

2024



ME IN MY CELLAR

MY KITCHEN TABLE, HEADING FOR THE FROZEN LAKE!



Christmas House,
Twice Lane,
The North Pole.

Dear Friend,
I've been meaning to write to you for a couple of days, but it's only now, this afternoon, that I've finally got some time to myself. It's such a busy month, you see, everyone seems to be following me about asking endless questions about who should get which presents, what wrapping paper to use, how much fairy flying dust the reindeer will need and so on, and so on and so on. In fact, sitting down in this nice quiet corner to write to you is a very big relief.

At the moment, I am in one of the cellars, right underneath my house. I expect you think that's a little strange, but it's one of the best places to come if you want some peace and quiet. It's mostly used for storage... there's all sorts of rubbish down here, boxes of broken presents, old bits of furniture, out of date potions, things like that. There are also a good many spiders, who I rather like. The spiders in my house are very great artists - and they often make beautiful pictures in their webs. Why, even now I can see one in the corner, spinning a pattern like a tiny Christmas tree hanging between a box and an old table leg. They are, of course, a little bit magical, like everything else in my home. Magic is funny like that; if you're around it long enough, it kind of rubs off. I see it happen all the time. Objects which were perfectly normal when I brought them here can start to do the strangest things.

Take, for example, my new kitchen table. It is a completely ordinary pine table which I bought from a big furniture shop in your world last year. We had to replace the old one because a mountain troll came to dinner one night and ate it, thinking it was the first course... but that's a story for another day.

Anyway, I stood the new one in its place, covered it with a cloth and assumed that that was that - until, one moonlit night in May, when I caught sight of it galloping across the garden like a horse. It vaulted over a snowdrift and cantered out of sight, off towards the frozen lake. I would have loved to follow it, but I'd had a very long day and was just too tired.

I got up the next morning thinking I would have to buy yet another new one, but when I went down to breakfast, there it was back in the kitchen, as though it had never moved an inch. I told my elves about it as they munched their toast and cereal, but I don't think they believed me my dear, for they just nodded and smiled and asked whether I thought I needed a holiday. I guess even magical people don't think their furniture gets up to anything when they're not looking. Still, you and I know better, don't we? And if I were you, I'd keep a special eye on your chairs, because I'm sure I saw one of them wandering down the road last Christmas Eve from my sleigh. Perhaps your house is a little bit magic too!

Well, I'm afraid I shall have to finish this letter soon, as I've only got one piece of paper with me and it won't be long before I run out of space. There's just enough room to tell you how much I'm looking forward to dropping off your presents this year. The elves all send their love to you, as do the reindeer... and do you know what? I've just looked up to see that one of the spiders in the cellar here has written your name in his web and decorated it with little stars. Isn't that nice? I think it means they want me to send you their love too. Yes, that must be it, now that I've written that, they're nodding. Aren't you lucky? Lots of love, Father Christmas x



SPIDERS IN MY CELLAR

ONE OF THE ELVES