

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

THE TORCH on Ruskin's helmet shone into the hole, illuminating the ladder leading down, and the water below.

Ruskin put his ear to the ground.

No rumbling.

Nothing.

Ruskin waited a little longer, then picked up a slice of toast and dropped it into the hole.

He heard it splash.

He waited.

Nothing.

He leaned over the hole.

Still no rumbling.

Nothing.

Ruskin looked round him.

FOUR

He imagined all his neighbours curled up in their beds, sheets and blankets tucking them in tightly, clocks ticking beside them, eyes rolling behind eyelids as they dreamed, unaware that he - Ruskin Splinter - was poised over a drain, waiting to do battle with Krindlekrax.

And what would they be dreaming?

Mr and Mrs Cave would be dreaming of their pub with its stained-wood bar and satin cushions and carpet with red roses on.

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dder leading

Mrs Walnut would be dreaming of the day she could close the grocer's shop once and for all and stop smelling of potatoes.

Mr Flick would be dreaming of his black velvet lapels and all the films he had yet to show.

Mr Lace would be dreaming of pencils and Shakespeare.

Dr Flowers would be dreaming of the day he could stop sneezing.

Elvis would be dreaming of smashing all the windows in the world.

Sparkey would be dreaming of saying 'Yes, Sir' to everything for the rest of his life.

And in his house, his own mum and dad were busily dreaming too. Wendy of toast and tea and saying, 'polly-wolly-doodle-all-the-day', and

Philip Ridley

Winston of elephants and tigers and how happy he had felt in his zookeeper's uniform.

Ruskin was in the midst of these thoughts when . . .

Eeeek!

Ruskin jumped.

He dropped the walking stick. It disappeared into the hole and landed with a splash in the water below.

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

E EEEK!

It was only the pub sign, but in Ruskin's nervous state it had scared him. And now Corky's walking stick was in the sewer.

Ruskin stared into the hole.

He'd already lost the medal. He couldn't lose the walking stick as well.

Ruskin took a deep breath.

There was no alternative.

He would have to go into the sewer.

He swung his legs over the edge and started climbing down the ladder.

The last sound he heard before he disappeared beneath Lizard Street was the pub sign.

Eeeek!

Eeeek!

Eeeek!

