

# Ice Writing

*by janus*

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*Chapter 1 of 1*

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"If you aren't allowed to do magic, or to have magical things, and if you aren't even allowed to have Muggle things like telly-vision, what did you do all day on your hols in such a small house in that little town?" Evan had grown up with house-elves, a library, fields, magical creatures, and amusing magical toys. At twelve he did not have a clear idea of the Muggle world.

"Well, I read and studied. There's a playground, but it's better in summer." He didn't want to explain how he cut wood for the stove, how he lit the coal furnace each morning, how he shovelled snow for Muggle coins and there *still* wasn't a Christmas. "But look." He drew Evan to the window.

"Well, it's pretty, all laced in ice, but you can't really see anything. We could cast a warming charm."

"No, wait. Look."

Severus took a big breath and leaned over to within an inch of the window. He blew a steady stream of air at the iced glass, his mouth a wide O. The moisture condensed on the window as water, melting the ice. When his breath ran out they could see through the circle he had created: to the snow, the dark trees, and the path to the gamekeeper's hut. He and Evan looked out, their heads close together. But immediately, their peep-hole began to whiten and close in.

"That doesn't work for long." Evan was scornful.

"No, look." Severus blew again, and then again, over the ice that had formed beneath his breath. It melted and froze again.

"Let me." Soon a thick layer of smooth ice had formed and was raised above the white crystal that covered the rest of the glass.

"It's a lake, see? And the rest is a whole country," Severus explained. He pressed the outside of his curled fist against the glass until the frost melted. He melted five dots with his finger above the mark his fist had made. He moved back to show Evan. "It's a footprint! It's the footprint of a Giant who is not wearing any shoes."

Evan had begun making another lake. "Hey, it really is!" He was pleased.

Severus made a whole parade of Giant footprints with his left and right fists, leading from the window sill in a meandering path to their first lake. "It's going to be a magic lake. Now, into what shall he transform?"

"A rabbit!" Evan selected randomly.

"All right." Leading from the lake, straight towards Evan's new one, he drew a path of rabbit-prints. For each print he melted the ice twice with the pad of his thumb for the big rabbit hind feet. Then he made an index-finger dot either side of them for little rabbit fore-paws. "Your lake is a magic lake, too. You make the next animal."

"You pick one."

"A snake!" Severus chose less randomly. "And you can make a print by scratching the ice with a coin, if you have one."

Evan drew out a galleon and scratched a slithery path of curves leading to the far edge of the window.

They stood back, looking at their handiwork. "They must be very deep lakes," Severus decided. "Otherwise the giant animals would have displaced all the water."

"Let's make a giant squid!"