

The Night Before Christmas In The Parsonage

Twas the night before Christmas,
When all through the house,
Not a critter did stir,
But a lone pocket mouse.

Maw hung the stockings
By the chimney with care,
In hopes that Saint Nicholas
Soon would be there.

Poppycock! Said I.
In Saint Nick I ne'er believed.
For an end to this trifling cheer,
I'd be relieved.

Just pinto beans and greens,
Maw fixed me for dinner,
Little to fortify,
To preach to those sinners.

When Christmas morn' came,
A sermon I had to preach.
Hellfire and brimstone,
These cheery sinners to teach.

If Saint Nick was real,
Omaha steaks he should bring,
For come Christmas morn',
I'd do a lot more than sing.

Maw's beans and greens
May be good for Christmas carols,
But left a man short,
To fight the Devil's peril.

The Devil took no holiday,

No time for cheer,
Nor could the preacher,
I could feel his pitchfork near.

Maw in her pajamas
Had gone off to bed,
Dreaming of that fat old man,
Decked out in red.

Curled by the fire,
His rhythmic snores the only sound,
Lay Brimstone on his quilt,
My cranky Bluetick hound.

Ready by the door,
Hung my black frock coat and hat,
All black to hold in awe,
Those sinners where they sat.

Glancing out the window,
The snow began to fall,
But no fat man with reindeer,
Heeding his lone call.

It took down my stocking
And laid it in my chair,
Some warmth for my tokus
In the cold, winter air.

Then I sat at my desk
With this Good Book of mine
And thumbed through the pages
To Saint Mark, chapter nine.

"Ha!" I said aloud,
And Brimstone let out a yell.

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Worms die not,
In the unquenchable fires of hell.

My new Christmas sermon,
"Immortal Worms of Hell,"
No fat man on a sleigh,
Or jingling, silver bells.

I had just begun to write
The words I would preach,
When up on the roof,
There came a thundering screech.

Brimstone went to howlin',
And I ran for the door,
A disturbance of my sermons,
I did deplore.

I charged out through the snow,
And looked up on the roof,
Then could not believe my eyes,
It must be some spoof.

A sleigh packed with presents
And eight tiny reindeer,
And I wondered,
For my senses, was the end near?

Back in the house,
Through a gathering cloud of ash,
I ran toward the fireplace
Like a lightning flash.

Set to put an end
To all this hocus-pocus,

All at once to feel
Brimstone's teeth in my tokus.

I slapped Brimstone's snout,
For could think of nothing ruder,
But blinded by the ash,
He thought I the intruder.

Squinting through the ash
And rubbing my wounded rear,
I saw a man in red
Jump from the fireplace near.

Down my chimney he'd come,
For the ashes and soot,
Covered his red fur suit
From his hat to his foot.

Below his red and white fur hat,
His eyes shone bright,
He had the nerve to wink
In this raid in the night.

His fluffy, white beard
Was like the new fallen snow,
And on his back
A big red bag, sealed with a bow.

Then all at once,
In the dim light and cloud of ash,
Like a fat cat he sprung,
And vanished in a flash.

Well I limped to the bathroom
To find some first aid,
For the punctures in my bum

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That Brimstone had made.

With Band-Aids on my wounds,
I limped back to the room,
To find that man in red,
Who'd brought my Christmas gloom.

A glance at the chimney,
The cloud of ash settled,
And I could see, at once,
That Saint Nick had meddled.

Still hung from the chimney,
Maw's stocking was packed full.
But mine was not there,
And ornery trick to pull.

Some eggnog I needed,
My strength to replenish,
Be done with Saint Nick,
I'd a sermon to finish.

Then back to my desk
To ponder the worms of hell,
I plopped down in my chair
And, "Youch!!! I hotly yelled.

All at once I felt
Like my tokus was on fire,
My situation changing,
From gloomy to dire.

I sprung up from my chair,
Quicker than I'd sat down,
And turned around to look,
With a pained, angry frown.

There, in my chair, was
My misplaced Christmas stocking,
Had Saint Nick the gall,
This parson to be mocking?

Jerking up that old stocking,
I looked down inside,
And found the lump of coal
That had just burned my hide.

Now ole' Saint Nick
Had thoroughly unfurled my ire.
Of lumps of coal I'd heard,
But this one was on fire.

Then in the stocking,
I found a short Christmas note,
Signed by Saint Nick,
Below a little rhyme he wrote.

"Hellfire and brimstone,
So this your magnum opus,
Well how's a Christmas fire
On your holy tokus?"

Furious, though I was,
I began to smell smoke,
And I'll tell you now,
This was no time for a joke.

With my britches smoking
And my tokus burning,
I ran for the door,
My feet like buzz saws turning.

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Bounding into the yard
Through the new fallen snow,
A deep spot I found,
My smoldering cheeks to stow.

Sitting in the snow's chill,
I felt the fire subside,
And then heard a booming voice,
"Onward boys, let's ride."

At the crack of a whip
I looked up on the roof,
Then heard the tapping
Of thirty-two little hoofs.

Saint Nick sat proud,
His fur cap blowing in the wind.
The reindeer pulled his sleigh
As they neared the roof's end.

"Tallyho! " Cried Saint Nick,
And he called them by name.
Even faster they ran,
Like racing horses, game.

"Ho! Dasher and Dancer!
Ho! Prancer and Vixen!
Up, Comet! Up, Cupid!
Up, Dander and Blitzen!"

Then just when it appeared
A disastrous plight,
Saint Nick's sleigh rose skyward
As the reindeer took flight.

Rising from the snow,
The fire in my britches quenched,
I limped back to the house
Wanting, Saint Nick, to lynch.

But as I walked through the door,
What then did I see?
A box of Omaha steaks,
By the fire, for me.

I hobbled to the fireplace
And knelt on the floor,
Looked inside and found none,
Where there should have been four.

An empty box? I mused,
But then an awful hunch!
For behind me the sound
Of something being munched.

I slammed the empty box
And spun around to see,
Strewn, empty wrappers,
And Brimstone starin' at me.

My anger at that hound
Made me begin to shake.
For there in Brimstone's jowls,
My last Omaha steak!

That ornery hound cleared
Out just before my boot,
And I lost my footing
As he ran with his loot.

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Finding myself dazed
And looking up from the ground,
I couldn't believe what,
By the chimney, I'd found.

Hung by the chimney
Where my stocking had been,
The finest thing to behold,
This side of sin.

A long, red frock coat
And matching felt fedora.
Mine eyes, they lit up,
Like a thousand menorahs.

Oh, could it be,
That Saint Nick brought this for me?
I must have lived the year
Entirely sin free!

Able to wait no more,
I went and took the coat.
And as I put it on,
I could not help but gloat.

A glorious sight I was,
And none could help but look,
When I stood tall in the pulpit,
With the Good Book.

Even dear Saint Paul
Would be envious of me,
For his sake I hoped,
My glory, he could not see.

That grand, red fedora,

I slipped onto my head.
That the ladies might get frisky,
I sure did dread!

Despite the fact that
I was modest as could be,
Had one in the pulpit,
E'er looked as fine as me?

I saw on the mantle,
Another Christmas card,
Like the one I'd read,
Before I ran to the yard.

"Good tidings of joy
And peace for all men," it read.
"Amen!" I yelled,
For that was what the Good Book said.

It was then, I realized,
I felt merry and glad!
To postpone "The Worms of Hell",
Might not be so bad.

With me decked out in red
On Christmas Sunday morn',
The Savior's joyous birth,
The Devil all forlorn!

What a sermon! I thought,
And did a Christmas jig.
So merry did I feel,
In my new Christmas rig.

When, from high in the sky,
Through my chimney muffled,

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I heard a booming laugh,
And slowed my blithe shuffle.

Only then to hear Saint Nick
Croon with all his might,
"Merry Christmas to all
And to all a good night."