

# THE LUCY WILSON MYSTERIES

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS



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CANDY JAR BOOKS · CARDIFF  
2023

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Range Editor: Shaun Russell

Edited by Keren Williams

Cover: Steve Beckett

Licensed by Hannah Haisman

Published by

Candy Jar Books

Mackintosh House

136 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 1DJ

[www.candyjarbooks.co.uk](http://www.candyjarbooks.co.uk)

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# TWELVE DRUMMERS DRUMMING

*Hello! What a weird way to start a festive story! I don't remember opening A Christmas Carol and the first word being 'hello'. Okay, I'll try a different tact. Are you sitting comfortably? Then I shall begin...*

Lucy looked out into the winter sky. Snow had been threatening to fall since Thursday but there had not been a flake yet.

Hobo sat at Lucy's desk. He was browsing through that year's Christmas *Radio Times*. From the speed he was going through it, Lucy assumed there was nothing good on.

Lucy sighed. She had to admit, although she loved Christmastime, it was a little boring. It was too cold to go outside – the strong ocean winds saw to that. Mum and Dad were a little stricter on where Lucy went since the whole missing on the beach fiasco.

Lucy watched as a light shone in the sky. *It's too bright to be a star, she thought. I wonder where the passengers on the plane are going.*

The aeroplane disappeared behind the clouds. Frustrated, she picked up the discarded *Radio Times*. Hobo was now fiddling with the TV remote.

The second her fingers touched the glossy cover a small electric shock crackled from the page. The lights around her fizzed and crackled with a blue hue. Her bedroom light flashed brightly, creating a marble effect on the walls. The bulb in her lamp was the first to switch off. One by one each light disappeared.

'Ow!' She jolted back her hand.

'Are you okay?' Hobo asked, jumping when everything suddenly went dark. Lucy, nearest to the light switch, tried to turn it back on, but nothing happened.

'It must be a power cut,' she said. 'Look, my computer's stopped working too.'

'I think it might be the fuse. Look at the houses across the street.' Hobo pointed to Mr Morecambe's house. The fairy lights were still up and twinkling in the cold. 'Where's your fuse box?'

'Downstairs.'

Lucy and Hobo edged out of the room and crept to the top of the stairs. It was cold and getting colder. Lucy reached into her pocket for her phone.

‘That’s weird, the battery’s dead,’ she said. Hobo rummaged for his phone. It was also dead. They shrugged their shoulders and cautiously stepped down the stairs in the dark.

Mum had already put the decorations up in the house. This included a Christmas teddy on every step.

‘I can’t even see the bottom of the stairs,’ Lucy said, while cautiously tapping her foot around trying to locate *terra firma*. It was almost obligatory that she should then slip.

‘Luce, are you okay?’

‘Just embarrassed, no lasting damage. Wait! What was that?’ Lucy saw a shadow move ahead of her. It was no taller than a dog.

‘Luce, it’s dark. I can’t see where you’re pointing or what you’re pointing at,’ Hobo explained, bumping into his friend.

‘Something moved.’

‘It’s probably just a car going by outside.’

Lucy was just in the process of replying when the sound of a glass bottle falling came from the kitchen.

‘Hello?’ Lucy called out.

‘Genuinely, what would you do if someone said “hello” back?’ Hobo asked.

‘Push you down first and run...’

Lucy and Hobo took another cautious step, and another, and another until they finally found

themselves in the hallway.

'Where is your fuse box?'

'Under the stairs.' Lucy felt silly pointing again, but it was just habit.

'Ow!' she cried out.

'What is it?'

'It's okay. It's just the radiator. Which means, the door for the cupboard should be... ah, got it.'

She turned the handle and heard the squeaky hinges of the door groan. She felt Hobo brush past her.

'It's no good. It's too dark,' Hobo said.

'What was that?' Lucy cried out.

'What?'

'Something brushed past my leg.'

'The cat?'

'What cat?'

Lucy hoped Hobo felt silly. He knew they didn't have a cat.

'I think there's a torch in the kitchen!' she declared.

'Brilliant,' Hobo said, edging along the hallway.

With her hands out in front of her, Lucy found Dad's man drawer. It was so full of stuff that she had to force it open. Rummaging around in the drawer, she eventually found the torch. An ancient one from the 1980s. Lucy switched it on. There was a large shadow across the kitchen floor. Lucy jumped, but

then realised the shadow was simply being made by one of Mum's Nutcracker statues.

Hobo laughed when he saw Lucy's face. He picked up the statue. It wasn't much bigger than the kettle beside it. Some of the paint had chipped away from the arms, but other than that the wooden soldier was fine.

Lucy took it from him. Mum loved to collect Nutcrackers, but what weirdly painted soldiers with big moustaches had to do with Christmas was anyone's guess. She placed it back on the kitchen counter. After a brief thought, she turned it to face the wall.

'That thing gives me the creeps,' she said. Her eyes were getting used to the lack of light. The torch started to fade. 'The batteries are a bit old in this, but at least I can see you.'

Shadows danced around the walls, creating waving shapes that changed as she moved the torch around. Lucy couldn't see what had knocked over the bottle, nor could she see the bottle.

Then the torch stopped working. Lucy shook it for a few seconds and threw it back in the drawer. 'Now what?' she asked.

'Well, we can't just stand here until your parents get back. That could be hours,' Hobo replied. 'Do you have any candles?'

'Mum does. There's a box in the living room.'



Mum has scented candles for when she does Yoga.' Lucy looked back at the Nutcracker. Its eyes pierced through her.

'Be back in a second. I know where they are.' With that, she left the room.

Hobo leaned on the kitchen counter. He picked up the statue. *I thought Lucy turned you around?* he thought.

It wasn't long before Lucy returned with a box the size of a shoebox.

'It may smell like Vanilla or Jasmine but at least we'll be able to see,' Lucy said, lighting the first candle. It was in a jar and it was a little difficult to get the wick to meet the flame. But she managed it.

'I think Mr Morecambe across the road could help us if we can't get the fuse box to, Hobo... Hobo?' She looked around for her friend but he was gone. 'This isn't funny.'

Lucy picked up one of the Nutcrackers on the counter and, with the candle in the other hand, she headed back into the hallway. The candlelight flickered. Once again shadows on the wall danced.

'Mum's gone overboard with these things,' Lucy said, passing yet more Nutcrackers.

'Hobo?' she called out again.

Deciding that it *really* wasn't funny, Lucy gave

up on finding him. She knew he would jump out and surprise her at some point, so until then she might as well do something useful.

Turning to the front door, she decided Mr Morecambe was her best bet. She twisted the handle.

But...

'It's locked!' she said, puzzled. She tried turning the latch but it wouldn't open. She placed the candle and Nutcracker on the floor and tried to open the door with both hands. 'It's jammed.'

Something moved behind her, knocking some of the bells Mum had hung from the bannister.

'Well done, Hobo, you've given yourself away,' Lucy said, turning to confront him.

Nobody was there.

Apart from the usual furniture, some tinsel and more of those pesky Nutcrackers, the hallway was empty. There was no way Hobo could have moved away so fast.

Lucy squinted, trying to focus on the candlelit hallway. She picked up the candle and returned to the kitchen. She lit another candle and crept into the living room.

It was a better candle than the first, although it smelt of oranges. It did, however, have three wicks so lit up more of the room. She placed it down on the table, before trying the patio doors.

'These are locked as well!' she said with a huff.

'I'll just have to try the windows.'

With that, she turned on the spot. Something was there that made her go cold. With a slight scream, she fell backwards into the patio door curtains. They grew tort and ripped at the eyelets. Thick winter curtains fell on top of her, their weight and length made it almost impossible to get out quickly. Something hit the back of her leg.

She scrambled about, narrowly missing further strikes from the attacker beyond. Reaching the edge, she pulled herself to her feet.

She grabbed the curtain and threw it over the attacker.

As the cloth ripped into two, Lucy could see the full wooden face of the giant Nutcracker. The candlelight flickered on its face, its eyes painted on, not blinking.

Lucy ran, scrambling away as fast as she could. She quickly grabbed the Nutcracker that she had taken to the front door with her.

As she climbed the stairs, she tripped on a teddy. Her determination kept her upright but she fell on the last step. She glanced behind. The giant Nutcracker had crouched down onto all fours to fit up the stairs. It eased forward menacingly.

As it blocked the candlelight from downstairs, its painted face was thrown into shadow. A large wooden hand reached out to grab her.

Lucy narrowly missed the first few swipes. She raised the Nutcracker she was holding and lashed at the figure. Its half-face glared up at her, almost smiling. She yelped and dropped the Nutcracker.

It rolled slightly but stopped face up. The face had changed. It was Hobo. And he was screaming!

She didn't have much time to think. The giant Nutcracker swiped at her once again. It knocked her sideways into the bathroom.

Lucy grabbed Mum's lighter from under the sink and lit the candles she kept by the bath. They created a warm glow. She then pulled open the shower curtain and climbed into the bath.

Turning on the tap, she held the showerhead like a weapon.

'Come on then!' she shouted.

Nothing happened. There was no bashing of the door, no hands swiping in, not even a creak of the floorboards.

Lucy kept her position for quite a while, but when it seemed the coast was clear, she turned off the tap and stepped out of the bath.

Cautiously, she reached for the handle on the bathroom door. She slowly pulled it open.

The landing was clear, just the gentle flicker of the candles in the bathroom. She slowly took a step out.

Her room was next door, so she quickly snuck

in, grabbing the small Hobo statue from the landing floor as she did so. Closing the door behind her, she needed a plan, but she had no time to think. Something came crashing through the bedroom window.

Multiple little wooden soldiers marched into the room, all heading towards her.

Apart from the Hobo statue, she had nothing to defend herself with. She took a step backwards and felt the cold door handle behind her. As the soldiers started to corner her, Lucy quickly pulled open the door, taking a few of them out.

Outside on the landing, more soldiers stood in formation. Lucy jumped into the bathroom once again.

Not sure what she could do, she yanked at the window. Thankfully, unlike the doors, this opened. Her joy was short-lived when the huge eye of a Nutcracker stared back at her through the glass.

Smashing the window, it reached in to grab her but she ducked just in time. It clasped the bathroom sink, believing it to be Lucy, and pulled it.

Water sprung like a fountain from the pipes, covering the hand.

Lucy could do nothing but watch. At the door, the smaller wooden soldiers were breaking through the wood.

The hand started to slow down. The cold

Ogmore-by-Sea air was freezing the water.

Lucy's mind charged into action, placing Hobo gently on the bathroom shelf first. She grabbed the showerhead once again and turned on the water. She twisted the tap to allow a full blast of cold water to stream out. Holding it up in the air, she drenched the soldiers. As their mechanisms froze, they fell to the floor lifeless. She sprayed as many as she could, but the shower only reached so far.

Luckily they charged at her, sealing their fate in the bathroom. They climbed over their fallen comrades only to be soaked with icy cold water, before freezing over and joining them. More and more climbed in, and more and more joined the pile.

With one last effort, Lucy stuck the showerhead out of the now-very-broken window, instantly freezing the giant Nutcracker outside. She leaned out to see if it had worked, but before she knew it she accidentally dropped the Hobo statue out of the window.

Certain that she had got all the Nutcrackers, she turned off the water and ran to the front door.

The latch had unjammed itself.

*That's odd*, Lucy thought. But not wanting to look a gift horse in the mouth, she left her house as quickly as she could.

Outside, she was thankful to see Hobo, this time in human form. It was finally snowing and it was

covering the inanimate body of the giant Nutcracker.

As Lucy giggled with her friend, something seemed wrong. The air was cold, the snow was wet and Hobo was being daft. She just couldn't put her finger on it.

She turned to look at her house. It looked fine, but something wasn't quite right. She studied every part of her house until she realised what was giving her the weird vibes.

The bathroom window was intact. As she continued to stare, she suddenly realised that the street around her had changed.

Inches of snow had now settled, Dad's moving van was parked outside and, weirdly, it was now daytime.

'Hobo?' Lucy was about to check with her friend to make sure she wasn't imagining it, when a large ball of snow came hurtling towards her.

*To be continued in Eleven Pipers Piping...*

*Available from Candy Jar*

**The Mystery of Lucy Wilson: Apocalypse Tomorrow  
by Steven Walton and Shaun Russell**

Lucy Wilson's adventures in time have taken her to some strange places. Dangerous places, faraway places... But none so strange and alien as where she finds herself now... The 1990s.

Pokémon battle in the schoolyards. Tamagotchi roam the streets. And a giant spider from a ruined future looks to spark an apocalypse that, technically, has already happened.

Timelines converge and realities shattered as Lucy's exile in time reaches its epic climax. And in the end, it all comes down to one question: who's better, 2Unlimited or Adamski?





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**The Lucy Wilson Mysteries:  
The Best Christmas Ever by Chris Lynch**

Christmas is the busiest time of the year, but this never seems to be a problem for the monsters and aliens that visit Lucy Wilson over the festive period!

Alongside her best friend Hobo, Lucy discovers one of her grandad's old secrets, investigates a creepy haunted mansion, and gets a visit from a mysterious goatman called Krampus, who takes bad children away.

This is a collection of three stories set over the Christmases of 2018, 2019 and 2020. Defending Earth doesn't stop for anything, not even Christmas! But which Christmas is the best one ever?





Listen to the Spotify Christmas list. Updated daily.

