

## The Story of Santa Claus (Open Book)



Every December 24th millions of children eagerly await a visit from a large, bearded man in a red suit. But where did Santa come from and how did he evolve into today's Jolly Old Saint Nick? Well before the legendary poem 'Twas the Night Before Christmas' shaped the modern vision of Santa Claus riding a flying sleigh pulled by magical reindeer, his story actually began about seventeen hundred years ago in the Eastern Roman Empire. There, a young orphan named Nicholas became famous for using his inheritance to give gifts to the needy. In his most widely-known story, he threw bags of gold over a wall into the house of a destitute merchant, so that the man would not be forced to sell his daughters into slavery. Eventually, this young and holy man became the Bishop of Myra and lived a life of faith and miracles, fighting injustice and protecting the weak. Even after his death, his miracles continued, and he is credited with saving sailors, healing the sick, and even raising the dead. In time, he became known as St. Nicholas the Wonder Worker. In the numerous centuries since the passing of Saint Nicholas, his story has grown, developed, and been combined with numerous other legends. In the Netherlands, he became known as Sinterklaas, the old man who brought presents to children with the help of his assistant Zwarte Piet. In England, he became Father Christmas, the living embodiment of the holiday. Fully illustrated with original color drawings, *The Story of Santa Claus* celebrates the story of his beginnings as a holy man in Ancient Rome, through his development in the Middle-Ages, to his current, likeness on advertisements, greeting cards, apparel and decorations - right down to real-life mall-based family photo opp. It is a winding, magical tale filled with mystery and good will towards all men, sure to fill even the most jaded scrooges with a little

bit of Christmas magic.

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