Eventually it was taking so long to reload that there came a moment when there were no more feathers tickling the Green Death's nostrils and his eyes stopped streaming and suddenly he could see the maddening Fireworm pinpoint clear...

The Green Death made a lightning reflex swipe at the red dragon and caught her in one gigantic claw.

It was lucky for Fireworm that at that very moment the Purple Death came crashing round the corner and struck the Green Death heavily in the stomach. His grip loosened on Fireworm for a second and she flew off, panting with relief.

The Green Death sat down heavily in the sea and fought for breath.

The Purple Death did much the same.

15. THE BATTLE AT DEATH'S HEAD HEADLAND

While Hiccup and his team had been enraging the Green Death, Thuggory and *his* team had been infuriating the Purple Death.

The two monsters ran smack into one another as they met at the corner of Death's Head Headland.

One of Fireworm's wings was broken in two places from her experience in the Green Death's grip but she bravely flew back and made her final speech into his ear, as he sat gasping for air in the shallows.

'Here he is,' shouted Fireworm. 'My Master, the Purple Horror, who will tear you limb from limb and spit out your toenails!'

And Fireworm flew away lopsidedly as fast as she could, with one wing trailing behind her.

♦♦♦

The Green Death was having a bad day.

Ordinarily, a Seadragonus Giganticus Maximus would not dream of attacking another animal of the same breed. They avoid fighting each other because

they know they are so heavily armed that the battle risks ending in death for both of them.

However, the Green Death had been attacked and jeered at by minuscule creatures who had inflamed and outraged his vanity. This Creature, who seemed to think he was tougher than the Green Death himself, had struck him heavily in the chest.

The Green Death wasn't thinking too hard.

He leapt at the Purple Death with his talons outstretched, breathing great bursts of fire, which lit up the landscape all around like lightning.

The ground and the sea shook in great earthquakes as the two gigantic monsters lunged crazily at each other, swearing the most unrepeatable oaths in Dragonese.

The Green Death's foot completely destroyed Wrecker's Reef with one blow.

The Purple Death's wings caused great landslides to come tumbling down from the Headland's cliffs.

Now their job was done, the Viking boys were running away as fast as they could, their eyes popping with terror, in case one of the dragons survived the fight. Every now and then they looked back to see

how the battle was going.

With ghastly, eerie cries, the Dragons slashed and bit and tore pieces off one another.

The Sea Dragon is the most well-defended creature that has ever lived on this planet. Its skin is over three feet thick in places, and so encrusted with shells and barnacles that it almost has the effect of armour.

It is also the most well-armed creature that has ever lived on this planet and its razor sharp claws and teeth can rip open its own iron crust as if it were made out of paper...

Now both Dragons had terrible wounds, and their green lifeblood was pouring out of them.

The Green Death gripped the Purple Death around the neck with a deadly Throatchoker Grip.

The Purple Death hugged the Green Death around the chest with a deadly Breathquencher Hug.

Neither would let go – and the grip of a Dragon is a terrible thing. They reminded Hiccup of a picture on one of his father's shields: of two dragons forming a perfect circle as they ate one another, each with a tail in their mouth.

The Dragons thrashed around wildly in the surf,

gagging and choking, with their eyes popping, their tails causing such tidal waves that the boys were soaked, even though they were scrambling away from the Headland as fast as they could.

Finally, with some last heaving shudders and grim gurgles, both mighty beasts lay still in the water.

There was silence.

The boys stopped running. They stood gasping for breath, watching the motionless beasts with dread. The boys' dragons, which were flying some way ahead of the boys, also turned, and hung still in the air.

The Terrible Creatures didn't move.

The boys waited two long minutes, as waves lapped gently over the great, motionless bodies.

'They're dead,' said Thuggory at last.

The boys started laughing, rather hysterically, now that the terror was over.

'Well done, Hiccup!' Thuggory slapped Hiccup on the back.

But Hiccup was looking worried. He was squinting his eyes and straining to hear something. 'I can't hear anything,' said Hiccup anxiously.

'You can't hear anything because they're DEAD,' said Thuggory joyfully. 'Three cheers for Hiccup!'

Halfway through the boys' cheering, Fireworm let out a terrible noise. 'DESERT!' she shrieked. 'Desert, desert, desert, desert!'

The head of the corpse of the Green Death was slowly lifting up and turning in their direction.

'Uh-oh,' said Hiccup.