

EXPELLIARMUS

A Conjure Play experience for wee-ones and not-so-wee-ones

By: Brendon Allen

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Note to the reader/performer & talking points for families

This play is best performed as a story time or weekend play experience. The performance is meant to inspire discussions, activities and fun on a summer day when maybe you do not have any plans yet or maybe it's a rainy day experience. It is packed with suggested spells, potions and treats that you can conjure up in the kitchen.

If you do not have access to a laptop or tablet that all the actors can read from, you can print as many copies of the script as you may need. The stage directions are written with a participatory feel. This is an attempt to make the experience feel playful. Play along if you can. If the stage directions ask you a question, feel free to answer out loud. This play works best with a cast of three, but can be done in any way you choose. Each scene does not go beyond two characters speaking, so you can share all the parts, including reading stage directions.

This play presents the opportunity for the actors to engage in exploring discussions on magic, perspective, belonging and also looks at the capacity of young people to use something relatively simple like making slime to communicate good in the world around them. There is a lot of discussion on how you can contend with an opinion that you do not agree with and still feel like you have agency.

Enjoy this Conjure Play and break a leg!

For Parents and Teachers, there are some discussions in this play about particular areas that have been touched on in the evolving conflicts around JK Rowling's social media statements on gender. Some of these articles may add helpful context.

[JK Rowling doubling down on her transphobic statements.](#)

[Many actors from the film franchise respond to JK Rowling's tweets.](#)

[What does TERF mean and how does it apply to JK Rowling?](#)

[Fans encouraged not to "cancel" JK Rowling but "confront."](#)

[Fan Fiction responses that empower fans to write into the Harry Potter universe and create a variety of new character perspectives.](#)

CASTING

Luna: Is a 9 year old girl who is thoroughly obsessed with the Wizarding World of Harry Potter, raised by parents who are equally obsessed parents.

Oakley: Is Luna's cousin and babysits regularly throughout the summer on days where both Luna's parents have to work. Oakley is very good at babysitting and pre-plans all sorts of activities to do with Luna. Oakley is trans-feminine.

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SCENE 1:

Luna and Oakley are out hunting ingredients for a potion they are making. Oakley is Luna's cousin and spends a lot of time taking care of her as her parents both work regularly and school is out for the summer. They both share a love of Harry Potter, and Oakley prides herself as being a stellar-sitter, often filling their days with many activities, usually attached to a theme. This week's theme has been Hogwarts. Luna, who was named after Luna Lovegood by her Harry Potter loving parents, couldn't be happier about this week's theme. Luna was so into this morning's activity, which was making Polyjuice Slime, that she tripled the recipe and it exploded onto the ceiling of the kitchen. If you would like to try making some Polyjuice Slime of your own, follow this [Polyjuice Slime Recipe](#). Keep in mind that Polyjuice allows you to take on the identity of other people, so please, impersonate safely. After the slime explosion, Oakley decided to take Luna outside for a walk and to gather ingredients for their next potions project. Do you know the Harry Potter stories? It is fine if you don't, you can absolutely keep reading this play. If you do know Harry Potter well, are there any spells or potions that you have always wanted to make? Luna is gathering ingredients for a [Skele-Gro potion](#). The fun thing about Harry Potter is that there is a huge fan-base, which means there are all sorts of activities online that you can try! And you know...some of the potions, you can just make up: that is what Luna and Oakley are doing.

Luna: I didn't think that the scarab beetles would be the hardest part of this ingredient trip.

Oakley: I know, right? Who knew that we'd find puffer-fish scales just hanging out on that storm grate...

Luna: *(swatting the air)* Way too many ladybugs, not enough scarab beetles.

Oakley: *(laughing a bit)* That's what I always say this time of year.

Luna: But once we find the beetle, we can complete the Skele-Gro potion.

Oakley: Yup.

Luna: But who are we gonna test it on?

Oakley: What about seeing if we can get Lupin to grow an extra tail?

Luna: I don't know, he's still a bit skittish after I dressed like a Dementor and tried to drain all of his joy. I think it worked but he was pretty upset.

Oakley: What were you expecting? *(Sees something the distance)* Whoa, what's that just wandering under that patch of echinacea?

Luna: Scarab beetle!!

Oakley: Oh, shhh....

Both: *(whispering and running over to capture it)* Scarab beetle!!

Both Luna and Oakley stand up and clasp their hands like they may have a scarab beetle inside.

Luna: *(opening her hands quickly)* Ha! *(disappointed)* Oh, looks like I missed.

Oakley: There's something special about scarab beetles that I forgot to mention.

Luna: What?

Oakley: Well, you know how you can see cicada exoskeletons when they shed them off?

Luna: Yeah, they're so cool....kinda like ghosts.

Oakley: Well, the reason why scarab beetles are so essential to a Skele-Gro potion is that they can seem invisible, as a trick, but in reality, I may have one in my hands, it's just in its ghost-like form. So....

Luna: Oh, my! You mean you have one? Oh...I guess mine tricked me and I let it get away.

Oakley: Happens to all muggles...

Luna: Huh! Speak for yourself! I'm full wizard! My parents are just in hiding.

Oakley: Oh, I stand corrected. *(whispers)* I think we have some Skele-Gro to make and maybe afterwards we can do a cicada exoskeleton hunt, I know a way to turn them into billywigs.

If you are a cicada exoskeleton hunter, maybe you want to try [conjuring up a billywig](#).

Luna: What are billywigs?!

Oakley: You must remember Newt Scamander, who wrote the Hogwarts textbook *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*?!

Luna: I think I remember that.

Oakley: Luna! That'll be a full week of activities. *(Looking at her watch)* Before we go back inside, do you think your Polyjuice Slime will have come down from the kitchen ceiling yet?

Luna: I never thought it would explode like that.

Oakley: Honestly...It was pretty cool.

SCENE 2:

Oakley and Luna sip on [mugs of butterbeer](#), as they wait for their [butterbeer fudge](#) to cook. Due to all the sugar and butterbeer-goodness, they are quite giddy. If you are having a day that could use a little pick-me-up, you should try to conjure some of the butterbeer for yourselves.

Oakley: So, let me get this straight. You have a crush on Joseph and Joseph has a crush on you, is that right?

Luna: Yup.

Oakley: So, what's the problem?

Luna: I can't just...you know, like, talk to him.

Oakley: Why?

Luna: Well, there are rules...you wouldn't get it. You can talk to anybody.

Oakley: Luna, do you honestly think I could talk to just any boy I had a crush on? Sometimes there's just no amount of butterbeer fudge that could make that happen. If you think there's rules for you, you can't imagine all the unspoken ones you have to try to figure out when you're trans in junior high. It can actually be pretty scary, even just thinking about talking to someone.

Luna: I'm sorry, Oakley. I shouldn't have...You're just always so strong and confident.

Oakley: Yeah, I do know who I am, it's true. But some situations, even Snape couldn't conjure up a potion for.

Luna: I think we should still make the love potion. We have all the ingredients.

Oakley: If anything we can put it in Dobby's water dish and maybe he'll stop barking non stop at your neighbour's dog on the other side of the fence.

Luna: Alright, aprons on.

Luna grabs their aprons and passes one to Oakley.

Both: *(said like a mantra)* I solemnly swear that I am up to no good.

They start to make their love potion. If you would like to do the same just get an apron and follow these [Love Potion Instructions](#). Luna inches closer to Oakley.

Luna: Oakley, I really am sorry. There's no way I can understand what it's like for you, and I should be more sensitive about--

Oakley: *(placing a hand on Luna's shoulder)* Mischief managed.

Luna takes comfort in their coded language and they both joyfully continue with the conjuring.

SCENE 3:

Luna and Oakley are out for another walk through the neighbourhood, perhaps gathering ingredients for more potions. If you feel up for making more potions, here is some [more potion inspiration here](#). As they walk, Luna sees a box of items that have been put out by a family to give away.

Luna: Oh, look! Freebies!!

Oakley: Careful Luna, we can't just be grabbing things from people's houses. It's not really COVID-friendly behaviour. You don't know what kind of household this stuff is coming from!

Luna: Whoa! Well, it's pretty obvious they're Potterheads! Looks at this!

They both look in the boxes without touching and realize they're filled with all sorts of Harry Potter memorabilia, including several of the books.

Luna: Why would someone be giving away all this stuff?

Oakley: Maybe their kids have grown up.

Luna: These books aren't just for kids.

Oakley: Well, maybe they're upset with JK Rowling.

Luna: Why would anybody be upset with her?

Oakley: She's said some...controversial stuff lately. Crappy stuff.

Luna: Right, isn't she known for being an ally to women across the world?

Oakley: Not trans women so much. Not me, to be honest.

Luna: Wait, what do you mean? What did she say?

Oakley: She started talking about what makes a real woman.

Luna: She's created some amazing woman characters.

Oakley: But in her opinion, anyone who isn't born a woman, like, biologically, will never really be one or understand fully what it's like to be one.

Luna: But that sounds so harsh...like something a Death Eater kind would say. But not the good people!

Oakley: I think it could be why people are having trouble holding onto stuff. Suddenly it feels complicated to like her. Or maybe even to like the things she made up.

Luna: Argh! This makes me so angry! Why would she say something so obviously not true?!
(Luna kicks the cardboard box in frustration).

Oakley: You know, something that I've realized lately, especially with this situation, something I've had to realize, is that people can create beautiful, magical things and they can still have opinions that you don't agree with. And it's okay to disagree with them, even if they made something magical that you love. And I think in this case it's still okay to love the magical thing she made.

Luna: Yeah, okay, but this is something too beautiful, too magical! I feel like it's a lie now.

Oakley: None of the books and characters change, right? That's all still whatever your imagination makes it. And if anything...the books, her characters, they're what taught us to stand up to someone like her in a moment just like this. To know when something is wrong and that it's worth fighting for what's right.

Luna gives another kick of frustration to the cardboard box and then starts to run back home.

Oakley: What are you up to?

Luna: *(yelling back to Oakley)* I have some mischief to manage! I think I'll need your help.

Oakley: *(Picking up her pace to catch Luna)* Here we go again.

SCENE 4:

Oakley and Luna are back in the kitchen with their aprons on. The space looks more like a science lab now with ingredients scattered all over the place, the stove is full of pots a-boil and both girls' hair is a mess as a result of their conjuring. Luna is very excited to test out her first creation on Oakley.

Luna: Close your eyes.

Oakley: What did you make? Is it more butterbeer fudge?

Luna: Nope. Keep your eyes closed.

Oakley: This is a big trust exercise.

Luna: It has chocolate.

Oakley courageously opens her mouth.

Oakley: *(speaking with her mouth wide open)* Should I plug my nose?

Luna: *(with mischievous tone)* Yes.

What Oakley is about to find out is that Luna has been busy making a few surprises, but the first is edible and it is a DIY [version of the Honeydukes' Chocolate Frogs](#). This is a fun thing to conjure up at home.

Luna: Bite down.

Oakley: Ohhhh, is this chocolate? Mmmm.

Luna: Yup, I made my own chocolate frogs.

Oakley: They're delicious. *(Looking to the kitchen)* How many did you make? You have a whole assembly line going here.

Luna: I'm gonna make a gift basket.

Oakley: For me?

Luna: Nope.

Oakley: Your parents?

Luna: Nope, you wanna try some of the other stuff from the care package?

Oakley: I turn around for a few minutes to answer some texts and you've made the kitchen into *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

Luna: Oh, the rest of the stuff you don't want to put into your mouth. In fact, I think this time around, you should close your eyes and stick out your hands.

Oakley: Close my eyes?!

Luna: Yup. It may be better if you sit down.

Oakley: What have I gotten myself into? *(sits on a chair, with her hands open)*

Luna has made some [Troll Boogers Magnetic Slime](#), if you want to make it, just click the link. It's lots of fun and a great way to freak out cousins, siblings and parents alike. Luna has placed three dessert spoons in Oakley's hands.

Oakley: Feel like utensils, I thought I wasn't going to be eating.

Luna pours some of the troll booger magnetic slime onto her hands and Oakley screams and tries to pull her hands away as it envelops the spoons and oozes all over the place.

Oakley: That's so disgusting! What is this?!

Luna: *(uncontrollable laughter)* Troll boogers!!

Oakley: Ewww... I don't even think the polyjuice has dried on my shirt and now troll boogers. I think this has been, by far, our messiest day of adventures. The clean up is going to have to be extensive.

Luna: Actually, I'm glad you asked.

Oakley: Asked for what?

Luna: A chance to clean up...the next part of my gift basket is a golden snitch bath bomb.

Luna gestures towards a bowl within the mess of the kitchen that is full of 4 tennis ball shaped yellow bath balms. If you would like to know what it feels like to bathe like a Quidditch House Cup Champion, you can follow the instructions to make a [Golden Snitch Bath Bomb](#).

Oakley: *(Still trying to contain the troll boogers)* I don't think I'm gonna need a full bath, I think it can wait 'till I get home, but thanks.

Luna: Your choice.

Oakley: So, who is this gift basket for? Oh, I know...it's for Joseph.

Luna: No way, are you nuts?!

Oakley: Well then who are you making a gift basket for?

Luna: JK

Oakley: JK, who? Do you mean "Just Kidding?"

Luna: JK, like JK Rowling.

Oakley: You're making a gift basket for JK Rowling?

Luna: Yes. Although there's one little difference to the stuff I'm testing on you.

Oakley: Like she gets other things?

Luna: No, she gets an extra ingredient.

Oakley: Uh oh.

Luna: All the things in JK's gift basket have love potion mixed in.

Oakley: Love potion?

Luna: Yup. I feel she needs a bit more of it snuck into her life, so she can be more accepting. You know?

Oakley: You're a pretty amazing wizard, you know that?

Luna: You mean that?

Oakley: But no matter how amazing a wizard you are, you can't be lacing chocolate frogs with love potions. That must be against the wizarding code and most likely illegal somehow.

Luna: But it's a love potion!

Oakley: Still, it's dishonest. And we can have major frustrations with someone's opinion and how they're using their platform, but if we're on the side of good, we can't resort to being dishonest. I don't think Harry, Hermione or Ron would ever do that.

Luna: Are you kidding me?! Ron would totally do that. Sometimes you've got to be a little dishonest, dare I say mischievous, to accomplish something good. Ron knows.

Oakley: Okay, maybe Ron, but let's hold ourselves to a higher level than that!

Luna: Are you saying I can't send the gift basket to JK Rowling?

Oakley: Did you know that "JK" is actually a pen name that she chose to make her name sound more more like a man, and less like a woman? I think maybe one part of that is because she wanted the books to have a wide appeal to kids of all genders.

Luna: Isn't that a lie? It sounds dishonest.

Oakley: Pen names have been used for a long time, hundreds of years, for all kinds of reasons. I don't think it's always dishonest. It makes me think about everyone's complicated journey towards being who they are in the world. When I was younger, living as a boy, I felt a lot of confusion and anger for the world I was living in. And I loved the Harry Potter series because it was a source of love and belonging for me. I knew I was uncomfortable with how I was in the world around me, but within the world of those books I could believe in the possibility of things getting better and that magic was possible. It means so much to me that just in an afternoon your passion has moved you in supporting me and other trans kids. And I think a lot of that has to do with what you learned from the stories, doesn't it? It shows me that the world of Harry Potter has served as a backdrop for something bigger than itself, and beyond its author.

Luna: But what if she continues to write and say stuff that's cruel? And incorrect?

Oakley: Oh, I guarantee that she'll continue to try to defend her position. I'm trying to say the universe of her characters is bigger than her now. You know, in my own preparation for our theme this week, I actually came across some different sources of fan fiction.

Luna: What's fan fiction?

Oakley: Well, some fans love the stories so much, they start to publish pieces that they create and write that look deeper into the world at Hogwarts. They invent new characters and dive into

particular parts of the story they want to know more about...friendships, relationships, other time periods, other people... Most of it is self-published on the internet. I actually found some stuff that pushes more diversity at Hogwarts, queer characters, even trans characters. I can be a part of how the world exists.

Luna: Maybe we could write something together!

Oakley: That sounds nice. And a lot more fun than sending questionable packages to world famous authors.

Luna: I need to think of my pen name!

Oakley: We haven't even written anything yet.

Luna: You know anyone that could use a whole bunch of golden snitch bath bombs and chocolate frogs?

Oakley: I bet after a business day at work your parents would like nothing better than a gift basket from their little muggle. *(Correcting in a whisper)* I mean wizard, sorry. Maybe just avoid adding the extra love potion...you don't want to overload them.

Luna: I bet Jeremy would really like some of the troll boogers slime, he just lives a few blocks away, and I have a batch that has not been touched yet. Maybe I can write him a note.

Oakley: This sounds like a much better way to show the true messages of infinite love without judgement than sending the package to JK...

Luna: Time to get my quill.

She removes her apron and exits to get her notepad.

Oakley: *(Looking back to the kitchen)* I solemnly swear that I am up to no good. And JK, I guarantee that this mischief will be hard to manage. Your books taught this trans kid how to fight back against oppression, I just never thought I would have to use these skills on you.

The End