

CHAPTER FIFTY-FIVE

KRINDLEKRAX saw the golden medal and stopped shaking.

It sniffed the medal.

Ruskin jumped off Krindlekrax's back and rushed over to Elvis.

'Oh, please wake up,' pleaded Ruskin, shaking Elvis. 'You've got to go to bed. It's not safe out here tonight.'

But Elvis continued to sleep, snoring slightly, and reaching out for the ball.

Elvis found the ball and gripped it tightly. He got to his feet and started to bounce it.

Da-boinggg!

Da-boinggg!

Krindlekrax

Krindlekrax heard the bouncing and, losing interest in the medal, roared at Ruskin and Elvis.

What can I do? thought Ruskin, panicking now. There must be a way to tame the monster. I just don't know what it is.

And then Ruskin heard something.

Eeeek! went the noise.

It was the pub sign.

Ruskin looked up and, as he did so, the torch on his helmet illuminated the painting of the baby crocodile with a penny in its mouth.

If only I had a golden penny! thought Ruskin.

BUT I DO HAVE ONE!

The medal! Of course!

Corky's golden medal!

CHAPTER FIFTY-SIX

IMMEDIATELY Ruskin reached out, grabbed hold of the medal and hurled it into the crocodile's mouth.

The medal stuck at the back of Krindlekrax's throat.

Krindlekrax closed its jaws and stared at Ruskin.

It didn't move.

Ruskin got to his feet.

It had started to rain now and there was the sound of distant thunder. Raindrops landed in Krindlekrax's eyes, giving the impression of tears.

Although, of course, the medal was very small in Krindlekrax's throat, it was obviously causing a lot of discomfort.

Krindlekrax started to cough, trying to dislodge it.

Ruskin stood in front of Krindlekrax and tapped it on the nose with his walking stick.

'Don't you like the medal in your throat?' asked Ruskin.

Krindlekrax just stared.

'Open your mouth,' Ruskin said. 'Open your mouth and I will take the medal away.'

Slowly, Krindlekrax opened its mouth.

CHAPTER FIFTY-SEVEN

LISTEN to me first, Krindlekrax,' continued Ruskin. 'If I do this, you must never threaten Lizard Street again.'

Krindlekrax slowly nodded.

Ruskin stepped over the bottom row of Krindlekrax's teeth, and crawled into the soft, pink mouth.

It was like entering a cave full of steam, like when Wendy left the kettle boiling and the kitchen got hot and damp.

Slime dripped from the roof of the mouth and trickled down Ruskin's neck. The slime was thick and very sticky, like marmalade.

Despite the sticky slime and the slippery tongue, Ruskin found it oddly comforting in the mouth of

Krindlekrax. It smelt of toast and reminded him of home.

Ruskin dislodged the medal from Krindlekrax's throat and crawled back out of the mouth, clutching the medal in his hands.

'Now go back to the sewer!' exclaimed Ruskin. 'Lizard Street is full of my friends and I don't want you threatening them.'



CHAPTER FIFTY-EIGHT

SLOWLY, Krindlekrax turned around and started to walk back down Lizard Street towards the drain.

Ruskin watched it go, saying, 'Mr Lace is my friend because he gave me coloured pencils.'

Krindlekrax started to climb down the drain.

Its head disappeared.

Ruskin said, 'Mrs Walnut is my friend because she gave me chocolate biscuits.'

The front legs of Krindlekrax disappeared.

'Dr Flowers is my friend,' said Ruskin, 'because he gave me a handkerchief.'

The belly of Krindlekrax disappeared.

'Mr Flick is my friend,' said Ruskin, 'because he gave me a photograph.'

Krindlekrax

The back legs of Krindlekrax disappeared.

'Mr and Mrs Cave are my friends,' said Ruskin, 'because they gave me some cherryade.'

The tail of Krindlekrax disappeared.

'And Elvis and Sparkey are my friends,' said Ruskin, 'even if they don't want to be.'