

THE SMUGGLING SERPENTS



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Mrs. Sarita Hood, our English teacher without whose support and able guideness this story would not have been written.

I thank her on behalf of my whole team for giving us such an exciting project. In the process of writing the story we learnt a lot of new words and learnt to work as a team.

We hope that there are more such projects to come.

**All places, characters, incidents
described in the book are fictitious.
Any resemblance to any character
dead or alive is purely co-incidental.**

CHAPTER 1

A CLOSE SHAVE

'Only 10 seconds left!' David's mind was racing. His mind was filled with all kinds of thoughts. If he does not defuse the bomb the National Football Stadium in California will no longer exist and the 25,000 spectators will be dead.

Just then, his younger brother, Fernando came running towards him. David barely looked up when his brother called out his name.

"David!" he exclaimed, "The red wire has to be cut to defuse the bomb"

"Who told you?" David asked.

"The security people here just informed me."

David looked at him with a somewhat 'are you sure like' look and then took a deep breath and cut the red wire.

The bomb gave 2 beeps and then the timer stopped.

David and Fernando heaved sighs of relief and congratulated each other on defusing the bomb. They gave each other hi-fives and after informing the security head, they directly went to their convertible.

CHAPTER 2

A DEATH THREAT

At home David told his father about the day's events. His father praised him and Fernando for keeping their cool in such a tense situation and told them that they will certainly become good private sleuths like him.

David's father, Toni Villa, was a world renowned private investigator and David and Fernando too were following their father's footsteps and have already established themselves as amateur detectives.

When David was having his shower, his younger brother called out, "David, hurry up and come out. Trevor just called and informed that he wants to meet us in 15 minutes."

Trevor was their friend and the Prince of Bavaria. He was currently in California on a royal tour. He had become their friend since they had once before rescued him from kidnappers. He was of the same age as David and was a year older than Fernando. He is 19 years old and is the sole heir to the throne of Bavaria.

After having a quick snack they set out to meet Trevor in their convertible. On the way, David, who was at the wheel,

asked Fernando, “Did Trevor tell you on the phone why he called us so urgently?”

“No, he only told me to come fast and meet him at the Grand Hotel.”

Suddenly, as if from nowhere an arrow darted in from the open window and hit the seat, narrowly missing Fernando’s head. David looked around and saw a man with jet black hair running down the alley.

“No point chasing him now” said Fernando, “He probably has a car waiting on the other side of the alley. By the time we get there he will be miles away.”

After checking that Fernando is not hurt and the arrow is not poisonous, David examined the arrow. There was a small note attached to it. David opened it and read it aloud.

“Don’t help the Prince or you and your family will be killed.”

CHAPTER 3

A NEW CASE TO SOLVE

Before going to the Grand Hotel, the boys wanted to show this note to their father. They hurried home only to find out from their mother that their father had left for New York and will be back only after a week.

So, they took the note and the arrow to their modern crime lab. They checked the note for fingerprints but found none except their own. They studied the wood from which the arrow was made from and on comparing the wood with a type of wood that is only found in Bavaria, they came to the conclusion that this arrow and the shooter are from Bavaria and want to stop them from helping Trevor.

After completing their examination they immediately went to the Grand Hotel. They found Trevor waiting for them in the lobby. He beckoned them and signalled them to follow him. They followed him to his room. After they had entered, he quietly closed the door.

He first wanted to know why they were late so they told him the old incident and told him their suspicions. On hearing their account Trevor looked distraught and asked them to describe the man.

“He was about 30 to 35 years old and had jet black hair.” told David.

“He also had the little finger of his right hand missing”, added Fernando.

After hearing this description, Trevor looked even more distraught. On asking, he replied, “This man, who you have just described is a much feared assassin and has been on the wanted list of my country for several years now. It seems that the enemies of Bavaria want to stop you from helping me at any cost.”

“But why have you called us?” asked David.

“I want you to help me and my country. Several cases of smuggling have been discovered and my father suspects that some rebels are planning to overthrow him. He suspects some top officials are involved. He and I want you to help us and our country. Will you do so?”

“Most certainly”, replied David for both of them.

“Then we all will leave for Bavaria as soon as possible. That is, of course, after you take permission from your parents.”

David and Fernando bid him goodbye and left for home.

CHAPTER 4

A REPTILE WARNING!

On the way back, David stopped the car at chemist's shop and handed a paper packet to him and asked him to do something. When David came back, Fernando asked "What were you doing?"

"I gave that arrow to the chemist and asked him to find out if any special ointment or something like that was applied to it. I had a doubt about it after we had checked it in our lab."

When they reached home they told their mother about their meeting with Trevor. They then asked her permission for going to Bavaria with Trevor. Their mother agreed, but told them to ask their father also. The boys were overjoyed as they knew that they will have no trouble in getting their father's permission. They called their father and told him the whole incident and asked for his advice.

“Be careful. From what I hear from you, this man seems to be dangerous. I think I have heard of him before. He belongs to or heads a group called the Serpents and is on the wanted list of the American authorities too. I hope you have a good time and solve this case and catch this man.”

He hung up and David and Fernando hurried upstairs to their room to pack their bags.

The next morning they woke up early and informed Trevor that they will be able to come any time after today evening.

After dressing up and having their breakfast, they went to pick up the arrow which they had left at the chemist's for examination. When they reached the shop, the chemist informed them that an ointment which could harm you if the arrow remained in the body. The material was found only in the plains of Bavaria.

They took the arrow and went to the Grand Hotel. On the way, David told Fernando that his suspicions have been confirmed. “When I first saw the arrow I knew something had been applied on the arrow. I just took it to the chemist to know what was applied on it.”

In the Grand Hotel they met Trevor and told him about the arrow. After hearing their account, Trevor told them that they will be leaving for Bavaria early next morning on board

his private aircraft. They discussed for a while about their trip and then David and Fernando took Trevor's leave.

They woke up early next morning. They took a quick shower and left for the international airport in a taxi.

Trevor was already waiting for them. After doing some formalities they were escorted to the aircraft. They were informed that this plane is very similar to the American President's private plane, Air Force One. After they were on board they slept for about three hours and then they woke up to find themselves above the desert region of America. They then had a quick and quiet breakfast. They asked Trevor to give them more details about the case.

“Well, the intelligence agencies have not found out much about the case so at present I can't tell you much about the case”, said Trevor.

The whole journey past uneventfully and next morning they landed in Tralynn, the capital of Bavaria. They were to live in the Royal Palace along with Trevor. The sun had yet not risen so there was darkness all around. A Rolls-Royce was sent to collect them and drop them to the Royal Palace.

A man named Frank was the driver. David was sitting beside him. Everyone heard the sound of a bullet. Everyone except Frank. Frank was dead. The bullet was meant for David. But

as David had bent down to pick up his pen, the bullet missed him by a whisker and hit Frank instead. A note was also seen attached to the back of the bullet. It read ‘All of you will be killed the next time.’ It was signed ‘Cobra’.

CHAPTER 5

THE CODE

They reached the Palace with David at the wheel. As soon as they reached the Palace Trevor ordered one of the guards to take Frank’s body away for further examination. Trevor’s father, the King of Bavaria, was at the door to welcome them. Fernando could sense that he was bursting to tell them something. As soon as they had paid their respects to him, he said, “I have some good news to tell you. The security agency has just intercepted one of their codes. I would willingly show them to you.”

Overjoyed after hearing about such an important breakthrough they followed the King to the control room. All the important members of the council were present there. After a brief session of introductions, they were shown the codes.

“I can’t make out anything from this”, the head of security informed them while handing over the piece of paper.

The paper read-

a m w o t m t c y l e a n l p t o c l e r f p o e m o
a t e r m r n p b g a h i v t d u r
e t o d e a a l a n o u a r n n s t l s y y t c o
s d e a i a e r

David and Fernando observed the paper carefully. After some time, David shouted, “I have cracked the code.”

Everyone looked at him with an amazed expression. Before anyone could speak, The King asked David to show them how he cracked the code.

David took a seat near the computer and explained “The Smugglers are pretty clever. They have used a method called the Caesar’s box. In this, you have to arrange the alphabets

in a certain order which depends upon the number of blocks. In this, there are nine blocks you have to arrange in the square of nine. I will show it to you.” He typed something on the computer and projected that on the screen. It showed-

a m w o t m t c y

l e a n l p t o c

l e r f p o e m o

a t e r m r n p b

g a h i v t d u r

e t o d e a a l a

n o u a r n n s

t l s y t c o

s d e a i a e r

Then later it read-

All agents meet at old warehouse on Friday at 1 pm very important attendance compulsory Cobra

On seeing Cobra, David, Fernando and Trevor all exclaimed. Everyone looked at them. Then Fernando explained “The note that came with the bullet that killed Frank was also signed by Cobra. I think that Cobra is the leader of Serpents, a group about which Dad talked to us. He thinks that the

assassin is also from that group. If we unravel this mystery we may unravel two major international mysteries and catch these people.”

After hearing this, everyone praised David and Fernando. The King then announced that further plans will be discussed after breakfast.

CHAPTER 6

THE LAST CONSIGNMENT

During breakfast David and Fernando discussed the code and other events. After breakfast, every one met in the control room again. Then the Head of Security took over.

“Today at 1 pm the smugglers are having a meeting at the old warehouse. We will be there half an hour before them and will lie in wait for them.” Everyone was then assigned jobs. “You two”, he said, pointing at David and Fernando “will stay with me and help me direct operations.” David and Fernando nodded their head in agreement.

Still two hours were left for 12:30 pm, so David and Fernando, along with Trevor roamed around the palace gardens. When it was 12:15 everybody met again in the Control room and equipped themselves well with weapons.

They reached the warehouse at 12:35 and quietly surrounded it. Soon a cluster of cars arrived. Many people came out from them, one of them being the assassin. David quietly eavesdropped on the meeting going on inside. On a signal from him the Head of Security ordered his troops inside and a fierce gun battle took place inside. The smugglers were taken in by surprise and were outnumbered, but still they fought the state troops in an organised manner. Many of them were killed and some escaped. The state troops managed to capture two people alive and soon the battle was over.

On interrogation, the two of them revealed nothing. They had to be tortured and only after that they revealed some things. The most important of them being that the last

consignment of goods will despatch from Coerap, the largest and the busiest port city of the country the day after tomorrow and that the assassin was only the leader of the group and their group name was Serpents. They were searched thoroughly and apart from some guns and knives a piece of paper was confiscated. It was also in the same code language. After being cracked, it read-

Last smuggling consignment will despatch from Coerap on Sunday this week Python will be at port to oversee the operation Cobra den will be open after the consignment is smuggled successfully Anaconda will be at gate 10 ID will be required

After reading this letter, the authorities again interrogated the prisoners but they refused to open their mouth. Serious planning was started on how to take on the smugglers.

They left for Coerap that night in an airplane along with 100,000 security personnel. Seeing this Fernando commented to David, “I think this is going to be a big operation.”

They reached Coerap past midnight and they moved directly to their respective rooms in the airport hotel to have a good sleep after a hectic and eventful day.

The next morning everyone had breakfast together and after taking permission from the King and making sure that they had no duties to attend to, David, Fernando and Trevor went for sight-seeing. They moved around carefully and tried to avoid catching the people's attention. David and Fernando observed how the people and their way of living was different from that of the Americans. They then visited the famous places of the city. After quiet an uneventful day, they went to the hotel, had dinner and went to bed eagerly waiting to see what will happen tomorrow.

The next day, everyone woke up early because the consignment was going to be dispatched at 8 am. They had learnt this from the prisoners. After getting ready and making plans everyone left for port no.3 as this was the place from where the goods were going to be dispatched. They surrounded the port and in a dramatic fashion they captured Python without any firing. Python was forced to reveal Cobra's Den and from then on the smugglers stood no chance against the state troops. The whole operation lasted for just two hours. All the smugglers were imprisoned and most of them were internationally wanted criminals. David and Fernando were congratulated for playing their part well and were rewarded with honorary citizenships of Bavaria. David and Fernando decided to stay back and spend some time in Bavaria.

They certainly hope that they will have more mysteries like these to solve.