

He clutched the walking stick as tightly as he could.

Be brave! he thought.

Suddenly, mustering all his courage, he jumped on top of the pile of toast and, waving the walking stick in the air, cried, 'I'm ready for you, monster!'

And that's when Krindlekrax appeared.

## CHAPTER FIFTY

**A** CLAW.  
A gleaming, black, sharp claw.

Then another claw.

And another . . .

Until a whole leg came to the surface.

A dark green, scaly leg, dripping with slime.

Then another claw.

A gleaming, black, sharp claw.

Then another.

Until a second dark green, scaly leg came to the surface.

Ruskin was so scared he couldn't move. He felt as if his feet were stuck to the toast. He wondered if the congealed butter had hardened round the soles of his boots, trapping him. Then he realized

he couldn't move his knees either, or his arms, or his neck, or even his eyes.

His eyes were wide open and staring at the head of Krindlekrax as it rose from the drain . . .



## CHAPTER FIFTY-ONE

KRINDLEKRAX'S mouth was wider than an open car bonnet and full of sharp teeth, each one the size of a new pencil. The teeth had once been white and healthy, but now they were rotten and discoloured, with slime trickling between the gums. Its breath was hot and smelt of toast and there were flies buzzing round its tongue and nostrils. Its eyes were red, as bright as traffic lights, and its nostrils flared and leaked green liquid.

More of Krindlekrax climbed out of the drain.

Its belly was fat and dark, its back legs as claw-sharp as the front, its tail long and pointed. It was the biggest thing Ruskin had ever seen.

Ruskin thought, It could swallow me whole!



And he wished he was back in bed, tucked up and safe, his lips sticky and warm with marmalade and tea.

Krindlekrax started to sniff the toast.

Clack! went the jaws.

## CHAPTER FIFTY-TWO

**K**RINDLEKRAX munched the toast for a while, then swallowed and took another step forward.

Sniff!

Clack!

Munch!

Step forward.

Ruskin thought, I must move! I must do something!

Sniff!

Clack!

Munch!

Step forward.

Ruskin could feel Krindlekrax's hot breath against his cheek.

Sniff!

Clack!

Munch!

Step forward.

DO SOMETHING! Ruskin thought.

Sniff . . .

Krindlekrax was sniffing the pile of toast.

Its jaws opened wide.

Ruskin stared into the pink steaming cave of its mouth.

In a moment the jaws will clack on me, thought Ruskin.

And then . . .

Da-boinggg!

No, Ruskin thought. It can't be!

Da-boinggg! Da-boinggg!

Krindlekrax stared over Ruskin's shoulder.

Ruskin didn't have to look behind him to know what was there. He knew that, at the other end of Lizard Street, a sleepwalking Elvis had left the pub and was dreamily bouncing his football.

## CHAPTER FIFTY-THREE

KRINDLEKRAX lost interest in both the pile of toast and Ruskin. Slowly, it walked past Ruskin and started to approach Elvis.

It's going to get him, thought Ruskin. I've got to move. I've got to save Elvis.

Da-boinggg!

Suddenly, Ruskin spun around and raised the walking stick into the air.

'Oh, you terrible monster!' cried Ruskin.

Krindlekrax stopped.

Ruskin jumped from the pile of toast, ran down the street and leaped on to Krindlekrax's tail.

Krindlekrax roared.

'RAAAAHHHH!'



Ruskin ran up the back of Krindlekrax – treading carefully so as not to slip on the slime – until he was standing on Krindlekrax's



head. It was very high and Ruskin felt a little giddy.

But he didn't let this stop him.

He was determined now.

He knew he had to tame Krindlekrax and protect – not only Elvis – but the whole of Lizard Street.

## CHAPTER FIFTY-FOUR

**I**AM BRAVE and wise and wonderful...'  
cried Ruskin, striking the top of Krindlekrax's head with the walking stick.

Krindlekrax roared again and tried to flick Ruskin from its head, as if Ruskin was nothing more than an irritating fly.

Ruskin got to his knees, then sat astride the neck of the giant crocodile.

'...and handsome and tall...' continued Ruskin, '...and covered in muscles, with a voice like thunder...'

Krindlekrax continued to try to shake Ruskin off. But Ruskin's legs only gripped the scaly skin tighter.

'You can shake your head all you like,' Ruskin said, 'but it won't get me off.'

*Krindlekrax*

Then Krindlekrax's tail curled around and hit Elvis.

Elvis fell to the ground, the ball rolling into the gutter.

Something else rolled as well.

Something that had fallen out of Elvis's pyjama-trousers' pocket.

Something gold!

Something shining!

It was Corky's medal!