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Opening extract from
**The Night Before
Christmas**

Written by
Clement C. Moore

Published by
Palazzo Editions Ltd

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CLEMENT CLARKE MOORE

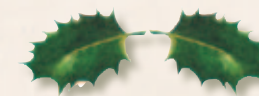
(1779–1863)



DR. Clement C. Moore was born in New York City in 1779, and lived his whole life in the same large house in Manhattan, Chelsea House (the area that surrounded it is now known as the Chelsea District, after the Moore home.) He was one of New York's wealthiest and most educated men, and had a deep love of language. He was best known in his day as a professor of Greek and Oriental literature at Columbia College, and his greatest scholarly achievement was writing a Hebrew dictionary, the first of its kind to appear in America. But he also loved to write stories and poems for his nine children.

On Christmas Eve in 1822, when the Moore children had hung up their stockings ready for Santa Claus, their father entertained them with the poem he had penned for them as a Christmas present. The story, which began with the immortal words, "Twas the night before Christmas..." was later written down for the children, who memorized and recited it for friends and family. A family friend who heard it sent a copy to the editor of a New York newspaper, the *Troy Sentinel*, where it was printed anonymously the following Christmas with the title, *A Visit From St. Nicholas*. It then appeared in a magazine, and was soon being translated into numerous languages and even into Braille.

Clement C. Moore's timeless poem, which perfectly captures the magic and anticipation of Christmas Eve, is now irrevocably an essential part of the build-up to Christmas for countless families. It is a delight to read aloud, and is recited to excited children all over the world every Christmas Eve, a fact that would probably amuse its serious, respected academic author!



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 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.

