



In 1923, North Polar Bear broke the North Pole as he tried to rescue Father Christmas's fur-lined hood. The bear and pole fell on the roof, and damaged their home.

Portrayed by J.R.R. Tolkien

North Pole postmarks awe kids

Letters to Santa are a childhood tradition. Hand-written replies are rare, so 4 British siblings were charmed to get 20 years' worth, which still offer holiday cheer and magic worldwide.

Father Christmas first wrote 3-year-old John Tolkien in 1920 and for over two decades sent illustrated epistles to J.R.R. Tolkien's growing children.

His first began, "I heard you ask daddy what I was like & where I lived. I have drawn me and my house for you," penned in shaky handwriting.

In 1923, he reported, "One very windy day last November my hood blew off and went and stuck on the top of the North Pole." The North Polar Bear broke the pole climbing up to get it, falling into Father Christmas's home, breaking his leg, ruining the presents in the basement and sidelining the bear for the year.

In 1926, the bear's fireworks display spooked the reindeer, sending Father Christmas racing after the runaway sled.

Father Christmas berated the bear, who added little notes defending his honor. Stories recounted the Snow Man's garden stay and how the Man in the Moon

dropped by for some plum pudding.

Snow elves soon joined the crew. Goblins followed, attacked North Polar Bear, and burrowed into Father Christmas's home to purloin presents before Red Gnomes helped fight them off.

World War II worried Father Christmas in 1940. "This horrible war is reducing all our stocks, and in so many countries children are living far from their homes."

Father Christmas said goodbye to Priscilla in 1943 when the youngest child was grown but promised to write her children later. Tolkien collected all the letters, but none were published until 3 years after he died in 1973.

The Kid gives this book a 5-star review.

Houghton Mifflin has republished a deluxe edition of "Letters from Father Christmas" that includes many of the letters and most of the pictures, now archived at Oxford University.

UNSCRAMBLE these names for the man who lives at the North Pole.

NTSAI CHNILASO

TANSA ALSUC

HERTAF STCRHISAM



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UNLOCK YOUR INNER CHILD

ACTIVITY Does your newspaper have Santa letters? Stretch your creativity by writing a reply.

Saint Nicholas, Santa Claus, Father Christmas