

This text was written by Kent Hultqvist and is inspired by the poetry of **Alf Hambe**.

The Dog Cousins' outing to Steninge - Stora Trollstenen (The Big Trollstone)

Semlan and Stella stood on the trail that leads to the Green Fog Forest.

- Over there is the Big Magic Stone. How big and round it is, shouted Stella.
- Certainly, and under this stone lives the Troll. The troll decides who gets to walk past on the trail, whispered Semlan. He is the porter.
- I don't like trolls, said Stella determinedly. They are awfully strong, have big noses, big ears with rings, grey bushy hair and very big feet that can mash dogs.
- Then there will be dog mash! Said Semlan laughing.
- We're going to leave now, Stella was whispering to not wake the Troll up.
- Absolutely not! How do we know that the Troll is dangerous? Asked Semlan. Now I am going to pet the stone and ask if the Troll wants to let us in on the Grey Count's Trail.
- No, don't do it! Shouted Stella.

It was already too late, Semlan had already petted the stone carefully with her little paw.

- Who's that petting my big Troll stone? The Troll was rumbling under the stone.
- It's only two dogs, answered Stella. But we are leaving right away.
- Stella is afraid of you, so I would like to know if you are as dangerous as your voice sounds, asked Semlan trying to peek through the cracks of the Troll stone.

Semlan caught a glimpse of the Troll when she shone with her torch through one of the cracks of the stone.

- I am so glad you asked, everybody thinks that I am very dangerous only because I am so big. I am the kindest Troll on earth and you are welcome to enter into the Green Fog Forest.
- Thank you! Said Stella exhaling when she understood that he was a nice troll.

Stella and Semlan bowed when they walked past the stone and waved to the Troll stone.

The stone was moving a little bit.

Now you're walking on the Green Count's Trail, said the Troll in his deep but kind voice.

- Who is the Green Count? Asked Stella.
- I want you to be careful when he comes riding on his horse. Sometimes he is transparent and can hardly be seen. But don't let him fool you, because he is still sitting there. He is a little bit crazy too, said the Troll, laughing.
- What are you saying, is he crazy? Asked Stella.

- Only a little bit, sometimes. You will hear a silver bell ring before he comes and then you have to get off the trail quickly.

- Does he own the trail? Asked Semlan.

- Yes! Said the Troll determinedly.

- Cool, said Semlan. He owns his own trail. My trail is going to be called the White Pug Trail.

-You and your dreams, said Stella.

- If you can dream of something, the chance of it becoming true is bigger, said Semlan.

- That's wise and god bye! Shouted the Troll. Remember to listen closely for the silver bell and stay away.

Now the Dog Cousins were walking on Green Count Trail and it was sloping upwards the whole time.

- I get exhausted from walking uphill, said Semlan and turned around to see the Troll stone down there.

- Do you hear what I hear? Said Stella and pointed her ears. It's ringing.

Up there on the hill came the Green Count on his horse at a high speed. The horse and the silver bell could be seen, but Green Count was almost transparent, so it was hard to see him.

- Move away, Semlan!! Shouted Stella who had noticed the danger. You are going to get run over!

But Semlan had decided to remain standing because she was so tired after the long hill. The horse came to a full stop a millimeter from Semlan's flat nose. Stella covered her eyes.

- Get out of the way! Shouted the Green Count and was ringing the silver bell so loudly that everyone in all of Molom's directions could hear it - Northom, Southom, Westom and Eastom.

The people who were sitting and eating at the Skepparkrogen looked out through the windows.

- Sorry, sorry Green Count, I was too tired to get out of the way, said Semlan. You don't seem so very dangerous because you can hardly be seen and your horse looks like a Pally, said Semlan calmly.

Stella was hiding behind a tree and she was trembling.

- I am not dangerous, I am only guarding my trail and my forest. The horse and I are always in a hurry because there is so much to guard. Because we don't want to have animals, trolls, kings and people here who are not friends. I can feel that you are very nice dogs, so you are welcome to be here, said the Green Count.

The horse was nodding so that the silver bell was flying around.

- Could I get a ride from you all the way to where the trail ends? It's so very far and I have such short legs, said Semlan.

- Sure, jump up! Said the Green Count and stretched his invisible hand down, but it could still pull Semlan up to the horseback.

- Would you like to come too? Shouted Semlan to Stella.

Stella shook her head so much that it was about to fall off. She thought that she was dreaming. No one has ever dared to talk to the Green Count. Now Semlan was sitting on the horseback holding a transparent being at full stride on its way to King Inge's Grave.

The silver bell was heard farther and farther away.

The Troll looked up from behind the stone, shook his big troll head and could not believe his troll eyes.

Would you also like to ride on the Green Count's horse? Listen closely for the silver bell.