

## Don't pet the pretty horses

Don't pet the pretty horses that live by the sea. As beautiful as they are, as tempting it may be. With shining coats of dapple gray and flowers woven in their manes, they seem so tame and innocent, to lure the young astray. They beckon you with gentle neighs and soft cunning sighs as if to say, Oh human there, come and take a ride. But oh dear listener, I beg you, stay away, for once you touch that gleaming hide, the illusion starts to fray. And what was once a lovely gray begins to turn a green, the same as the waves when a storm comes upon the sea. The flowers rot and fall apart, and their manes are tattered and torn. As the creature's eyes stare into yours, you see a kelpie's soul. And all at once, you realize those pretty neighs and sighs were all along a trickster's call to get you to climb astride. With your hands upon the creature, no matter how hard you try, you cannot pull yourself away from the deceiver's fetid hide. And in a flash like lightning, and with a sound like thunder, down into the water, the kelpie goes, with you dangling on its side, the waves rush up to meet you, drowning out your cries. And once beneath the water, the kelpie bears its grin, and you, dear listener, are never heard from again. So brave soul, take my warnings in your stride, or the pretty horses that live by the sea, will do to you, what they did to me.

Sam Slattery