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The Scholar's Letter

Maud Lindsay

Once upon a time, when the day's adventures had finally come to an end, all the guests in the grand hall eagerly awaited the merriment of the evening. Candle flames danced in their holders, and the Yule log bathed the room in its warm, welcoming glow. Just then, the sound of galloping hooves echoed from the frosty road outside, causing all heads to turn in anticipation.

"Who could be riding so hastily in the chilling darkness?" the guests murmured to each other, their eyes filled with curiosity and a pinch of worry. "A surprise visitor? A messenger with news?"

Suddenly, the horse hooves' clatter ceased, followed by a loud knock at the door. With a creaking groan, the heavy wooden entrance swung open, letting in a burst of icy wind. In stepped the Postboy, his hands stiff from the winter chill, holding a thick letter.

The Squire, a generous and jovial man, paid the Postboy a shiny shilling for his efforts. He then ordered a Christmas treat for him, a slice of Yuletide cake and a steaming cup from the wassail bowl to warm him up.

Turning his attention to the letter, the Squire carefully studied the envelope. His initial guess was that it was from a trader, talking about the price and market of his wool. But to his surprise, upon breaking the seal, he discovered it was from their scholarly friend, a young man known for his love of books and kindness of heart.

Excited murmurs filled the hall. The guests, who remembered the scholar from their joyous journey together in the past, eagerly asked about the contents of the letter. Smoothing out the thin sheets, the Squire began to read aloud.

In his letter, the Scholar expressed his wish to greet all those who might remember him. Though he was traveling in foreign lands, he held close to his heart his English friends and their warm homes, especially during this festive season.

Unable to be a guest and share a tale by the Yule fire himself, he had instead sent a ballad, hoping it would be accepted and recited as part of their holiday tradition. The letter ended with the Scholar sending his deep respect and heartfelt blessings to the Squire, the Lady, and everyone present in their grand

hall.

The Squire, touched by the sentiment, declared, "How extraordinary that our Scholar friend's rhyme should arrive just in time! It shall be read aloud as part of our festivities tonight!" He passed the ballad to his cousin, known for his eloquent reading, and everyone settled in, eager to hear the Scholar's poetic tale. Thus, the spirit of the scholar was with them, a part of their joyous celebration, even though he was many miles away.



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