

# VARIOUS

THE NIGHT BEFORE  
CHRISTMAS AND OTHER  
POPULAR STORIES FOR  
CHILDREN

**Various**  
**The Night Before Christmas**  
**and Other Popular**  
**Stories For Children**

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The Night Before Christmas and Other Popular Stories For Children:*

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# Various The Night Before Christmas and Other Popular Stories For Children

## The Night Before Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the house,  
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.  
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,  
In the hope 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 midday 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! Now, Vixen!  
On, Comet! On, Cupid! On, Dunder and Blixen!  
To the top of the porch, to the top of the wall!  
Now, dash away! Dash away! Dash away! All!"  
As dry leaves 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 tiny hoof.  
As I drew in my head, 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 pedlar 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 in a bow,  
And the beard on 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 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,  
"Merry Christmas to all, and to all a goodnight!"

# The Night After Christmas

'Twas the night after Christmas, and all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring—excepting a mouse.  
The stockings were flung in haste over the chair,  
For hopes of St. Nicholas were no longer there.  
The children were restlessly tossing in bed,  
For the pie and the candy were heavy as lead;  
While mamma in her kerchief, and I in my gown,  
Had just made up our minds that we would not lie down,  
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang from my chair to see what was the matter.  
Away to the window I went with a dash,  
Flung open the shutter, and threw up the sash.  
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow,  
Gave the lustre of noon-day to objects below.  
When what to my long anxious eyes should appear  
But a horse and a sleigh, both old-fashioned and queer;  
With a little old driver, so solemn and slow,  
I knew at a glance it must be Dr Brough.  
I drew in my head, and was turning around,  
When upstairs came the Doctor, with scarcely a sound,  
He wore a thick overcoat, made long ago,  
And the beard on his chin was white with the snow.  
He spoke a few words, and went straight to his work;  
He felt all the pulses,—then turned with a jerk,

And laying his finger aside of his nose,  
With a nod of his head to the chimney he goes:—  
"A spoonful of oil, ma'am, if you have it handy;  
No nuts and no raisins, no pies and no candy.  
These tender young stomachs cannot well digest  
All the sweets that they get; toys and books are the best.  
But I know my advice will not find many friends,  
For the custom of Christmas the other way tends.  
The fathers and mothers, and Santa Claus, too,  
Are exceedingly blind. Well, a good-night to you!"  
And I heard him exclaim, as he drove out of sight:  
These feastings and candies make Doctors' bills right!"

# SANTA CLAUS DOES NOT FORGET

Bertie was a very good boy. He was kind, obedient, truthful, and unselfish. He had, however, one great fault,—he always forgot.

No matter how important the errand, his answer always was, "I forgot." When he was sent with a note to the dress-maker his mother would find the note in his pocket at night. If he was sent to the store in a great hurry, to get something for tea, he would return late, without the article, but with his usual answer.

His father and mother talked the matter over, and decided that something must be done to make the little boy remember.

Christmas was near, and Bertie was busy making out a list of things which Santa Claus was to bring him.

"Santa Claus may forget some of those things," said his mother.

"He cannot," replied Bertie; "for I shall write sled, and skates, and drum, and violin, and all the things on this paper. Then when Santa Claus goes to my stocking he will find the list. He can see it and put the things in as fast as he reads."

Christmas morning came, and Bertie was up at dawn to see what was in his stocking. His mother kept away from him as long as she could, for she knew what Santa Claus had done.

Finally she heard him coming with slow steps to her room. Slowly he opened the door and came towards her. He held in his hand a list very much longer than the one he had made out. He put it in his mother's hand, while tears of disappointment fell from his eyes.

"See what Santa Claus left for me; but I think he might have given me one thing besides."

His mother opened the roll. It was a list of all the errands Bertie had been asked to do for six months. At the end of all was written, in staring capitals, "I FORGOT."

Bertie wept for an hour. Then his mother told him they were all going to grandpa's. For the first time he would see a Christmas-tree. Perhaps something might be growing there for him.

It was very strange to Bertie, but on grandpa's tree he found everything he had written on his list. Was he cured of his bad habit? Not all at once; but when his mother saw that he was particularly heedless she would say, "Remember, Santa Claus does not forget."

*M. A. HALEY*

# THE FAIRY CHRISTMAS

It was Christmas Day, and Toddy and Tita were alone. Papa and mamma had gone out West to see their big boy who was ill. They had promised to be home for Christmas, but a big snow had blocked the railroad track, and nurse was afraid the train would be delayed until the day after Christmas. What a dull Christmas for two little girls, all alone in the great city house, with only the servants! They felt so lonely that nurse let them play in the big drawing-room instead of in the nursery, so they arranged all the chairs in a row, and pretended it was a snowed-up train. Tita was the conductor, and Toddy was the passengers. Just as they were in the midst of it, they heard music in the street, and, running to the window, they saw a little boy outside, singing and beating a tambourine.

"Why," said Tita, "his feet are all bare!"

"Dess he hanged up bofe stockin's an' his shoes, too," said Toddy.

"Let's open the window and ask him."

But the great window was too high to reach, so they took papa's cane and pushed it tip. The little boy smiled, but they could not hear what he said, so they told him to come in, and ran to open the big front door. He was a little frightened at first, but the carpet felt warm to his poor bare feet.

He told them that his name was Guido, and that he had come

from Italy, which is a much warmer country than ours, and that he was very poor, so poor that he had no shoes, and had to go singing from house to house for a few pennies to get some dinner. And he was *so* hungry.

"Poor little boy!" said Tita. "Our mamma is away, and we're having a pretty sad Christmas, but we'll try to make it nice for *you*."

So they played games, and Guido sang to them. Then the folding doors rolled back, and there was the dining-room and the table all set, and Thomas, the black waiter, smiling, just as if it had been a big dinner party instead of two very little girls. Nurse said: "Well, I never!" when she saw Guido, but she felt so sorry for the lonely little girls that she let him come to the table. And *such* a dinner as he ate! He had never had one like it before. "It is a fairy tale," he said.

Just as dessert came on, the door opened and in rushed mamma and papa; the train had gotten in, after all. They were so glad to see their darlings happy instead of moping that they gave them each some extra kisses. You may be sure little Guido never went hungry and barefoot after that. Long afterward he would say: "That was a fairy Christmas!"

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