



Dec. 21, 2017

It's almost time for Father Christmas to make his annual ride. Before the jolly old guy slides down your chimney, here are some things you need to explain to your Irish wolfhound.

### **He Knows If You've Been Bad or Good**

No, really, Santa's not like mom or dad. The old guy never lets his guard down. He has spies. He knows it was you who hid that flank steak in your left cheek and strolled nonchalantly right past everyone before creeping off down the hall to swallow. Sure, Santa grades on the curve or *nobody* would get anything but lumps of coal for Christmas.

But he's watching. Maybe its hidden cameras. Maybe he really *does* have an army of elves. You're getting away with nothing, bub. *Nothing*.

### **Santa Has The Good Stuff**

Wolfhounds walk to the beat of their own drummer, it's true. What do you care if some old guy who hangs around with reindeer disapproves? But understand that while mom and dad may get you a new bone or special treats like nice cream and pizza bones, Santa has the best stuff. Better than steak. Better than rolling in roadkill. Because it's made by elves, see. It's magic. Wolfhounds understand magic. You *are* a magical creature. This is action you want *in* on. But only if you're reasonably good. Not wolfhound good. Santa's got a higher standard. It may take some self-control. But, c'mon, if kids can toe the line occasional, so can an Irish wolfhound. Magical stuff,

remember? Probably better than that whole cheesecake you stole that time.

### **Patience is a Virtue**

Sure, you're a wolfhound. You can hear Santa coming two counties away. But you'd better not bark, you'd better not howl. Santa may be a pretty stout fellow but reindeer are a jumpy bunch. Cut loose like you're itching to do and all you're likely to hear on your rooftop is the clatter of hooves and a big swoosh as Prancer and Dancer cut out on you. Lay low. Keep quiet. Pretend it's the cat. Don't commit until North Pole One has come to a complete stop and the Santa has a chance to stagger out.

### **Give The Guy Some Room To Work**

Be cool. Santa's been around but he's probably not used to wolfhound snouts snorfling all through his pockets when he tries to clamber out of the fireplace. The man's working. He's like mom cutting up carrots on the cutting board. Keep thrusting that long nose in the way and he'll have to stop what he's doing altogether. He's got a lot of stops to make. The last thing you want is seeing Santa's backside vanishing back up the chimney and all he tosses you is a Nylabone. Reel it in. And try not to lean on the old guy. Cripple Santa and there'll be hell to pay.

### **Seek Not The Treasure**

Sure, that's milk and cookies left up on the mantel. You *like* milk and cookies. But while you're *not* barking and *not* frisking Santa, resist passing the time with Santa by casually reaching seven feet up and scarfing down his snack. It cold out. The old

guy's blood pressure's probably a little wonky from all the exertion on this night of nights. He needs his boost before getting back in that cold sleigh again riding the wind. Santa may not be as patient as mom and dad when you flitch his food. A guy who can control a team of eight flying reindeer is probably no a pantywaist. Besides, you know how to open the fridge. You can get your own milk and cookies later.

## **The True Meaning Of Christmas**

It's the season for giving. No, really. Giving to others is what makes you feel all warm inside. Well, okay, so does pot roast. Stay focused here. After Santa's survived you and made it safely (and probably speedier than you expected) back up that chimney again, remember to give something to your humans. And no, not another green gas cloud. Something way better. Keep on giving them you. Just like you always do, with no holding back. You don't need an American Express card or a job in the corner office to make them feel rich. Keep on being you.

And try to not get into *all* the boxes before mom and dad make it out of bed on Christmas Day. Pace yourself.