



# SANTA CLAUS

THE BOOK OF SECRETS



WRITTEN & ILLUSTRATED BY  
RUSSELL INCE



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# INTRODUCTION

As a child, I was always blessed with the most magnificent Christmases. My parents love this time of year and so, without fail, it was magical in our home. It was not just about presents, but rather – the build-up, the decorating of the tree, the cooking and the preparation: all of the expectation and, of course, that lingering question: world Santa Claus visit?

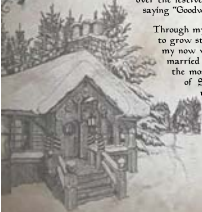
I still remember, as if it was yesterday, one particular Christmas Eve when I was 7 or 8 years old. I had been lying on my bed for what seemed like hours, excitement keeping sleep at bay. It was then that I saw him: his face looking in through the crack between the curtains that hung from my first floor bedroom window. Santa Claus himself.

As a child, time seemed to slow almost to a stop at Christmas. The family was gathered in the house without anywhere to rush off to, nowhere else they had to be. We stayed in together, playing games and testing out that year's new toys.

As I grew older, Christmas only became even more magical. I have always found people are at their best over the festive period. You see the kindness of the human spirit shining through and the saying "Goodwill to all men" certainly seems to ring true, now more than at any other time.

Through my late teens and into adult life, my love of Christmas continued to grow stronger and stronger. I was blessed with the gift of meeting my now wife, Claire, who also shared my love of Christmas. We were married in December and visited Lapland for our honeymoon. It was the most incredible experience of my life, as here, in the fabled home of Santa Claus, amongst the snow covered plains, I found a magic and wonder that I never thought could be possible. It was here that I had my second personal encounter with the man himself.

It was evening and my wife and I had decided to go for a walk through the beautiful area around our cabin, where the snow rose up above our knees. As we strolled cautiously around a bend in the path, trying to keep our grip on the hard ice, the sight that met us left us spellbound. There, in



a single reindeer drawn sleigh, was Santa Claus. he was taking a nap, seemingly waiting for something or someone. We were so astounded by what we saw that we simply continued on our way without even the softest of whispers. It was as if he was part of the scenery that should be left undisturbed.

Upon returning from our honeymoon, we decided that we would like to start our own Christmas business, something that would enable us to share our love of the festive period with the rest of the world, and soon we started making and selling decorations.

In the year 2012, I experienced my first Christmas as a father and, as such, it was the most magical yet. I woke up early on the morning of the big day, excited as ever, and went in to wake my daughter for her first ever Christmas. Arriving downstairs, I saw, resting on the mantelpiece above the fire, a beautifully wrapped gift with an envelope resting by its side. I assumed it was a present from my wife, placed there as a Christmas surprise. I would discover later however, that my prediction was wrong. Upon picking up the letter, I soon realized that it was something very special. The beautifully scribed writing, the embossed red wax seal, my mind began to race with excitement. Could it be? Yes, it was. A letter from Santa Claus.

In the letter, he told me of how he could see that the modern world was changing so fast. The arrival of new things, such as the Internet and films, meant that children now had access to so much information that he was worried the real truth about Christmas might be lost forever. As such, he had left me a journal containing knowledge that had remained a closely guarded secret for centuries. He said that, as an illustrator and writer who kept Christmas alive in my heart all year round, I would know what to do with it and as such help spread the truth about Christmas to the children of the world.

So here it follows, the truth behind one of the world's oldest and greatest mysteries, in the words of Santa Claus himself. I have tried my best to do such an important story justice, and hope that you enjoy reading it.

Russell





# History

Many centuries ago, I was known to people simply as Nicholas, or Nicholas, depending on which country you were from. I lived in a small wooden house with my wife and was blessed with the ability of being able to make anything I desired out of wood, with toys being my personal favourite. Only the wealthier people could afford to spend money on luxuries such as toys and so I had to make all sorts of different things.

Having seen the joy that my toys brought to the children of those who were lucky enough to be able to afford them, I could not bear to think that the majority of children in my village were going without. As such, throughout the year, I would make wooden toys and my wife would sew dolls, whenever we had a spare evening.

Upon the Eve of Christmas, I would ride through the village in my sleigh and deliver these toys to all of the children, even those whose families could not afford to buy their own. I did this for many years, until my beard grew white and the twilight of my life began to descend.

History has, at times, got me confused with many great people around the world, such as the famous bishop of Lycia (now in Turkey), St Nicholas. I am afraid that this is not so, I am still and have always been just a humble toymaker.

In a time when humans were living the early chapters of their story on earth and for thousands of years before that, magic was as commonplace and as accepted as the wind and rain, and many magical races shared the planet. At first, humans were just another race



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