

Luna's Christmas

Written by: michelle_31a

This story is based on characters and situations created and owned by JK Rowling, various publishers including but not limited to Bloomsbury Books, Scholastic Books and Raincoast Books, and Warner Bros., Inc. No money is being made and no copyright or trademark infringement is intended. THIS NOVEL HAS BEEN SOLEY WRITTEN FOR THE PURPOSE OF PERSONAL FULFILLMENT.

~ Luna's Christmas ~

Hermione extinguished the candle on the nightstand and plunged the room into darkness. She slowly lay back on her pillow, staring up at the ceiling as she rubbed her stomach remorsefully. Although it had been several hours since she'd partaken in Mrs. Weasley's magnificent feast, she'd overeaten dreadfully, so much so that she seriously doubted she'd be able to indulge in anything prior to the morrow's Christmas dinner. As her stomach continued to protest silently Hermione resolved to be more resistant to Mrs. Weasley's exquisite desserts.

She stilled her breathing for a moment, listening; all was quiet in the room below. Not entirely surprising, considering the twins therein had made Hermione's culinary excess look entirely tame in comparison. They'd literally gorged themselves, to the point where Hermione strongly suspected they'd engaged in an undeclared eating contest.

Well if they complain of sore stomachs in the morning it'll serve them right, she mused.

Hermione heard a gentle rustling of linen just off to her left, bringing her attention back to her current predicament.

It felt quite strange to be cooped up in Ginny's room with Luna Lovegood, of all people, occupying the other bed.

Well, it's not so bad, she told herself. Luna hadn't brought up the usual subject of Snorkacks, or Humdingers, or any of the other fantastic creatures in which she placed so much misguided faith. In fact, now that Hermione reflected, Luna had been unusually quiet since her arrival.

Still, there was something about the girl that seemed to make every interaction an exercise in awkwardness. At least to Hermione, anyway; she frankly wondered how Ginny managed to get along so comfortably with her.

But Ginny wasn't present now, having insisted on sleeping downstairs in the family room despite Hermione's repeated, and almost desperate, offers to swap places with her russet-haired friend.

Don't be silly, had been Ginny's firm reply as she unfurled the blanket over the couch. *It's plenty warm by the fire anyhow. And besides, it'll do you good to spend a bit of time with Luna.*

To which Hermione had rolled her eyes.

C'mon, don't be like that, Ginny had admonished with a frown. *Her dad's away for the holidays and she's got no one else. Be nice.*

And with that, Hermione had trudged upstairs, feeling slightly laggard and more than a little embarrassed. It's not that she disliked Luna, far from it. She was a quite amiable sort, if one could overlook her many unique perspectives; unfortunately it was an ability that had thus far eluded Hermione.

Well, it's Christmas Eve, she conceded, drawing the blanket up snugly under her chin. And besides, there hadn't been so much as a mention of *The Quibbler* all day by her reckoning. It certainly looked as though Luna was making an effort, at least, not to get on Hermione's nerves. Then again...

"Do you think Muggles will ever find out about Santa Claus?" Luna suddenly chimed from the other bed, abruptly ending her silence. Hermione glanced over but could only see a vague outline of the girl lying atop her blankets, staring up at the ceiling.

"Um...I think they already know," replied Hermione neutrally. "It's a tradition with them, too. Has been for centuries."

"Oh, no, I don't mean *their* Santa," countered Luna airily. "I'm referring to the real one, of course."

Oh great, thought Hermione, rubbing her temple. *Here we go...*

"The real Santa," continued Luna. "You know, the jolly old elf."

"Don't tell me you believe in that too," chided Hermione incredulously. "Goodness, Luna, it's all myth! Fables!"

She heard a soft rustle of hair on linen as Luna turned her large silvery eyes on her.

"I forgot," said Luna softly. "You were raised by Muggles, so I suppose you never knew, did you?"

Hermione's fists clenched under the blanket in reflex. "I wasn't *raised* by Muggles," she stated infignantly. "I was raised by my parents, who just happened to *be* Muggles!"

There passed a long moment of silence as Luna evidently digested her words.

"Well, that's the same thing, isn't it?" she asked innocently.

Hermione sighed, suppressing a strong desire to pull the bedsheet over her head. "No – I mean yes – I mean...it's just the way you put it, Luna. You made it sound like I was raised by wolves or something."

There followed another long pause, and even though Hermione was staring up at the ceiling, she could distinctly sense the younger girl's gaze upon her.

"I don't think you were raised by wolves," said Luna appraisingly. "I've never met your parents, but your grades are entirely too good to have been the product of a canine upbringing. Yes, I'm quite certain."

"Oh, well, thank you for that assessment," replied Hermione dryly.

"You're welcome," said Luna graciously.

Hermione bit her lip to cut off any possible retort, and for a few moments she thought she might finally be able to sleep in relative peace.

"But as Muggles, they wouldn't have known," breathed Luna to the air. "So I suppose it's understandable that you wouldn't have known about it either."

"They never knew what, Luna?" asked Hermione tiredly.

"About the wizarding Santa, of course," said Luna matter-of-factly. "He goes from house to house throughout the wizarding world on Christmas Eve distributing presents and -- "

Oh for –

"All right, Luna," said Hermione heatedly, pushing herself up on one elbow and glaring at the Ravenclaw in the other bed. "If he does exist, then how do you explain him being able to do that little trick of going around to thousands of houses in the space of just a few hours?"

Though it was quite dark in Ginny's room, Hermione's eyes had by now acclimated themselves to the lack of light. She could see Luna more clearly now, lying on her side, hands clasped together and sandwiched between her head and the pillow, pale eyes wide and gazing unblinkingly back at Hermione.

"He uses a time turner, of course," answered Luna confidently. "That's how he gets around to all the wizarding families."

"I...oh..."

Hermione slowly dropped back on her pillow and turned her gaze once more to the ceiling. There wasn't much point in arguing the matter, given that she knew full well the capabilities a time turner bestowed upon its user. Still, she couldn't bring herself to lend any credence to such a ludicrous belief. Time turners were one thing; but Santa Claus??

"All right, maybe he does get around with a time turner," she said in a carefully measured tone. "But explain this, Luna. Why haven't I ever gotten any presents from him? All the ones I get are from friends, or my parents. I suppose you'll say he couldn't fit down our chimney?"

Luna giggled.

"Did I say something funny?" asked Hermione, frowning.

"No," said Luna mirthfully. "It's more the way you said it. But he only brings presents to children who don't have family, you know. Or friends. I've always wondered how he knows that, though. It's never been explained, although there have been many interesting theories published in *The Quibbler*."

"I'm sure," agreed Hermione cynically.

"Sugarplums," said Luna vaguely after a brief silence.

"Excuse me?"

"I'm quite fond of them," answered Luna, holding her hands above her head and tracing indecipherable imaginary patterns through the air.

"Well that's...nice," said Hermione a bit uncertainly, unsure of where this sudden turn in their conversation was heading.

Which, as it turned out, was nowhere. Luna fell silent, though she continued to gesticulate with her hands, casting unrecognizable shadows on the moonlit wall. Hermione found it very difficult to sleep, however, with the young Ravenclaw still lying wide awake in the other bed barely an arm's length away. She tossed and turned for a good hour or two, yet as a goal slumber continued to be frustratingly elusive. Over in the other bed, Luna made not a sound – Hermione envied her ability to drift off effortlessly.

She rolled over onto her back once more, carefully repositioning the blankets which had worked themselves loose.

"Do you think it's midnight, yet?" Luna suddenly whispered after Hermione had finished tucking her coverings and settled down. Had she been awake all this time?

"I suppose so," answered Hermione a bit more sharply than she'd intended. *Now go to sleep!*

"He didn't come," said Luna wistfully a moment later.

Hermione suddenly felt a slight twinge in her stomach. "Oh...well...I'm sorry, Luna," she said softly, belatedly realizing that the young Ravenclaw might be feeling very much alone.

She heard Luna's sheets rustle slightly as the latter turned her gaze to the Gryffindor. Hermione could only dimly make out Luna's face in the soft moonlight, but was startled to see a dreamy smile staring back at her.

"Don't be," said Luna. "I've been waiting for him not to come for years..."

"Luna?"

The Ravenclaw gazed at Hermione, her misty eyes glittering strangely. Then, without a word, she rolled over onto her side and hugged her pillow, facing the moonlit wall, before sighing contentedly.

"Happy Christmas, Hermione," she whispered.