

Schoolgirl Wizard

Written by

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Based on the Independent article, "Revealed: the eight-year-old girl who saved Harry Potter" by John Lawless

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FADE IN:

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

ALICE LITTLE, 8, is a girl with curly red hair and glasses bigger than her imagination and her little body.

She is on the edge of the playground during recess reading alone, while the other kids in her class run around together. Her eyes are glued to a book and she is twirling around, dancing to the beat of the story.

By the vigor in the way she flips the pages, it's clear she prefers to be alone reading than to be playing with other kids.

Her teacher, MRS. NEWSBURY, 45, is professionally dressed with a stern face and watches as Alice reads alone.

FRIENDLY CLASSMATE, 8, approaches her.

FRIENDLY CLASSMATE
Hey Alice, what are you reading?

Alice is oblivious.

FRIENDLY CLASSMATE (CONT'D)
Hey, Alice? Yoo hoo?

ALICE
Oh, hi! What am I reading? It's this book about dragons who save the world by breathing fire into the spirits of their enemies. See the unicorns team up to beat...

FRIENDLY CLASSMATE
Uh... Mrs. Newsbury told me to ask if you wanted to play with us cause you were all alone.

ALICE
Oh.

For a second, she feels dejected when she realizes that the classmate doesn't actually care about what she's reading.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Thanks, but no thanks. I'd rather see if the dragons beat the unicorns or, oh, if the dragons team up with the unicorns to save the demon dwarves.

ALICE (CONT'D)
 (To herself)
 There are endless possibilities!

Friendly Classmate runs off.

Alice goes back to reading her book.

Mrs. Newsbury sighs in the background.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PICKUP AREA - DAY

Alice's dad CHRISTOPHER LITTLE, 45, wearing a "Bloomsbury Publishing" jacket, has a kind face but carries bags under his eyes from being overworked.

He is waiting outside to pick Alice up from school.

JOANNE, a blonde and chatty mom, waves Christopher down.

JOANNE
 Christopher! Over here! Hi! How
 are you? How is little Alice? Not
 so little anymore, huh? Is she in
 3rd grade already?

Christopher nods uncomfortably. Why is this mom talking to him for the first time in 5 years?

JOANNE (CONT'D)
 It must be so tough raising a
 child on your own, you know, after
 Sheila passed...

Christopher is focused on the door, looking for Alice.

CHRISTOPHER
 We're doing well.

JOANNE
 Are you coming to the PTA meeting
 later? We could really use a dad's
 opinion on the committee.

CHRISTOPHER
 I'm not sure. I have a lot of work
 tonight finishing these
 manuscripts...

Before he has a chance to finish...

JOANNE
 You know Chris,

DINING ROOM

Christopher is clearing and setting the table.

CHRISTOPHER
(distracted)
That's great, honey.

ALICE
Will you help me pick out my next
book? Hopefully it's something way
better than this one.

Christopher turns to Alice.

CHRISTOPHER
Daddy has a lot of work to do
tonight, sweetie. The books don't
read themselves. So can you go
play upstairs until dinner?

Her face lights up. She has the greatest idea of all time.

ALICE
What if I help you?! I can totally
do it. I want to be a professional
book-reader just like you, daddy!

CHRISTOPHER
I'm sorry sweetie, but this is an
adult's job. Not for little girls.

Her face falls. Christopher notices this and responds...

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Maybe when you get older.

Christopher turns and goes back into the kitchen.

ALICE'S ROOM

Alice's floor is strewn with stuffed animals and books. The walls are colorful and the furniture, juvenile.

Alice walks in and greets her stuffed animal friends, all arranged around a small table with little teacups.

She sits down at the mini table and sighs.

ALICE
Mr. Scruffypants, why can't I do
what adults do? They get to do
whatever they want, and they don't
have a bedtime.

Alice picks up MR. SCRUFFYPANTS, a stuffed elephant wearing pants.

ALICE (CONT'D)
 (imitating her dad as
 Mr. Scruffypants in a
 low voice)
 Because, Alice, you're not ready.
 You need to be more mature.

ALICE (CONT'D)
 I know I can help read daddy's
 books, I love to read, in fact, I
 read more than anyone in my class,
 but daddy just doesn't think I'm
 ready, but I am. I know I am.

Beat. Alice's thoughts change quickly, as her attention span is quite small.

ALICE (CONT'D)
 (imitation)
 I'm hungry.

ALICE (CONT'D)
 Yeah, me too.

Alice opens the door of her bedroom and yells down.

ALICE (CONT'D)
 Daddy, when's dinner?

No response. She tries a little louder this time.

ALICE (CONT'D)
 DADDY, WHEN'S DINNER?

Alice goes downstairs to look for her dad, who is not in the kitchen or the dining room. She checks his study, a room restricted to Alice, hesitantly.

STUDY

ALICE
 Daddy, are you in here?

She walks further into the study and sees a stack of papers on his desk. Her eyes light up at the sight of one manuscript in particular.

From behind, the camera sees her pick it up, but the title of the book isn't visible.

She stands there, contemplating whether or not she should take it.

She tucks the paper under the crook of her arm and scurries off to her room.

ALICE'S ROOM

Alice is sitting, eyes again glued to the book. But this time, it's different.

SUPERIMPOSE:

"CHAPTER 1: THE BOY WHO LIVED"

While Alice is shown reading, a voiceover starts.

J.K ROWLING (V.O.)

Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much. They were the last people you'd expect to be involved in anything strange or mysterious, because they just didn't hold with such nonsense.

Suddenly, the room comes alive, as if in a dream. Alice looks up and is suddenly in this world that the story is told in.

As J.K. ROWLING, 32, a woman with a motherly British voice, introduces the characters offscreen as they pop up onscreen and act out her descriptions.

J.K. ROWLING (V.O.)

Mr. Dursley was the director of a firm called Grunnings, which made drills. He was a big, beefy man with hardly any neck, although he did have a very large mustache. Mrs. Dursley was thin and blonde and had nearly twice the usual amount of neck, which came in very useful as she spent so much of her time craning over garden fences, spying on the neighbors. The Dursleys had a small son called Dudley and in their opinion there was no finer boy anywhere.

Image of Mr. and Mrs. Dursley coddling Dudley.

Fast forward to the interior of a big castle as 3 kids, all 11, await the decision of which house they will be in. There's a brown-haired boy, with a lightning-shaped scar and round glasses, a red-haired girl, and a red-haired boy.

They are standing in a crowd, facing an empty chair.

Among them, in the crowd, is Alice whose name is called...

BRITISH VOICE (V.O.)

Alice Little

Alice pushes through and sits on a chair, with a tall talking hat atop her head.

TALKING HAT

GRYFFINDOR

Alice runs to a long table where her new housemates greet her. Everyone is clapping and a grin fills Alice's face.

Suddenly, there's a KNOCK at the door.

Alice is jolted back to reality and turns her head to the door of her room as the animations disappear.

In a panic, she shoves the manuscript into her backpack as the door starts to open.

CHRISTOPHER

Alice, it's time for dinner.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Mrs. Newsbury is at the front of the class, teaching maths on a chalkboard.

MRS. NEWBURY

So, class, if you drop the one and carry the two...

Alice is at her desk, clearly not paying attention. Instead, she is reading the manuscript, concealing it on her lap, under the desk.

MRS. NEWSBURY

Who knows the answer?

A few kids raise their hands. Mrs. Newsbury looks over at a distracted Alice.

MRS. NEWSBURY (CONT'D)

Alice?

Alice doesn't look up.

MRS. NEWSBURY (CONT'D)
 Alice? What are you doing under
 there?

Alice looks up and sees Mrs. Newsbury walking over to her desk.

MRS. NEWSBURY (CONT'D)
 Alice, this is not the time to be
 reading. I'm going to have to take
 this from you.

ALICE
 But!

MRS. NEWSBURY
 You can have it back at the end of
 the week.

ALICE
 This is so unfair!

MRS. NEWSBURY
 Class what's the first rule we
 learn in school?

CLASS
 Respect one another.

MRS. NEWSBURY
 Right, so Alice, when an adult
 tells you to do something, you
 must respect them and do it.

Alice quietly pouts and puts her chin in her hands.

INT. SMALL LONDON FLAT - ALICE'S ROOM - DAY

Alice is in her room playing with different dolls. This time, they resemble the characters we saw come to life earlier.

She picks up a boy doll with brown hair and round doll glasses from an American Girl Doll and draws a lightning-shaped scar on his forehead.

CHRISTOPHER'S OFFICE

Christopher is sorting through papers on his desk frantically looking for something.

ALICE'S ROOM

Alice picks up a girl doll with red hair, and says...

ALICE
Oh, Harry. Kiss me!

Alice makes two of the dolls kiss. She makes KISSING SOUNDS and laughs.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S OFFICE

Christopher turns his bag over, dumping all the contents onto the floor.

He mutters curse words to himself as he gets up and walks out of the room.

ALICE'S ROOM

Alice has the dolls all lined up.

She takes a small wizard hat and puts it on the brown-haired doll's head.

ALICE
Hmmm. Not slytherin. GRYFFINDOR!
Yes yes yes!

Suddenly, Christopher bursts into her room, distraught. Unlike his usual comforting voice, his tone is firm.

CHRISTOPHER
Alice, have you seen my manuscript lying around? I have to finish it by tomorrow and I can't find it anywhere.

Alice quickly hides the toys behind her back. Not before Christopher has a look at Harry's drawn-on scar.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Alice, why are you drawing on your toys? Where did you get that Sharpie from?

He reaches out to grab the toy from Alice. Once he sees the doll up close, he comes to a realization.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Alice, what's this doll's name?

Right away and with enthusiasm...

ALICE
Harry! He's a wizard.

Alice quickly realizes that she revealed her secret.

CHRISTOPHER
Alice, did you take my manuscript
after I specifically told you not
to?

Alice turns away and smiles awkwardly.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Alice, this is serious. I need
this script for work. I have a
meeting with the author tomorrow.
Now. I am not joking.

ALICE
Daddy, it's SO good! You HAVE to
read it!

Disappointment sets in Christopher's face.

CHRISTOPHER
Alice, we don't steal in this
house. Please give me back the
script.

ALICE
I'm sorry daddy but I don't have
it here.

CHRISTOPHER
Then where is it?

ALICE
Well, it was so good, I couldn't
put it down, so I brought it to
school to read during class but
Mrs. Newsbury took it and put it
in her desk. She said I couldn't
have it back until the end of the
week.

Anger starts to brew in Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER
You are grounded. No toys. No
books. Nothing for the next month.

Christopher starts taking Alice's toys and books.

ALICE
But DAD!!

CHRISTOPHER

Don't you understand how hard I work to take care of us? I am working overtime by taking these scripts to read at home.

Beat.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Your mom would be disappointed in you, if she were here.

This hits Alice HARD.

ALICE

TAKE IT BACK!

Christopher slams the door.

Alice sits alone at the foot of her bed. For once, she is still, smile wiped from her face.

A few tears fall from her eyes.

DINING ROOM

Christopher sits at the dining room table, thinking. Was he too harsh on Alice?

ALICE'S ROOM

Alice sits on the ground at the tea table with Mr. Scruffypants, eyes still red from crying. She uses a wet paper towel to rub the sharpie off the brown-haired doll and takes the glasses off.

She gets up and walks around the room, cleaning up the toys and books on the floor, returning them to their rightful places.

There's a KNOCK at the door.

OUTSIDE ALICE'S ROOM

CHRISTOPHER

(from behind the door)

Alice, sweetie, can I come in?

ALICE'S ROOM

ALICE

No.

OUTSIDE ALICE'S ROOM

CHRISTOPHER
Please honey, I'm sorry. Can we
please just talk?

ALICE'S ROOM

ALICE
Fine.

Christopher walks into Alice's room and sits on the foot of her bed.

CHRISTOPHER
I'm sorry for what I said earlier.
Your mommy would be so proud of
you and everything you've
accomplished. You've become quite
the book worm.

ALICE
(through tears)
You really think so?

CHRISTOPHER
I have no doubt about it. Look at
you, a smart, beautiful young
woman.

Beat.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
But now I really need your help to
get that script. Will you come
with me?

ALICE
But school's closed.

CHRISTOPHER
Well I guess we're going on an
adventure.

Alice can't help but crack a smile and subtly nods.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - NIGHT

Alice and Christopher are staking out the place. A sign reading, "PTA meeting TONIGHT at 7 p.m." is hung outside the school.

Alice and Christopher try the front door knob.

CHRISTOPHER

It's locked.

They both look around the area, nothing. There is no one remotely nearby.

They check all surrounding windows, yanking on them to try and pry them open. All are locked tight.

ALICE

Daddy, we're never gonna get in.
No one is here and it's all my
fault. I'm sorry.

They stand in despair. It's a lost cause.

Suddenly, they hear a car pulling out of the parking lot toward them.

CHRISTOPHER

Quick! Someone's coming. Let's
hide!

They hide in the bushes out front, waiting for the car to drive away. The two of them are curled together tightly. In this moment, we notice their relationship repairing.

Instead, the car stops and Joanne gets out.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Oh no, not this woman again. Don't
make a peep.

Joanne walks over to the bushes. She ruffles through them.

JOANNE

Hello? Who's in there? I saw you
run into these bushes. This is
private school property. I am the
head of the PTA! I know the
principal! Don't make me call the
cops!

After he hears this, Christopher slowly comes of out from behind the bushes.

JOANNE (CONT'D)

Christopher? What are you doing
here, hiding behind the bushes?

CHRISTOPHER

(nervously)

Uh, Alice and I were driving by the area, in need of a bathroom break. Isn't that right, sweetie?

Alice gets the hint and feels smart.

ALICE

Yeah, totally. I don't know if I'll make it in time.

JOANNE

There's a market across the street that has a bathroom. If it was that urgent then you could have gone there. Why are you actually here?

Christopher realizes that the jig is up. Instead, Alice confesses.

ALICE

I stole one of the books daddy has to read for work tomorrow. It was so good that I brought it to school and read it during maths but Mrs. Newsbury took it. So we're here to get it back but the door's locked and we couldn't open the windows. Can you PLEASE help us?

JOANNE

(bragging)

Oh, you need to get in the building? I run this place, of course I can make that happen. I know the janitor. He'll let us right in.

Joanne raises the phone to her ear, as a figure opens the front door. They enter the building. Christopher and Alice look at each other and quietly fist bump.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Alice starts to run down the hallway toward the classroom. Joanne and Christopher follow.

ALICE

Let's go! I wanna know what happens!

JOANNE

So what's the book about?

ALICE

It's about this boy-wizard Harry who doesn't know he's special until he gets an acceptance letter from an owl to Hogwarts, a school of witchcraft and wizardry. It's called, "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone."

CHRISTOPHER

Sounds pretty good.

Alice stops dead in her tracks.

ALICE

Daddy, it's unlike anything I've ever read. And I read A LOT.

Christopher sees how much this book has impacted her.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Alice, Christopher and Joanne burst into the empty classroom and they all rummage, looking for the script.

Alice finds the script in a desk.

ALICE

Here it is!

CHRISTOPHER

Let's bounce!

Alice, Christopher and Joanne leave the building as one unit. In that moment, we know that everything will be alright for their family.

FADE OUT

J.K. ROWLING (V.O.)

Christopher finally read the script and enjoyed it as much as Alice did. It was ready to be distributed within a week. And for me, well, I went on to become one of five self-made billionaires and the first billionaire author, all thanks to Alice Little.

THE END