

The Night Before Christmas

Bright Eyes

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house

Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse

The stockings were hung by the chimney with care

In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there

The children were nestled, all snug in their beds

While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads

And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap

Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter

I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter

Away to the window I flew like a flash

Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow

Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below

When, what to my wondering eyes should appear

But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer

With a little old driver, so lively and quick

I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick

More rapid than eagles his coursers they came

And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name

"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!

On, Comet! on Cupid! on, Donner and Blitzen!

To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!

Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly

When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky

So up to the house-top the coursers they flew

With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof

The prancing and pawing of each little hoof

As I drew in my hand, and was turning around

Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot

And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot

A bundle of toys he had flung on his back

And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack

His eyes, how they twinkled! his dimples, how merry!

His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!

His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow
And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth
And the smoke, it encircled his head like a wreath
He had a broad face and a little round belly
That shook, when he laughed like a bowlful of jelly
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work
And filled all the stockings, then turned with a jerk
And laying his finger aside of his nose
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night"

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