

Prologue

Five Years from Now

The North Sea gave birth to a monster. An abomination. Something experts said could never happen. But the world was warming. Faraway, arctic glaciers melted. A tipping point that changed weather patterns everywhere. And as a result, the worst hurricane ever known raged off the British Isles. Gales roared and lightning flared. Shrieking twisters reached down from thunderous clouds. Waves were whipped into a frenzy. But deep beneath this turbulent cauldron lay a vast rock ledge. A continental shelf which withstood the tides for centuries. But on this storm-lashed day, the ledge shuddered, cracked, and collapsed. A massive landslide displaced millions of tons of water in an instant.

A colossal wave raced towards the shore, gathering height with every mile. Boats were swallowed in one watery gulp. Oilrigs were overturned. On land, a lone man on a rainy beach saw it first. He rubbed his eyes in disbelief. Surely not? A grey mountain was rising and blotting out the sky. A shapeless monster devouring the world. And getting nearer with every second. The man screamed and fled.

It made landfall, drowning every town and village in its path. On and on it cascaded, filling the Thames Valley with icy seawater. A wall of water that just kept coming and never receded. And rivers were already overflowing after days of rainfall.

London, that city of skyscrapers and castles, never stood a chance. Flood defences were useless against such a towering wave. Its inhabitants peeked out from their umbrellas to see their doom

crashing down upon them. An unstoppable mega-tsunami. Big Ben, the Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace all swept away in the blink of an eye. And still the waters came...