE, I ALWAYS HAVE TO WORRY. WHAT IF I BUMP INTO SOMEONE? WHAT IF THEY BUMP INTO ME?

WHAT WILL CLAY THINK IF I BURN ONE OF THEM?

DOES CLAY LOVE ALL THE OTHER STUDENTS MORE THAN ME? HE MUST—HE SHOULD—WHY WOULDN'T HE? NONE OF THEM HAVE MURDERED... WELL, A WHOLE LOT OF DRAGONS.

BUT NONE OF THEM SAVED HIS LIFE EITHER! AND HIS FRIENDS!

BUT EVEN HIS FRIENDS HATE ME.

EVERYONE EVERYWHERE HATES ME. I LEARNED THAT WHILE I WAS SEARCHING THE CONTINENT FOR SCARLET, AFTER THE WAR.

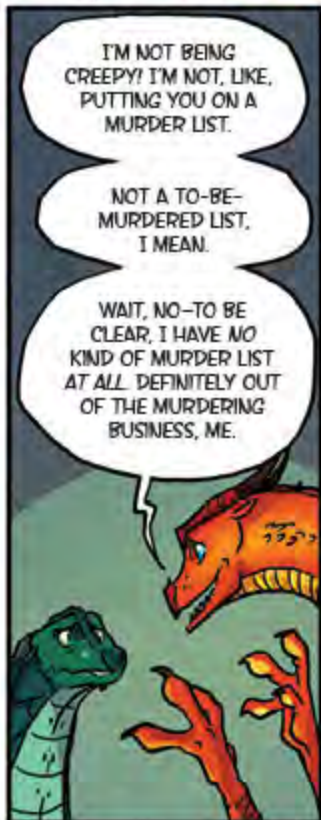
IT'S STRANGE TO REALIZE THINGS CAN HURT MORE ON THE INSIDE OF YOUR SCALES THAN THE OUTSIDE.

IT'S STRANGE THAT A DRAGON WHO CAN'T BE HURT ON THE OUTSIDE CAN HAVE SO MANY RAGGED HOLES INSIDE.

THUMP

FINALLY!
IS THAT CLAY?

ACK!





MAYBE I SHOULD STOP SAYING THE WORD MURDER.

THAT WOULD BE GREAT. IF YOU WOULDN'T MIND.

HE DOESN'T LOOK SCARED OF ME. HE DOESN'T LOOK THRILLED, BUT HE HASN'T RUN SCREAMING.



I WAS JUST DOING WHAT MY QUEEN TOLD ME TO DO! I CAN'T HELP THAT, CAN I?



UM, SURE. TURTLE.

IS THAT... SOME KIND OF SEAWING CODE? IS HE CALLING ME A TURTLE? SHOULD I RESPOND WITH, LIKE, MY FAVORITE ANIMAL?

MOOSE.



UH... I MEAN, MY NAME IS TURTLE.

OH! RIGHT. HELLO.



WHAT WAS THAT?

ROOOARRR!

MAYBE THEY JUST TOLD QUEEN RUBY THAT I'M HERE.

WANT TO GO FIND OUT?

SO I CAN GET ROARED AT FACE-TO-FACE? THAT DOES SOUND MORE FUN.

I DON'T MEAN GO SAY HI. I MEAN, I'M GOING TO EAVESDROP. DO YOU WANT TO COME?

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