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Father Christmas

by [azriona](#)

Summary

John Watson believes in Father Christmas. Luckily, Father Christmas believes in him.

Notes

The fifteenth* installment of this year's Advent Calendar Drabbles. Because I am lazy, I'm titling the drabbles with the prompt. Today's prompt is from shadowturquoise, who had specific requirements for who Father Christmas was meant to be. I apologize that this turned more bittersweet than actually intended.

*Yes, I know AO3 says it's the 14th, but that's because the 14th is not posted here. It's not actually a fic, it ended up being a project for my husband who requested it. You can see it [on my LJ](#). He requested "Sontarans on Ice".

December 1, 1978

Dear Father Christmas,

My name is John Watson and I am six and I go to Sudsbury Primary School and I have been very good and I have not put spiders in Harry's bed no matter what she tells you. I don't know how they got there. It wasn't me. I help mum with carrying bags and I tell Dad when his horses are running and I do all my homework and I only lied about being too sick for school once and I missed a fire that day

which was exciting and the school nearly burnt down so I won't do that again. For Christmas I want a Han Solo and Luke Skywalker action figures from Star Wars. That's a film about space. Han and Luke are best friends they act like they don't like each other but I can tell. Someday I want a best friend like that. I don't want him for Christmas I know you can't give me a person. I'll just find him. Anyway if I have Han and Luke that's a good start. Thank you.

Johnny Watson

*

“Putting on weight again?” says Sherlock, but John is still reeling from learning that the man – *Mycroft* – is Sherlock's brother to really pay attention to the conversation.

“Losing it, in fact,” says the man, rather stiffly. “As it is *January*.”

“So...he's *not* a criminal mastermind?” says John, trying to clarify matters.

“Well, that's a new definition for it,” says Sherlock, amused.

“For goodness' sake, I occupy a minor position in the British government.”

“He *is* the British government, when he's not too busy being the British Secret Service or the CIA on a freelance basis,” snaps Sherlock. “And then there's the family business in December—”

“Sherlock,” cautions Mycroft, and Sherlock lifts his head.

“Try not to start any wars, Mycroft, you know what it does for traffic.”

John thinks he's missed something in the conversation. He just doesn't know what.

*

December 1, 1979

Dear Father Christmas,

My name is Johnny Watson and I wrote you last year and I don't think you'd remember because I bet you get lots of letters. Thank you for Han and Luke, they have lots of adventures until Han was eaten by the dog down the street. Luke got bit and has toothmarks all on his leg and arm but he's okay, just sad. I've been very good this year, but don't ask for details.

This year I would like a Space Lego so Luke can go on adventures. And a remote control helicopter. I know you can't get a new Han because they aren't in stores anymore but Luke isn't lonely because mum got me a Leia for my birthday and she's Luke's GIRLFRIEND. But he still misses Han.

Johnny Watson, age seven

*

“What's he like to live with, John?” asks Mycroft. “Hellish, I'd imagine. Has he been a good boy this year?”

Sherlock doesn't even let John answer before he reaches out and kicks Mycroft's chair, all the time muttering about *lists* and *checking* and *there's a world of difference between naughty and rude*.

“I'm never bored,” says John loyally, and Mycroft might smirk as if he knows better, but Sherlock practically glows.

*

December 1, 1980

Dear Father Christmas,

My name is Johnny Watson and my sister Harriet says I don't have to be so formal with you but that's how I've always called you and I always get what I want so HA. Thank you for the Space Lego and the helicopter it was great until Luke and Leia crashed it in the river. They survived though.

This year I want a long scarf like the Doctor wears. Do you know him? If you do, can you tell him to come find me because I want to take the Tardis to Star Wars because they messed up the end of the movie, Darth Vader isn't Luke's father, I don't care what Harry says. I would also like a Han Solo, because Luke still misses him awful bad and Leia's nice but all she wants to do is kiss and have babies and a house, and Luke wants adventures.

Johnny Watson, age eight

*

“Now if you'll excuse me, I have a long and arduous apology to make to a very old friend,” snaps Mycroft, and turns to leave the flat, but not before Sherlock begins to play “God Save the Queen” on his violin.

John smirks and turns back to the paper. Mycroft sighs heavily, because being annoyed with Sherlock is a constant.

But he doesn't actually go until Sherlock's music somehow, seamlessly, transforms into “We Wish You a Merry Christmas,” and he slams the front door with extra verve.

*

December 1, 1981

Dear Father Christmas,

Rob from school says you're fake and that my parents buy my presents and I told him he's a big fat liar and then I punched him and was suspended from school so I guess it doesn't matter if you're real because you wouldn't bring me anything anyway.

And I never got my new Han Solo.

I'm not going to tell you what I want for Christmas and if I get it then I'll know you're not real because my parents bought it and put your name on it. So there.

Johnny Watson, age nine

*

“Are you sure tonight's a danger night?”

“No, but then I never am. You have to stay with him, John.”

“I've got plans.”

“No.”

“Mycroft, he’s *your* brother.”

“Which is why, tonight, I am very glad he has you,” says Mycroft, and the line goes dead.

It is a very long night, and Sherlock spends most of it banging around his room, complaining about his sock index and the way the plates in the kitchen are stacked too neatly. John falls asleep on the sofa, and when he wakes up, there’s a crick in his neck and a blanket covering his feet, and a plate of Mrs Hudson’s biscuits and a glass of milk sitting on the table, as if someone expects Father Christmas to stop by with gifts.

John eats the biscuits and drinks the milk, and when he sees Sherlock asleep in his bed – asleep, and not sleeping it off – he goes upstairs, relieved.

*

December 25, 1981

Dear Father Christmas,

Maybe you’re real after all. Or mum forgot about Han Solo. But I’m still glad I punched Rob at school. He deserved it.

*

“Initially, he wanted to be a pirate,” says Mycroft, a bit fondly, a bit whimsical. As if wanting to be a pirate was the most fanciful thing in the world.

“And what you’d want to be?” asks John before he can stop himself.

Mycroft smiles, as if he has the best secret in the world.

“Oh,” he says, “my life was mapped out for me at a very early age. I’ll need the packet back, John.” And he slides the plastic envelope containing the life of the Woman across the table.

*

December 18, 1982

Dear Father Christmas,

Mum says I’m too old for Father Christmas. I don’t care. I think she’s just sad because of Dad. She hasn’t put up any Christmas decorations or anything, and she spends a lot of time crying, and Harry stays out late after school and is failing everything.

I think the reason I don’t have a Han Solo is because he’s needed somewhere else. Is that it? That’s why Dad’s gone, someone else needed him more than we do, so we have to be strong until he comes back. So that’s what I’m telling Luke; he has to be strong while Han’s away helping someone else, and then he’ll come back and they’ll be together again and it’ll be fantastic. So if you were planning to get me something for Christmas, please help Han instead, so he can come back sooner. Luke misses him. Thanks.

John Watson, age 10

*

Mrs Hudson has decorated 221 Baker for Christmas. The lights are bright and colorful, and it’s almost

easy to smile and pretend that everything's fine, that he's just stopped in for tea and biscuits and gossip about Mrs Turner's married ones, that the footsteps in her kitchen belong to a six-foot-tall dark-haired poncy git, and not a slender, blonde, bright-eyed woman who is quick as a whip and twice as funny.

"She's lovely, John," says Mrs Hudson, patting his hand. "How long have you been sleeping together?"

The tea burns John's throat as it goes down and he chokes.

"Only a few weeks, Mrs H," says Mary cheerfully, bringing in the tray of cookies and fudge and iced fairy cakes. "Oh, that pillow is too sweet, did you crochet it yourself?"

"Goodness, no, I'm all thumbs," says Mrs Hudson, and John goes to get a glass of water, leaving the girls to gossip. He doesn't actually *care* if Mary is going to divulge every secret intimate detail to Mrs Hudson, but he'd like to go on pretending she doesn't know about it.

Footsteps on the stairs in the hall. John tenses, and holds still, listening. The girls are chattering away, and on impulse, he slips out into the hall, his heart pounding.

Maybe. Maybe. Maybe...

But Sherlock is dead and John knows the umbrella leaning against the door. He hasn't seen Mycroft since the funeral and that's fine. John stands by Mrs Hudson's door, but Mycroft, just above him on the landing, doesn't move again. It's as though they're both waiting for the other to speak first.

In the end, it's Mycroft who is the braver of them. "I was just leaving."

Mycroft sounds...well. Strong. Entirely too diplomatic. John opens Mrs Hudson's door again.

"John..."

"No," said John, his voice catching in his throat. "I...no."

He goes back into Mrs Hudson's flat, and into her little lace-covered lavatory, and he doesn't come out until the cold water from her tap has washed the red in his eyes away.

It's an hour before Mary and John are ready to leave; Mrs Hudson fills their bags with scones and fudge and mince pies, and Mary says she'll grow fat and John claims he'll still love her and Mary kisses him and complains that he didn't shave that morning and he threatens to grow a beard or at the very least, a moustache. They kiss again and Mrs Hudson titters with delight and it's almost normal, it's almost fine, it's almost as if they can ignore the gaping Sherlock-shaped hole, and Mary nearly trips over the box left in the hall as they go.

"Hullo," she says, and picks it up. It's no bigger than a shoebox, and she hands it over to John. "It's for you."

John takes the brightly wrapped box with a frown. "I don't..."

"Open it later," says Mary. "We'll miss the bus."

Later, after Mary's asleep and the lights are low, John opens the box. The first thing he sees is a letter, crumpled and discolored with age.

Dear Father Christmas,

My name is Johnny Watson and I am six and I go to Sudsbury Primary School...

John's hand, steady for two years, begins to shake, so that he can't hold onto the letter anymore. He sets it down, carefully, and looks inside the box.

Where Han Solo is waiting.

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