

The Saga of the "Petrified Virgins" of Eselsburg

A long time ago there was a castle on top of the hill near the village of Eselsburg.

It was a huge castle and belonged to the knights of Eselsburg (Esel von Eselsburg).

Once a very beautiful young lady lived in the castle but she was proud and vain. No suitor was handsome or good enough for her and so she remained alone. Time went by and the lady grew older and more bitter and the suitors stayed away. What a shame!

She started to hate men and her hate was so deep that she even forbade her two maidservants ever to speak to men.

Every evening the girls had to go down to the valley to fetch water for the castle and for a long time they accept their mistresses command not to speak to any of the local fishermen, being afraid they would be punished.

But, after one particularly harsh winter with long cold nights and gloomy days, the maidservants were longing for spring when they could resume their daily duties. They loved going down to the valley, in fact it was their favourite task. So when the first warm and sunny day came round they were overjoyed and eagerly awaited the evening so they could go down to collect water. It was their last duty of the day before finishing their work.

Halfway down the hill they heard enchanting music coming up from the valley below and stopped to listen for a while. How wonderful and bewitching the music was! For a time, they forget their duties but then suddenly remembered with a start. Quickly they fetched the water and hastened back up to the castle. Their mistress was already waiting for them impatiently.

From that day on, the maidservants stopped to listen to the music every day. And each day they stayed a little longer. Soon they even forgot they had been forbidden ever to speak to men.

So the young girls got to know the young fishermen, sang songs with them and stayed by the boats until sunset. Eventually, becoming suspicious, their mistress decided to go down to see what the girls were up to.

She was in a terrible mood, looked fearsome and her thoughts were evil. On seeing that the girls were in love, her hate became so overwhelming that she cried out: "Turn to stone! That's your punishment for disobedience!" The girls were turned instantly to stone and since that time they have remained as rocks near the "Fischweiher".

The following night, while looking out over the valley from the castle tower with a self-satisfied smile on her face, the lady was struck by lightning and killed, and the resulting fire burnt down the whole castle of Eselsburg to the ground.

The End.

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