

## The Merchant and the Great Barrow

Once upon a time, in the days of the Hanseatic League, there lived a merchant in Lübeck who owned many ships. He usually did business with Reval, which we know today as Tallinn.

One day, the man had an idea to start trading in tobacco. So he sent his brand new flagship to the Livonians. But a month later, when the quarter-rig was due to arrive home, there was no sign of the ship. No one had seen it or heard anything about it.

The merchant thought: "Well, sailors are notoriously late, or maybe they had a bad wind."

He waited, hoping nothing bad had happened. But a week later he realised the ship wasn't coming. So he decided to send another ship, only this time with a whole convoy to protect it. Another month passed and the escort ships returned, but the tobacco ship did not.

Now the merchant thought he would go on one of the trips himself. All the time he did not sleep, but waited on deck for what the other ships had taken with them. But nothing happened, he reached Reval without any trouble. It was only now that the merchant realised that only the ships carrying tobacco would disappear.

So he went to ask the local people if they knew anything. One of the female scientists was able to tell them that the islanders knew more about the subject. But to talk to the islanders at all, you have to bring them a proper beer.

The merchant ordered a whole shipload of beer and then set off for Saaremaa. When he got there, he told them the whole story, and the islanders immediately knew what the problem was: Vana-Kurat was a notorious tobacco smoker, so he had to have a hand in the disappearance of the lava. The Saarländers knew only one solution: summon the Great Troll, Saaremaa's national hero.

They led the merchant to the Great Troll, and the aforementioned beer was brought to him. The merchant then went to the table with the hero and they drank together. They soon came to an agreement that Tõll would go to the hold of the next tobacco ship, and when the devil came he would surprise him and send him back to hell for good. The Great Barrow himself had some business with the devil that needed sorting out. In return, he wanted peace for 1000 years.

An agreement was reached, the giant came to Reval and placed himself in the hold of a tobacco ship. As on all other occasions, the devil was present, but unexpectedly, the old fool sprang from the ship and sent the infernal giant to his doom - the mighty man's leg-hook sent the horned one flying so far that the blue chatter behind him.

The merchant kept his promise, and the Great Bear rests to this day. Since then, merchants have been able to do business peacefully on the Baltic without fear of the devil. But legend has it that there will come a time when the Troll will have one last fight with the Devil.

*Translated with DeepL.com (Pro version)*