

The background of the image is a dark, festive scene. It features a Christmas tree decorated with numerous warm white lights. In the foreground, there is a mesh lantern containing two lit candles, which are also illuminated with warm white light. The overall atmosphere is cozy and celebratory.

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*Magic words:
A tale for
Christmas time*

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IT was the evening of Christmas Day. The hymn of "Peace upon earth, good-will towards men," had been chanted by thousands of voices throughout the land, from the grand cathedral-choir to the simple singers of the village church. Charity had extended her munificent hand to the poor and needy, lighting up smiles on many a care-worn face. Hospitality welcomed the good, the beautiful, and the great to the lordly mansions of the rich. Love and Peace sat enthroned in many a happy home. Poverty, shivering at the present, was consoled by the glowing figure of Hope, pointing with radiant eyes to the future. Memory and Sorrow lingered around the grave of many a departed one; but of all mourners they were the saddest who were estranged from those they still loved. Yes, amid the pain, the sorrow, the suffering of life, *their* hearts were the heaviest; for (to use the oft-quoted words of the poet) "to be wroth with those we love, doth work like madness in the brain;" and this hallowed season speaks strongest to our kindest feelings, and to the tenderness of our better nature.

A train had stopped at a rough little village station about thirty miles from town, and a few country people, on their way home, leaned over the bridge above to admire the enormous red eyes of the monster as it moved slowly on through a deep cutting crowned with dark firs. They lingered yet a moment longer, to mark whom it had borne from the