Jack Frost is the personification of frost, ice, snow, sleet, and freezing cold weather. Personification means, representing with human characteristics that is not usually human. For example, making a dog talk is personification. He is often portrayed as an older man, though other depictions show him as a young adult or a teenager. In some cultures, Jack Frost is also called Old Man Winter. Old man winter is held responsible for frosty weather, for “nipping at” the nose and toes in cold weather, coloring the leaves in the fall, and leaving frosty fernlike patterns on cold windows in winter.

**NORTH AMERICA**

Starting in the late1800’s, stories in North America characterized Jack Frost as a sprite-like character. A sprite is a mythical creature similar to elves or fairies. Jack Frost is said to be a friendly spirit who only wishes to enjoy himself and bring happiness to others. Being the personification of winter, he is said to also be around in the spring and autumn months. In the springtime, will make small mirrors out of puddles, hence why we can see our reflection in the water. In the fall, he makes the leaves tumble down from the trees in order to prepare himself for his winter art. He is sometimes pictured with a paint brush and bucket. Using these tools, he colors the autumn leaves red, yellow, brown, and orange.

At times he is shown as a mischief-making spirit who is happiest when he can be carefree and behave as he pleases. With no obligations, he is able to spend his time painting the fall leaves, and creating frost ferns on windows. He is traditionally thought to leave the frosty, fern-like patterns on windows on cold winter mornings (window frost or fern frost) and nipping the extremities (nose, fingers, and toes) in cold weather.

On the other hand, other versions depict him as a sinister mischief maker. But he can be very dangerous. Because if he gets insulted, he will suffocate the offender with snow or turn them into frost.

In today’s mythology, he is often the being that parents warn their child of in frosty winter mornings before they go outside. Parents say he will pull tricks on them and cause their extremities to become cold.

**EUROPE**

The myth of Jack Frost may come from Anglo-Saxon and Norse winter customs. In this area, the winters are cold. Some tales claim that he is related to Norsefrost giant, who were responsible for glaciers, avalanches, ice caps, and frozen rivers (so pretty much North America’s Jack Frost but on steroids and with slightly more devious intentions.) His mother was thought to be Kari, the Norse god of the winds. Her son was named Jokul Frosti (which literally means frosty icicle) and it is believed that the name Jack Frost is just a modernized version of this name.

Other myths claim differently. In Russia, he was known as Father Frost, who was a blacksmith, forging chains to bind the Earth and its waters together. And in Germanic mythology, they have Old Mother Frost, who was a white-haired crone, who shook out a feather blanket to create snow.