The Diamond Serpent By Tobias Baker

“Finally! We’re here!” said Dom.

“That took us 6 and a half hours!” replied Alfie as he looked at the old holiday cottage with a sloping garden down to the canal. He was really excited to finally be on holiday in Cornwall, especially as his parents had allowed Dom to come as well.

Dom and Alfie had been best friends since nursery which now seemed like a really long time ago as they had just finished their GCSE’s.

After a good night sleep, they woke up full of energy and were ready to explore the local beach. Soon they were ready and as Alfie’s parents were visiting a friend in a nearby town they could explore the area by themselves.

Following the canal down to the seaside they soon found Crooklets Beach where they planned to set up camp for the day.

“That’s strange. When I read the guidebook, it said that the sea pool and the beach were key attractions yet here they are empty!”

The sea pool was a large pool of sea water by the beach. People had swimming lessons in it and tourists would swim in it as well.

“Do you want to swim in the sea or the pool?” asked Alfie

“Nah let’s explore the caves behind the pool.”

The cave was dark and damp. Bits of algae wrapped around most of the rocks making it hard for the boys to walk. They walked for about a minute.

“Let’s go back Dom, I don’t like this.”

“Can you hear those footsteps? Maybe your right. We should turn around.”

But it was too late soon a group of 10 human like creatures came upon them. They had narrow slits for eyes and four arms. They were a mud brown colour with long sharp teeth displayed every time they breathed in. Soon the boys were surrounded by the creatures.

“How dare you Mud Monsters! Be gone, forever!” Said a new voice, and just like that a blue mist surrounded the monsters and they crumbled to dust.

“Wh wh wh who are you? What just happened?” shivered Dom.

“I am a wizard. To be precise the only wizard left in this world. Now come with me, I have a lot I need to explain to you.”

He had short blonde hair and wore a long, blue gown.

“No. how can we trust you. I may actually believe you if you looked like a wizard.”

“You can trust me because I have just saved your lives from a group of Mud Monsters of Boreylis.”

“So, I am guessing you have seen that the sea pool and the beach is empty. It is because the keyhole to The Whisperer is down there. And as all monsters are searching for the key, he is releasing powerful magic into the water to stop humans from getting in the way.”

“But what is the key? Why are the monsters trying to release The Whisperer?”

“Good questions child. The key is the Diamond Serpent. Not a living serpent but a sculpture made from diamond. It contains magic inside it that can unlock The Whisperer from his prison. The Whisperer is the most powerful of all monsters. He whispers to them, telling them what to do. But recently he has gone quiet, he believes that soon the Prophecy of the Diamond Serpent will happen,” explained the wizard, “I will tell you the prophecy:

If the life birds turn to death,

And the whisperer holds his breath,

Then no magic can stop,

The key being in the lock.

If the serpent is caught,

And to The Whisperer it is brought,

Then the wizard will bawl,

And the world will fall.

Part of the prophecy has already happened. There was once a type of bird called the Life Bird. But only a year ago The Whisperer warped their minds into evil, killing birds.”

After half an hour of walking they reached a tall, crumbly building.

“This is my home. It is called Compass Point. It was built over 5 centuries ago.”

Inside was an elaborately furnished room, looking nothing like the derelict outside.

“Come here I have a couple of things I need to show you.”

The wizard led them down some stairs and into a room full of large, yellow worms.

“I have something I need to tell you two. In the prophecy it says that no magic can stop the end of the world. It never mentions anything about humans. So, the world needs you to save it. You need to find the Diamond Serpent and bring it to me so I can destroy it. I can give you a few weapons though, to help you with your quest. Also, legend has it that that the serpent will be found in a snake.”

Silence filled the room.

“I have two things I would like to give to each of you…”

“We are not interested in saving the world. Thank you for telling us all this but we are going,” said Alfie.

He walked back up the stairs, but Dom stayed where he was.

“Alfie come back. Think about it. Either we try to save the world, or we die. And yes, we may die defending the world but at least we will die heroes.”

“Fine.”

“Nicely done Dom. So here are my gifts,” he gave each of them a worm in a pouch, “This is a Healer Worm of Birmyr. If you are injured eat it and you will be healed.”

The wizard then gave them a bracelet each

“If you are in danger tap the blue bead three times and it will become a sword. Good luck.”

\*

“Where should we look for the serpent?” Alfie asked Dom as they walked back to the town.

“Maybe we could go to the library. We could go on the computers and look up local mysteries.”

The library was small, modern building with floor to ceiling shelves of books. There were four computers to left of the books and a desk to the right where an old, grumpy looking woman sat filling in a sheet.

Alfie went over to one of the computers and started searching.

“I have found one. It is called the Mystery of the Empty Ship. It seems like in the 19th century a boat was found empty out at sea and was brought it to the harbour. Look! It was called the Sea Snake, maybe that’s the snake we are looking for? It is still there! Dom, I think we need to give the Sea Snake a visit,” said Alfie.

“Ok but where is the harbour?”

“It is north. Past Crooklets Beach and the sea pool.”

\*

In 45 minutes, they were on the pier.

“Which one is the Sea Snake?”

“I don’t know, maybe we should ask the harbour master.”

Soon they were in the harbour master’s cabin. He was in his 70s with with short, white hair.

“Excuse us. Do you know which boat in your harbour is the Sea Snake?”

“Yes, of course I know. Why?”

“We are doing a history project on it and it would be great it we could get some pictures of the boat, including the inside.”

“Ok, let me take you there.”

“Please can you tell us where it is because we would like to go by ourselves.”

“Afraid not. The Sea Snake is very old. I can’t allow youngsters like you to go around damaging everything in there. Hope you don’t mind going slowly because I have a bad leg.”

The Sea Snake was a large fishing boat. It had three floors, one of which still held the bones of the fish the fishermen caught that day.

“Ok. As I have a bad leg, I can’t climb onto the boat so I will stay here on the pier. But I will be listening.”

“I think I’ll stay here as well. I don’t like that old thing,” Alfie said.

“I’ll go in by myself then. I shouldn’t be too long.”

Dom climbed into the boat. He guessed that if the Diamond Serpent was in this ship it would not be on the open top. He went down a ladder into what looked like a storage room. There was a table with old netting on top, a few cupboards and a chair.

He went towards the table, maybe it could be hidden under all the netting. But as he got closer, he tripped over one of the chairs legs.

“What was that child? Be careful in there,” called the harbour master from the pier.

“I’m alright.”

But as Dom was about to stand up, he saw a box taped to the under side of the table. It was only visible from the floor. He took off the tape and opened it. Inside was a snake, not any snake, but the Diamond Serpent.

It was beautifully carved, with and open mouth and fangs sticking out. And in the middle, there was a strong blue glow, the glow of magic. The very magic that could unleash The Whisperer.

Dom picked it up. He was about to leave when an awful thought struck him. What was he going to do about the harbour master? He decided he would phone Alfie.

“Hi, I have the serpent. But how am I going to get past the harbour master?”

“You have it! Oh, I will try to distract him while you sneak out. We can then run away as he has a bad leg.”

“Hey, harbour master. I have been looking at this boat here. It is called the Sea Queen. What do you know about her?”

“This beauty was made in the 1950s. She is a fine boat. It is said she survived the worst storm the Atlantic has ever seen…”

Meanwhile Dom had managed to get out of the boat. He tapped Alfie on the shoulder and soon they where running down the pier towards the land.

“Hey! Come back!” called the harbour master, “I was just about to tell you about the storm!”

\*

Soon the boys were passing the sea pool.

“Do you think The Whisperer will notice us running past him with the Serpent?”

Meanwhile in his prison, The Whisperer sensed that the boys had the Diamond Serpent. He couldn’t let the wizard have it.

“Monsters. The humans have the serpent. Come by the sea pool. Kill them and free me.” He whispered into all the monsters’ ears.

Back above ground Alfie and Dom saw hundreds of Mud Monsters charging out of the cave and coming straight towards them.

“We need to destroy this. But only the wizard can do that. We need to get to the wizard and quick!” wheezed Dom, who was holding the serpent.

They ran as quick as they could. The land monsters were closing in. But what they didn’t realise was that the air monsters were already upon them.

An eagle-sized bird swooped down towards them. It had two knife-shaped claws and the end of its wings and four legs. A Death Bird.

It snatched the serpent from Dom, leaving a large gash across his chest.

“Dom, eat the Healer Worm. Quick, or you will be trampled by those Mud Monsters.”

Dom fumbled around in his pouch trying to find the worm while the bird flew fast towards the pool.

Suddenly, seemingly from nowhere a flash of blue hit the bird and it fell, loosing its grip on the serpent. The Diamond Serpent dropped into the shallow sea by the beach.

Alfie, being an excellent sprinter, ran towards where it had landed. The Mud Monsters where on his tail though. He picked up the snake but soon was surrounded by grunting monsters. He tapped the blue bead three times and suddenly a sword was in his hand.

He had never used a sword before, so he held it in both hands and spun around, slicing in half any monster that happened to stray too close to him. Piles of monster dust gathered in the sea around him.

Another blue spark suddenly killed all the monsters around him.

He looked back to the beach and the only people there was Dom and the wizard. He walked over to them

“Wizard, I thought you weren’t allowed to help.”

“I wasn’t but as The Whisperer broke the spell of the prophecy by telling his monsters to attack you, I could then join in. I would recommend eating your Healer Worm Alfie to heal your tiredness. I see Dom has already used his.”

“Yes, I got a huge cut across my chest from a Death Bird.”

“Well done you two. I wouldn’t like to jinx it, but it is fair to say that you saved the world.”

“Thanks for your help, Wizard. But we need to go now. But if the world is about to end again soon, please don’t ask us!”

\*

“So, what do you want to do?” Dom asked Alfie

“I heard about this place in the town that do excellent ice creams.”

“Decided.”