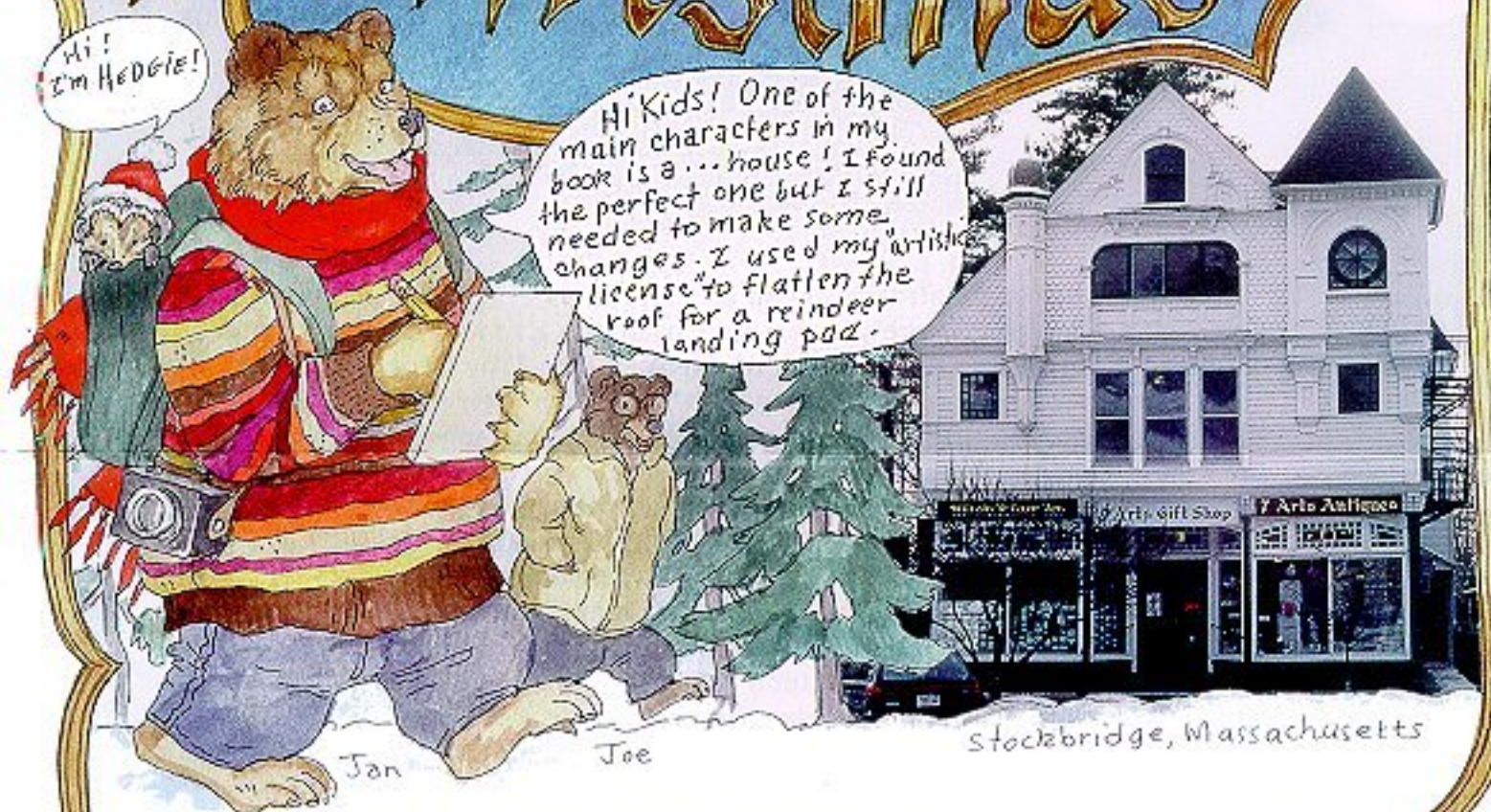


All About

# The Night Before Christmas



When I was little, I couldn't wait for Christmas because it meant toys! There wasn't anything more fun and mysterious than tiptoeing downstairs with my sisters to see 3 bulging stockings. Giving gifts to others was just as fun because we could pick out the presents ourselves, or even better, make them. The Night Before Christmas is my present to you. Most of my books come from my imagination, but illustrating Moore's poem is an enthusiastic response to all the children and friends that suggested it.

For a long time, I couldn't find a way to illustrate The Night Before Christmas because the line "...all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse," stopped me. I love drawing "creatures" and first thing, right at the beginning, Clemont Moore wrote that not one was stirring!

One night, laying in bed, an idea came. No creature was stirring inside the house, but what about outside? It was if a door opened up in my imagination, and I knew how I could share the creativity with Clemont Moore. Two elves would stow away in Santa's Sleigh. While Santa does his Christmas work, the elves would have a grand time with all the toys up on the roof, ride the reindeer, and play, play, play!

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It's daunting to illustrate a poem as famous as The Night Before Christmas. Clement Moore wrote it on Christmas Eve for his 6 children. When it was printed in a newspaper, The Troy Sentinel, in 1823, readers clipped it out and saved it to read to their children. St. Nick was patterned after a cheery, chubby Dutchman who worked in the Moore's neighborhood. Our summer home is a cabin in the Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts - down the valley lies Stockbridge, the town I choose for the setting of my book. Stockbridge's Main Street is familiar to many of us because it was home to Norman Rockwell, America's most loved illustrator. He painted not just Stockbridge, but the people in it and I was inspired by the tradition. The family in my book is my sister's family and if you visit Stockbridge you will first recognize the scene from Rockwell's painting and then you see how I tucked it in the dedication page of my book.

If you take a summer trip to New England you might like to visit the Berkshires. You can hear the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood, where my husband Joe plays, visit the new Norman Rockwell Museum, hike the Appalachian Trail and have an ice cream cone on Main Street Stockbridge to top it off. If you do, be sure and look for the "dog & cat" fountain across from the Red Lion Inn! It is one of my favorite landmarks.



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"MUZZLE"



Many of the toys children played with in Clement Moore's time would look unfamiliar to us today; hoops, China-headed dolls or a ball on a stick for example. I painted old fashioned toys in my book, but I set my version of the poem in a later time so I could include some of my favorite toys too. My sister Jeannie received a Steiff stuffed animal for Christmas every year. She has lovingly kept them for her children to play with, and when the children open their copy of the book, they'll see some of "their" stuffed animals. One of my daughter Lia's favorite toys is a tin wind up snail. See if you can find it. There is also a very old Teddy Bear named "Muzzle" pictured. He belonged to my Uncle Bill. I used to see him when I visited my Grandmother Baba, who kept Muzzle after Bill grew up. Although he has always had a dignified spot, in my book, he's tumbling through the air as Santa magically whistles everyone and everything back on board his sleigh. Do you think you could write a story about one of your favorite toys?



Did you know that Teddy Bears are a relatively new toy? Our 26th President, Theodore Roosevelt received much notice in the newspapers when he refused to shoot a trapped bear while on a hunting trip. His actions caught the public's fancy and the "Teddy" Bear was created. "Teddy" is a nickname for Theodore and the Teddy Bear. Walk into almost any toy store and you will find a "Teddy" Bear!

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