

## 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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The rocks in the distance are actually **basalt sea stacks**.

### Glossary

**basalt:** volcanic rock. Here it is very dark in colour.

**sea stacks:** pillars of rock, formed by the wind and the waves. These were once thought to have been arches of rock attached to the nearby cliffs.

These rocks or sea stacks have real Icelandic names:

**Skess** in the story is actually called **Skessudrangur** in Icelandic.

**Landra** in the story is actually called **Landdrangur** in Icelandic.

### Activity one:

*Read the story and make a note of any words that you do not understand. Can you find out the meanings using either the internet, a dictionary, or the context of the sentences around them?*

Activity two:

Re-read the story. Can you work out what the words in bold mean and write the definitions in the table below? There is a box of similar words underneath if you need a little help. If you can't work out what the words mean, you can look them up either in a dictionary or on the internet!

Target Word	Definition that fits with the information text
cover of darkness	
venture	
mischievous	
ebony beach	
hoard	
pitching	
wade	
stricken	
hefty	
clambered	
shielded	

**Similar Words Help Box**

protected      heavy      paddle      catch or supply      black      risk or dare  
naughty      plunging      climbed      wrecked      at night-time

Activity three:



## What did you think about the story?

Tip: Try and use the word because to develop your ideas.

1. What did you like about the story?

*I liked the part where ...*

*because ...*

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2. What surprised you?

*I was surprised when ...*

*because ...*

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3. What did the story remind you of?

*The story reminded me of ...*

*because ...*

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What do think might be the main message of this story?

**Underline the answer that you think is the best fit.**

Don't sit on the edge of a cliff?

Don't ignore warnings?

## Activity four:



### Reading Quiz

★ Let's go back and re-read the story then try and answer these questions.

1. Why do you think these trolls hide in their caves during daylight?  
Underline the answer that is the best fit.

Trolls like the dark.

Trolls would be turned to stone.

Trolls would go blind.

Trolls would go swimming.

2. Underline the words that suggest Landra did not really want to go and rescue the ship at first?

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.

3. *Below, the sea bubbled and foamed.*

What do the words *bubbled* and *foamed* suggest about the sea?  
Circle the answer that is the best fit.

The sea was like a fizzy drink.

The sea was boiling.

The sea was very stormy.

The sea was calm and relaxing.

### Reading challenge task:

4. Underline the words in this paragraph that tell you that there might be danger ahead? One has been done for you.

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 the other trolls, feasting on their hoard of freshly caught fish.

Activity five:

Reading for pleasure! Read any book you like for 20-30 minutes. Maybe you could make notes about what is happening in it, but don't feel like you have to. Just enjoy it

