



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

The Night After Christmas

Anne P. L. Field

'Twas the night after Christmas in Santa-Claus land
And to rest from his labors St. Nicholas planned.
The reindeer were turned out to pasture and all
The ten thousand assistants discharged till the fall.
The furry great-coat was laid safely away
With the boots and the cap with its tassel so gay.
And toasting his toes by a merry wood fire,
What more could a weary old Santa desire?
So he puffed at his pipe and remarked to his wife,
"This amply makes up for my strenuous life!
From climbing down chimneys my legs fairly ache,
But it's well worth the while for the dear children's sake.
I'd bruise every bone in my body to see
The darlings' delight in a gift-laden tree!"

Just then came a sound like a telephone bell —
Though why they should have such a thing I can't tell —
St. Nick gave a snort and exclaimed in a rage,
"Bad luck to inventions of this modern age!"
He grabbed the receiver — his face wore a frown
As he roared in the mouthpiece, "I will not come down
To exchange any toys like an up-to-date store.
Ring off. I'll not listen to anything more!"
Then he settled himself by the comforting blaze
And waxed reminiscent of halcyon days
When children were happy with simplest of toys:
A doll for the girls and a drum for the boys —
But again came that noisy disturber of peace
The telephone bell — would the sound never cease?
"Run and answer it, wife, all my patience has fled.
If they keep this thing up I shall wish I were dead!
I have worked night and day the best part of a year
To supply all the children, and what do I hear —
A boy who declares he received roller-skates
When he wanted a gun — and a cross girl who states

That she asked for a new Victor talking machine
And I brought her a sled, so she thinks I am 'mean!'"
Poor St. Nicholas looked just the picture of woe,
He needed some auto-suggestion, you know,
To make him think things were all coming out right,
For he didn't get one wink of slumber that night!
The telephone wire was kept sizzling hot
By children disgusted with presents they'd got,
And when the bright sun showed its face in the sky
The Santa-Claus family were ready to cry!



Just then something happened — a way of escape,
Though it came in the funniest possible shape —
An aeronaut, sorely in need of a meal,
Descended for breakfast — it seemed quite ideal!
For the end of it was, he invited his host
Out to try the balloon, of whose speed he could boast.
St. Nick, who was nothing if not a good sport,
Was delighted to go, and as quick as a thought
Climbed into the car for a flight in the air —
"No telephone bells can disturb me up there!
And, wife, if it suits me I'll count it no crime
To stay up till ready for next Christmas time!"
Thus saying — he sailed in the giant balloon,
And I fear that he will not return very soon.
Now, when you ask "Central" for Santa-Claus land
She'll say, "discontinued" — and you'll understand.

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