

DECEMBER 1 TO 25

Letters from Bramble

written for

Beau and Lucy

Twenty-five letters, one for each morning until Christmas.

Read the first one on December 1, the last one on the 25th, when Bramble flies home.

OLD HIGHWAY HOLIDAY POST

Made to keep.



✦ 24 sleeps until Christmas! ✦

Dear Beau and Lucy,

I'M BACK!!! I zoomed all the way from the North Pole and did three loop-de-loops over your roof because I was SO excited to see you. I missed your giggles all year long. For the next 25 days I'll be playing, exploring, and maybe causing a teeny bit of trouble. Look for me somewhere new each morning! One small thing: please don't touch me, or my flying gets wobbly.

Love, Bramble



✦ 18 sleeps until Christmas! ✦

Dear Beau and Lucy,

Oopsie! I was trying to bake you some cookies, but the flour bag tipped over and, well... I had to make a snow angel. It's the rules! I think I have flour in my ears now. Maybe you and a grown-up can bake the cookies today, and I'll just be the official taste tester.

Love, Bramble



♦ 16 sleeps until Christmas! ♦

Dear Beau and Lucy,

I've noticed what GREAT listeners you've been! When your grown-ups ask you to do something, you're getting better and better at listening the first time. That makes my heart glow like Rudolph's nose! Tonight, pick your favorite book for bedtime. I'll be listening too!

Love, Bramble



✦ 12 sleeps until Christmas! ✦

Dear Beau and Lucy,

Brrr! A BLIZZARD hit your house last night... a paper snowflake blizzard! I cut out snowflakes all night long, and every single one is different, just like real ones. And just like each of you! There's nobody else in the whole world exactly like you. Can you find my favorite snowflake?

Love, Bramble



✦ 9 sleeps until Christmas! ✦

Dear Beau and Lucy,

Good morning! Does your milk look a little... GREEN today? That's how we drink it at the North Pole! Elf milk makes you jump higher and laugh louder. At least, that's what I tell the reindeer. Take a sip and tell me: do you feel extra elfy?

Love, Bramble



◆ *It's Christmas!* ◆

Dear Beau and Lucy,

MERRY CHRISTMAS! Today I fly home to the North Pole, and my heart is so full. Thank you for the giggles, the adventures, and all the kindness you shared. I'll tell everyone at the North Pole about you. Keep being wonderful, and I'll see you next year. I'll miss you already!

Love, Bramble

Setting the scene for Bramble's countdown

Every night after bedtime, Bramble moves to a new spot and leaves the next day's letter for Beau and Lucy. This guide tells you exactly what to set up for each of the 25 letters, what you'll need, and how long it takes. Nothing takes more than 15 minutes, and most nights are 5 to 10 with things already in the house.

25 letters

12 pranks

5 praise days

6 activities

The nightly routine

About 10 minutes after the kids are asleep

1

Check tomorrow's page

Find the date below and gather what's on the "You'll need" list.

2

Move the elf

Always a new spot. Kids love finding the elf somewhere surprising.

3

Build the scene

Follow the steps. It doesn't need to look like the painting. Close enough is plenty.

4

Leave the letter

Prop the printed letter where they'll see it first thing in the morning.

Print everything ahead

Print all 25 letters in November on matte cardstock. Keep them in a folder in date order, hidden from the kids.

The no-touch rule

Day 1's letter sets the rule: kids can talk to the elf, but touching makes the elf's flying wobbly. It keeps scenes intact until you reset them.

Make it theirs

When you read a praise letter aloud, add one real thing they did that week. That's the part they'll remember.

The month at a glance

One letter a morning, December 1 to 25

● Arrival (1) ● Prank (12) ● Praise (5) ● Activity (6) ● Goodbye (1)

Dec 1 I'm Back!	Dec 2 Marshmallow Bubble Bath	Dec 3 Toilet Paper Snowstorm	Dec 4 Kindness Cards	Dec 5 Candy Cane Zip Line
Dec 6 Marshmallow Snowball Fight	Dec 7 Flour Snow Angel	Dec 8 Teddy Bear Ice Rink	Dec 9 Bedtime Story Night	Dec 10 Silly Mustache Gallery
Dec 11 Gone Fishing	Dec 12 Blanket Fort Campout	Dec 13 Paper Snowflake Blizzard	Dec 14 Brave Sledgers	Dec 15 Candy Cane Treasure Hunt
Dec 16 Green Milk Breakfast	Dec 17 Gingerbread Village	Dec 18 Sticky Note Snowman	Dec 19 Super Helpers	Dec 20 Marshmallow Snowman Army
Dec 21 Longest Night Dance Party	Dec 22 Wrapped Up Surprise	Dec 23 Notes to the North Pole	Dec 24 Christmas Eve	Dec 25 Merry Christmas, Time to Fly Home

One shopping trip covers it

Most of this is already in your kitchen or craft drawer. Day numbers in gray.

Pantry

- Mini and large marshmallows days 2, 6, 12, 20
- Flour day 7
- Goldfish crackers day 11
- 10+ mini candy canes, 2 large days 5, 11, 15
- Green food coloring day 16
- Gingerbread kit or graham crackers, icing, gumdrops day 17
- Pretzel sticks, mini chocolate chips day 20
- Cookies, milk, a carrot day 24

Craft drawer

- Cardstock, crayons, stickers days 4, 23
- Kitchen twine or fishing line day 5
- Painter's tape days 5, 13, 22
- White printer paper, kid scissors day 13
- Window or dry-erase marker day 10
- About 40 sticky notes day 18
- Cotton balls days 8, 14
- Gold star stickers day 19
- Toothpicks day 20
- Wrapping paper and a big bow day 22
- A red envelope day 23

Around the house

- A big mug day 2
- One roll of toilet paper day 3
- Baking sheet days 7, 8
- Small shatter-resistant mirror or foil day 8
- Clear bowl day 11
- A battery tea light and string lights days 12, 21
- Toy sled or a box lid day 14
- Toy truck and blocks day 19
- Stockings days 15, 24
- Stuffed animals days 6, 8, 9

Night-by-night setups

Set up the night before the date shown

DECEMBER

1

24 sleeps to go

I'm Back!

Arrival

Setup 10 min

Mess: None

YOU'LL NEED

- Your elf
- Day 1 letter
- A few paper snowflakes or a pinch of fake snow
- Optional: a small wrapped treat

SET IT UP

1. Put the elf on a windowsill or mantel with arms spread wide, as if it just landed.
2. Scatter snowflakes or fake snow around its feet.
3. Lean the letter against the window where it catches the morning light.

Tip: Read the letter together on the first morning so everyone hears the no-touch rule.

In the letter: *Bramble announces the arrival and explains the no-touch rule.*

DECEMBER

2

23 sleeps to go

Marshmallow Bubble Bath

Prank

Setup 5 min

Mess: Low

YOU'LL NEED

- A big mug
- Mini marshmallows
- A washcloth or tissue for a towel

SET IT UP

1. Fill the mug to the top with mini marshmallows.
2. Sit the elf inside so it's lounging back, with one leg over the rim.
3. Drape a tiny towel over its cap, and scatter a few marshmallows on the counter.

Safety: Keep it on the counter, out of reach of little ones.

In the letter: *Bramble brags about the fluffiest bath and admits eating "most" of the marshmallows.*

DECEMBER

3

22 sleeps to go

Toilet Paper Snowstorm

Prank

Setup 10 min

Mess: Low, easy cleanup

YOU'LL NEED

- One roll of toilet paper

SET IT UP

1. Loosely drape the paper around the tree in a spiral, top to bottom.
2. Put the elf near the top holding the loose end.
3. Leave the empty cardboard tube on the floor as evidence.

Tip: Drape, don't wrap, so the ornaments stay put. Roll it back up in the morning.

In the letter: *Bramble made a "snowstorm" and asks for help unwrapping.*

DECEMBER

4

21 sleeps to go

Kindness Cards

Praise

Setup 10 min

Mess: Low

YOU'LL NEED

- Folded cardstock
- Crayons and stickers
- Envelopes

SET IT UP

1. Set the card supplies out on the table.
2. Make one sample card with a big doodled heart.
3. Sit the elf on the paper stack holding up the sample card.

Tip: Decide who the cards are for ahead of time (a neighbor, grandparent, or teacher) and deliver them the same day.

In the letter: *Bramble praises the kids for kindness and suggests making cards.*

DECEMBER

5

20 sleeps to go

Candy Cane Zip Line

Prank

Setup 15 min

Mess: None

YOU'LL NEED

- Kitchen twine or fishing line
- 2 anchor points (chair backs, cabinet knobs)
- A large candy cane
- Painter's tape

SET IT UP

1. Tie the line on a gentle slant between two anchor points.
2. Hook the candy cane over the line and wrap the elf's hands around it.
3. Use a small piece of tape to hold the elf in place, hidden behind its hands.

Safety: Run the line above head height and away from walkways. Take it down after the morning reveal.

In the letter: *Bramble rode the zip line "about one hundred times" and bumped the lamp.*

DECEMBER

6

19 sleeps to go

Marshmallow Snowball Fight

Activity

Setup 10 min

Mess: Low

YOU'LL NEED

- Marshmallows (large for little ones)
- A few books
- Couch cushions
- Stuffed animals

SET IT UP

1. Build a small book fort for the elf with a pile of marshmallow "snowballs."
2. Set up a couch-cushion fort across the room for the kids' team.
3. Line up stuffed animals as extra players.

Tip: Plan 10 minutes after school for the rematch.

In the letter: *Bramble challenges the kids to a marshmallow snowball fight.*

DECEMBER

7

18 sleeps to go

Flour Snow Angel

Prank

Setup 5 min

Mess: High, but contained

YOU'LL NEED

- A baking sheet
- About ½ cup of flour
- The flour bag and a wooden spoon

SET IT UP

1. Spread the flour on the baking sheet, not straight on the counter.
2. Lay the elf in it and swish its arms and legs to make an angel.
3. Tip the flour bag on its side next to it, with the spoon.

Tip: The painting is inspiration: the elf spills flour across the counter, but the baking sheet keeps yours tidy. Pair it with baking cookies that day, and brush the elf off afterward with a dry soft brush.

In the letter: *Bramble spilled the flour trying to bake and had to make a snow angel.*

DECEMBER

8

17 sleeps to go

Teddy Bear Ice Rink

Prank

Setup 10 min

Mess: None

YOU'LL NEED

- A small shatter-resistant mirror, or a baking sheet covered in foil
- Cotton balls
- 2 or 3 stuffed animals

SET IT UP

1. Lay the mirror or foil tray flat as the rink.
2. Ring the edges with cotton-ball snow.
3. Pose the elf mid-glide, and sit one teddy bear on its bottom.

Tip: Name the fallen bear “Bear” so it matches the letter.

In the letter: *Bramble opened an ice rink, and Bear kept trying until he could spin.*

DECEMBER

9

16 sleeps to go

Bedtime Story Night

Praise

Setup 5 min

Mess: None

YOU'LL NEED

- A favorite picture book
- A few stuffed animals

SET IT UP

1. Open the book on the bed or a pillow.
2. Sit the elf against the pillow as if it's reading aloud.
3. Gather stuffed animals around as the audience.

Tip: Let them pick tonight's bedtime book, just like the letter says.

In the letter: *Bramble praises the kids for listening the first time.*

DECEMBER

10

15 sleeps to go

Silly Mustache Gallery

Prank

Setup 10 min

Mess: Low

YOU'LL NEED

- A window or dry-erase marker
- Framed photos with glass

SET IT UP

1. Draw curly mustaches on the glass of the frames, never on the photos.
2. Stand the elf nearby holding the capped marker.
3. Make one mustache extra large to match the letter.

Safety: Test the marker in a corner first. Glass cleaner wipes it right off.

In the letter: *Bramble drew mustaches on the family photos and asks which is best.*

DECEMBER

11

14 sleeps to go

Gone Fishing

Prank

Setup 10 min

Mess: Low

YOU'LL NEED

- A clear bowl with a little water
- Goldfish crackers
- A candy cane or chopstick with string
- A small cup or toy bucket for the "catch"

SET IT UP

1. Pour a little water into a clear bowl to make the pond. A blue towel underneath makes it look deeper.
2. Fill the cup with goldfish crackers and set it beside the bowl, not in the water.
3. Sit the elf on the rim with the rod, a cracker tied to the string and dangling just above the water.

Tip: Keep the crackers in the cup so they stay crunchy for snack time. Only the one on the string goes near the water.

In the letter: *Bramble caught a bucket of goldfish and wants to share at snack time.*

DECEMBER

12

13 sleeps to go

Blanket Fort Campout

Activity

Setup 5 min

Mess: None

YOU'LL NEED

- A dish towel or small blanket
- Two cereal boxes or books
- A battery tea light
- A marshmallow on a toothpick

SET IT UP

1. Drape the towel over the boxes to make a tiny fort.
2. Sit the elf in the doorway with the tea light as a campfire and the marshmallow in hand.
3. Stack the kids' blankets nearby. Building the big fort is their job after dinner.

Safety: Battery lights only. The kids build the real fort that evening, so your part is done in five minutes.

In the letter: *It's campout night: bring pillows, flashlights, and a story.*

DECEMBER

13

12 sleeps to go

Paper Snowflake Blizzard

Prank

Setup 10 min

Mess: Low

YOU'LL NEED

- White printer paper
- Scissors
- Painter's tape

SET IT UP

1. Fold a square in half three times and snip to make 6 to 8 snowflakes.
2. Tape them on one window.
3. Sit the elf on the sill with kid scissors (closed) and the scraps.

Tip: A bag of pre-cut paper snowflakes skips the cutting entirely. Choose one ahead of time as the elf's favorite.

In the letter: *A paper-snowflake blizzard, and every one is different, just like the kids.*

DECEMBER

14

11 sleeps to go

Brave Sledders

Praise

Setup 5 min

Mess: None

YOU'LL NEED

- A toy sled or a box lid
- Ribbon for a pull rope
- A pillow
- Cotton balls

SET IT UP

1. Slant a pillow against the couch to make a hill.
2. Cover it in cotton-ball snow.
3. Put the elf at the front of the sled holding the rope, mid-ride.

Tip: When you read it, name one brave thing each child tried this month.

In the letter: *Bramble praises the kids for being brave and trying new things.*

DECEMBER

15

10 sleeps to go

Candy Cane Treasure Hunt

Activity

Setup 15 min

Mess: None

YOU'LL NEED

- 10 mini candy canes
- A big mitten

SET IT UP

1. Hide the candy canes around the house: some easy, some tricky.
2. Hide one near mittens or slippers to match the letter's hint.
3. Put the elf peeking out of a big mitten on a coat hook, finger to its lips.

Tip: Write the hiding spots down. You'll forget one.

In the letter: *Bramble hid 10 candy canes and gives a hint.*

DECEMBER

16

9 sleeps to go

Green Milk Breakfast

Prank

Setup 5 min

Mess: Low

YOU'LL NEED

- Green food coloring
- Milk and a clear pitcher
- Cereal bowls

SET IT UP

1. Stir 3 or 4 drops of coloring into a pitcher of milk and put it back in the fridge.
2. In the morning, set the pitcher out with the cereal bowls.
3. Stand the elf next to it holding the empty coloring bottle.

Tip: Food coloring stains, so put the lid back on and keep it out of reach.

In the letter: *It's how elves drink milk at the North Pole. It makes you jump higher.*

DECEMBER

17

8 sleeps to go

Gingerbread Village

Activity

Setup 10 min

Mess: Medium

YOU'LL NEED

- A gingerbread kit, or graham crackers
- Icing
- Gumdrops and candy

SET IT UP

1. Lay out the kit pieces and candy on the table.
2. Build one tiny starter house.
3. Perch the elf on its roof placing a gumdrop on the chimney.

Tip: Setup is 10 minutes for you the night before. Plan about an hour the next day with the kids for the building. Graham cracker houses are cheap and easy for little hands.

In the letter: *Village building day. Bramble is the mayor.*

DECEMBER

18

7 sleeps to go

Sticky Note Snowman

Prank

Setup 10 min

Mess: None

YOU'LL NEED

- About 40 sticky notes
- An orange and a black marker

SET IT UP

1. Stick three rough circles of notes on the fridge door, smallest on top.
2. Draw eyes and buttons on a few notes and a carrot nose on an orange one.
3. Sit the elf on top of the fridge.

Tip: Short on notes? Three paper plates taped to the fridge work too.

In the letter: *Meet Frosty McFridge. Can you draw him a friend?*

DECEMBER

19

6 sleeps to go

Super Helpers

Praise

Setup 5 min

Mess: None

YOU'LL NEED

- A toy truck
- Building blocks
- A toy basket
- Gold star stickers

SET IT UP

1. Load blocks into the truck.
2. Set the elf on top, driving toward the toy basket.
3. Put a gold star sticker on each child's letter.

Tip: When you read it, name the specific ways each child helped.

In the letter: *A gold star for being super helpers.*

DECEMBER

20

5 sleeps to go

Marshmallow Snowman Army

Prank

Setup 10 min

Mess: Low

YOU'LL NEED

- Large marshmallows
- Toothpicks
- Pretzel sticks
- Mini chocolate chips
- Paper and a toothpick for a flag

SET IT UP

1. Stack two marshmallows on a toothpick for each snowman.
2. Add pretzel arms and press on chocolate-chip buttons (a dab of water helps them stick).
3. Line up five or six with the elf in front holding the flag.

Safety: Take out the toothpicks before little ones eat the army.

In the letter: *The army protects the house from grumpiness.*

DECEMBER

21

4 sleeps to go

Longest Night Dance Party

Activity

Setup 5 min

Mess: None

YOU'LL NEED

- Twinkle lights
- Paper stars
- A speaker or playlist

SET IT UP

1. Turn on the twinkle lights and hang a few paper stars.
2. Pose the elf mid-twirl on the coffee table.
3. Leave a speaker or a written playlist next to it.

Tip: December 21 is the winter solstice, the longest night of the year here in the north. Have the dance party right after dinner.

In the letter: *The longest night is for lights and dancing.*

DECEMBER

22

3 sleeps to go

Wrapped Up Surprise

Prank

Setup 10 min

Mess: Low

YOU'LL NEED

- One sheet of wrapping paper
- Painter's tape
- A bow

SET IT UP

1. After the kids are asleep, tape one sheet of wrapping paper across the outside of their door frame at kid height.
2. Stick the bow in the middle.
3. Put the elf on top of the door frame holding the tape.

Safety: Use paper only and never tape the door shut. Kids must be able to get out. For kids who wake at night, wrap a different door.

In the letter: *Bramble got carried away wrapping and wrapped the kids' door.*

DECEMBER

23

2 sleeps to go

Notes to the North Pole

Praise

Setup 5 min

Mess: None

YOU'LL NEED

- Paper and crayons
- A big red envelope

SET IT UP

1. Set paper and crayons at the table.
2. Stand the elf on the table holding the empty red envelope.

Tip: Keep the kids' notes. They make great keepsakes to tuck into next year's box.

In the letter: *Bramble's report says the kids have been kind, brave, and helpful.*

DECEMBER

24

1 sleep to go

Christmas Eve

Activity

Setup 10 min

Mess: None

YOU'LL NEED

- An empty cookie plate
- A glass
- A carrot for the reindeer

SET IT UP

1. Put the elf on the mantel near the stockings, hugging its knees.
2. Set the empty plate, glass, and carrot on a small table nearby.
3. Leave the letter by the plate.

Tip: Set out the cookies and milk together that evening, before bed.

In the letter: *Just one more sleep. Bramble thanks them for a wonderful month.*

DECEMBER

25

Christmas Day

Merry Christmas, Time to Fly Home

Goodbye

Setup 10 min

Mess: Low

YOU'LL NEED

- The Day 25 letter
- A trail of gold star confetti or sugar
- Optional: a small gift from the elf

SET IT UP

1. Put the elf away somewhere the kids won't find it.
2. Make a sparkly trail from the tree to the window.
3. Leave the letter (and small gift) where the elf last sat.

Tip: Skip real glitter. Star confetti looks just as good and vacuums up easily.

In the letter: *Merry Christmas. Bramble flies home and promises to come back next year.*

Forgot to move the elf?

It happens to everyone

"Your elf got stuck in a snowstorm."

Leave the elf where it was, and put a little flour or a few cotton balls on the cap. Tomorrow's letter can arrive a day late.

"Someone touched the elf!"

Sprinkle a pinch of cinnamon beside the elf. It's elf medicine. Say the elf needs a night to recover.

Morning save

If the kids are still asleep, do a quick 5-minute scene instead: day 2, 9, 16, or 19. Swap in the full one tonight.

Two letters at once

Leave both letters and say the elf was so busy that yesterday's letter got lost in the sleigh.

Safety notes

Quick things to keep in mind

- **Choking hazards.** Mini marshmallows, candy canes, gumdrops, and goldfish crackers are choking hazards for children under 4. Keep scenes on counters and supervise snack time.
- **Strings and lines.** Run the zip line (day 5) above head height and away from walkways and doorways. Take it down after the morning reveal.
- **Doors.** On day 22, cover the door with paper only, never tape it shut. Kids must be able to get out at night. For children who wake up at night, wrap a different door instead.
- **No real flames.** Use battery string lights and tissue-paper campfires only.
- **Glass and markers.** Use a shatter-resistant mirror or foil for the ice rink. Only draw on photo glass with a window marker, and test it in a corner first.
- **Food coloring stains.** Put the lid back on and keep the bottle out of reach.

Old Highway Holiday Post · Setup guide for the 25-day elf countdown letters. Letters print on 8.5 x 11 in paper.