

KERNOWLAND I: *The Crystal Pool*

by Jack Trelawny

CHAPTER ONE

Are We Nearly There Yet?

'Are we nearly there yet?' moaned Louis, for the twelfth time.
'Stop asking that,' scolded Tizzie, 'you are nearly eight, you know.'

'Not long now,' said Mr Bennett, smiling patiently.

Anastasia Bennett was called 'Tizzie' for short. She was nearly eleven years old; and her brother Louis - who always had to tell people how to say his name, '*Lew-eee*' not '*Lew-iss*', when he first met them - was seven-and-three-quarters.

The Bennett family were going on holiday in their car.

As they passed over the long bridge that spanned the River Tamar, there was a sign which had two words on it - *Cornwall* and *Kernow*.

'Kernow is the old Cornish language name for Cornwall,' explained Mr Bennett. 'We'll soon be in the town of Newquay, which was once called Towan Blystra.'

My Dad knows everything, thought Tizzie.

'Yes, and my friend Todd said there are real gnomes in Cornwall,' enthused Louis. 'They live in people's gardens and come alive at night. And there are trolls and sea monsters and little people called "piskies" that only children can see.'

My brother doesn't know anything, thought Tizzie.

'Be a good girl and amuse your brother for a while,' said Mum, handing her daughter a booklet. 'Here, show him all about *The Eden Project*. We're going there tomorrow morning.'

'Look at these two huge white domes, Louis,' said Tizzie, pointing at the front page of the booklet.

Louis looked, as Tizzie continued.

'They're so big that one has a jungle in it, and the other has a desert.'

Louis was puzzled.

'How can they have a jungle and a desert in them?'

'Because the scientists make it so that the climate is like a real jungle in one dome, and like a desert in the other,' explained Tizzie.

'What's a climate?' queried Louis.

'It's the weather and temperature in a particular place,' answered Tizzie. 'It's warm and wet in the jungle, and hot and dry in the desert.'

Louis gave her one of his confused looks. 'But where do they get the plants?'

'They collect them from all over the world and put them in the big white domes to live,' said Tizzie. 'They've even brought back carnivorous plants from some places.'

'What's carnivorous?' asked Louis, screwing up his face because he'd never heard that word before.

'It means "meat-eating",' answered his sister. 'If you get too close, they'll eat you, Louis; they like eating little boys.'

'No way,' shrugged Louis, pretending not to be bothered.

'Stop frightening your brother, Tizzie,' cautioned Mum. 'You know he has nightmares.'

Tizzie went quiet, reading all about *The Eden Project* for the rest of the journey.

Louis was quiet too. He was thinking about carnivorous plants, and wondering whether they really could eat people.

CHAPTER TWO

Echo Cave

An hour after crossing the Tamar Bridge, the Bennetts arrived at the hotel and parked the car.

When they were unpacked, Mrs Bennett asked them what they wanted to do first.

'Beach,' said Tizzie.

'Beach,' said Louis.

'Beach,' said Dad.

'Beach it is then,' said Mum, with a big smile.

Mrs Bennett made sure they had everything ready: the surfboard, the blow-up shark, Louis' float, the big towels, and the picnic basket.

Then she picked up her little red beach bag, and led the way to the front of the hotel.

On the short walk to the beach, Louis looked at the seagulls, Tizzie listened to the roar of the sea, Dad smelt the fish and chips, and Mum admired the wonderful view over the bay.

When they arrived at the beach, Louis and Tizzie changed into their swimming costumes and asked if they could go exploring before they went in the water.

'All right, but make sure you can see us all the time,' warned Dad.

'Race,' shouted Tizzie, and set off running towards a big cave with Louis chasing after her. Tizzie was a very good big sister and she slowed down a little so that she and Louis both got to the mouth of the cave at exactly the same time.

For some reason though, Tizzie was hesitant to go any further; she had a strange feeling that something was wrong.

As usual, Louis just went straight in, with neither thought nor feeling to hinder his progress.

'Come out of there, Louis,' pleaded Tizzie. 'Dad said we must be able to see them all the time.'

'I can see Mum and Dad from in here,' reported Louis, from atop a pointed rock towards the back of the cave, his words echoing around the walls to his obvious delight. 'Come in and stand on this rock and you'll see I'm telling the truth. Or are you scared?'

Despite her own reservations, and although she thought Dad might be cross, Tizzie made herself go into the cave. She was determined not to be called a 'scaredycat' by her little brother. He'd definitely go on about it for the whole holiday if she didn't go in.

On braving the cave, Tizzie saw Louis' pointed rock, which was covered in seaweed and surrounded by a little pool. Drips of water plopped into the pool from the roof of the cave, making ripples as they splashed.

She put her toe in the water and immediately took it out. 'I can't do that, it's freezing,' she complained.

'Close your eyes and it doesn't feel as cold,' advised Louis.

'That's what I did.'

Tizzie didn't think that closing her eyes would stop the pool being cold, but tried it anyway. She summoned all her courage and stepped into the water. It was just as cold with her eyes closed. She waded five shivering steps to the rock, and Louis stretched out his hand to help her climb up it.

Tizzie and Louis stood on the big rock surrounded by the icy cold pool.

Pop! Pop!

The seaweed covering the rock popped every time they moved their feet.

'Helllllowwww,' shouted Louis.

'Helllllowwww,' replied the cave.

'I'm going to call it "Echo Cave",' declared Louis.

'Okay,' agreed his sister, 'that's a good name.'

Inside the cave, it was very dark. They both looked out towards the bright and sunny beach.

'It's like looking out of a tunnel,' said Louis.

'Yes,' said Tizzie, 'and the good thing is, we can still see Mum and Dad.'

Suddenly, they heard a rustling sound from the back of the cave. Someone, or some *thing*, was in there with them.