

Jupiter and His Trumpet

By Brianna Harris

NAME: Brianna Harris

WHERE ARE YOU FROM: Berkeley Heights, NJ

BIO: I'm 15 and an upcoming sophomore. I rock climb competitively and love to read. This is the first play I've ever written though I'll occasionally write for fun. While I don't expect to win, I look forward to competing in the Bake-Off and the experience that comes with it!

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What's keeping you positive? Facetiming my friends and playing with my dog, Clover.

Yes, you can publish this!

Characters:

DAVY: a 43 year old man who's an inventor. He has a daughter named Emilia, and his wife's name is Juno. He's a bit offbeat and socially awkward, but he's still a friendly person. The thing he's been working on most recently is his time traveling gun.

CASSIUS (pronounced Ca-see-us): a man from ancient Rome. middle to lower class. He is deeply in awe of the Roman gods. He's in his late 20s. Is a formal but naturally curious person.

BIANCA: soft spoken, polite young woman. Is 18-22. Often seems to be competing with sister Katherine. She and her sister are lower to middle class.

KATHERINE: a louder, older, and more outgoing girl than her sister, and is often perceived as rude.

DEVIL: Surprisingly laid back and adapted to modern society. He's slightly rude. He is mostly interested in gaining more people to torture eternally.

TO INDICATE SPEAKING LATIN, CHARACTERS HAVE A SLIGHT EUROPEAN ACCENT AND IN DAVY'S CASE, A SLIGHTLY DEEPER VOICE.

Time:

First part: 4:15 in April 2018

Second part: approximately 150 BCE around 2 in the afternoon

Third part: 3:00 in April 2018

Place:

Small office with a cluttered desk, a battered clock, a large computer, and an old chair.

A **small porch** with hanging baskets overflowing with flowers on the sides, a painted white railing along the sides, and an abandoned bird's nest in the corner.

Ancient Rome on a deserted cobblestone street with a small house that's against the porch and has many buildings in the background

Darkness with one light on Davy to symbolize where he meets the Devil in limbo during time travel.

Davy is sitting at his cluttered desk with his phone propped against his ear chatting with his friend. He is tinkering with the time traveling gun. His trumpet is sitting on the desk and a beaten up clock is on the wall behind him.

DAVY:

Yeah! Emilia's recital is today. I'm playing a trumpet duet with her.

Davy pauses and listens to the speaker on the other end

DAVY:

Yeah, it isn't what they usually do, but she really loves when I play with her. And they wouldn't say no to their youngest student!

Davy pauses and listens again

DAVY:

I've finally finished it this morning. Soon, time travel will be available for everyone! It was surprisingly simple to make, too. I'm surprised more people haven't thought of it. I'm gonna test it out before Emilia's recital

As he listens, he holds up the time travel gun and mimes shooting it at the floor.

DAVY:

Yeah, Juno's taking her there after school, and I'll get there a few minutes early so we can run through our piece one more time.

Davy gradually stops fidgeting and listens intently for a few moments

DAVY:

I have time, the recital is at four...

Davy Trails off and looks up at the clock to see that its 4:15

DAVY:

I'm late! I have to go, talk to you later, bye!

Davy stands up quickly while shoving his phone into his back pocket, He glances down at his time travel gun and appears to be considering something. He grabs his trumpet and bursts out

onto the small porch attached to his house. Davy points it at the ground and slowly traces a circle. He nervously looks at it.

DAVY:

This thing had better work. I don't want to end up 30 years into the future.

As he jumps forward as if into the portal, lights cut and the scenery is changed. Lights return with the front porch of Davy's house haphazardly against the side of a small, old-looking building in Rome. Davy is sitting on the ground besides it with his trumpet next to him. Davy slowly stands up and looks around at ancient Rome.

DAVY:

What...happened?

Davy turns around when he hears a quiet creaking sound coming from where his porch hit the wall. He shakily walks over and opens the door that previously led to his house. Almost immediately, Cassius, wearing a tunic, walks out looking cautiously at Davy.

DAVY:

What year am I in? Is this old Rome? You wouldn't understand me if it was. I'm guessing you speak Latin? I haven't tried speaking latin since school, so I'm not sure you'll understand me anyways.

While Davy is talking, Cassius appears too shocked to say anything. He keeps looking from the porch to Davy and his trumpet.. Davy clears his throat and his voice deepens and has a slight european accent.

DAVY:

Hello. I'm Davy and I'm from the future. Something is wrong with my time travel gun so I ended up here. I think I accidentally took my porch with me as well. I guess it landed non your house.

CASSIUS:

What is a time travel... gun? How have you come from the future? What is this structure that is on my house? And what is that strange device?

Cassius emphasizes "gun" to indicate he had never heard the word before. When he says "device" Cassius points at the trumpet lying on the ground. A few more Romans are walking up to investigate the noise, all wearing plain tunics

DAVY:

You don't know what a gun is yet it's not been invented. Just think of this as a time travel...sword? catapult? And the "structure" is actually a porch! Though you don't know what that is yet either. This thing, it's a trumpet. It's an instrument.

Davy picks up trumpet as he speaks and holds it up to the Romans when he refers to it

CASSIUS:

Can you get the... porch off my house? I'm Cassius. Are you a god?

DAVY:

No, I'm not a god, I'm Davy. But nice to meet you, Cassius. A porch is useful though. You can sit under cover from the sun, but still be outside! My wife, Juno, likes to plant flowers on it so it looks nice

Cassius and the other romans freeze up in surprise

CASSIUS:

Your wife is Juno? You must be Jupiter!

DAVY:

I'm not Jupiter, I'm from the future. I'm here by mistake. Something is wrong with my time travel gun. I was just trying to go to my daughter's recital. I think I know how to fix it though, so I'll be out of here in no time!

CASSIUS:

Will you be able to take your... porch off my house, Lord Jupiter?

DAVY:

I'm not- oh nevermind. I can't promise you that I will. I'll do my best to remove it. But wouldn't you like a nice porch? In the future, plenty of people have them. I'm not sure when the porch is invented, so you might be a bit ahead of your time..

CASSIUS:

Someone, bring Lord Jupiter some offerings!

DAVY:

No, really, it's not necessary. I'm not Jupiter!

KATHERINE:

it would be my great honor to retrieve an offering for you!

BIANCA:

Sister Kate, I would love to go get them myself, if you wouldn't mind.

KATHERINE:

Bianca, I do mind, actually! I want to get them.

Katherine hurries offstage

DAVY:

Please don't be bothered. I'm just here by mistake. I'm not Jupiter. Here, while I'm waiting for my time travel gun to cool down I'll play you something with my trumpet.

Davy picks up his trumpet and quickly plays a few scales. The Romans are intrigued and gather around him.

DAVY:

Okay, here we go!

Davy starts playing a cheerful melody. At first, everyone is shocked and confused by the music, but they soon start dancing. Within moments many of them are dancing and humming along with the trumpet. They continue for another minute until the piece ends and Davy sits back down on the ground

DAVY:

Do you guys like that?

BIANCA:

It's very good, my Lord! Did Lord Apollo gift you that instrument?

DAVY:

No, it hasn't been invented yet for you guys. How about this. I'll leave it for you guys to figure out? I can transport myself to an hour before the performance so I can myself get a new one. I've needed a new trumpet for awhile anyway.

CASSIUS:

Lord Jupiter, we humble mortals would be honored to use your... what did you call it?

DAVY:

A trumpet, and I'm not Jupiter!

CASSIUS:

Of course, lord Jupiter. I'm sorry

Katherine returns with some more Romans, and a huge platter with fruits and cheeses and a large goblet of wine.

KATHERINE:

For you, lord Jupiter. These people heard you were here and wanted to meet you.

DAVY:

Thank you, but this really isn't necessary, guys. I'm not Jupiter. I just came here by mistake with my time travel gun. I'm just from far into the future. This cheese looks delicious though!

Davy takes some of the food on the platter and accepts the goblet

DAVY:

I should probably head back to my time soon. I don't know the side effects of time travel.

CASSIUS:

Is there anything any of us could do for you, lord Jupiter?

DAVY:

No, it's okay. I think I know what I have to do.

Davy pats his back pocket and pulls out his cell phone. Immediately all the Romas gather behind him to look at it.

CASSIUS:

Lord Jupiter, what is that?

DAVY:

It's a cell phone. I have to take out a chip from it to put in my time travel gun. It'll probably be useless after I do that, unfortunately.

CASSIUS:

My lord, what is a cell phone? And if you wouldn't mind, could we look at it when it is useless to you? You have many intriguing devices.

Davy opens his mouth to answer but is interrupted by a Roman blowing loudly into the wrong end of the trumpet. Davy motions switching it around and the Roman obliges. Davy pries his phone out of its case and starts working through the wires and chips inside.

DAVY:

Yeah I guess showing you my phone won't do you any harm. I have a few games for my daughter on it so you could probably still play those.

Davy finds the chip he wants and picks up his time travel gun and opens a small door on the side of it. The Romans watch him intently. After a few moments they look up at a squeaking sound, which was a Roman undoing a hanging basket full of flowers off the porch and quickly carrying it away.

KATHERINE:

Lord Jupiter, would you like that returned to you and that man killed?

DAVY:

No, no, don't kill him. I can always buy a new one. I'm done with my phone. Let me quickly show you how to use it so you won't immediately break it.

Davy moves over slightly so he's nearer to Cassius and points at different parts of his phone screen.

DAVY:

So you press the screen part, right here, gently. It's sensitive so you won't have to press very hard. My password is 1, 2, 3, 4 because I'm honestly not very good at remembering passwords.

CASSIUS:

What are those, lord Jupiter?

DAVY:

Wow I forgot you don't even know numbers. Well, nevermind that. Just see the order I did? Okay so once you've unlocked it, see these squares? Each one will lead you to a dif-

As Davy is speaking, a different Roman plays a loud note from the trumpet. He quickly drops it in surprise.

DAVY:

You know what, I think you'll figure it out. I have to get back to my daughter's recital. I've almost finished fixing the time travel gun, then I'll be able to go back to my time.

A Roman who had been investigating the porch climbed on top of the railing on its side while he was reaching for a bird's nest and he toppled off it, breaking it with a loud snap.

CASSIUS:

Do you want us to kill him as punishment for breaking your porch, Lord Jupiter?

DAVY:

No, don't worry about it. Killing him isn't necessary.

BIANCA:

Who is your daughter whose recital it is that you're going to? Diana? Minerva? Bellona?

DAVY:

Uh, none of those. It doesn't matter. I think I've gotten this to work now.

Davy stands up, and quickly the other Romans watching him stand up as well.

DAVY:

I'd like to thank all of you for being so gracious, even if I did intrude on you all.

Cassius puts down the phone and stands up.

CASSIUS:

My lord, I am honored that you chose to be here with us. We enjoyed you visiting us, and the gifts you bestowed upon us.

DAVY:

I'm really sorry about my porch, Cassius. Do you want me to try to help you remove it before you go? I don't think I'll be able to take it with me.

CASSIUS:

No, Lord Jupiter. I think I'll keep it. It will always remind me of your visit, and it is very useful. I'll be able to stay out of the sun but still see people nearby.

BIANCA:

Goodbye, Lord Jupiter. It was an honor to meet you, and I thank you for all you do for us.

DAVY:

Thank you again, everybody. Now I really must be going.

Davy points his time travelling gun at the floor and carefully traces a circle. The Romans back up and watch in awe as he slowly steps forward and jumps into where he drew a circle. The lights flash off and the set is changed so it is Davy standing in the darkness. A single light flashes onto Davy with the Devil standing besides him, though Davy doesn't notice him yet.

DEVIL:

Hi there, Davy!

Davy is startled and screams in a high pitched tone and leaps away from him.

DAVY:

Are you the d-devil?

DEVIL:

Well yeah, what do I look like to you?

DAVY:

What d-do you want from me? I just want to go h-home. Did I die? Am I going to hell?

DEVIL:

Certainly not! Your time traveling device is quite successful. I'm here for another reason. You've destroyed humanity.

DAVY:

I w-what?

DEVIL:

You've altered the past, Davy. you've altered it big-time. You introduced some things to ancient Rome that weren't introduced to society for a millennium.

DAVY:

I did?

DEVIL:

Yup. for one thing, the porch. Why would you introduce the porch? Rome fell four centuries early partially because everyone was too focused on building themselves a porch, then refusing to leave it.

DAVY:

I-I didn't know that a porch could be so dangerous. I'm really sorry

DEVIL:

Nah, I'm just getting started. The flowers in that hanging basket on your porch? They carried a ton of diseases. You introduced three new plagues to the world. Within four decades, most of human life had been wiped out.

DAVY:

I-I'm really sorry I truly didn't know it would have this much impact.

DEVIL:

You also introduced your trumpet? That was a very costly mistake. The great inventors of the world stopped creating new things to try and figure out how to replicate it, then use it to make good music. Trumpets really don't make a ton of good music on their own, so it took awhile. Also, they all thought you were Jupiter for some reason? How did you even screw up badly enough that they thought you were the king of their gods? Man, you have a talent.

DAVY:

What can I do to make up for this? What am I going to do? Is my family okay?

DEVIL:

Nothing YOU can do for humanity now. And also, no, your family is far from all right. humans wiped themselves out like 30 years after Jesus died at the cross. Your family is very dead. Those Romans who saw you formed this cult thing? Their cult survived long enough to kill all those who followed Jesus. And your phone? That did not help. Until it died a week or so after you left, they figured out the calculator, which obviously changed the course of math. They found the camera, which confused everyone beyond belief, and they found a bunch of saved articles on women equality? Women took out like, half the male population after reading that, devastating the population.

DAVY:

I really don't know what to say. I'm so sorry. I'm assuming you're here to take me to hell?

DEVIL:

No man, I think your work is great! Really inspiring. I'm a big fan. I've opened a new torture chamber where you listen to ancient Romans learn the trumpet for eternity. It's a huge success! The one problem is everyone who believed in me was killed and now I have no fresh meat to torture since they were all killed two millennia ago. I'm setting things back the way they were. Your porch, your trumpet, and your phone are all going back to your timeline along with you. I just ask that you keep this a little secret between you and me?

DAVY:

I'll do anything.

DEVIL:

You have to keep quiet about the time travel. I can't do this every time someone goes back in time, something goes wrong, and the world ends. You have to destroy that time travel gun, got it? And anyone you told about it before. You have to tell them it doesn't work or something. Got it?

DAVY:

Yeah I guess. This was a lot of work though. Can't I have it and just keep quiet about it?

DEVIL:

What are you going to do with it anyway? Tell you what, I'll pay you off. You're gonna have to move on.

DAVY:

Fair enough. So is the world back to normal?

The light fades, leaving the stage dark, and the Devil steps away from Davy.

DEVIL:

You tell me

The lights return to have Davy standing on his porch, staring straight ahead of him with his trumpet in his hand. He turns around to go inside and trips over a big red bag by the door. Davy opens it, to find a huge wad of cash and the time travel gun. Davy looks at it for a moment, then drops it to the ground and stomps on it until its in pieces.. He picked up the bag and carried it inside. He glances up at the clock and sees its only 3:00. Davy sits down at his desk and pulls out his phone and dials a number into it.

DAVY: Hey there! How are you?

Davy pauses and listens for a moment

DAVY:

I'm great! Emilia's recital is today. I'm playing a trumpet duet with her.

Davy pauses and listens to the speaker on the other end

DAVY:

Yeah it isn't what they usually do but she really loves when I play with her. And they wouldn't turn down their youngest student!

Davy pauses and listens again

DAVY:

Nope. It turns out that a time travel device really is impossible. I thought I had a good idea, but I guess I was just grasping at straws.

Davy pauses and listens for a few seconds

DAVY:

Yeah, I was really confident. It's a shame, too, there was so much I could have done with it...

CURTAINS CLOSE AND LIGHTS FADE