*Disclaimer: I really did not have the time to write this blog post. But since I usually tell the bloggers that it should be possible to write ”on the fly” I decided to walk the talk and write anyway. So here we go!*

For most Swedish kids the 6th of December is an ordinary day during christmas-season. They get up, open a package or a door in their advent-calendar, watch the calendar on TV and go to school if it is a school day.

My kids get up an run eagerly to their boots which they have placed by the door. Strategically they will have chosen their biggest available boot. Why? To get more loot. Chocolates, sweets and hopefully a small present.

I am originally from Germany and German kids get a visit from *Nikolaus* (Saint Nicholas - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Nicholas>) in the night from the 5th to the 6th of december. If you have been a good girl or boy you get sweets, if you have been not quite as nice you get a coal or in some regions even a stick so your parents can give you a good spanking. (When I mentioned this to my kids the first time they cried, then my daughter enlightened me that it is forbidden to beat kids according to the UN convention.)

Nikolaus also comes to children in other countries, most well known is the Netherlands and their Sinterklaas (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinterklaas>).

So thanks to my German roots Nikolaus also comes to my Swedish-German kids and by the time you read this they will have gotten their chocolate and a present (all work in progress, just like this blog post).

Now, the big question is: what will be in my boot?

Chocolate I hope. Or actually, I know. I have a direct connection to Nikolaus and we agreed to solve the chocolate issue.

But what else? What will be there?

When I was a child, I sometimes got a stick with candy on. Meaning: well kid, we all know that you have been naughty sometimes so we are watching you. But you are also sort of nice and sweet so here you go, have some candy.

I think this year I will get a stick with letters on. Yes, letters. ABC and so on.

Why?

Because I love them. They are my candy. They make it possible for me to communicate my thoughts, other people’s great science and facts people did not know they wanted to know more about. Without letters I would not be able to write this text and I would certainly be out of work. The stick - well, I wouldn’t know. Maybe a postponed deadline or two.

One of the highlights of my job as science journalist is to work with the KI blog team. We discuss ideas, the bloggers write and I get to read their texts. Now we are talking really nice candy or even luxury chocolate. I get a text in my mailbox, open it without knowing what to expect and start reading. They make me smile, think and sometimes I might have to wipe a tear on my almost daily commute. I get to know new stuff, sometimes fun facts and sometimes more serious matters. I get new ideas for my own writing and more importantly ideas for how to write. Giving feedback also gives me the opportunity to learn. Learning by teaching, what a perfect circle.

So thank you bloggers for filling not my boot but my mailbox with letters which form texts, your texts. Just bring them on and remember that a blogpost does not have to be perfect (which I have just provided a living proof of).

And Nikolaus, don’t forget that chocolate. I need it for reading and writing.

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