



Once Upon A Christmas Eve

Wayne (Bo) Bomar

Magic

'ONCE UPON A CHRISTMAS EVE'

By: Capt. Wayne H. (Bo) Bomar—retired

Why I have waited so long to write my extraordinary story down is quite beyond me. So much in fact, that tremble I even now as I write-down the memories of my thoughts and experiences of so long ago and, over so many years. A child, I fancy, could not begin to express the descriptions of grandeur that have been mine to witness over so many Christmas' gone by or, the one Christmas Eve that began my marvelous journeys.

I have often pondered on the spectacles that were presented to me some fourteen and eighty years gone by. I know now that the so-called illusion that had befallen me as a young child,...was in fact, not an illusion. Quite the contrary,...it was indeed no illusion. I know that now and, no reasonable excuse or, unreasonable excuse could explain the reality of what I saw and experienced that started this journey for me. The 'wisdom of age', as my father was so fond of saying has taught me better.

There are 'things', if you will, that do exist, even if they donot present themselves as often as some would wish. Things of such magnitude that I, and I do confess on this particular instance, that even now, if I let it, would confuse me still and, reduce me to quite a trembling sight to those around me.

To better understand what I am trying to convey to you, my dear readers, we must return to the past. I will, as best I can, endeavor to relate to the reader the circumstances that wholly and, entirely changed my life and,...my way of thinking.

It is of no consequence to me whether I convince my readers in my convictions, but rather your loss if you donot believe me. Accept it or not, it was a reality to a young master of ten years of age,...me. This reality has

remained and, grown quite stronger with the passing of my many years. It is of course, not for me to state what is reality or, what is illusion. I simply pass-on to you, dear reader what I saw and, what I have believed for so many years to be the only reality left to man.

Christmas Eve is a magical time to most children and, at ten years of age, I was no exception. I had fallen prey to what most modern 'idiots' would call, folly. And, no amount of my time or statements will convince them otherwise. It is their loss and, I am convinced that one fine day they too, shall see the 'folly' of their misgivings,...whether they want to or not.

I felt at ten years of age there had to be more to the fabled story of, Santa Claus. In curiosity I was never lacking and, more than once this virtue of mine led me into trouble on the homefront.

I most certainly would want to know what made things go, what made them work. Santa Claus was, in my mind, to be no exception, no matter how much I was warned by my elders not to pry into that which did not concern me. My childish mind went down many avenues of adventures as I tried to solve and deduce this riddle that had been forbidden to me.

There were, of course, rumors. In school, classmates whispered in giggles that there was no Santa Claus. But, being a child of true conviction, I tossed these rumors aside and, continued forward in my search for the truth concerning this mystery.

Upon all legends or, myths is a certain basis of truth and fact. This I learned from my father, a very wise man, in my opinion. I listened thoroughly as he told and retold the story of Santa Claus to me. I daresay he became quite tired of my never-ending questions pertaining to the famous legendary figure in red. Nonetheless, my father was a patient man and surely reserved his frustrations for a later time frame.

I calculated in my young mind that if a person were to remain healthy in mind and body, that his sphere of longevity could possibly carry him past one hundred years of age. But, I had been told that Santa Claus was well over six hundred years of age,...not forgetting his Reindeer, who had been with him since his legendary beginning. To be able to walk at six hundred years old would be virtually impossible,...much less fly.

Yet, all the artist renditions I had ever seen of Santa Claus and his Reindeer showed them to be happy and full of life. No artist brush ever portrayed a wrinkle in the jolly old Elf's face that I had seen or, remembered seeing. So, the mystery of his longevity remained a mystery to my young mind. A mystery, I later found out, that I had no business knowing about anyway. I was firmly, but gently told this did not concern my quest for knowledge and, I should simply accept this extraordinary age as fact. I did.

And then, the question of flight puzzled me greatly. Many a painful landing upon my backside, from no greater a height of twenty feet proved to my young mind that it is impossible for a young master of ten to fly. But, to

float was not impossible and, a number of my father's large umbrellas proved my theory successfully. Two of these umbrellas, to my knowledge, are still buried under clumps of Sumac, not far from the old homestead. Better buried than risk discovery by my father. A patient man he is,...a foolish man he is not. Doubtless, he would have understood my scientific experiments concerning flight, but I dared not wait the several years it might have taken.

Steadily, but secretly I gathered together the facts as only a ten year old boy could. I knew that the man called, Santa Claus traveled at night. Why under the cover of darkness eluded me at my young age. This bit of information I had so longed to understand was, as 'he' put it very politely, "None of your business, to be sure, Master Smith." So, I tucked this answer deep away into my brain and, never spoke of it again.

His entrance by chimney's had so fascinated me, that I did, at one time manage to become securely wedged into ours. Such thoughts that can go through a young boy's mind while securely trapped in utter darkness plagues me even today. Of course, I had no logical explanation befitting my father as he extracted me from my dirty and sooty dungeon,...that I simply cried. A maneuver that many a young child has found to be quite effective in the face of imminent danger. A loud, hysterical cry is quite useful in such situations and, many a parent has humbly cowered to a child, as Wolves before a blazing fire. I did tuck this useful bit of information away for future references, if such needs arose.

After said incident, I fancied that Santa Claus must indeed be extremely flexible concerning his entrance by chimney method.

As the wonderful day or, night rather, grew closer, I became quite unmanageable, to say the least. My time was fast running-out. Should I leave out milk and cookies, as always I had or, something more to an old man's fancy, such as some of my father's stoutly Port. I did finally decide against't the Port. I pictured myself as the perpetrator of a terrible night tragedy for Santa Claus. The headlines might read: Santa falls from sleigh in intoxicated stupor,...young boy blamed for Christmas Eve tragedy.

I shuddered as my young mind went through numerous versions of terrible tragedies befalling Santa Claus due to my inconsiderateness. Myself, being led, head down, arms shackled securely behind my back, to the nearest magistrate for restitution of my crimes. NO,...the Port was out! Instead, I simply put out upon our stately hearth the remains of our lavish Christmas Eve Turkey dinner. A small note, scratched in my childish handwriting simply stating: 'Help yourself,...there's more in the kitchen,...clean-up or, mother will boil.'

After our yearly renditions of numerous Christmas carols, that still remain in our family as a resemblance of tradition, I was hustled-off to bed, lest 'Santa' pass us by.

Feining sleep, I watched through carefully slitted eyelids my father as he shut the door to my bedroom. To this

day, I know he muttered or, something like it, "May he sleep 'till noonish upon the 'morrow."

An hour passed. The house was completely quiet. Sleep?!! Never!! There were questions to be answered upon this Christmas Eve night! I had not strived in my quest so long to be put off by mere sleep. I lay nervously quiet, planning my strategy. A kerosene lamp beside my bed gave me comfort. Had I not practiced hours upon end in lighting this very same lamp? I knew, that in my nervous state, I would lose precious seconds if yon lamp must be lighted. No matter. I would manage.

A shuffling sound that quickened my breath, came from the alley beside our house. The quick rattle of a garbage pail. I eased back into comfort for the moment. It had been nothing but 'old' Trundle's cat seeking a Christmas morsel in thrown-out dinner scraps.

I found myself drifting. Uncomfortable close to that which I feared,...sleep! Especially upon this night! I fought against the sleep that sought to overpower me. It was almost a losing battle until I heard, 'it!'

My eyes were instantly thrown-open in instant wakefulness, my hands clutching the bed sheets. Quickly I glanced at yon lamp and, then disregarded it from my mind. Stealth was my answer,...the cover of darkness would hide me. An answer I had sought earlier pertaining to Santa Claus burst upon my brain like the burst of a lighted crackerjack. I smiled inwardly. I had discovered the answer to at least one question.

Silently I crept from my bed, aware fully of everything around me. The shadows of the night moved with me as I softly laid my hand upon the doorknob.

Our house, an old Victorian two-story skyscraper would have to be maneuvered in utter darkness and quiet. Carefully, I counted my steps as I descended the enormous staircase. Numbers eight and twenty-two were 'creakers'. Loud creakers! Cat-like, I stepped over these creakers as I counted and, continued my descent, clutching the stair-rail with ponderous strength.

As closer I came to the bottom of the stair-case, I became aware of small noises coming from our spacious living area. The shadows of the fire upon the hearth flickered around every corner and, danced upon the walls, throwing eerie shadows in every direction.

The flowered wallpaper that my mother so adored took-on strange shapes as the shadows played upon the many patterns. But still, there was something strangely out of place among the shadows of dancing flowers. Something quite big, but with definite shape. The shape moved. Somewhat quickly,...but then slowing down, again quickly, then slowly again.

Suddenly, the strangely out of place shape-shadow stopped completely. I could feel, if you will, something watching me. I froze as solid as the water in Park pond. My heart quickened fiercely,...retreat was the answer! I turned slowly, one small foot held high, as I searched for a solid floor. The shape-shadow moved slightly and, I

longed for the security of my own warm bedsheets, a mile or more away upstairs. Oh!,...foolish me!,...I was doomed! Raising my eyes slightly, I faced our large mirrored hall-tree. I must have looked quite comical, one foot perched highly, the other as steadfast and, as solid as the corner-stone of the 7th avenue Baptist church, several blocks away. Behind me, quite close, almost touching me was the shape-shadow. I stood, my mouth hanging to my chin as I gazed fully at the mirrored image in our hall-tree, upon the spectacle that has puzzled mankind for centuries.

Frightened,...I was not. Overwhelmed,...I was! Turning slowly upon one foot,...I beheld and gazed fully upon the man known as, Santa Claus!

He smiled and whispered. Such a voice I have yet to chance upon in my many years of worldly travel. The rustling of the wind could not have mastered the silvery tone of his voice. He spoke.

“To be caught unawares while going about my nightly work is an incident I have eluded to for nearly two hundred years, Master Smith. Sit!”

I did so promptly. Fascinated,...I stared at him.

“The hour is quite late and, ye should not be here,” he whispered.

“I live here, kind sir,” I whispered quietly, my eyes lowered.

“I am aware of where ye live and, of whom ye are, Master Smith,” he quietly said, a hint of annoyance in his whisper.

I said nothing. He paced back and forth in front of me, muttering softly, his hands clasp tightly behind his back. I took this opportunity to study his unusual wearing apparel.

He was not, as so many artists have rendered him upon their canvas. He was not even close to submitting to their imaginations. I will admit, his beard was as white as the new fallen snow and, his shoulder length hair did fall askew in many silver curls. But, heartily rotund he was not. Possibly somewhat overweight, but hide it he did well by the long immense scarlet ankle-length robe that he wore. Barely noticeable were the dull black boots that he wore upon his feet. The sparkles fascinated me that did so cover the soles of his boots and, he left many a sparkling footprint upon my mother’s persian.

A soot-spotted fur encircled the collars of his lapels and cuffs and, wound laborously down the front of his robe to encircle the bottom hem of said garment. A much-wider belt than ever I have seen wound ‘round his waist and fastened itself, not by a buckle, but by bright, silver tassels. His cap, although of the same scarlet red, resembled my father’s night cap. A large golden bell hung mutely at the end of its peaked point. It made no sound, although he swung the bell from side-to-side as he paced. And, as upon his robe of red, the soot-spotted fur encircled his cap. A pair of gold-framed spectacles rested upon his red nose, pulled-down, as if he

had been looking down through them. He stopped pacing. His eyes I could feel full upon my person. I looked up.

Looking over the top of his spectacles, he whispered, "Now that the deed is done, Master Smith, ye shall have the answers to the questions ye seek,...and hopefully my brain shall not be over-taxed further than it already is." He held his hand out to me. As I took it, he smiled at me and led me to my father's chair by the blazing hearth. Sitting down, he quite easily lifted me to his scarlet, robe-covered lap.

Taking a deep breath, he said, "I fancy, Master Smith, that many question has raced through yer young mind at the sight of me."

I tried to speak and, found myself silently stuttering. He stared at me, a wide smile broadened his whiskered face. He said, "Tonight, of all nights, is not to be wasted, Master Smith. My time is short and, a great many stops must I make before sun's rise."

I found my tongue and blurted out, "Who are you?!!"

In that moment, that gone-forever, never to be recalled moment, the stupidity of my question entirely engulfed the room in which we both sat. He threw his head back and heartily laughed, the framework of our monstrous residence echoing with his insane chuckles. Yet, I knew somehow that only my ears could hear his ringing laughter. I twitched uncomfortably upon his lap, realizing full-well he must think me a very stupid little urchin, in need of education.

Wiping his eyes with one of his white gloved hands, he looked back down at me and, still chuckling asked, "And WHOM do ye think I am, Master Smith."

Swallowing quite hard, I whispered, "I am pleased to think that you are Santa Claus, kind sir."

"Then,...we must not endeavor to cloud yer way of thinking." He said, smiling.

Brightening somewhat, I asked, "How is it, kind sir, that I have come upon you at your secret work?"

A slight frown covered his face. "Alas, Master Smith,...as I have grown older I have discovered that the innocence of my work keeps me fully occupied. I was unbeknownst to your presence. It is I that begs yer pardon."

"And, how old are you, kind sir?" I asked this quite quickly, lest he interpret my rudeness.

"I am as old as my tongue and, a little bit older than my teeth, Master Smith." He whispered smiling.

I shifted slightly and asked, "That does not answer my question, kind sir."

"Hhhmmmmmm," he muttered, his eyes narrowing, "A Harvard man dwells within thee, Master Smith."

There was a brief, uncomfortable silence as he pondered my aforementioned question. Directly, he smiled and answered. "To tell ye, Master Smith, that my age exceeds sixteen centuries would leave ye in a state of

bewilderment. So,...I shall simply leave it at that.”

“My school chum, Johnathan Trundle has spread inconcievable lies concerning your existence.” This I announced quite proudly, being fondly surprised at my newly acquired vocabulary.

He quickly produced a list, as if out of thin air and, glanced at it. “Master Trundle, I believe does has some serious misconceptions concerning me, yes. But, he does write a rather nice letter,...nice, but lengthy.”

Smugly, I smiled. My next question would certainly take him aback. “Has your mode of transportation changed, kind sir or, shall I assume you travel as always you have?”

He too, smiled smugly. “And, to what mode of transportation do ye assume I travel by, Master Smith?”

To match wits with Santa Claus would be a master feat for a learned and, well-educated adult. As a ten year old boy, I floundered pitifully. I could only produce with a squeak, “Reindeer”, and pointed toward our high ceiling. He casually inter-locked his fingers and, leaned back agains’t the chair. He looked casually up toward the ceiling, following my pointing finger. And, just as casually, he looked back at me. “My method of transportation has not changed, Master Smith.” He whispered with a smile.

I again twitched with excitement. Now, we were getting to the very heart of things. I formed my next question very carefully. “If it is not to be too much of an inconvienece, kind sir,...might I see them?”

A glimmer of annoyance crossed his faced and, he breathed-in deeply. “Must ye, Master Smith?” he growled softly.

I had this feeling that I was calling the extraordinary shots of this evening. I would stand firm in my convictions. I suppose Santa Claus had deduced this already.

“If quite convenient, kind sir,...” I grinned smugly.

There was suddenly a blinding flash of light. In that instant, I threw both my arms around Santa Claus’ neck, closing my eyes tightly. I heard an audible choking sound coming from my distinguished guest and, slowly loosened my grip from around his neck. I opened my eyes to find myself standing beside him on the roof of our two-storied Victorian, in a gently falling snowfall. To say I gasped, would not be a true and descriptive word of what presented itself before me, as I stood in that Christmas Eve snowfall. The spectacle that confronted me on the roof of my own house and, thirty feet above the ground would be a sight that would imprint itself forever upon my brain.

As I stared at that which was before me, I heard him say quietly, “You may pet them, if ye wish, Master Smith. To yer right, in this order, stands, Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, and Vixen. On yer left will be, Comet, Cupid, Donner and, the big fellow munching cookies is, Blitzen.”

I looked from the eight Christmas Reindeer to Santa Claus. The look of total disbelief must have shown shining

in my face, as he said, “Yes, Master Smith,...Mr. Clement C. Moore did get that part right. And I must say, pleased them immensely it did.”

I inched forward, blinking at the immense brightness of the sparkles emitted from the antlers of each Reindeer. Slowly, I reached my hand out and, touched the soft fur of the one Santa Claus had called, Dasher. The big Reindeer turned, his harness bells jangling and, gave me a solemn look,...although ominous, his look was not. I would have described his look as humorous,...if a Reindeer can look humorous I might add. Then, they all turned in their bright red harness and, looked at me. Then,...at Santa Claus.

“I have no doubt what yer all thinking,...ALL of ye.” Santa Claus said.

I turned, thinking he was speaking to me. But, he clearly had his eyes upon the Reindeer. I marveled. Was it possible? Could he really talk to his Reindeer and, they understand him? Santa Claus continued speaking, rather annoyed, I must say.

“I firmly realized the situation that I have been placed-in. In order to lessen my degree of subjugation,...I shall also involve all of ye.”

I turned swiftly at what I thought to be giggles and chortles coming from his Reindeer. And, thinking clearly back upon the situation upon the rooftop that night, I have concluded they were giggling and chortling to one another.

To gain full attention of those in attendance, Santa Claus gently cleared his throat. “For two-hundred years we have avoided such confrontations and, pursuant to my age, I accept full responsibility for my act of yer involvement. To speak openly of this,...this,...matter, will only further heighten my degree of annoyance. Upon our return to the Great Pole, I must expect and, anticipate this isolated incident to be either forgotten or, discussed quietly ONLY among yerselves.”

I could feel the quiverings of silent laughter beneath my hand, as it rested upon the Reindeer called, Dasher. I know now, they were all silently laughing. As older I grew, I realized the cause of their laughter. To be plain and too the point,...Santa Claus had been caught! And, by a mere child. As I remember, it gave them all immense pleasure, that they would all truly come to embrace and exploit as the many years and Christmas Eve’s rolled by.

Throughout the many years that lay behind me now, when Santa Claus and I talked, I learned that he had indeed become the brunt of many a joke concerning that Christmas Eve night. Not harmful or cruel jokes, I assure you. No,...a snicker here, a giggle there. A “What was that Lad’s name again, Santa?” Questions and remarks of this sort that seemed to pop-up now and again during a serious moment.

Turning to Santa, I began to again rally-forth with questions of this I had just witnessed. But, instead of

standing quite shivering upon the lofty rooftop of my dwelling, I found that, once again, we were seated very comfortably in front of the warm living room hearth and fire.

“How may I ask, did you do that?!” I asked.

“Is this important, Master Smith?” he answered as he proceeded to light an extremely long pipe, which the stem of same twinkled brightly in the hearth firelight.

Reflecting upon his answer, I squirmed uncomfortably. He allowed for my twitchings upon his lap and, thoughtfully puffed his pipe. Consideration crossed his whiskered brow and, taking the pipe from between his teeth, said, “I have found yer intelligence, Master Smith, to far exceed yer young years so, ...I will answer yer question. Undoubtedly, ye will not understand my reply but, ...answer it, I will.”

“Thank-you, kind sir,” said I, listening attentively.

He nodded and continued. “To believe in that which one cannot see, I fear, is quite beyond the thinking realm of modern mankind. To be sure, this realm of thinking has also escaped the grasp of those who did dwell in the third century to the present nineteenth century. So, present day inhabitants of this century might find solace in knowing they have followed quite comfortably in the footsteps of their predecessors.”

He relented some, I could tell, as he softly said, “Although, ...there are still many who are satisfied and, donot question the belief that even such certain things that seem impossible to accomplish, can, by other means, be accomplished.”

He placed the stem of his pipe between his teeth once more and, puffed serenely. I eyed him quite suspiciously.

“I still donot understand, kind sir.”

Looking at me, he smiled and patted my head gently. “Then, we shall let it go as such and, ye must think furtively about the answer I have given ye. As to the direction yer young life is heading, I have no doubt that one day, when youth has been left behind, ye will understand completely what I have said, Master Smith.”

I stared into the flickering fire, gathering my thoughts. I could tell he was amused, as he chuckled quite loudly.

“Is it possible, I dare-say, Master Smith, that ye have reached an ending-point concerning yer questions and, have quite finished with my time?”

Indeed, I had not! But, the hour being quite late, I knew that keep him further, I must not. “One question more, kind Santa Claus?”

He looked at me quite intently and, removed the pipe from ‘twixt his teeth. “Haaa, ...this question, Master Smith may be the most climactic of all. I have sensed a burst of intelligence from yer young brain.

Nevertheless, I have braced myself for the worst. Answer, ...I will try, Master Smith.”

He bowed his head curtly to me and, I returned his smiling nod.

To this day, I myself do not know where the words came from that formed my question. Certainly it could not have been formed by the brain of a mere ten year old boy, for the question itself was well-advanced and, far beyond my years.

“Since I now firmly believe you to be the man called, Santa Claus and, having seen with my own eyes your Reindeer that so comfortably stand upon my rooftop, I would like to know your purpose concerning our well-being.” I breathed in deeply as I finished as, the question was quite long. I then smiled confidently. Soon,...I would know the secret of, Santa Claus.

He looked at me quite astounded,...the seconds ticked by. Then, he smiled and said, “Ahh,...aptly asked, Master Smith,...aptly asked.”

By his wrinkled brow, I knew that he gathered his thoughts into words that would somehow hopefully satisfy my curiosity. Leaning down, he tamped his pipe upon the hearth and, carefully placed it inside one of his many red-robed pockets. Then, putting both arms around me, he gave me an answer that I knew in my heart to be true. Mince words, he did not, but rather love flowed from his thoughts and words as he quietly spoke and, held me gently.

“Far and long have I traveled. Much have I seen, Master Smith. But, in all of my travels, I have yet to see a central direction upon which mankind is heading. The only thing, to be sure, I have witnessed is the pursuit of a common goal that seems to be the most focused-upon point of mankind’s existence. Not to say, in the least, that this pertains to all men, but upon the majority this central point of focus lies. This goal, it seems, to my aged existence is the pursuit of the worldly-material possession. A kind word is, I daresay, much more valuable to the soul of man than a handful of sovereigns. A helping hand to those less fortunate seems to be much overtaken by the common goal I have mentioned. Man is on a collision course with himself, Master Smith. To see the forest, but not the trees, is indeed a grave misfortune. To see the Rose, but to never smell its sweet fragrance, is a thing that is lost forever. I do not question my existence, nor should ye question yers. It is ,...so it is. No more,...no less.”

I nodded my head gravely at him. He eyed me for just a moment, then smiled and continued.

“I appear to making quite an impression on ye, Master Smith, but in time, ye will come to understand my words. Now, where was I?,...Oh yes,...my purpose concerning yer well-being. There is a fine line, Master Smith, between childhood and, the adult state. There are many avenues into which one path may be divided. Yer path, Master Smith, may take an uphill avenue. Prosperity, wealth, respect. On the other hand, yer path may take a downhill avenue. Destitute, criminal,...or worse. There is an avenue, I myself, would prefer to see ye travel, Master Smith. This avenue would be an even-line avenue, Master Smith. Concern for yer fellow beings,

love for the helpless and sick, empathy for the unfortunates. There are some, Master Smith, who have traveled this avenue. Their rewards are great and,...many. To believe in something, Master Smith that represents the good in mankind is, what I consider to be my purpose concerning yer well-being. I am what ye have made me, Master Smith. Ye and, thousands like ye. Ye have believed and scorned false rumors and, misconceptions concerning me. Ye are, indeed true to yer convictions, Master Smith. And for that, I heartily applaud ye and,... thank ye. This perhaps was not a chance meeting, Master Smith but,...maybe a meeting fated to be.”

I nodded my head, trying to understand his answer, long that it was. I thought that in time I would understand what he had told me,...I knew I would.

Standing-up, he hugged me quite tightly and, then set me gently upon the floor. He said quite cheerfully and loudly, as if a burden had been lifted from his aged shoulders, “The hour is late, Master Smith and, I should hurry my schedule somewhat.”

I looked up at him and, knew I would remember all that had transpired this night, this Christmas Eve. And,...I somehow knew that he knew this. As he turned to leave, he paused for a moment upon the hearth. Looking steadfastly at me, he smiled. “Master Smith, my very young friend,...it has indeed been a wondrous pleasure to converse with one such as ye. My journey is lightened and, for that, I thank ye!”

I trembled as he slung his heavy pack upon his back and turned to me and smiled broadly. I found my voice and, shakingly whispered, “Will ever we chance to meet again, my dear Santa Claus?”

Marvelous bright twinkles and sparkles surrounded him as he began to fade. A broad smile stretched ‘cross his whiskered face. I faintly heard him say, “...Upon my word, Master Smith,...I most definitely say that we will.” The firelight twinkled with sparkles as he vanished upon the hearth. A ‘Merry Christmas, Master Smith’, echoed in my ears.

Although the years have passed me by, each, seemingly faster than the last, I have never forgotten what he said. And, as older I became, I did understand what he meant. I think I have traveled a straight-line avenue as he mentioned so many, many years ago. I have found great contentment in his echoing words to me. I too, have traveled in my many years and, throughout it all, I have tried to live as he would have me live. So great an impression he made upon a young master of ten years old.

I saw and spoke with him on many occasions throughout my many years. And, these conversations left me with even more understanding of the purpose he so plainly spoke of those many years ago.

And so, in the Winter of my ninety-fourth year, upon this,...Eve of December, I sit and pen by the light of my lamp that which I saw and heard so many years ago. Scoffers and disbelievers abound and, truly shall I be criticized and laughed at for my words. But, as stated I earlier,...it is misfortune to them and, not I.

The hour grows late and, finish my last words, I must, ...lest I keep him waiting. For, ...he has promised me that on this night, this Christmas Eve, ...I shall travel with him.... 'for the company', as he has told me, ...but, I know better. I think I shall very much enjoy the journey's he has spoken of. And, hinted he to me, ...that I might even handle the reins upon this night.

So leave you I, dear reader, ...a young master of ten again!

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