



Scripts for Schools

The Night Before Christmas

Adapted by Lois Walker

A Choral Reading/Speaking
Script for Elementary
School Readers

HISTORY: Clement Clarke Moore (1779 - 1863) wrote the poem "T'was The Night Before Christmas" also called "A Visit from St. Nicholas" in 1822. It is now the tradition in many families to read the poem every Christmas Eve.

The poem has redefined our image of Christmas and Santa Claus. Prior to the creation of the poem, St. Nicholas, the patron saint of children, had never been associated with a sleigh or reindeers!

CHANGE OF TENSE: The original poem is written in the past tense, as though the author is recalling an experience from the past. This adapted version sets the story in the present, as though Santa's visit is unfolding as the readers perform.

Ask your readers to visualize what is taking place in the story and see the actions taking place right in front of them. They should be able to visualize Santa's movements somewhere over the heads of their audience - straight ahead.

FORMATTING: This version of the story has been formatted for: 3 NARRATORS, 3 SOLO VOICES, VOICE CHOIR GIRLS, VOICE CHOIR BOYS, and ALL VOICE CHOIR.

If performing this piece with a primary voice choir, you might consider using older students for your 3 narrators and possibly some of the solo voices.

NOTE 1: SOLO VOICE 3 is a comedy reading part and requires a reader who can have fun with and project a character who is just too short to see what's going on.

NOTE 2: An unformatted version of this script is also included so that you may do your own formatting and assign reading parts in any way that works best for your particular readers.

GRAPHICS: (*Optional*) As this piece is being performed, you might consider showing appropriate and corresponding graphics on the overhead projector. These can be found in a great variety of picture books, many of them award-winning publications.

The Night Before Christmas

Original Poem by Clement Clarke Moore

Adapted for Choral Reading/Speaking by Lois Walker

NARRATOR 1: It's the night before Christmas,

NARRATOR 2: And all through the house,

VOICE CHOIR: Not a creature is stirring, not even a mouse!

SOLO VOICE 1: Squeak, squeak!

VOICE CHOIR: Is there a mouse in this house?

NARRATOR 3: The stockings are hung by the chimney with care,

In the hope that St Nicholas soon will be there.

HALF THE VOICE CHOIR: Is he coming yet? Is he coming yet?

SECOND HALF OF VOICE CHOIR: No, not yet. Go to bed!

NARRATOR 1: The children are nestled all snug in their beds,

While visions of sugar-plums dance in their heads.

SOLO VOICE 2: Oh yes, we are snuggled and all in our beds,

VOICE CHOIR: With sugar plums dancing around in our heads!

NARRATOR 2: And ma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,

Are just settling down for a long winter's nap.

VOICE CHOIR GIRLS: Good night papa!

VOICE CHOIR BOYS: Good night mama!

NARRATOR 3: But now out on the lawn we hear such a clatter

We spring from our beds to see what is the matter.

VOICE CHOIR: Away to the window we run like a flash,

To open the shutters and throw up the sash.

SOLO VOICE 3: Hey, wait a minute. I'm too short - and I can't see anything! What's happening out there?

NARRATOR 1: The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow

Gives the lustre of mid-day to objects below.

NARRATOR 2: When, what to our wondering eyes now appear?

VOICE CHOIR: A miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer!

NARRATOR 3: With a little old driver, so lively and quick,

VOICE CHOIR: There he is now. It must be St Nick!

SOLO VOICE 3: I still can't see anything! Somebody tell me what's going on!

NARRATOR 1: More rapid than eagles his reindeer they come,

NARRATOR 2: And he's whistling and calling out names for each one.

VOICE CHOIR: Now Dasher, now Dancer, now Prancer and Vixen!

On Comet, On Cupid, on Donner and Blitzen!

SOLO VOICE 1: To the top of the porch - to the top of the wall!

VOICE CHOIR: Now dash away! Dash away! Dash away all!

NARRATOR 3: As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,

When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky.

NARRATOR 1: So up to the house-top these reindeer they fly,

With a sleigh full of toys, and a big bearded guy.

VOICE CHOIR BOYS: But what are those noises we hear on the roof?

VOICE CHOIR GIRLS: It's the prancing and pawing of each little hoof.

NARRATOR 2: As we draw in our heads, and then turn around,

VOICE CHOIR: Down the chimney old Santa comes with a bound.