

# HARRY AFTER POTTER 2020

with LORRIE KIM and JC

## Transcript

### Episode 1.10

#### Book 1, Chapter 10: Halloween

Caroline: You're listening to Harry Potter After 2020, an HP chapter re-read podcast, wherein two friends who read the books way back in the day as adults revisit the series through a post-2020 lens. Your hosts are Lorrie Kim, author of *Snape: The Definitive Analysis*; and JC, an educator and long-time HP fan. I'm your editor, Caroline. In this episode, Lorrie and JC tackle Book One, Chapter 10: Hallowe'en.

Lorrie: Hey, JC. Are you ready to talk about Chapter 10: Hallowe'en?

JC: Hallowe'en, yes.

Lorrie: Hallowe'en is the most portentous holiday in Potterverse. Important things tend to happen. This is the day when the veil thins between the dead and the living. On this first Halloween, Quirrell interrupts the Feast with the immortal line, "Troll in the dungeons! Thought you ought to know," and then he faints. The students return to their dorms except for Hermione, who is crying in the girls' bathroom because Ron was mean to her about how she has no friends. Harry and Ron go to tell her about the troll. They find the troll menacing her in the bathroom; they knock the troll out. McGonagall, Snape, and Quirrell find them, and the kids have now bonded. So, what stood out for you from this chapter?

JC: Harry and Ron are completely over the fact that Malfoy tried to set them up because they had an adventure, and Malfoy's just baffled.

Lorrie: He's so left in the dust.

JC: It's funny. They're like, "Oh, yeah, we had this great adventure," but then we have the moment where the Nimbus 2000 gets delivered by Owl Post, and I have so many thoughts about this. First of all, I love how the whole idea of the Nimbus 2000 is very 90s-coded. These books are set in -- I guess at this point, we're in 1992 or something? Having been a young adult at that time, I remember how the year 2000 seemed like it was so far away. It was still the stuff of Sci-Fi and magical things were going to happen, so the fact it's named the Nimbus 2000, that's so 90s. And also, the brooms getting better every year as we go through the series is also

like, "Okay, that's how it would be." It's never good enough. You never have the best iPhone. As I was reading this one this time, the idea that it was sent by Owl Post with a note saying, "Don't open it," but it's a broom-shaped package and I'm like, "Really? What were we thinking, McGonagall?" Why not give it to him in private? Why send him a broom-shaped package in the middle of a meal when everyone's going to see? And they're going to know it's a broom. What else could it be?

Lorrie: It couldn't be anything else.

JC: Okay, it's great for the plot, but also the reality side of me is like, "Just hand it to him quietly in a dark corner."

Lorrie: I love, "Do not open the parcel at the table." That's so hapless. Yeah, that'll work.

JC: And only by luck did he open the letter first. Oh, my gosh.

Lorrie: But it's also super satisfying, and then to get the affirmation when Flitwick comes and beams and says, "Oh, yes, I heard all about it!"

JC: Oh, that moment, right. Poor Draco. Poor Draco thinks, "Now, I'm going to get him in trouble. I missed my chance; the other night, whatever happened, it didn't work out. He got away with flying the other day." At this point, Draco doesn't know that Harry's on the Quidditch team, I assume.

Lorrie: No, he doesn't know yet.

JC: Right, he doesn't know yet. So he thinks, "Now's my chance to get him in trouble, here comes a teacher," and it has completely the opposite effect. It's not quite the start -- No, I think it is the start of Draco thinking, "Oh, the rules don't apply to Harry."

Lorrie: They don't.

JC: "I'm going to hate him even more."

Lorrie: "They're all in cahoots to elevate Harry Potter at my expense."

JC: Exactly. It's just so interesting to think about it from Draco's perspective here. "Aaah, this kid who's famous, who refused my handshake, who's associated with the Weasleys, of all people. Ugh!" Now he's like, "Oh, he thinks he's better than me." You can just see how all this is playing out in Draco's mind, and it really isn't fair. We talked about this a bit last time. It's absolutely not fair.

Lorrie: Draco's correct. It's against the rules.

JC: Yeah, and for McGonagall to handle it the way that she did just makes it more obvious that it's not fair. But I think that for the reader, because Harry's the protagonist, we're seeing the story from his point of view. He has had such a shitty life up to this point that it feels like this brings things a little more into balance for him to get these advantages that the other kid who's obviously -- Draco is obviously the spoiled brat, and he's in Slytherin, so he must be evil, right? Everything else that comes along with that package feels like it's balancing things out a little bit. As a Draco stan, I have to be like, "Oh, my guy, I feel for him," but then the line: "It's thanks to Malfoy that I got it." It's a twisting of the knife, and Draco has no idea what that means at this point. He's like, "What?"

Lorrie: But Harry, by that time, knows that he can get away with saying that. Someone else might say that and be reprimanded, but Harry knows. Look, Flitwick's on his side, McGonagall's on his side. Yeah.

JC: And Ron is just eating it with a spoon. He's loving this.

Lorrie: The pure feeling of it is very recognizable, though. The pure feeling of being a kid and knowing that there's somebody hateful who will stop at nothing to make your life miserable, and then seeing the satisfaction of other people -- grown-ups -- coming and backing you up against them? That is separate from who's right and who's wrong. That's just a really relatable feeling for that age.

JC: And that's never happened to Harry. Obviously, at home it never happened, but even at school, no one would take Harry's side because they were afraid of Dudley, so no one would take his side. This has never happened to him before. This is new. I feel for Draco, but also it's great and feels really good as a reader.

Lorrie: And that brings me to one of the first sentences that stood out to me: Harry felt like he'd already been at Hogwarts for longer than two months. He's surprised because it just feels so much better than that.

JC: Right.

Lorrie: Wow, this is the feeling of belonging. And I know that feeling: when you go somewhere and it's completely new and then you're acclimated, and then you get caught up in it and then you stop and realize, "Wait, I'm very comfortable here. This is fun. This feels like home." Yeah, so the fact that he is surprised to realize it's only been two months, that really felt real.

JC: Yeah, that line that the castle felt more like home than Privet Drive had ever done.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Oh, yeah, that's great. And I think that as a reader when you find out that he gets into Hogwarts and he's going off, that would be your hope for him: that he's finally going to find his

place, and the fact that he feels that way so soon is great. In the film version, the note that comes with the Nimbus 2000 is not signed, and it's heavily implied that the broom was a gift from Dumbledore and not from McGonagall. It's wild to me because I feel it takes away some of the -- well, okay, it does a lot of things, but the idea that this was all McGonagall: I love that. I think that's something that I really love about the story. It makes McGonagall more of a figure in Harry's life than in the movie version, which boils it down to it's all Dumbledore and Harry and the other teachers are just there. But the fact that McGonagall is like, "This is what we're going to do," and has clearly told the other teachers. "This is what's happening, so if you see Harry with the broom, he has permission." And Flitwick's so excited. He's like, "Yeah, you're going to be a Seeker; this is great!" But it's so interesting to me that that piece of it, I resonated with that so much this time, thinking about McGonagall as the Head of House and as the person who's taking this role in Harry's life, which I think -- and I've seen the film multiple times since the last time I read the book -- wasn't there in the film version.

Lorrie: Well, the part that I agree with, though, is that Dumbledore was involved in that he had to give explicit permission for McGonagall to do this.

JC: That's true.

Lorrie: She came saying, "We have a rule, everybody knows this rule. I put that rule personally into every letter that I sent out, that I signed. Can we override this? You can override it for me."

JC: Interesting.

Lorrie: It's important to me that Dumbledore did give the permission for that override because Draco knows. Yes, Draco, the entire school is conspiring against you to do this.

JC: No matter how much you stamp your feet and beg your father.

Lorrie: And point to the rule.

JC: And point to the rule, you're not going to get a broom. You would not be allowed. Yeah. And he's never not been allowed something he wants. Never.

Lorrie: Or at least nobody's been favored over him. This is against nature.

JC: Right, the natural order of things, exactly. Oh, he's such a little shit. I love him.

Lorrie: Well, this is an artifact of the Drarry ship in fanfiction. I have had people say to me -- people who have read the books, but really much more have read a whole lot of Drarry fanfiction -- have said to me that when they go back to the books, they're surprised at how nasty Draco actually is. They're so used to rehabilitated Draco or Harry Potter Soulmate Draco, or sexy Draco or whatever. Then they see him; he doesn't have that many redeeming features, the textual Draco. I just say, "Yes, he's a little Nazi."

JC: Yeah. No, he is. He is. I've known kids like that, and sometimes they grow up and they have experiences that really change them and they become good people. Just because you're a nasty little shit as a kid doesn't mean you're destined to be that as an adult. That's one of the things that as we go forward in the series, I'll definitely come back to this a lot. That idea that early on -- actually, it wasn't even that early on; it was pretty late in the writing of the books. I remember reading an interview with the author where she didn't like the fact that the fans of the books really wanted to see Draco be redeemed, and she was like, "Oh, you're just playing into this whole 'finding the bad boy attractive' thing." That was really insulting to me as a grown-ass adult because I was like, "No, that's not my interest in this at all. My interest in this is that if you have a little kid who's acting like a Nazi, I want to know that kid can turn out differently. I want to know that, despite the people around them and the way they were raised, that that kid can have some experiences that change them and make them into a good person. I want that to be true."

Lorrie: Yeah. It's an interesting story, and it's a survival story for those of us who are being picked on by that person in power.

JC: Oh, that's true, too. Yeah. You want them humbled and you want them to pay for their mistakes, but you also want them to be better and to make a difference. That's Snape's story.

Lorrie: This is exactly what Dumbledore is doing with Voldemort, when he's trying to figure out how to help Harry survive. He keeps trying to save Voldemort's soul; Tom Riddle, the student, would not accept it from Dumbledore, but he knows that the only way Harry has a chance against Voldemort is to look at Voldemort and say, "What made you this way? What's the way in? Can you change?" That is not different from looking at little shitty Draco Malfoy, thinking, "Can you be redeemed?" Because this conflict exists; it does damage real people who have to coexist on one small planet. When I remember the author being afraid that people were interested in Draco just because Tom Felton is good-looking or that bad boys are sexy or something, I think that's more like when people are afraid, like, "Oh, no, am I getting my point across?" Are people going to take that easy side track and not see the real point? But you always hear a voice in your head saying, "Oh, no, what if people take this the wrong way?" That's a worry. It does also sound like a person who had personal experience in being attracted to bad boys, and discovering that sometimes you're projecting in the wrong way. Oops.

JC: Another thing that strikes me about the scene there with Draco is that he's trying to get Harry in trouble, but it's a very Hermione-like way.

Lorrie: The rules!

JC: It's like, "I know what the rules are, and he's breaking a rule!"

Lorrie: Yes, look!

JC: "Teacher, he's breaking a rule!" It's very much the way that Hermione -- Hermione wouldn't - - well, maybe Hermione would go to the teacher. Hermione is more likely to go to the people, which is what she does in the previous chapters, saying, "No, you're breaking a rule, don't do it." But that appeal to authority, that idea that -- in my past experience, an appeal to authority has always worked for me. When I go to the cops, they're going to treat me like a human being. All of this world experience telling him that this is the way to go, and it's not working for him for the first time.

Lorrie: Then we get the wonderful Wingardium Leviosa storyline in this chapter, where we get the iconic showdown between tiny little Ron and tiny little Hermione about how to pronounce the spell.

JC: It's a classic. Everyone knows that. Wingardium Leviosa. Levio-SA.

Lorrie: And just how horrible Ron feels and how right she is, how flawlessly her spell works, how nobody can stop her from being smug, and then how that pays off later in this chapter.

JC: Right.

Lorrie: Which is exactly the same thing as Draco arriving at age eleven as a little Nazi. This is why you teach children and this is why there is a war -- a cultural war -- at all times over what children get taught, because this is indoctrination. Children will, by rote, repeat whatever they've been taught, even if they don't understand it, even if they've never learned how to do it for real. How many times do you know of children calling each other names? They don't even know what the word means, and then they get punished for it and they don't even know what they said. They just had heard somebody else say it. What we see here is the beginning of what happens when Ron is taught Wingardium Leviosa; he doesn't even know how to cast it, but it's going to pay off later. This is indoctrination. Indoctrination is not necessarily bad, although it's a word that's used as a negative in arguments. It's something that happens. We have young; we teach the young. Everything we teach them is a choice.

JC: I think you and I both probably really identify with Hermione in that whole scene: that feeling of being the only one who's able to do it and it being easy when it's hard for everybody else. "I don't really have any way to understand why it isn't easy for the rest of you. Just do it like I'm doing it."

Lorrie: I don't actually identify with Hermione as much as some people do.

JC: Oh, that's interesting.

Lorrie: I had a lot more failure in my life than Hermione. But certainly, in this scene of one teacher and three students, I'm definitely in the Hermione quadrant.

JC: First of all, that feeling of knowing that other people around you aren't able to do the things that you're able to do easily, but then recognizing how much that's isolating you from everyone else. Then we get the line about she has no friends, and Hermione is clearly upset about that. Yeah, because when you are a clever girl, there's a price to be paid. That was so familiar to me. It was -- oh, man -- all through school.

Lorrie: And that I did remember from being a kid, is that she's in an impossible position because she's supposed to show what she can do. What is she going to do? Pretend that she can't? She's doing what she's been asked, and you're supposed to let your light shine. When girls especially, but anybody -- when people hide their aptitude because of resentment from others, that creates a whole other slate of problems. She's doing what she's supposed to, and she's getting a lot of bad feedback, resentment, punishment for it. What is she supposed to do?

JC: Yeah, I don't know.

Lorrie: Yeah. I don't know either.

JC: Same, yeah. It's painful to read because it's so familiar, and I'm sure that for a lot of people who read these books, that was very familiar.

Lorrie: So, there is Hermione crying because Ron correctly says that she has no friends, and she runs to the refuge of all refuges: the girls' bathroom. The popular girls, Lavender and Parvati, are saying how, "Oh, Hermione's crying in the bathroom. She doesn't want anyone to bother her." They don't like her, they're not her friends, but it's girl bathroom code. Okay, and that's as far as I can go with the meaning that the girls' bathroom used to have for me when reading this author's work, because it used to mean that. I grew up as a girl; I did seek and find a lot of refuge in the girls' bathroom. It was really nice to be in a place where the boys couldn't sexually harass you. Lots of drama also happened in the girls' bathroom, but there was kinship, there was comfort. There was safety.

JC: There were people who would have a tampon if you knocked on the stall door.

Lorrie: The first time I remember having to go to the girls' bathroom for refuge: I was in fifth grade, and I brought a banana to school in my lunch. I had no idea what was so funny about this: I peeled the banana and I was eating it, and these horrible fifth-grade boys were like, "Oh, look at Lorrie, it looks like she's giving someone a BJ." A what? What is a BJ? I didn't know what it was, but the boys were all laughing and laughing and laughing. There was no internet then, so I didn't know who to ask, but from the way they were laughing: "Ew. No, ew! Seriously?!" But I wanted to eat, so anytime I brought a banana to school, I would have to eat my lunch in the bathroom where it smelled like a bathroom.

JC: Oh, my God.

Lorrie: Because it was better than being around those horrible boys.

JC: Wow. You didn't do the thing where you just break off the pieces of banana and eat them, rather than do the thing with the banana?

Lorrie: I didn't actually know what a BJ was, still, so I didn't know.

JC: But you just knew that something about eating a banana was making them laugh and point, so that's it.

Lorrie: I don't even know. Ugh.

JC: Wow. I was trying to remember as you were telling that story if there was ever a time that I felt like the girls' bathroom was a refuge. I don't think that it was for me. I can't think of a time at school. What I remember is that we had four minutes between classes, and I barely had time to go to the bathroom during the day. That's my memory, but I don't remember it being -- But as a teacher, it's a very common experience -- especially during the first period of the day -- to have girls come into your classroom bare-faced, ask for a bathroom pass, and then come back with a full face of makeup ten minutes later.

Lorrie: Yes. Yes, yes, yes.

JC: Oh, yeah, your mom didn't want you to leave the house looking like that, so now you look like a completely different person. Full face of makeup. So that, and then kids would meet up in the bathroom to talk about new things. These days with cell phones, it's even easier: just text each other and say, "Hey, meet me in the bathroom." It was different in the 90s, when I was first teaching high school, but there's a lot around the girls' bathroom. Obviously, there's a lot of stuff that happens in this series. A lot of really significant things are happening in that bathroom, and this is one of the first ones.

Lorrie: Yeah. I think this is the first one, because this is the first time during this re-read that I have really been upset by the difference in meaning. That extratextual contributions from the author have changed how I can appreciate what she wrote.

JC: It was just a place before, and now it's not. It was just a place in the sense that we find out next year that it's the entrance to the Chamber of Secrets or whatever. Other things happen in bathrooms throughout the series, but man... Yeah. It does carry a different meaning now.

Lorrie: Yeah. And even in this scene -- even in the pre-TERFpocalypse -- there was some taboo-breaking about Harry and Ron knowing that there are some emergencies that can override the gender taboo about their going into the girls' bathroom. Obviously, she's in mortal peril. Go! There are two different things that I realized, reluctantly, I have to talk about when considering what girls' bathrooms mean from this author now, to me. Hermione is frightened by a troll in the bathroom. One of them is the history of sexual assault in a bathroom that the author has written about, and the other is her wholesale buy-in to the bizarre transphobic myth that,



somehow, men dress as women in order to assault women in women's bathrooms because there's no other way to get access. I don't even. I can't even.

JC: Right. It's so ridiculous.

Lorrie: And because that happens, what we have to do is punish all trans people. Whether they're trans masc or trans feminine, or non-binary, or whatever. Because of this perceived danger, we have a solution here, which is to scapegoat an entire group of people. Somehow, these two things are linked in her mind. That was when I came to the heart-sinking realization -- which you don't have to be a part of, although you are perfectly welcome to -- the realization that there's going to have to be an episode of this podcast that deals with her manifesto, her opinions on gender that she posted on her personal website during the Black Lives Matter month of the disaster that was 2020, where she does link her transphobic views with sexual assault.

JC: Yeah, no, I do feel it's something that needs to be dug into more. At this point, we have the troll getting locked into the bathroom; the troll went into the bathroom with Hermione, and that feels like a very different metaphor now than it did before. It's hard to read that and not be like, "God damn, woman. Really?!" Yeah.

Lorrie: So here's Hermione -- and Hermione is having a freeze response with the fear -- and Ron and Harry go and they just throw whatever they have at the troll. Obviously something has to happen, so Harry actually gets on the troll's back and shoves his wand up the troll's nose. Ron does the thing that he's been conditioned to do without understanding: he says "Wingardium Leviosa" and it works, which shocks him. This is why it's important to teach children. After that happens, that's when McGonagall, then Snape, and then Quirrell come pelting into the bathroom, and we have an instance of Legilimency where Snape gives Harry a swift, piercing look.

JC: What did he see when he looked into Harry's mind, then?

Lorrie: I'm wondering if Snape was seeing if Harry knew. Snape was off trying to catch Quirrell from stealing the Sorcerer's Stone because he knew that Quirrell had released the troll on purpose into the bathroom as a diversion. Maybe he was checking Harry to see what, if anything, Harry knew about that. If your suspect colleague has just done such a thing, and then the kid that you wish the most had nothing to do with this shows up being one of the three kids in the bathroom, why? Is this coincidence? Is it because if you're a Potter, you're always in the middle of things? Does he know, somehow? Is he connected somehow? Did Quirrell or something in Quirrell get Harry on purpose to the troll because was Quirrell trying to take out Harry with the troll? Whatever it is, if you're Snape -- if you're the spy that was set to keep an eye on both Quirrell and Harry Potter -- you definitely want to know what's going on. And he's out of breath, too, because he had to run up to see that the Stone was safe and then he felt the emergency here and had to run back. Yeah, he did get there right before Quirrell. Back in the girls' bathroom, Hermione does an amazing thing: she leverages her good girl privilege to cover

for Harry and Ron, and they recognize what a giant act this is from her and they appreciate it. This is something I identify with, and I imagine you do, too: the existence of the good girl privilege...

JC: Oh, my gosh, yes.

Lorrie: As something that is in your bank account. You can use it. You don't want to use it too often, but you definitely have some capital.

JC: Definitely.

Lorrie: And it works. It never occurs to McGonagall that honest Hermione might be lying on purpose to her.

JC: Yeah, it's interesting to me, too. Looking back, though, how damaging would the truth have been? The truth was that Hermione was in there because she was upset, and then Harry and Ron... well, they ran and they locked her in with the troll, but then they came back to rescue her from the troll, so it's not that different from... I guess my question here is: what if she had just said, "I was in here crying; Ron and Harry heard I was in here, and they saw the troll come in." I guess they would have gotten in trouble for not just going back to their dorm. Maybe she was trying to cover them from that, but I don't know. I'm just trying to figure out: what purpose did that lie serve that telling the truth wouldn't have?

Lorrie: Well, if you cast back your mind to being a kid of that age, grown-ups never bother to listen to the point where you tell what was really happening inside your feelings that is blameless and understandable. They don't actually hear you say, "I was afraid for this fellow student that I was feeling guilty about because I had a petty insult that made her cry." They don't listen for that. What they say is, "What were you told?" "We were told to go back to our dormitory." "What did you do?" "We went to the bathroom." "Were you supposed to?" "No." "Should you have tried to knock out a troll by your 11-year-old selves?" "No." That's what you would get. "Well, detention." "Yes." They don't ask you. There was pretty much no chance that they would get listened to about why they disobeyed direct orders that had been blanket-issued over the entire school for the purposes of safety. You're not supposed to question. If we had all the 11-year-olds thinking that they could disregard a direct order because of something that seems logical to them at the moment -- well, we will see in the next volume, when they fly the Ford Anglia -- that it's not always the wisest course.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: But yeah, I think they recognize nobody is going to stop to listen to them.

JC: Yeah. That also brings up another point that the specter of all of this -- the troll in the dungeon and Percy's "I'm the Prefect, follow me" -- it just made me think of shooter drills in schools.

Lorrie: Oh, nice. Yeah.

JC: Well, not drills, but situations. Having drills for what happens when you have an invader in your school who is going to kill people, and what do you do. The fact that years ago -- well, even by the time I read this book, I think Columbine had already happened, but it's different now. It's different now because I have my own kid. It's different because it's happened so much. This idea of having that kind of deadly danger in a school and having an attack, and then having students in chaos. These days, Hogwarts would have shooter drills, or not. Who knows what they call it, but they would have those kinds of drills. And this book was written at a time when those things hadn't started happening, certainly not at British schools. Maybe they don't have to deal with this like American schools do, but that wasn't really happening in American schools at the time this was written. That is there for me, too, when I was reading. And the things that you were just saying -- they didn't follow the protocol, they didn't do the things they were supposed to do. Of course, they were going to get themselves hurt, and we really need everybody to go into the room and to get down and turn off the lights and make no sound. That's what we need you to do. But yeah, anyway... Wow, this got dark.

Lorrie: Yeah. I've noticed that this is just what happens with me when I talk about the series and I feel kind of bad about that, because I know there are people who think of it as so warm and loving and nostalgic. I don't know. As soon as I get involved, it turns to darkness and death.

JC: Darkness. There is a lot of darkness and death in these books, I have to say. I'd like to go back to the introduction to Quidditch scene.

Lorrie: Oh. See, this is my blind spot. I'm like, "Quidditch? Was there Quidditch in this chapter?" Yes. The whole first half. Yeah. Anyway, carry on.

JC: So, a lot of things about it. I love the way that the game is introduced to Harry. It's chaotic and violent, and it's like every contact sport. When I read this, I think the author hates contact sports and doesn't understand them. I'm the same, I'm like, "Same." The description of this over-the-top ridiculous game that's unnecessarily violent and has bizarre rules... it's like she invented this contact sport that was just a joke, and the amazing thing about it is that it's a real sport.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And the fact that it's an international sport that has major leagues and has international competitions; also, the fact that they've renamed themselves to Quadball to distance themselves from her, which I think is amazing. It's interesting to me that this thing that she made up almost to be..

Lorrie: A parody!

JC: It's a parody, exactly. It's a parody of contact sports. Possibly one of the biggest things that came out of the series is the fact that there's now a whole international sports league. They're based on this idea from someone who doesn't even like contact sports, clearly.

Lorrie: Yeah, and who intentionally built absurdity into the rules.

JC: Yeah. It's so much fun. But I love the whole interaction there between Oliver Wood and Harry in that it's just so sports bro-y.

Lorrie: Yes, it really is.

JC: Somehow it captures that. It's also another one of those moments when you get to see Harry in his element. He knows he's going to be good at this. He flies around, and it's only his second time on a broom. He jumps on the Nimbus 2000, and he flies it like an expert.

Lorrie: It's so nice.

JC: Yeah, it's nice, too, for him to have those moments before trolls in the dungeon and stuff like that.

Lorrie: The end of this chapter is another iconic moment. I love this so much: there was a very embarrassed pause. Then -- none of them looking at each other -- they all said, "Thanks," and hurried off to get plates. What a perfect description of being eleven.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Then there's the line about how there's some things you can't share without ending up liking each other. I know there was -- at the time of publication -- some back and forth between the author and her editor, who thought that ending this chapter by talking about knocking out a 12-foot mountain troll was just the wrong note, kind of silly, and tried to get that line cut out. The author said, "No, no, I insist, I'm going to have it in there," and I think it is one of the more memorable lines. I think everyone does remember that. It grounds the chapter in the silliness of being eleven in a good way, I think.

JC: I do also like the realism of the way that they interact with each other there, and the fact that that's all it takes. All it takes; it's a lot, but that's the moment where their friendship is cemented, and they don't even have to say it. They don't even have to look at each other. It's just like, "Okay, now we know we can trust each other. We've got each other's backs. We're going to be friends. We make a good team!"

Lorrie: It's a moment of maturity, because their conflicts with each other before were real; they had to realize, "No, that was bigger than that. I'm bigger than that. I see something in that person, more than their pettiness. I have to say thank you." It makes them all more mature. It makes me love them.

JC: Every time we get that trio -- the heart, the brain, the muscle, we get that kind of a trio. For me, it's always Harry, Ron, and Hermione. That's always what I map it back onto.

Lorrie: I do like the dynamic. I like that it gives room for any one of them to drop out at any moment when they have to. It's very stressful to be somebody's only major support, and it is nice to be able to go to different friends for different things, and know that you're taking turns sharing your strengths. Unlike a group of four, there's not so much risk of pairing off, which can be divisive.

JC: Right.

Lorrie: I guess in this scene, in the three-person troll scene here, they each get an opportunity to appreciate each other's strengths. Ron is never again going to mock Hermione for teaching him a spell that she knows better.

JC: Right. I think that's what really stands out to me from that scene, too: you were talking about it from the perspective of the education system; Ron was taught it, and when the time comes for him to be able to use it, it comes out. My read of that was more he listened to Hermione, and we see that he listened to her because he could do it when he had to. I was thinking of it more as a Ron and Hermione moment: he showed that he trusted that Hermione was right, and he channeled his inner Hermione. He listened to Hermione, and he was able to knock the troll out.

Lorrie: Yeah, I don't agree.

JC: Ah, interesting.

Lorrie: I don't think that's what was going on. I don't think he had time to think about that. What we have here in Ron's brain is zero spells that work; now he's learned Wingardium Leviosa, and that was in his mind, so that's the one he used. But before that --

JC: Oh, no, I don't disagree with you. Yeah, no. I don't think he thought about it. I think that the reason that it's in his mind is because of Hermione. I guess that's what I was saying.

Lorrie: But even if it had been Draco telling him, it was in his mind at all. I'm thinking about the culture war over things like saying 'gay' in the classroom, or critical race theory. What they want is for these concepts not even to touch people's minds. Why? To take away a method of self-defense, or to leave somebody so that when they're cornered, whatever they use, whatever they come out with -- suppose you take away the word 'gay' and you give them a gun. Then they'll shoot. It really is whatever you give children is going to come out, and there will be a time when the children are old enough to judge for themselves, but that is not the point of teaching children. The point is that these are the young who don't have those facilities yet and they have to be taught gradually, and what you teach them at that impressionable age really does make a

difference. We'll see that later in book six with, say, Sectumsempra. "I don't know what it does. I've never cast it before, but it's on my mind."

JC: Interesting.

Lorrie: Or 'mudblood'. Because Snape is my guy, this has everything to do with his teaching certain people who are in this chapter how to cast Expelliarmus against each other. Yeah. Well, it's been a weird chapter, huh?

JC: Yeah. Hallowe'en.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: I do love that they got their feast in the end.

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: I was so excited. When I first read the chapter, I was like, "Oh, I love that Hallowe'en is a Feast holiday." We've got the beginning of the school year, we get Halloween right in the middle of the semester, we get the Christmas one. I was like, "I love that Halloween is one," and then it got interrupted, but then the fact that the house elves still got their feast. I was very happy with that.

Lorrie: Harry was about to eat a baked potato when Quirrell came and announced the troll. It was going to be mealy hot and steaming.

JC: So hopefully everything is not cold and slightly congealed.

Lorrie: The house elves would never let that happen.

JC: You would think, yeah.

Lorrie: I hope he got his baked potato.

JC: I hope he liked his potato.

Lorrie: Yes. Alright, let's see. What do we have coming up next?

JC: Quidditch.

Lorrie: No wonder I didn't remember.

JC: Oh, right. And I'm actually excited. I'm actually very interested in reading this one, because it's a fun chapter. Also because of the extratextual knowledge of knowing how much the author hated writing Quidditch, and I'm curious to see how much of that hatred bleeds through.

Lorrie: Okay, because I did not realize that.

JC: That what?

Lorrie: That the author hated writing Quidditch.

JC: Oh, I know something you don't? What?

Lorrie: You know so many things I don't.

JC: I know a bit about Harry Potter. No, I think I read that there was a story when she was writing about the seventh book: she said the greatest thing about the seventh book was that there was no Quidditch. She was making a joke where she was saying, "When I wrote that last Quidditch scene in the sixth book, I was thankful that that was the last Quidditch I was ever going to have to write because I hated writing it." We'll see if that comes across in the chapter.

Lorrie: It's entirely possible that I knew that -- that I read that -- and it just left my mind, like all Quidditch-related things do.

JC: Ah, there you go.

Lorrie: This is an area in which I identify with Hermione quite a lot.

JC: It's a sport-ball thing.

Lorrie: It's sports-ball, yeah.

JC: Yeah. And also, writing action like that is hard, too.

Lorrie: Yeah. Well that's totally a thing where the author -- not only J.K. Rowling, but where authors do that to themselves. I know. "I'm going to make this thing. Damn, why do I keep having to write this now? Who made me? Nobody. I made myself."

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: All right. Well, we'll talk about Quidditch next time, then.

JC: Quidditch, alright. I'm going to have to read up on the rules. I need to pull out my copy of Quidditch Through The Ages and read up on it.

Lorrie: All right.

JC: Alright. Yay!

Lorrie: Talk to you then.

Caroline: You've been listening to Harry Potter After 2020 with hosts Lorrie Kim and JC. You can find show notes for this and all other episodes at [HPAfter2020.com](http://HPAfter2020.com). There, you'll also find ways to support the show, contact the hosts, and more. If you like what you heard, consider giving us a review on Apple podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts. Harry Potter After 2020 is produced and edited by Lorrie Kim and Caroline Rinaldy. Original music was composed by C.L. Smith. Thank you for listening.