

CHAPTER V: A MONSTER

THEY sailed from this, and on the fourth day discovered a large, sandy island, on which, when they came near, they saw a huge, fearful animal standing on the beach, and looking at them very attentively. He was somewhat like a horse in shape ; but his legs were like the legs of a dog ; and he had great, sharp claws of a blue colour.

Maldun, having viewed this monster for some time, liked not his look; and, telling his companions to watch him closely, for that he seemed bent on mischief, he bade the oarsmen row very slowly towards land.

The monster seemed much delighted when the ship drew nigh the shore, and gambolled and pranced about with joy on the beach, before the eyes of the voyagers; for he intended to eat the whole of them the moment they landed.

"He seems not at all sorry to see us coming," said Maldun; "but we must avoid him and put back from the shore."

This was done. And when the animal observed them drawing off, he ran down in a great rage to the very water's edge, and digging up large, round pebbles with his sharp claws, he began to fling them at the vessel; but the crew soon got beyond his reach, and sailed into the open sea.

A horrible monster, with blazing eyes,

In shape like a horse and tremendous in size,

Awaiting the curragh, they saw;

With big bony jaws

And murderous claws,

That filled them with terror and awe:

How gleeful he dances,

And bellows and prances,

As near to the island they draw;

Expecting a feast

The bloodthirsty beast

With his teeth like edge of a saw:

Then he ran to the shore,

With a deafening roar,

Intending to swallow them raw:

But the crew, with a shout,

Put their vessel about,

And escaped from his ravenous maw!

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