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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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# Wassailing The Apple-trees

Once upon a time, there was a village known as Appleton, famous for its magnificent apple orchards. These orchards weren't just trees, but were seen as enchanted, bearing fruit that could cure any ailment and bring great fortune. But, to ensure the trees gave their best fruit, they had to participate in an ancient tradition known as "Wassailing".

Every year, when the frost was crisp in the air, and the night skies twinkled with a thousand stars, it was time



for the Wassailing. The whole village would gather, led by the jolly big Squire. With his hearty laugh and glowing cheeks, he would head the procession from the Hall into the orchard, every villager following, eager for the festivities to commence.

The Squire, his family, the guests, and all the servants from the manor would parade through the orchard, stopping beneath each tree. They would pour a little spicy wassail, a deliciously warm, sweet brew, at the base of each tree. The essence of the wassail would seep into the frosty earth, carrying its magic to the roots of the trees.

As they wound their way around each tree, they'd break into a lively song, their voices echoing in the chilly night. "Wassail, wassail, flowing free, here's to your health, good apple-tree," they would sing. They'd wish the trees health from root to top, ask for a bountiful crop, and imagine the branches heavy with all kinds of apples—red, yellow, tart, sweet, mellow, green, russet-brown.

The villagers believed that this ancient custom of wassailing the trees would bring them good luck, and indeed it did. Each year, following the ceremony, the apple trees would flourish, their branches sagging under the weight of the finest apples in all of England. After the ceremony, everyone would return to the warmth of the great Hall, where the Yule Log crackled merrily in the fireplace. The Squire, full of the joy of the evening, would demand the best of their apples to be brought forth. As the villagers enjoyed the delicious apples, a request for a story was put forth.

Although the Squire initially hesitated, he was a natural-born storyteller. So, with a twinkle in his eye, he began to weave a tale that held everyone in rapt attention. He shared tales of magical trees, of daring quests, and of the wondrous power of wassail. And in that warm, joyous gathering, they celebrated the simple but enchanting magic of the apple trees until the moon bid them goodnight.