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Santa the only Acceptable Witch: Cookies, Sweets, Gifts and All

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"Twas the night before Christmas"

1. Introduction

Santa Claus, also known as Father Christmas, is a legendary character originating in Western Christian culture who is said to bring gifts to the homes of the well-behaved children on the night of Christmas Eve or the early morning hours of Christmas.

The modern belief is that Santa Claus frequent the shopping malls and public places during the festive season, that kids are encouraged to take pictures with him during this period in preparation for the special delivery on Christmas Eve. Children are warned that if they do not take pictures with him then he will not deliver sweets and gifts when the day comes.

Santa is associated with Christmas celebrations and although according to Macedo (2017) the holiday began as a celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, many celebrate Christmas regardless of their religion. Christmas in itself is celebrated in many different ways around the world.

It is therefore evident that Santa, the most iconic figure of the season also has many guises to keep up with the developments and world evolutions. *There are many magic ways up Santa's sleeves.*

2. *How he does the work?*

Santa Claus is said to live at the North Pole with his wife, where he spends the year making toys with the help of his elves. There he receives letters from children all over the world asking for Christmas gifts. On Christmas Eve, he loads his sleigh with toys and flies around the world, drawn by eight reindeers, stopping at each child's house, he slides down the chimney and leaves the gifts, refreshing himself with the milk and cookies left for him by the household's children.

He begins his deliveries promptly at midnight on Christmas day, December 25th. Meaning at night, twelve' o clock on the 24th of December. Firstly, it is culturally unacceptable to many Africans for anything to happen at night while people are sleeping. Unless, in a case of death and funeral preparation, then a night vigil can be held at night until the wee hours of the morning. Besides, in the aforementioned reason, socially in the African culture, Santa would be labelled a witch, if seen or identified. For it is said that if children are still awake then Santa will pass the houses where children are not sleeping. He returns later, but only when the children are asleep.

The children are made to sleep on Christmas Eve so that they do not miss out on the gift. The elders are privy to Santa's practices and they put children to bed for "*dilo tsa boshego*" (nocturnal activities) to take place. Contrary to the societal beliefs, they accept and allow the children to accept the gifts. Santa is indeed an acceptable witch and one who is welcomed by the entire family not only children. On other occasions, anything left or delivered at night would be frowned upon. The deliveries would be associated with *tokoloshe* (evil spirit) or ghost dealings. If deliveries are only made when recipients are asleep, these gifts would be taken to an *inyanga* (traditional healer) to be checked if they are poisoned or possessed by evil spirits. The delivered consignments would not be touched or moved. The *inyanga* would have to be called to the scene to cleanse and chase away any evil that may have come with "*dilo tsa boshego*".

According to Macedo (2017), in Italy, they have a different Santa identified as *La Befana*, a friendly witch who comes by on January 5th

to deliver sweets and toys. She flies around on a broomstick and slides down chimneys to deliver presents to nice children and coal to the naughty. *La Befana* is a female Santa and she will even sweep around the house before leaving. In return, families leave wine and plates of food instead of cookies and milk as a treat for *La Befana*.

Across the world and as commonly known Santa uses his reindeers to fly for quick deliveries (Kennedy - <https://www.fluentin3months.com/international-santa>).

Reindeers can't fly under normal circumstances but Santa's are special. Because of magic, they can fly very high and very far without getting tired. Again, it is acceptable for Santa to fly across houses using a mode that is not meant for flying. This is witchcraft. If something that cannot fly suddenly can fly from high and far without getting tired, this can only be as a result of a spell. The secret of witches' flying had little to do with their broomstick and a lot to do with a concoction called 'flying ointment'.

A question thus can be asked is Santa himself is a witch and has managed to get the concoction for the reindeer to enable them to fly.

Society believes that a witch can fly between cities the whole night and still be able to function perfectly the next morning, without having a feeling of fatigue. If something doesn't have wings then it can't and shouldn't fly.

Someone sprinkle 'holy water'. Things are getting out of hand!

Santa slides down the chimney, while not even the back door is an acceptable access point culturally. The polite practice is if a guest arrives at the door and knock, they then await for those inside to open the door of the building to let them in. Santa welcomes himself! It is rude and disrespectful to enter people's homes without permission or being welcomed by those inside the building. However, not only does Santa access people's homes through improper ways, but he also enters these houses without permission. This is well known among the young and the old but no one points it out or makes an attempt to stop it.

3. *Conclusion*

If Santa is not to be seen or heard when he makes his deliveries, then maybe he must take advantage of the technology and make use of the online gift delivery services. He can choose to remain anonymous with his gift and maybe sign off the gift as usual 'xoxoxo Santa'.

In the modern era, society is encouraged to believe in Father Christmas as any figure or form to bring gifts to children and replace Santa. That figure is at times a known relative or even a parent, thus they do not have to stay awake in hope on Christmas Eve. It is difficult to convince children of the magic that is Santa as they are now privy to the customs around the Christmas period, they gain knowledge from the internet and friends. Can it be that modern-day technology will be the death of Santa? *Santa changes but Santa never dies!*

4. *List of references*

Kennedy S "Naughty or Nice? How 'Santa' Looks in other cultures". (24 December 2017). Available at: <https://www.fluentin3months.com/international-santa>. (Accessed: 14 October 2020).

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