



# THE CHRISTMAS CHRONICLES



JAMES NEWMAN GRAY

JOHN TOWNSEND



'I've added some extra twinkle to the mix this year,' says Mr Magic as he unscrews a jar of the magic flying powder. He takes the lid off just as Tinsel pops outside through the cat flap. As soon as the flap swings open, a howling blast of wind rips through and zips all over the house. Magic powder blows everywhere and in seconds everyone is flying up to the attic ceiling.

It takes an hour for the magic to wear off – but what a fun hour it is. The elves, Santa and Sparkle giggle as they float off the ground, swooping and hovering. When Tinsel returns indoors, she is amazed to see all the flying fun and frolics.

'Tonight we will dream about flying,' Santa chuckles. 'After all, Christmas Day is now only two weeks away.'

'Christmas spells, Christmas spells, Christmas all the way...  
Oh what fun it is to sleep and wake up the next day!  
I wonder what tomorrow will bring..'

And yes, tomorrow you will find out, too.



## PROBLEMS

**T**hat's funny,' Mrs Claus says at breakfast. 'I just heard a rattle and a jangle with a clink and a tinkle at the window.'  
Santa goes to the front door and peers outside. 'Ooh, it's chilly. It's so cold even the icicles' icicles' icicles' icicles have got icicles. I don't believe it! The reindeer is back, with bits of chain in her antlers. She's broken out again.'

The postman chugs up in his van, opens the doors and takes out his sacks of letters. 'Morning, Santa. You've got a letter that says "special delivery – urgent"'. I see your reindeer is back with chains in her antlers. She must think you've got more treats for her. I must dash – see you tomorrow!'



He closes the van doors and chugs off through the snow.

Talking to the reindeer, Santa sighs. 'What are we going to do with you, eh? You mustn't keep escaping to come here for breakfast.'

'Leave it with me, dear,' Mrs Claus says. 'I'll sort things out while you read that special letter.' With her basket of hot MINTS pies, she leads the reindeer back to the stable and into her stall. All the reindeer look up, sniffing the air and dribbling.

'The only way to stop you coming to the house for treats is for me to leave some hidden in your bales of hay. Now there'll be no need for you to escape.'

After hiding mints pies in the hay around the stable, Mrs Claus trudges back home through the snow. The reindeer can't wait to start their mints pie hunt.

Already the tyre tracks from the postman's van are disappearing under fresh snow. 'That's funny,' Mrs Claus looks puzzled as she stares at the ground. 'How odd...'

Santa sits reading a letter, with Sparkle the dog at his feet. 'Oh dear, Sparkle - I'm in trouble. This letter is from my sister Maud. She's not very happy...'

Dear Santa,

How silly of you to send that picture of those funny little elves and that daft dog of yours. As for the cat, you know I don't like cats. Anyway, I've been trying to phone you and sending many texts but YOU ARE NOT ANSWERING. That's very rude of you, Santa. I am worried about you.

Older sisters always worry about their little brothers. So I'm packing my bags and I'm coming to stay. Please keep that cat locked away.

Love from Maud

Santa puts his head in his hands. 'Oh no, that's all we need!' Sparkle yelps and hides behind the sofa. Tinsel is nowhere to be seen. Perhaps she already senses someone scary is on her way. 'I know Maud is my big sister and I love her to bits... but she's so bossy.'

By bedtime Santa is even more worried. His grumpy sister could arrive at any time and Tinsel is missing. It's a cold night out there and she's not snuggling up cosily on his bed.

'Christmas spells, Christmas spells, Christmas all the way...  
Oh what fun it is to sleep and wake up the next day!  
Oh dear, I wonder what tomorrow brings...'

And yes, tomorrow you will find out, too.



December  
17

# MANY WORDS

**N**ot many people know this, but elves can sometimes get up to mischief. They like to play tricks. Although Santa's elves love him too much to cause trouble, they do like a good laugh. That can sometimes mean being just a bit naughty. Now and again they might change a teddy bear's little growly voice box to one from a toy cockerel or a frog. How naughty is that? Whenever elves are up to mischief at the toy factory, they start to sing:

'We sew the ears on teddy bears,  
Then stick on arms and legs in pairs.  
Now and then we have a joke  
And give a bear a loud frog-croak!'





Sometimes elf Crackerjack will tie one of his jokes around a teddy bear's neck: What do you call an elf who never went to school as a child? Elf-taught.

What do you call an elf who wins a lot of money? Welfy.  
What are elves' favourite types of photos? Elfies.

Santa has been sitting at his desk all day. There are pages of words in sparkly ink from his special pen. Beside him is the letter from Africa that started him writing his story. He has underlined Akua's words: 'I am learning to read and would like to have a book about you. Can you write one for me?'

Mrs Claus brings a tray of mince pies. 'Have you decided what to call your book, dear? After all, every book must have a title.'

Santa ponders for a while, staring out of the window at the falling snow. 'I could call it "The Fun of Being Santa Claus" or maybe "Santa's December Story"?'

Mrs Claus sips from a teacup and says, 'How about something more Christmassy? Something that gives a day-by-day record of what you do. What's another word for diary?'

Santa continues watching the dancing snowflakes through the window. 'Chronicle,' he smiles. 'Why not call my book "The Christmas Chronicles"?'

'Ooh, that sounds posh,' Mrs Claus giggles. 'It's got a ring to it. Go for it, love!'

Santa looks back at his desk where Tinsel is playing with Akua's letter by tapping it with her paw. 'And I shall mention Akua in it, too,' he says. 'In fact, I shall dedicate my book to all children in hospital this Christmas.'

At bedtime, Santa sits up in bed with his notebook and scratchy pen. Sparkle and Tinsel watch more words appear on the paper, as if by magic. Santa giggles, 'Shall I read you the first page? I told you both you would be in my book so here goes... "Not many people know this, but if you go to the North Pole and face one way, you will see a house with many windows, green shutters and a snowy roof. That's where Santa Claus lives with his wife Carol, their cat Tinsel and their dog Sparkle."' Santa turns off the light with a sigh.

'Christmas spells, Christmas spells, Christmas all the way...  
Oh what fun it is to sleep and wake up the next day!  
Nightie night, my sweetie-pies. Only one week to my big night. Just you wait till you see what tomorrow brings...'

And yes, tomorrow you will find out, too.