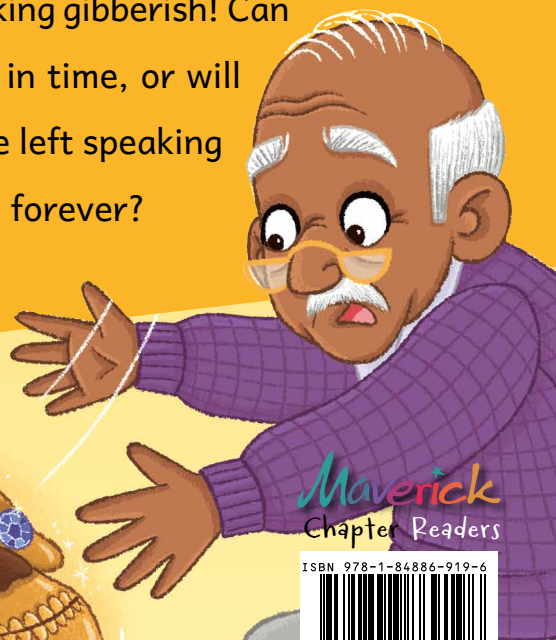




The Curse of the Sapphire Skull

When a mysterious gold skull with sapphire eyes washes up on the beach, Zak and his archaeologist grandad can't believe their luck. But things go very wrong when Grandad drops the skull and starts speaking gibberish! Can they break the curse in time, or will

Grandad be left speaking nonsense forever?



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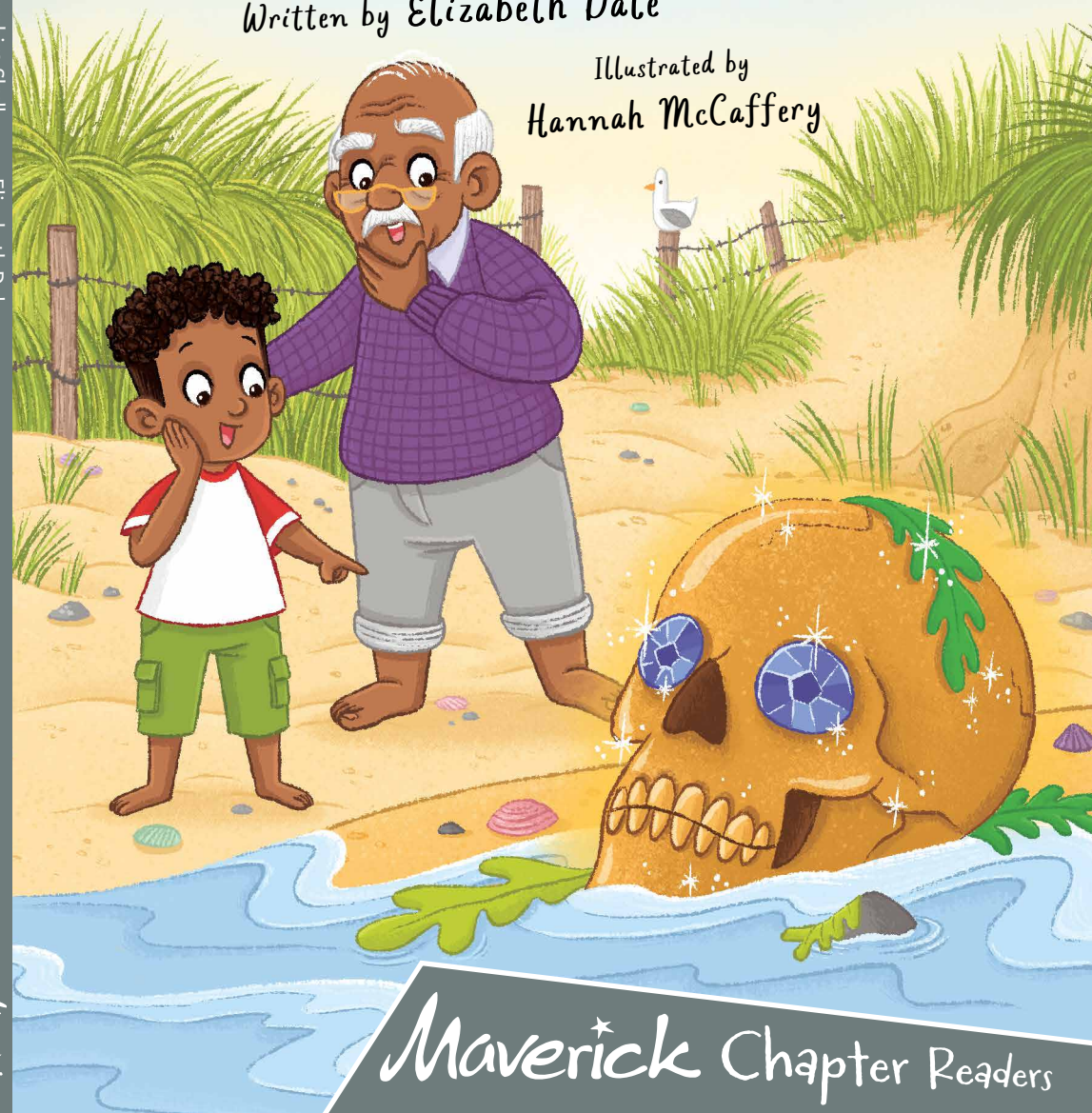
Elizabeth Dale

Maverick

The Curse of the Sapphire Skull

Written by Elizabeth Dale

Illustrated by
Hannah McCaffery



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'The Curse of the Sapphire Skull'

An original concept by Elizabeth Dale

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Illustrated by Hannah McCaffery

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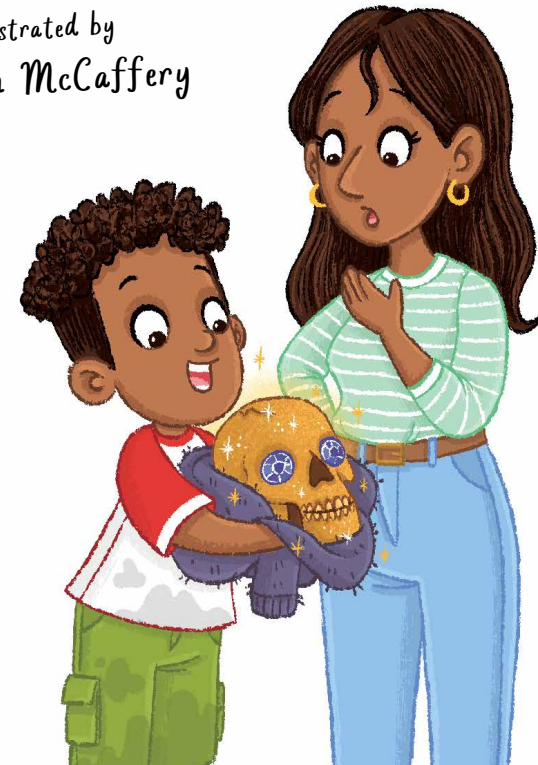


This book is rated as: Grey Band (Guided Reading)

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Chapter 1

It was a glorious, sunny morning. The strong wind was whipping up the most amazing waves as Zac and his grandad hurried down the cliff. Zac smiled happily. It was so early, they had the beautiful, sandy beach all to themselves—just how they loved it!

Zac gasped at the cold as he ran into the sea. His grandad followed but Zac went even deeper. Soon he was nearly up to his knees. “Come in more, Grandad!” he cried. “It’s fun!”

His grandad chuckled. “Oooh, it’s so cold...” he said as he gingerly waded further in. Suddenly, a huge wave came thundering in and **SPLASH!**

“Oh!”

They both shrieked in shock as the water hit them.



Zac's shorts and Grandad's trousers were totally soaked! They laughed at the sight of each other but, whilst Grandad quickly waded out of the sea, Zac continued splashing through the waves. After all, he couldn't really get much wetter!

Zac was about to turn and start running back to his grandad when he noticed something round and gold rolling backwards and forwards in the surf. The closer he got to it, the more amazing it looked. But only when he picked it up, did he realise what it was. A skull! A gold skull with an eerie, smiling mouth and dazzling blue eyes!

Zac couldn't believe what he saw. It was larger than a human skull and totally amazing! He shook the water out of it and turned it over in his hands. The wet gold glinted in the sunlight, and the blue eyes stared back at him. He just *had* to show this to Grandad!

"Look, Grandad, look!" he cried, racing back to him, holding out the skull. "Look what I found!"



Grandad looked up from unrolling his wet trousers and just stood there, staring at it in wonder. "What a clever boy!" he cried. "What an incredible find! It seems to be moulded in real gold."

"Isn't it brilliant?" cried Zac, giving it to him. "Oh, those blue glass eyes are so cool!"

His grandad shook his head. "I think they might be large sapphires rather than glass," he said. "They're really precious stones!"

"Wow!" said Zac. "And it's here on our beach. How amazing! I wonder how it got here? Maybe robbers hid it in the caves? And the sea washed it out? Do you think it was stolen from a jewellers?"

"I don't think so," said Grandad. "It looks very old to me. Come on, let's take it home and see what we can find out about it."

"Okay," said Zac, trying to hide his disappointment. For a moment, he'd imagined that a whole heap of reward money—just perfect for buying a bike—might be coming

his way. "So, it's not that valuable then?" he asked, just to be sure.

His grandad tore his eyes away from the skull and smiled at Zac. "On the contrary," he said, "it could just be very valuable indeed."