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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Enter A Chapman

Maud Lindsay

Once upon a time, in a grand hall filled with laughter and delight, a great feast was in full swing. Every guest was buzzing with excitement, and the Squire, the host of the gathering, was the center of it all. But soon, the merry atmosphere was interrupted by the Squire's faithful servant, who approached with a peculiar message.

"Master," said the servant, "a wanderer stands at our doorstep. A traveling merchant, or Chapman, as they are often called. He asks for food and a warm bed for the night."

The Squire, a man known for his kindness, immediately responded, "Invite him in, for the love of all that is good and holy. No one leaves my house without help. And when I'm gone, and my son takes my place, I hope he'll continue this tradition of mercy and kindness to those in need."

And so, the stranger was welcomed inside. He was draped in many layers to protect himself from the bitter cold, and on his back, he carried a large pack, filled to the brim. The man, his voice rough from the cold, spoke of a tiresome journey, filled with harsh roads and wearied feet. He mentioned he had heard of the generous Squire from other travelers in May and had decided to seek shelter at this welcoming hall.

The Squire, intrigued by the stranger's story, asked, "Among those travelers, was there a Chapman with wonderful goods and entertaining stories?"

"Yes!" the stranger replied, now more lively. He proceeded to talk about how he was familiar with the Squire, his small son, the Lady, and even the plump Nurse, who was so large, doors would barely fit her.

"Enough of this!" The Nurse exclaimed, with a playful scowl. "You rascal! I see now that you are that very Chapman, as bold and talkative as ever."

The Squire, taking a closer look at the man, exclaimed, "By my faith, it is him! Our very own Chapman!"

His wife, the Lady, echoed in surprise, "Our Chapman?"

"None other than I," the man confirmed, grinning. "And I am delighted to serve this company with the finest of my wares and the most engaging tales. My store

of either never fails." With that, the Chapman began to share one of his many merry stories, much to the amusement of everyone in the hall.

And so, the evening passed in warm companionship and joy, proving once again that even the humblest of strangers could bring smiles and laughter into a home.



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