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*Dramatic Publishing*

# 'Twas the Night Before Christmas



**Musical**

Based on the poem by Clement C. Moore  
Book and lyrics by

**Jennifer Kirkeby**

Music by

**Shirley Mier**

Enjoy a brand-new musical production inspired by the classic Clement C. Moore poem *A Visit from St. Nicholas*. Your family will indeed return home with “visions of sugar plums” dancing in their heads.

**'Twas the Night Before Christmas – Musical. Book and lyrics by Jennifer Kirkeby. Music by Shirley Mier. Based on the poem by Clement C. Moore. Cast: 6m., 16w., 4 either gender. May be expanded to up to 16m., 20w., 15 either gender.** It's four days before Christmas, and the *New York Evening Post* needs a holiday feature story. President James Monroe is counting on reading it to his family on Christmas Day. But writer Clement Moore has writer's block. Besides that, he must work at home amongst his five children who are, needless to say, very anxious for St. Nicholas to arrive. Clement's frustration mounts—then the magic begins. The sounds of bells, moving toys and visions of Sugar Plum Fairies all conspire to help Clement, as the events from the classic poem come to life. Interwoven with carolers, a song to St. Nicholas, dancing fairies and much more, including, of course, a visit from the old elf himself, this delightful musical concludes with the complete original poem set to exquisite music. Commissioned and first produced by Stages Theatre Company, this fresh telling of the most popular Christmas poem ever told will delight audiences of all ages. *Unit set. Approximate running time: 1 hour. Code: TS7.*

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# 'Twas the Night Before Christmas

Book and Lyrics  
by  
JENNIFER KIRKEBY

Music  
by  
SHIRLEY MIER

Based on the poem  
by  
CLEMENT C. MOORE



**Dramatic Publishing**

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Book and Lyrics by  
JENNIFER KIRKEBY

Music by

SHIRLEY MIER

(T'WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS)

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“Originally commissioned and produced by  
Stages Theatre Company, Hopkins, Minnesota.”

*'Twas the Night Before Christmas* was commissioned and first produced by Stages Theatre Company, Hopkins, Minnesota, November 20, 2009; Artistic Director, Sandy Boren-Barrett. It premiered with the following artists:

## CAST

Margaret . . . . .	LISA ADAMS
Fairy . . . . .	KYLEA BARNES
Laura . . . . .	BERIT BASSINGER
Toy Soldier/Caroler . . . . .	LAUREN BLUE
Adult Caroler . . . . .	KIERAN BOWERS
Clement . . . . .	TODD BRUSE
Catherine . . . . .	JOANNA BURR
Jack-in-the-Box/Ruth . . . . .	SHANNON CRON
Doll/Caroler . . . . .	MIKAELA EKBLAD
Edward . . . . .	SAM GAINES
Benjamin . . . . .	LUKE GUIDINGER
Child Caroler . . . . .	JESSICA HUTCHENS
Charity . . . . .	ELLE KESELEY
Charles . . . . .	PETER KRAMER
Jester/Caroler . . . . .	ABBY MAAS
Fairy . . . . .	JORDAN OMEISH
Child Caroler . . . . .	BERNADETTE RODEN
St. Nicholas . . . . .	BRUCE ROWAN
Toy Soldier/Caroler . . . . .	ANNA RUPP
Fairy . . . . .	EMMA SAX
Fairy . . . . .	NATALIE SCHMIT
Martha . . . . .	SCOTTIE NICOLE SCHWEFEL
Fairy . . . . .	CLARE SEEMAN
Jester/Caroler . . . . .	AUBREY SMITH
Luke . . . . .	TYLER SPRINGER
Thomas . . . . .	HARRY WENDT

## **PRODUCTION TEAM**

Director . . . . . SANDY BOREN-BARRETT  
Music Director . . . . . ANGELA BARGMANN  
Props Designer . . . . . JIM HIBBELER  
Technical Director . . . . . GRETCHEN KATT  
Choreographer . . . . . ANGELA MANNELLA-HOFFMAN  
Composer/Sequencing . . . . . SHIRLEY MIER  
Stage Manager . . . . . MANDY MORGAN  
Lighting Designer . . . . . KARIN OLSON  
Costume/Makeup Designer . . . . . CHRISTINE RICHARDSON  
Set Designer . . . . . JOE STANLEY  
Assistant Stage Manager . . . . . ANDREA WYLIE  
Sound Operator . . . . . CELIA FORREST  
Student Director . . . . . REBEKAH MOGILEVSKY  
Running Crew . . . . . HANNAH MORRISEY  
Production Manager . . . . . MELANIE SALMON-PETERSON



## SONGS

1. Caroling Merrily . . . . . Carolers, Catherine, Children
2. Caroling Merrily Underscore (instrumental)
3. Caroling Merrily Reprise . . . . . Carolers  
(If desired, Christmas carols may be sung  
instead of, or in addition to this number.)
4. Sugar Plum Story Underscore (instrumental)
5. Dear Saint Nicholas . . . . . Children
6. Scene Shift – Train Whistle (instrumental)
7. Writing Music – Part One (instrumental)
8. Writing Music – Part Two (instrumental)
9. Saint Nicholas Story Underscore (instrumental)
10. This Is the Time . . . . . Catherine
11. Stocking Music (instrumental)
12. Clement Sees the Sugar Plums (instrumental)
13. Sugar Plum Fairy Dance (instrumental)
14. Peaceful Night . . . . . Clement
15. Arrival of Saint Nicholas (instrumental)
16. What a Merry Night . . . . . St. Nicholas, Clement, Toys,  
Fairies
17. Quill Pen Music (instrumental)
18. 'Twas the Night Before Christmas . . . . . Full Cast

NOTE: Throughout play, italicized lyrics are spoken in rhythm.

# 'Twas the Night Before Christmas

## CHARACTERS

### FAMILY:

1. CLEMENT MOORE, father (Adult m)
2. CATHERINE MOORE, mother (Adult w)
3. MARGARET (12-14 yrs.)
4. CHARLES (10-12 yrs.)
5. BENJAMIN (9-10 yrs.)
6. CHARITY (8 yrs.)  
BABY EMILY (Doll)
7. NICHOLAS / ST. NICHOLAS (Adult m)
- 8-13. 6 SUGAR PLUM FAIRIES (Or however many desired.)

### CAROLERS: (These characters may double as TOY if not a CAROLER in finale.)

14. EDWARD
15. LAURA
16. THOMAS
17. RUTH

*(It might also be possible to begin with more FAIRIES and then have some of them become TOYS.)*

### TOYS: (May add more if desired. These characters should be doubled by CAROLERS or FAIRIES.)

DOLL  
JACK-IN-THE-BOX  
CLOWN  
TEDDY BEAR  
SOLDIER

TIME: Early evening, Christmas week, 1822.

PLACE: Upstate New York. Inside CLEMENT's house for most of the play. Outside when ST. NICHOLAS arrives.

SET: A beautiful Victorian living room and two upstairs bedrooms connected by a staircase. The living room is inviting, comforting and elegant. (See *The Night Before Christmas* illustrated by Catherine Barnes.) There is a lovely upholstered sofa and chairs, footstool, perhaps a piano, a writing desk, a large fireplace (that St. Nicholas can enter from), and several windows upstage with red velvet curtains that Clement can hide behind and snowfall can be seen from. On the writing desk, there is a quill pen, bottle of ink, paper and an oil lamp or candle that can go on and off. The walls should appear to be covered with wallpaper of the period. There is a coat-/hatrack. There are oil lamps in each room. Fire in fireplace will go off and on during "magical moments." There is also a large, decorated Christmas tree. It will have strands of popcorn, cranberries, various fruits and cookie ornaments, a small mirror ornament and other old-fashioned ornaments that family will use to decorate. The Sugar Plum Fairies will come out of or from behind the tree and other places. An old-fashioned (but remote control) train is on a train track under the tree. It will move at specific times during the show. On the mantle of the fireplace lay seven stockings, which will magically hang themselves up. The parents' bedroom has a canopy bed and window. There is a cradle upstairs for the baby.

NOTE: See end of script for original set design and synopses of scenes.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

The original set for *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* was a multilevel unit set of a house. On the lower level, there was a front door, a writing desk, a raised platform surrounded by a bay window with a large decorated Christmas tree on it, a large toy box, and a seating area in front of a large fireplace. A staircase led to the upper level that featured the parents' bedroom and an archway leading to a hallway and the other bedrooms. The set was topped with a chimney and other exterior fragments of the house's roof line. The bay window platform with the tree was a turntable which rotated to reveal a fragment of the exterior of the house as Clement looked out on a magical, snowy night. Fairies made entrances through the toy box and around the set. Santa entered down the chimney. The office of the *New York Evening Post* was defined by a sign that flew in DC and a work stool. Wreaths and garlands decorated the proscenium.

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

SCENE 1: December 21, 1822. CLEMENT MOORE meets with his boss, NICHOLAS, at the *New York Evening Post*. CLEMENT learns that he has an important writing assignment to complete in four days.

SCENE 2: Mother (CATHERINE) and CHILDREN are getting ready for Christmas. CAROLERS visit their house. CLEMENT returns from work and tells the story of the Sugar Plum Fairies.

SCENE 3: Later that night. CATHERINE and CHILDREN are eating sugar plums. CLEMENT struggles to write his Christmas story. SUGAR PLUM FAIRIES appear and begin to help CLEMENT with ideas for his story.

SCENE 4: CATHERINE encourages CLEMENT to get some sleep. He tries to go to bed but hears a clatter—he hears sleigh bells. ST. NICHOLAS visits.

SCENE 5: CLEMENT completes his Christmas story and shares it with his family.

# 'Twas the Night Before Christmas

## SCENE 1

*(Grand drape is closed.)*

*LIGHTS UP on New York Evening Post office, which can be a rolling desk or table and chair that comes on-stage in front of grand drape.*

*NICHOLAS, the editor of the New York Evening Post, is pacing the floor. He occasionally glances at a piece of paper that he is holding.)*

NICHOLAS. Oh dear, oh dear. This is not good, not good at all! What to do, what to do? Why did John have to become ill this week of all weeks? Poor fellow. Think, Nicholas, think. There must be a solution. There is always a solution. But what? And how?!? Dear, oh dear me. Oh my.

*(CLEMENT enters.)*

NICHOLAS *(cont'd)*. Clement! Thank heavens you're here!

CLEMENT. I came as soon as I received your message, Nicholas. You look rather peaked, old man. Are you all right?

NICHOLAS. No, I mean, yes...I mean no! That is to say, I hope to be all right soon. You see, we have a bit of a quandary. A dilemma. A predicament!

CLEMENT (*laughs*). We have all three? It must be serious.

NICHOLAS. Oh, but it is, Clement! It is!

CLEMENT. Calm down, man. Tell me. What is this quandary—dilemma—predicament?

NICHOLAS. As you know, the *New York Evening Post* always has a feature story about Christmas. Our readers depend on it. We sell more papers because of it than any other week of the year. And in these tough economic times, that is of the utmost importance!

CLEMENT. Indeed. Go on.

NICHOLAS. Well, earlier today, I received this message. (*Holds up paper.*) It appears that our writer for this year's piece, John Phillip, has become very ill and shan't be able to write it!

CLEMENT. Oh, my word. That's most unfortunate. I certainly hope that he recovers soon. The illness is not of a serious nature, is it?

NICHOLAS. Well, I...I don't believe so.

CLEMENT. That's a consolation. Don't worry, old man. I'm confident that there is someone else on staff who can create a most festive holiday story.

NICHOLAS. It's more than just a holiday story, I'm afraid. It seems that a rather special patron depends on it as he reads it to his family every Christmas. We promised in no uncertain terms to have it written.

CLEMENT. Don't keep me in suspense, man. Who is this illustrious patron? St. Nicholas himself? (*Laughs.*)

NICHOLAS. James Monroe.

CLEMENT. The president of the United States?!?

NICHOLAS. One and the same. This is an opportunity of a lifetime, Clement! Surely you can see why we need an excellent writer with a great imagination to come up with a very special Christmas story.

CLEMENT. Oh, my stars! Yes indeed. This is incredible! Fantastic! Unbelievable! But, but there is so little time! Christmas is only four days away!

NICHOLAS. Exactly. That's why it is a quandary, dilemma and a predicament. (*Looks at CLEMENT. Realizes.*) Nonetheless, I believe that we have a writer who can come up with a story worthy of a president. (*He smiles at CLEMENT.*)

CLEMENT. Why do I feel so nervous all of a sudden?

NICHOLAS. *You*, Clement! You're a wonderful storyteller! This could be the biggest break of your career!

CLEMENT. But...but I cover the news! The only stories of this nature are the ones that I tell my children. I'm a *serious* writer, Nicholas! I don't write Christmas stories! What about Grady or Michaels?

NICHOLAS. They've both left for the holiday. You're our only hope. Please say yes.

CLEMENT. What about my family? It will be such an immense sacrifice for them. I gave them my word that I would spend time with them this week. No work.

NICHOLAS. Clement, I'm quite confident that if you explain that the president of the United States is depending on it, they will be most supportive of your endeavor. And you *will* be at home. You'll just be writing.



CLEMENT. Hmm. Perhaps you're right.

NICHOLAS. So I can count on you?

CLEMENT. I'll do my best.

NICHOLAS (*as he exits*). That's the spirit! After all, it's just a story, Clement. Just a story. Besides, you've always loved Christmas. I'm positive that you will come up with something miraculous!

CLEMENT. A miracle is exactly what I'll need... (*He exits.*)

*(LIGHTS SHIFT.)*

*CAROLERS enter through the aisles singing. They travel onstage.)*

### **(SONG #1: CAROLING MERRILY)**

CAROLERS.

CAROLING MERRILY THROUGH THE SNOW,  
GOOD TIDINGS WE BRING TO YOU!  
THE MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS IS ALL AROUND,  
WITH PRESENTS AND COMPANY TOO.

FA LA LA LA LA LA, FA LA LA LA LA!  
FA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA!

CAROLING MERRILY THROUGH THE SNOW,  
GOOD TIDINGS WE BRING AND CHEER.  
THE SEASON OF LOVE SURROUNDS US ALL,  
AS YULETIDE IS FINALLY HERE!

FA LA LA LA LA LA, FA LA LA LA LA!  
FA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA!

THE DINNER WAS DELICIOUS,  
THE PUDDING DIVINE.  
WE'RE CAROLING TOGETHER,  
WON'T YOU PLEASE JOIN IN OUR RHYME?

OUR NOSES ARE SO ROSY,  
BUT OUR HEARTS ARE FILLED WITH GLEE.  
FOR DESPITE THE WINT'RY WEATHER,  
THERE'S NO PLACE WE'D RATHER BE! THAN...

*(Grand drape opens. CATHERINE and CHILDREN are singing in their living room. They are dancing and enjoying themselves. They don't "see" CAROLERS, however. It is gently snowing behind upstage windows.)*

CATHERINE & CHILDREN.

CAROLING MERRILY THROUGH THE SNOW,  
GOOD TIDINGS WE BRING TO YOU!  
THE MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS IS ALL AROUND,  
WITH PRESENTS AND COMPANY TOO.

FA LA LA LA LA LA, FA LA LA LA LA!  
FA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA!

SAINT NICHOLAS WILL SOON BE HERE,  
THE STOCKINGS MUST BE HUNG.  
THE TREE IS GREEN AND LOVELY,  
SUCH JOY FOR OLD AND YOUNG!

THE FAM'LY'S FEELING FESTIVE,  
OUR FRIENDS ARE GATHERED HERE.  
MERRIMENT SURROUNDS US  
SO LET'S GIVE A TOAST AND CHEER FOR...

CAROLING MERRILY THROUGH THE SNOW,  
GOOD TIDINGS WE BRING AND CHEER.  
THE SEASON OF LOVE SURROUNDS US ALL  
AS YULETIDE IS FINALLY HERE!

FA LA LA LA LA LA, FA LA LA LA LA,  
FA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA.  
FA LA LA LA LA LA, FA LA LA LA LA,  
FA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA!

## SCENE 2

*(LIGHTS UP on CATHERINE and CHILDREN.)*

### **(SONG #2: CAROLING MERRILY UNDERSCORE)**

CATHERINE. That was lovely!

CHARITY. I almost know all the words because I'm getting so big!

MARGARET. You're not big, Charity! You're the littlest one.

CHARITY. No I'm not. Baby Emily is!

MARGARET. Well, she certainly can't sing yet, so we can't count her!

CHARITY. Yes we can!

MARGARET. No we can't!

CATHERINE. Girls, please don't quarrel.

MARGARET & CHARITY. Yes, Mother.

CHARLES. May we finish decorating the tree?

CATHERINE. That's a fine idea, Charles.

*(They begin to decorate tree.)*

BENJAMIN (*holding up an ornament*). This is a very special one.

CATHERINE. Yes it is, Benjamin. Be very careful with it, dear. It was your grandmother's mirror or "peeper" as she used to call it.

BENJAMIN (*stares at himself in the mirror and makes faces*). Peep. Peep. Peep. Peep, peep!

CATHERINE. Benjamin, please hang it on the tree.

BENJAMIN. All right.

*(During following dialogue, BOYS heavily decorate only one section of the tree.)*

CATHERINE. Margaret, did you finish stringing the cranberries?

MARGARET. Almost. I'll do it right now. (*She gets her basket and strings cranberries.*)

CHARITY. Can I help?

MARGARET. No.

CHARITY. Why not?

MARGARET. Because you're too little.

CHARITY. No I'm not! I know how to sew!

MARGARET. Mother, please tell Charity that she can't string the cranberries! It's too hard for her to push the needle through! She'll poke herself!

CHARITY. No I won't!

MARGARET. Yes you will!

CHARITY. No I...

CATHERINE. Girls! Charity, do you know what would really help?

CHARITY. What?

CATHERINE. It's a big, important job. I don't know if you can do it.

CHARITY. But of course I can! (*Beat.*) Do what, Mother?

CATHERINE. The tree could use another popcorn strand. Do you think that you could string one for me?

CHARITY. Oh, yes!

CATHERINE. Good girl. (*Hands CHARITY the basket with popcorn, needle and thread.*) Here you go. Don't forget to knot the end of the thread.

CHARITY. Thank you, Mother!

CATHERINE (*notices BOYS' decorating job*). Boys, how about if you decorate a few other branches as well?

BOYS (*staggered*). Yes, Mother. All right. (*BOYS move to a new branch and begin heavily decorating it.*)

CHARLES. Benjamin, can't you decorate another branch?

BENJAMIN. No. I like this one.

CHARLES. But I already started on this branch.

BENJAMIN. That's all right. I don't mind.

(*CHARLES groans.*)

CHARITY. See, Margaret, I can do it. (*Pokes herself with needle.*) Ouch!

CATHERINE. Are you all right, dear?

CHARITY. Yes. I just poked myself a little.

(*MARGARET laughs.*)

CATHERINE. Margaret, this would be a good time to help your little sister.

MARGARET (*reluctantly*) All right. (*She crosses to CHARITY.*) I told you that you shouldn't string cranberries. You can't even string popcorn.

CHARITY. Oh, pickles! I can too!

MARGARET. Oh, pickles! You can not.

CHARITY. Stop saying "pickles"! Mother, Margaret is mimicking me!

MARGARET. Oh, pickles, I am not!

CATHERINE. For heaven's sake, girls! Do you both want to go to your room and stay there for the rest of the day?

CHARLES. That's a grand idea!

(*BOYS laugh.*)

CATHERINE. Charles!

CHARLES. Sorry.

CHARITY. We want to stay here.

CATHERINE. Margaret, I expect you to be kind to your younger sister.

MARGARET. I'm sorry.

CATHERINE. That's better. Charity?

CHARITY. Well, I don't know what I'm sorry for!

CATHERINE. For arguing.

CHARITY. Sorry.

CHARLES. This branch is getting really heavy.

BENJAMIN. Let's move to another one.

CHARLES. I've got a better idea. Mother, may Benjamin and I put the rest of the train around the tree?

BENJAMIN. Oh, yes! Please, Mother, please!

CATHERINE. That would be splendid! Please check on Emily while you're upstairs.

CHARLES. All right!

BENJAMIN. We will! *(He and CHARLES run to get the train. As they run off:)*

CHARLES. I get to hold the engine, *(caboose, or whatever)* Benjamin!

BENJAMIN. Then I get to wear the conductor's hat! *(He blows his train whistle.)*

*(CATHERINE begins to unclutter the BOYS' decorating job.)*

MARGARET *(to CHARITY)*. Here, let me show you a secret. See, you can even string two pieces at once. Now you try. *(CHARITY successfully strands two pieces of popcorn.)* Good job, Charity!

*(CATHERINE smiles at GIRLS and then continues decorating tree.)*

MARGARET *(cont'd)*. Won't Father be surprised to see how lovely the tree is?

CHARITY. Especially when he sees my popcorn strand!

CATHERINE. He'll be very proud, I'm sure. *(Takes out some small bells from a basket and rings them.)* Isn't this a lovely sound? *(She puts bells on the tree.)*

MARGARET. Yes, it is.

CHARITY. Maybe we'll hear them ring when St. Nicholas arrives!

*(BOYS enter carrying box with train in it. BENJAMIN is wearing a train conductor's hat.)*