

# The Year 2127 AD

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*Sea levels have risen without warning and most of England is submerged except north Edinburgh, and parts of London, now called The Mainland. As Edinburgh is so far away from the reach of the government, law and order has collapsed, leaving crime and starvation. This is the story of one boy, surviving alone in this devastated world.*

Michael ran. He ran past the gnarled trees, down the hill and through the graveyard. He'd been planning to leave Edinburgh for a long time, now he had no choice. Desperate, unruly gangs were ransacking people's shacks, killing for anything worth taking. Soon they would come for him.

Michael stopped in front of the tree where he'd hidden the boat he'd found while scavenging. He found it nestled among the sprawling tree roots. He spat on his palm and rubbed the mud off the prow to reveal fading, gold lettering: LYRA. With his back against the boat, Michael heaved it into the water and hastily rowed out to sea. He watched Edinburgh disappearing on the horizon and felt a surge of relief. Soon, fatigue overcame him and his eyelids grew heavy. He just managed to pull in the oars before falling asleep.

Suddenly, Michael snapped awake as a loud, rushing noise came from underneath him! He looked down to see the boat balanced precariously on the crest of a colossal wave. Lyra lurched to the left and...

He fell face-first into the ebony abyss before he could open his mouth to scream. The wind ripped the air from his lungs.

Michael tried to gasp in lungfuls of air but swallowed mouthfuls of water instead. Then, he felt a powerful mass of muscle dragging him towards the seabed. As he fought to keep his head above the water, he thought of all the obscure, unnamed creatures that lurked under the sea. That's when he saw it.

A giant sea-snake, stretching around fifty feet behind him. A pointed face pierced him with menacing eyes; red slits for pupils. Its tail thrashed in the water, grazing Michael's arm and opening a gash on his elbow.

As he tried to comprehend what was happening, he remembered tales about a monster rumoured to have lived in Loch Ness, the old Scottish lake.

He pushed the thought from his mind. That was just a story the old folk told, to keep themselves amused when topics for gossip were scarce. It couldn't be true, could it?

When he finally resurfaced, gasping for air, he turned his head to the right to see Lyra bobbing away and incredibly, still intact!

Inspired by his change of luck, Michael began to paddle furiously towards his last chance at life. Using a final burst of strength, he clambered into the boat. To his relief and astonishment, he saw the monster disappear under the waves, as suddenly as it had appeared, satisfied with the damage it had done.

For now ...