

# Hare Island and the Mermaid's Song

Y5

Warning tale

The sea had lapped the shores of Hare Island several thousand times and many people had perished there before Alvin came to understand the gravity of the warning his mother had given him.

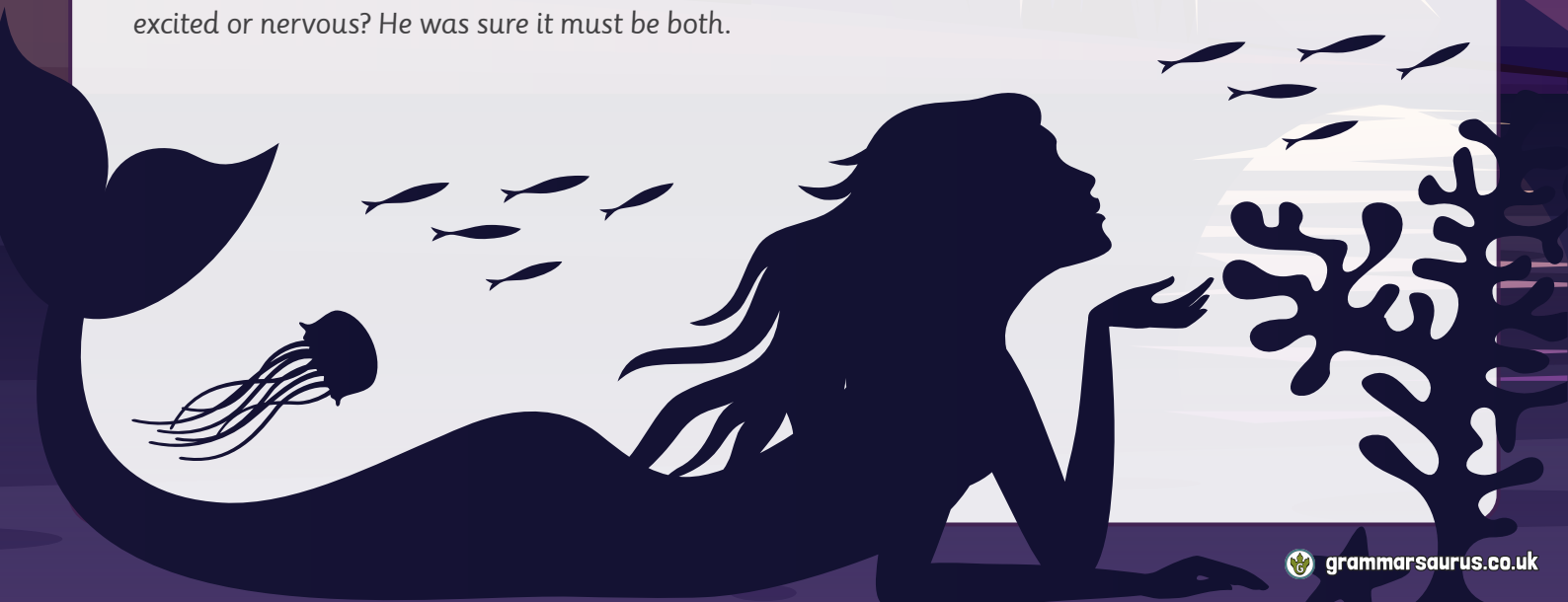
The warning had been something mothers told their sons and daughters for centuries on the mainland. It was every mother's worst nightmare and there wasn't a day that they didn't think about Hare Island and the mysterious mermaid who sat in plain sight. Many men and women had visited her and never returned. The simple warning – don't go to Hare Island – was something Alvin's mother told him many times.

Alvin was not tall, his features were striking but not necessarily handsome. His hair, which was wiry and ginger, was brushed backward from the temples every morning before he left the house. His eyes, which seemed not to blink very often, were a light blue, but had dark circles underneath from lack of sleep. Many people on the mainland suffered from a lack of sleep. This was because of the mermaid's song. Only some heard it; those who did spent most of the night trying to resist it – desperate to adhere to the warning from their mothers.

One night, when the fog had descended over the mainland and Hare Island could be seen peeping through the mist, the mermaid's song began. It was as sweet as sugar and as entrancing as a witch's spell. Alvin, who had been listening for a few hours, allowed his curiosity to get the better of him. Dismissing his mother's warning, he decided to explore the island and visit the aquatic goddess.

Climbing aboard his small boat (which he used for fishing most weekends) Alvin sailed under the night's sky, through the mist and fog and towards the mysterious song that echoed and rippled off the water.

As he gazed upon the sky, Alvin, who was rarely out at this hour, was struck by the darkness of the night - darker than smeared charcoal. He thought it was as if someone had thrown a blanket over the Earth. After an hour or so, he neared Hare Island and the butterflies fluttered in his stomach – was he excited or nervous? He was sure it must be both.



From the moment he cautiously stepped ashore, he was struck by her beauty. The mermaid, with perfectly smooth skin, sat on a rock in front of him and her tail glistened in the moonlight like sparkling crystals. Her long, sun-kissed hair flowed like a gentle river down her back and curled around her tail. Then, to Alvin's surprise, she raised her head and beckoned the boy to come closer. He very nearly did but, fortunately for him, Alvin spotted a pair of eyes in the darkness; they didn't belong to the mermaid!

From the shadows, a colossal behemoth, stood upright on two legs, with blue-green skin and a yellow abdomen reflecting the moonlight, emerged. The skin was unusual, but this wasn't what Alvin noticed the most. He was fixated on the creature's long, sharp claws; its thick, strong, leathery tail; and its mouth with dozens of sharp, pointy teeth protruding from it. As you can imagine, Alvin was utterly terrified and, at that moment, he wished (more than any wish he had ever wished) that he had listened to his mother's warning.

The mermaid had grown impatient with Alvin and his reluctance to come closer. Who could blame him? The beast was terrifying and he knew he was its delicious supper! The mermaid began her song and beckoned him once more. Alvin felt his body being lured towards her as though he was being pulled across the sand by an invisible force. By sheer luck, as the mermaid sat on her perch next to the lapping sea, her scaly tail twitched and splashed some salty water into the air and straight into the eye of the hideous behemoth! The beast let out a screech that would have shattered glass, but certainly broke the spell of the mermaid's song. Taking his chance, Alvin sprinted back to his boat, leapt inside and rowed like he had never rowed before.

After an hour or so at sea, Alvin arrived back on the mainland ready to tell his tale. His mother was too relieved to feel angry with her precious son for ignoring her warnings and she threw her arms around him the second he stepped ashore. Alvin didn't know why the mermaid deceived people for the beast or how the monster had arrived on Hare Island, but he was certain of one thing: he would never ignore his mother's warnings ever again.

