

The Stone Trolls

On the southern coast of Iceland, near the small village of Vik, there once lived a band of trolls. They were huge, ugly creatures who were feared by humans and hid away underground in the dark caves of the nearby ice-covered volcano. All trolls knew that if they ever got caught outside in the daylight, they would immediately be turned to stone. So, each night, under the **cover of darkness**, they would **venture** outside to hunt and fish.

One stormy night, two **mischievous** trolls called Skess and Landra perched together on the craggy cliff, watching. Below, the sea bubbled and foamed. Above, the full moon glared down, casting a long shadow across the **ebony** beach. In the distance, they could hear the low rumble of other trolls, feasting on their **hoard** of freshly caught fish.

Suddenly, Skess jumped up, pointed at the horizon and roared. "Landra, look, a three-masted ship. I think it's in trouble!" Landra followed his gaze and stared at the magnificent ship, **pitching** and rolling on the bubbling sea. "Let's **wade** out and pull it into shore," Skess said, setting off down the beach. Landra frowned as it was already very late and the sun rose earlier and earlier in late spring, but then he jumped down from the cliff and followed close behind.

Slowly, they waded out into the sea until, at long last, they reached the **stricken** ship. Together they started to haul it towards the distant shore, which was now just a strip of silver moonlight.

For the rest of the night they heaved, and they heaved, and they heaved, but the ship was **hefty** and the sea was rough. Time passed. The two trolls didn't notice the moon slipping slowly away. Finally, they reached the blackened beach where the sailors quickly **clambered** to safety.

At that moment, the first glimmer of sunlight appeared. Shocked, Skess and Landra **shielded** their eyes and then stared at each other in horror. Their mouths widened. Their legs stiffened. Their arms ground to a halt. Their eyes closed. Both trolls and the remains of the ship instantly turned to stone ... forever.

To this day, what remains of the stone trolls and the ship can still be seen just off the coast of Iceland near the small village of Vik.

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