

The image is decorated with various stylized botanical elements. In the top left, there are several dark green leaves of different shapes. In the top right, there are two bright red flowers with dark green, serrated leaves. In the bottom left, there are two dark green, multi-lobed flowers. In the bottom right, there is a small sprig with three dark green, oval-shaped leaves. The text is centered in the middle of the image.

DEAR SANTA

WISHING YOU A JOYOUS HOLIDAY SEASON



DEAR SECRET SANTA,

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU HAVE OFFICIALLY BECOME MY SECRET SANTA THIS YEAR. I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, AND I DON'T WANT TO GUESS (BECAUSE THAT WILL SPOIL THE GAME), BUT I DO KNOW ONE THING—YOU NOW HOLD THE POWER TO CHANGE MY OFFICE DESK LIFE FOREVER. DON'T WORRY, NO PRESSURE. OKAY, MAYBE A LITTLE BIT OF PRESSURE.

NOW, LET ME MAKE YOUR JOB SIMPLE. WHILE SOME PEOPLE MAY SAY, "I WANT KUROMI MUG," OR "I WANT A GOLD/MONEY," OR "I WANT SOMETHING EXPENSIVE BUT I WON'T ADMIT IT," I WILL TELL YOU THAT MY WISH CLEARLY:

I WANT A PLANT.



YES, A PLANT. NOT A FAKE PLASTIC ONE. NOT A PICTURE OF A PLANT PRINTED ON A4 PAPER. A REAL, LIVING, BREATHING, LEAF-SHAKING, PHOTOSYNTHESIZING PLANT. BUT NOT JUST ANY PLANT—I WANT AN EASY-CARE INDOOR PLANT. SOMETHING SMALL, SOMETHING STRONG, AND SOMETHING THAT CAN SURVIVE THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES OF OUR OFFICE ENVIRONMENT (NO SUNLIGHT, AIR-CON BLASTING LIKE NORTH POLE, AND ME OCCASIONALLY FORGETTING WHAT DAY IT IS).

NOW, BEFORE YOU LAUGH AND SAY, “WHY THIS FELLOW SO STRANGE, CHRISTMAS ALSO WANT PLANT?”, LET ME EXPLAIN. OUR OFFICE IS GREAT, BUT IT IS MISSING ONE VERY IMPORTANT INGREDIENT: GREENERY. WE HAVE PEOPLE, WE HAVE CHAIRS, WE HAVE LAPTOPS, AND WE HAVE THE SOUND OF KEYBOARDS GOING TAK TAK TAK TAK LIKE A FULL ORCHESTRA. BUT WHAT WE DON’T HAVE IS LIFE. NO PLANT, NO LEAF, NO JUNGLE VIBES. SOMETIMES, WHEN I SIT AT MY DESK, I FEEL LIKE I AM INSIDE A GIANT EXCEL SPREADSHEET—ROWS, COLUMNS, FORMULAS, BUT NO TREES.

AND THAT, DEAR SECRET SANTA, IS WHY I NEED THIS GIFT. PLANTS ARE MAGICAL. THEY REDUCE STRESS, INCREASE HAPPINESS, AND MAKE YOU FEEL ALIVE. FOR ME, EVEN ONE SMALL PLANT ON MY DESK CAN MAKE ME FEEL LIKE I AM WORKING IN A MINI GARDEN CAFÉ INSTEAD OF A SERIOUS OFFICE TOWER. WHEN I SEE GREEN, MY HEART GOES “AHHHH...” INSTEAD OF “AIYOOO...”



BUT LET ME ALSO BE CLEAR: I AM NOT ASKING FOR A HIGH-MAINTENANCE DIVA PLANT. PLEASE DO NOT GIVE ME AN ORCHID THAT NEEDS MORE CARE THAN A NEWBORN BABY. PLEASE DO NOT GIVE ME A CACTUS SO SHARP THAT MY COLLEAGUES WILL SUE ME FOR ACCIDENTAL INJURIES. PLEASE DO NOT GIVE ME A BONSAI TREE THAT REQUIRES DAILY MEDITATION, JAPANESE FLUTE MUSIC, AND MAYBE THREE EXTRA HOURS OF MY LIFE EVERY DAY.

NO, NO. I AM ASKING FOR A SIMPLE, HUMBLE, STEADY PLANT. A SURVIVOR. A “DON’T WORRY, I GOT THIS” KIND OF PLANT. A PLANT THAT CAN LIVE WITH AIR-CON WINDS, OFFICE GOSSIP, AND MY VERY QUESTIONABLE WATERING SCHEDULE.

AND I PROMISE, IF YOU GIVE ME THIS PLANT, I WILL TAKE CARE OF IT PROPERLY. I WILL WATER IT (BUT NOT DROWN IT). I WILL GIVE IT ENOUGH ATTENTION (BUT NOT OVER-OBSCESS). I WILL EVEN GIVE IT A PROPER NAME. MAYBE SOMETHING SERIOUS, LIKE SIR LEAFINGTON. OR SOMETHING CUTE, LIKE LEAFY-SAN. WHO KNOWS, MAYBE I’LL LET THE OFFICE VOTE. BUT ONE THING IS SURE—THE PLANT WILL BECOME PART OF THE TEAM. IT WILL BE MY SILENT CO-WORKER.



THINK ABOUT IT: PLANTS ARE THE BEST COLLEAGUES. THEY DON'T COMPLAIN. THEY DON'T SEND "URGENT" EMAILS AT 5:29 P.M. THEY DON'T FIGHT FOR THE PANTRY MICROWAVE. THEY DON'T ARGUE DURING MEETINGS. THEY JUST SIT THERE, LOOKING GREEN AND CALM, REMINDING YOU THAT LIFE IS NOT ONLY ABOUT DEADLINES. IMAGINE ME TYPING FURIOUSLY AT MY LAPTOP, AND NEXT TO ME, MY LITTLE PLANT IS JUST CHILLING. THAT BALANCE WILL KEEP ME SANE.

AND OF COURSE, I WILL TALK TO IT SOMETIMES. NOT IN A SCARY WAY. JUST A NICE "GOOD MORNING, MR. GREEN" BEFORE I START WORK, OR "WE SURVIVED MONDAY!" WHEN THE DAY IS TOUGH. IF MY COLLEAGUES WALK BY AND SEE ME TALKING TO A PLANT, I WILL JUST SMILE AND SAY, "BETTER TALK TO PLANT THAN TALK TO PRINTER, RIGHT?"

SO YES, SECRET SANTA, THIS IS MY CHRISTMAS WISH. IT MIGHT SOUND SIMPLE, BUT IT WILL MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE. TO YOU, IT MAY LOOK LIKE "JUST A PLANT," BUT TO ME, IT IS RELAXATION, FOCUS, AND JOY—ALL IN ONE POT. AND FOR THAT, I WILL BE TRULY GRATEFUL.



ALSO, LET ME JUST SAY—BY GRANTING ME THIS WISH, YOU WILL OFFICIALLY EARN THE TITLE OF BEST SECRET SANTA OF THE YEAR. NO COMPETITION. EVEN IF SOMEONE ELSE BUYS AN EXPENSIVE GIFT, I WILL STILL SAY YOU ARE THE WINNER, BECAUSE YOU GAVE ME SOMETHING ALIVE, SOMETHING GREEN, SOMETHING THAT KEEPS ME HAPPY EVERY DAY.

SO THANK YOU IN ADVANCE, SECRET SANTA, FOR PUTTING THOUGHT, EFFORT, AND KINDNESS INTO THIS. YOU ARE NOT JUST BUYING ME A PRESENT—YOU ARE GIVING ME A DAILY SMILE, A DESK BUDDY, AND A SMALL PIECE OF NATURE INSIDE THE OFFICE.

WITH APPRECIATION (AND EXCITEMENT TO MEET MY FUTURE LEAFY CO-WORKER),

BEST WISHES

Kelly