Nathan Lane

Mr. Mitchell

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1: The Man in the Gray Cloak

Krusborough was a small town, whose position on a map was secured only by its proximity to the Highroad, located between the far more bustling cities of Dram and Marescourt, and a three days’ ride from either. The cluster of small homes were sprinkled off the western edge of the road in something that could have resembled a circle, if one squinted hard enough. All the homes were simple timber and thatch farmhouses, surrounded by the crops and livestock that the people of Krusborough made their livelihoods from. All the homes, save for one.

The Happy Hearth was the only inn in Krusborough, and its second story meant that dominated the rest of the town at twice the height. It was crafted with stone and oak, study and strong, and unyielding in harsh weather. Glass windows lined the walls at regular intervals, letting warm sunshine pour inwards during the day, and warm firelight pour outwards at night. A wide front porch stretched along the front, its wood worn smooth by the tread of countless feet. Around the back was a small stable and well, stocked and waiting for use.

It was in the Happy Hearth that all travelers along the Highroad would stop for the night, enjoying a hot meal, a stiff drink, and a soft bed. On these nights, the townsfolk would gather at the inn for revelry and laughter with the newcomers, tended to by the Innkeeper, his wife and son, and the quiet, dark-eyed boy who lived and worked at the inn.

Of all the things that might happen when travelers came to Krusborough, one could always expect storytelling to be in there somewhere. The Happy Hearth was always filled with them. Stories told of brave heroes and slaying vicious monsters to save beautiful princesses, of honorable knights defeating evil sorcerers. There are tales of wonderous treasures, and valor, and courage. Songs are sung of brave warriors and forgotten kings, and of travelers in far-off…

Ah, but there’s the thing.