

C.V. Aramakutu

LOOPY LUCY

**FLYING
WITH
HUBBLE**

**For my daughter Amelia.
Explore with courage.**

Loopy Lucy by C.V. Aramakutu

Published by C.V. Aramakutu
Palmerston North
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For permissions contact:
cvaramakutu@outlook.co.nz

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1

JOURNEY TO JUNK

“Stop laughing at me you leotard-loving losers,” Lucy yelled at her gym class, who were mocking her attempts on the balance beam. “I don’t get this gym thing, anyway. What purpose does walking in a straight line have?” she said to her teacher, Miss Knuckles. “And the beam isn’t even straight!”

It was the third time this week she’d been forced into doing roly-polys, like a five-year-old, and jumping over a stupid wooden horse – which, by the way, didn’t even look like a horse. And each time, she’d been humiliated by her wobbly knees and lack of gymnastic talent.

Today was by far the worst day of the three. Miss Knuckles had insisted that Lucy complete a walk on the balance beam in front of the entire class. It wasn't her fault she'd failed a dozen times; she was being taunted by the old ten-centimetre wooden beam disguised as a tightrope! *How on earth can I balance on that?*

As she sat on the floor after her most recent spectacular fail, Miss Knuckles could see she was a lost cause.

“Okay, Lucy, that’s enough then. You really do need to try harder.”

“TRY HARDER?” Lucy bellowed, her voice echoing off the gymnasium walls. “HOW COULD I HAVE TRIED HARDER? I FELL OFF THE DAMN THING TWELVE TIMES!”

Oh no, Lucy thought to herself. I'm in trouble.

Lucy had never before yelled at her teacher, she had always been a good student. But today was different – very different. Because last night,

Lucy had experienced something so terrifyingly strange that she hadn't dared go back to sleep.

It was eight o'clock in the evening, and Lucy's mum, a brilliant astronomer and professor at Reddington University, flopped onto Lucy's overly bright – some would say fluorescent – pink duvet cover.

Lucy's mum was beautiful, with long wavy brown hair and sharp blue eyes. Lucy was proud to look a lot like her – except for her eyes, which Mum called milk chocolate eyes.

“What a day I've had, my darling,” sighed Mum. She worked long hours, and Lucy always missed her. Most nights she would be asleep when Mum came home from work.

“Today I spoke to my class about space junk,” she said. “Do you know what space junk is?”

Lucy was intrigued but a bit confused – Mum didn't usually talk about her work. “Space

junk?”

“Yeah, it’s really quite interesting. There are thousands, even millions of manmade pieces of rubbish just orbiting around Earth! I’m not talking about old apple cores or dirty nappies, of course – I mean spacey things, like unused satellites and old spacecraft engines; even tools that astronauts have let go of on spacewalks!”

Lucy was amazed, and kind of disgusted. She’d had no idea space had its own rubbish tip!

“So, my darling, you’d better be careful on the walk to school tomorrow, just in case a space hammer donks you on the head,” Mum said with a smirk.

Lucy raised her eyebrows in alarm. “Are you serious?”

“Ha ha, no. There’s no need to worry. Any junk that falls from the sky usually lands in the ocean, or somewhere remote. Although there was this one time ... No, I’m teasing. That’s enough

for tonight, Lucy.”

“MUM! Can you tell me more about space tomorrow night?”

“We’ll see, my darling. Goodnight.” She turned out the light above Lucy’s bed and closed the door behind her.

Lucy snuggled into her disco duvet with a wide smile on her face. *I hope she gets home early tomorrow night too.*

BANG BANG BANG!

In the middle of the night, Lucy woke suddenly to a commotion downstairs.

*The wind is banging the back door in the laundry.
No worries, Dad will close it.*

After a few moments of silence – *Dad must have sorted it* – Lucy pulled the duvet over her head and drifted back to sleep.

BANG BANG BANG!

What the?

Lucy jumped up, furious at having to drag herself out of bed to shut the back door. “Bunch of lazies,” she mumbled to herself as she shuffled down the stairs, along the hall, and through into the laundry.

It was dark in the laundry ... really dark. Lucy guessed it must have been about two a.m. She reached out, moving her hand around the dark space in front of her, searching for the door handle.

“Argh!” she squeaked, stubbing her fingers on the metal handle. *It's closed? That's strange.*

She stopped for a second, squeezing the pain from her throbbing fingers. Perhaps she'd dreamt the noise.

She turned away and headed back to bed.

BANG BANG BANG!

Lucy almost jumped out of her skin with fright. She'd only watched two scary movies in all her eleven years, but she knew one thing for sure

– DON'T OPEN THE DOOR!

Don't be a scaredy cat, Lucy. It might just be the stray cat that was sleeping in the hedge by the letterbox last week.

“Kitty, Kitty,” she whispered through the door.

There was no answering meow from the other side.

Hmmm. Maybe I'll just have a little peek.

Lucy gently pulled on the handle, opening a small gap, making sure to stand behind it just in case the cat got a fright too and jumped up at her.

Nothing. No cat.

Lucy opened the door wide to get a better look.

Nothing.

As she quietly inched the door shut again, a gust of wind swirled through and snatched one of the socks hanging on the clothes horse, whipping it outside, where it landed on the

second step down to the garden path. Without thinking, Lucy leaped out to grab the sock ... and you won't believe what happened next!

2

HAMMER HEADACHE

The backyard had vanished! Lucy looked down to see her feet floating above nothing. She froze, expecting her body to fall into the dark, empty space beneath her.

Looking up again, she couldn't believe the sight that met her eyes. In front of her, twinkling in the blackness of the void, were millions of tiny sparkling lights that looked just like stars.

Lucy panicked and stepped back into the laundry, stumbling and falling on her bottom.

The bright lights had disappeared, and the back door was now all she could see. Dazed, she

shook her head and tugged at her tangled bed hair, desperate to wake up from this nightmare.

But her curiosity got the better of her, and without thinking too much about it Lucy stood up, whipped the door open again, and stepped back into the glittering darkness. She looked around, mesmerized by its beauty.

Then she saw something emerge from the vast space ahead, travelling in her direction.

What is that?

She squinted, adjusting her eyes as the object came closer, growing bigger.

Hang on, that looks like a hammer ...

DONK!

BEEP BEEP BEEP!

Lucy jolted awake and slammed her hand down onto her alarm clock.

Phew, it was just a stupid dream. To be sure, she shuffled downstairs, along the hall and into

the laundry then peeked out the back door. It was a gorgeous day and she was comforted by the bright sunlight shining through the leaves of the lemon trees that lined the back fence.

Lucy's tummy grumbled at the thought of fresh, sweet, homemade lemonade. She dragged her tired body back down the hall and into the kitchen, where Mum was sitting drinking her morning coffee.

“Did you hear that banging last night, Mum?”

“Oh, good morning, Lucy.”

“Mum, did you hear it?” Lucy hated it when Mum ignored her questions.

“No, Lucy. Get out of the wrong side of the bed, did we?”

“Whatever, I'm just tired,” Lucy mumbled.

Mum put her mug in the sink and used a cloth to wipe up the coffee ring she always managed to leave on the counter. She kissed the

top of Lucy's bird's-nest hair. "I've got to go now, sweetie. Your dad's already at work, so don't forget to lock the front door on your way out."

"Okay, Mum."

"Your brother will walk you to school. Please remind him to take his lunch. Yesterday he had to eat baked beans from the school staffroom and I didn't hear the end of it all night!"

Zac was four years older than Lucy – fifteen going on five, she often teased. He was shorter than the average teen, but super strong, and he often boasted about being the next Mr Olympia. He spent more time in the garage pretending to lift heavy weights and looking in the mirror, than he did doing his school work. Despite their obvious differences, Lucy secretly adored him.

"Here's your lunch, Zacadoodle," she said, handing him a can of baked beans, trying desperately not to giggle.

“Ha-ha, you’re so funny,” Zac replied sarcastically. “Let’s go Lucky Ducky.” He bolted out the door, leaving the beans on the bench.

Lucy slipped them into her bag, hoping for another opportunity to tease him at school.

Old North High School wasn’t far; just a few blocks’

walk, past the fish and chip shop which fried up the best hot dogs on a stick – Lucy’s favourite – then around the corner where the snarly dog barked at Lucy every morning through a hole in the fence. Then only fifty metres more, which gave just enough time for her heart rate to drop back down to normal ... and to remember that she had gymnastics first up. *Oh no!*

“Hey, Luce!” a red-headed girl yelled out from across the courts. She zipped over to Lucy like a bullet.

“Hi, Bonny.”

Lucy and Bonny had been best friends since their very first day at primary school, when they'd bonded over play dough, and raspberry jam sandwiches.

“You all right, Luce? What's up with your hair?”

Lucy put her hand to her head, and realised that in her fluster that morning, she'd forgotten to brush it!

Great, I can be exhausted and look like an unloved Barbie doll all day too!

“I'm okay, couldn't find my hairbrush.” She decided not to tell Bonnie about last night. Who would believe such an outrageous tale anyway? “I've got to get changed for gym class, I'll see you at morning tea, Bon.”

Lucy shuffled off to the gym changing rooms, where she wet her hands under the tap and ran her fingers through her tangled mess of

hair. Luckily, she found an old hair tie in the bottom of her bag and pulled her hair back into a messy bun – more mess than bun, for sure!

Old North High was okay, Lucy thought, although it could be a little scary sometimes – not many high schools started at Year 7, but there wasn't much choice in Abeltown. It was that or home-school, which was not something Lucy or her parents were keen on.

There was a mix of cool kids and not-so-cool kids, plus the weird kids and the nerdy kids. Lucy wasn't really in any of these groups; instead she had friends in all of them. And Bonnie was her bestie, of course.

On days when humiliation in gym class threatened, it was great to know that not everyone would be laughing at her!

