

Luna and the Cooking Contest

Luna Lovegood/Harry Potter/J.K. Rowling

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It was 6:43 in the morning when ten-year-old Luna Lovegood scrambled out of bed. Today was July 18, the perfect day for catching Freshwater Plimpies, according to her dad, Xenophilus. She was going to catch Plimpies to put in her soup for the Humdinger County cooking contest. Luna skipped down the spiral staircase into the perfectly circular kitchen, which to her felt like being in a giant cooking pot. She ate breakfast quickly, as to not waste any time.

Xenophilus walked down the stairs and asked, "Luna, are you going down to the lake to catch the Plimpies yet? You know I need to preheat this old clunker," gesturing to the stove.

"Oh, yes. I was just finishing breakfast." Luna replied. She grabbed the colander to collect the Plimpies, then skipped down to the lake.

Luna gathered the Plimpies, then walked back up to the house, and a little water splashed on to her shirt. She turned the battered old door handle, and heard the familiar sound of the pot whistling on the stove.

From the pantry she grabbed the chicken stock and her mother's recipe for Freshwater Plimpy Soup. She diced the carrots and mushrooms from the fridge and slid them into the boiling water along with the Plimpies. In a few minutes, the vegetables were soft. She set the timer for 10 minutes, and then put on oven mitts and carefully lifted the pot by the handles.

"Dad? I'm ready to go!"

Xenophilus shuffled down the spiral staircase and put on his shoes. Suddenly, Luna tripped over the crack between the floor and the door frame. The soup sloshed out of the pot, and all of the soup was now on the floor. Her eyes welled with horror and disbelief.

“Oh no! My soup! Dad, I don’t have time to make something else.”

Xenophilus replied, “Don’t worry, Luna. You’ll think of something.”

Thoughts whirled around in her mind. Could she make a cake? Cakes didn’t take long to bake. Yes! That’s what she’d do. Luna gathered eggs, flour, vanilla, baking soda, salt, butter, sugar, and her secret ingredient. There was also a little frosting in the fridge, so she grabbed that too. She quickly made her cake, baked it, delicately frosted it, gently put it on a cake plate, and carried it to the car. Minutes passed in silence as they drove to the cooking contest. When they got there, 21 other contestants were competing. All were holding a dessert of some sort, so Luna was competing against 21 other desserts.

The judges gathered round the microphone, and one said, “Welcome, natives of Humdinger County. Contestants, please set your decorated desserts on one of these podiums.”

“Wait, what?” she thought. “It had to be decorated? I didn’t know that. Well, I’ll just have to hope for the best.”

Luna walked to one and gently set her cake down.

“We will now start the judging. Contestant 1, please come forward with your dish.”

A scrawny kid came forward with a pie decorated with flowers in his arms. He set his pie on the judge’s table, they tasted it, wrote something on a piece of paper, and this process repeated until it was Luna’s turn. When they called her number, she brought up her cake and set it on their table. A judge took out a cutting knife, sliced the cake, and gave each of the other judges a slice. They took out their forks and tasted some. Their

expressions were motionless, and she couldn't tell whether they liked it or not. "Time will tell," her father always said.

Finally the last contestant had been judged.

A judge with deep black hair said, "Thank you to all our competitors. Now, it is time to announce our winners. In third place, Tristan Lane, with a blackberry pie." The scrawny kid Luna had seen earlier walked up to the table and received his trophy.

"In second place, Madeline Kelly, with a frosted crepe." A tall girl ran to the table and nearly yanked the trophy out of the judge's hands.

"Finally, in first place, Luna Lovegood, with a magically delicious vanilla cake." Luna couldn't believe she had done it. Her cake wasn't even decorated. She skipped to the table and received her trophy. The trophy was really shiny, and it felt smooth in her hands. She walked over to her dad, and he tousled her dirty blond hair.

"I always knew you could do it, my Luna," and winked at her.