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Christmas Greens

Maud Lindsay

Once upon a time, when the snow carpeted the ground and the festive spirit swirled in the air, a grand house twinkled with the magic of Christmas. The manor was aglow, dressed in emerald ornaments of ivy, pine, and bay. It was filled with an enchanting fragrance that seemed to come straight from the forest firs. Crimson holly berries adorned the walls, and cedar trees stood tall, guarding the chimney on either side.

The manor's doorway was framed by lush green arches, and garlands wove around the stately stair. Every pillar and post were wrapped in Christmas green, and cheerful festoons dangled from the walls. The atmosphere buzzed with joy and laughter as each ancestral portrait on the wall seemed to echo, 'Good folk, 'tis Christmas! Laugh! Be happy!'



But amongst all these lively portraits, one stood out, capturing the eyes of every passerby. It was an image of a young girl with a face so fair, one might mistake her for royalty. Deep pools of shadowed blue revealed her steadfast nature, and her bright brown hair crowned her brow like a coronet of autumn leaves.

This girl was no commoner, her regal demeanor shone through, despite her cloak, tattered and worn, which served to conceal her dress. Yet it could not mask her undeniable elegance. The portrait hinted at a hidden tale, a story of valor and love that had been whispered down the corridors of the manor for generations.

Finally, during one Christmas gathering, the head of the household, invited Cousin, the keeper of the family's lore, to share the tale. With a twinkle in his eye and a voice filled with anticipation, Cousin began to weave the story of the noble girl.

Many years ago, he began, the girl, who was a princess, found herself thrust into the role of a heroine when her father, the king, was kidnapped by a ruthless pirate. Having nothing to pay the ransom, the princess decided to take matters into her own hands.

Dressed in a beggar's cloak to blend into the common crowd, she set out on her

journey. With unwavering courage, quick wit, and her heart full of love, she embarked on a daring adventure. She crossed treacherous terrains, fought off dangerous beasts, and solved cryptic riddles until she finally reached the pirate's lair.

In disguise, the princess negotiated her father's freedom, exchanging a priceless family heirloom she had hidden under her cloak. The pirates, oblivious to her true identity, agreed to the deal. The princess and her father returned home, where she was hailed as the hero of the kingdom.

Cousin's story filled the manor with awe and wonder. It was a tale loved by everyone in the family, a heartening reminder of the courageous spirit, love, and cheer that defined the festive season. This is how the portrait of the heroic princess came to hold a special place in the heart of the grand manor, a silent ode to her gallantry, inspiring everyone who looked upon her.

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