

## Transcript

### Episode 1.11

#### Book 1, Chapter 11: Quidditch

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 11: Quidditch.

Lorrie: Hi, JC.

JC: Hello.

Lorrie: It's time to talk about Chapter 11: Quidditch. What do you think? Harry makes his debut as a Quidditch player and somebody jinxes his broom. Huh.

JC: It's funny, because reading this chapter again after having not read it for a while, I paid attention to almost everything but the Quidditch -- which I'm sure you did, too -- and so many little details jumped out at me this time and it was a surprise. It really rewarded a re-read, which is nice. For example -- and this is me getting too hung up on details -- in the very opening paragraph, we have this description of Hagrid: "Hagrid could be seen from the upstairs windows, defrosting broomsticks on the Quidditch pitch, bundled up in a long moleskin overcoat, rabbit fur gloves, and enormous beaver-skin boots." I have so many questions. Why was he defrosting brooms? Weren't they in storage? Were they out? What? What? I don't understand why he was defrosting brooms. I get that this is a 'We're getting ready for Quidditch' kind of ridiculous description, but what? That makes no sense, so there's all that. I know that that's not where you would keep the brooms -- out in the open, obviously -- so I don't know why they're frosty. But then the description of Hagrid wearing a long moleskin overcoat. There's two definitions of moleskin: there's the one which is this really thick cotton fabric, but I thought that's probably not what he's wearing. The man's wearing beaver-skin boots and rabbit fur gloves. It's probably actual moleskin, which is a thing that people don't wear anymore. Moles are tiny.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: It would take a thousand moles to make a coat for Hagrid, and I had this moment of, "How many moles did Hagrid have to catch?" Because you know he made this himself. I guess there's a lot. He's the groundskeeper; there's probably plenty, but that's a lot of skinning of moles. I went off on this tangent of Hagrid skinning moles, keeping the little tiny skins, and patching them together into this enormous coat. I don't know why my brain went there, but the details of that description ate my brain for a little while.

Lorrie: Although maybe he goes to a tailor. No, he can't possibly. It's got to be him, because we know he sews, we know he knits. Yeah.

JC: He makes his own clothes? Oh, my gosh. Yeah.

Lorrie: Actually, I'm picturing Hagrid going to where the Ferengi in Star Trek get their clothes.

JC: Oh, my gosh.

Lorrie: Right.

JC: Anyway, all of that was the thing. I think the big theme for me -- and I'm sure your theme is completely different -- but for me, the big theme of this chapter is Hermione. So much Hermione, and it could be that there's a couple things going on. One is that because Harry's our narrator, Harry's paying attention to Hermione for the first time, so we just see more of her cleverness than we have in the past. But also Hermione, because she's now friends with Harry and Ron, and something has happened between the three of them, she is no longer as uptight about following the rules as she was earlier.

Lorrie: Yeah, yeah.

JC: She starts using her magic to break rules in ways that benefit her friends, and we start to see just how talented she is and how much magic she's already mastered, and it's just glorious.

Lorrie: It really is.

JC: All through the chapter, we see little examples of that and I love it.

Lorrie: Yeah. The first one that I noticed was her signature bright blue fires that she carries around in a jam jar, and that's something that she keeps doing throughout the whole series. It's not really remarked on; she always produces them and they sound pretty.

JC: And apparently warm enough that you can warm yourself from them, which is amazing. You keep it in a jar, because wouldn't the jar get really warm? See, this is where I started going -- I get too into the details again.

Lorrie: Well, I guess if you put a charm, a heat-proof charm, on the jar...

JC: And she would do that. She would totally do that. I love that in the beginning of the chapter, we're seeing that she's helping Harry and Ron with their homework and there's this very mom-like role that she has. I say that because I am a mom who has a kid who's super busy and has ADHD, so helping him get through his homework during the school year -- especially during marching band season -- is a big part of my role for him at this point in his life. It's sitting him down and going, "Okay, what have you got to get done? Let's make a list. What are you going to do first? Okay. I'm going to help you stay on track. I'm going to check your work for you. I'll give

you advice on how to make it better." That's exactly what she's doing for them, so I was like, "Wow, this feels like a mom thing."

Lorrie: Yeah, and she's a little older than they are.

JC: Is she really?

Lorrie: Apparently. Well, her birthday is in September; Ron's is in the spring, and Harry's is in July.

JC: Oh, so would that make her a year older?

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: She's not like one of those young –

Lorrie: No.

JC: Oh.

Lorrie: No, which I always found extremely frustrating, because she's already the brightest. And then to be also one of the oldest; it must be so infuriating to be that far ahead.

JC: You're right, because she would have gotten her letter on her birthday in September, and then she had to go through a whole year of her first year of secondary school knowing she was going to go to Hogwarts. Oh, that's interesting. Having a whole year to memorize all the books... That explains a lot, actually. That's great. A whole year to look forward to it, and yeah.

Lorrie: And to catch up, yeah.

JC: That's amazing. So we have that. She also gives Harry a copy of *Quidditch Through the Ages* where Harry learned some really funny facts about Quidditch, and then *Quidditch Through the Ages* gets us into the first scene with Snape.

Lorrie: Yeah. Snape is limping, and he says, "Library books are not to be taken out of school." And they say, "He's just made that rule up," and I cannot tell if he did or not. What do you think?

JC: I think it could go either one of two ways. One is that he did make it up, or the other one is that he was just so pissed off to see them out there and he was like, "They must be up to something. What's an obscure rule? Oh, here it is. That'll do it."

Lorrie: Although, I can also imagine. If you imagine Madame Pince, I could easily see her saying, "No, you can't take the books out of school." I truly come down 50-50 on this. I don't know.

JC: He's just so annoyed. It's like, "Oh, God, you little shits again."

Lorrie: Yes. "I don't know what you're doing, but it's obviously bad."

JC: "It's obviously bad; I'm going to punish you for something." Yeah. Oh, my God. If it is a real rule, it's a little obscure rule; it's very petulant. But I guess one of the questions that I have there -- this is as good a place as any to bring it up -- is how does the House points thing work? If a teacher says it, is there a spell where it gets picked up and calculated, or does he have to go back and fill out a form?

Lorrie: No. It's spoken into existence, and the prefects can do it, too.

JC: Oh, okay. Interesting. At my son's middle school, when they had a house point system, the teachers had little forms they had to fill out. Or I think they could use a Google form and do it online, too. The teacher had to record it, so the teacher would say, "70 points for your house," but then they'd have to actually go physically record it somewhere. That made me wonder: how do they do it at Hogwarts?

Lorrie: What a pain in the butt.

JC: Yes, definitely. You're going to forget.

Lorrie: Like teachers don't have any other forms to fill out.

JC: Yes, exactly, or things to keep track of.

Lorrie: Yikes. Yeah, no. My headcanon is that Ravenclaw is always dead last in any House point system because it's so arbitrary. It's so non-standard, even if you don't have a miserable wretch like Snape using it to express his feelings. There's just no regulation of it, so I imagine that Ravenclaws ignore the whole thing.

JC: Interesting.

Lorrie: And are always dead last.

JC: Also, as a teacher, I can imagine: if you've got a class full of Ravenclaws, it's like having the Honors kids. Your expectations are that everyone's going to be able to work at a certain level, so you're not going to be giving out House points as much because they are all going to be working at that level. That's what it makes me think, too. So with your Gryffindors, you're like, "Oh, wow, Hermione; five points to Gryffindor," but with your Ravenclaws, you're like, "Yeah, Luna, you should know that." Again, the tyranny of expectations.

Lorrie: It's so non-standardized, because I think if I were giving out points for Ravenclaws, I would say, "That's really good. I saw you overcome your perfectionistic tendencies, I saw you using cognitive models to fight that. I saw the two of you are working together instead of competing."

JC: There are ways you can reward Ravenclaws.

Lorrie: Yeah. It's so arbitrary.

JC: Yeah, definitely. Clearly, that's the point of this, too. If you can just take away five points... Hermione lost five points from Gryffindor for going after a troll supposedly, and that's equivalent to taking a library book out of the school? It's petty on Snape's part. This is also where Harry notices that Snape is limping, so when he goes to ask for his book back, he sees something he wasn't supposed to see.

Lorrie: Oh. The "horrible scene" -- that's what it's called. I love this because it captures perfectly the visceral nausea that children and young teens have when they're face-to-face with the physicality, the humbleness, the unattractive humanness of their teacher's bodies. When you're a sixth grader or a 13-year-old and you look at your teachers being creaky, or maybe pale and hairy or with some sort of pathetic lunch, it's just intolerable. Embarrassing. It's mortifying to the teens -- not even teens, but preteens -- and Snape is so scrawny and pale and vulnerable. This

is a look underneath his defenses, because he has his robes hiked up. Since Snape is the personification of defensiveness, he really depends on his robes to lend him some presence; then he's with Filch, who is an even more miserable specimen of manhood, and it's a nightmare for a tween boy to see this. It's so repellent. And, of course, it's also, I think, the first instance we have of how thankless Snape's life is. Of course, he's limping; of course, he went and did the thankless thing and it didn't even succeed, and now he's injured and the children are wishing or hoping his injury hurts extra.

JC: I think that's something interesting about reading that scene, too. I'm sure on the first reading, I was suspicious of Snape along with Harry, but on subsequent readings it's obvious that Snape is not working in the way that Harry and Hermione and Ron think that he is. He's in the teacher's lounge with Filch; they're talking openly about it. What?! If he's really sneaking around trying to steal this thing, that's not how you would go about it. It makes no sense; even Hermione says, "No, that can't be what's happening" -- though she changes her mind later on -- but Snape is obviously not the bad guy here in that scene. It's interesting.

Lorrie: We still aren't sure as readers about the rules of this universe and this author, because we are starting to see this author show us scenes that we're later supposed to put together and get clues about. But we don't know how this person works, how this author works. If she shows us a scene, what are we supposed to take from it? The delight of reading this book -- volume 1 - - as an adult is finding out that actually, yes, this author did write that many layers into it. Normally, if you read a children's book and you're hoping that's what's happening, that's quite a lot to ask of an author, and it's more work than is necessary for most children's books. But when you go back as an adult and you re-read this, then you see the level on which the teachers are all talking to each other that the students don't know about. You see how the teachers are talking about ways to tell the students as much as they need to know; things that they're telling the students that aren't quite true -- that are supposed to protect the students -- you see the levels of behind-the-scenes teacher talk. I don't know this language because I'm not a teacher, but I know this language exists and I've been told about it. There's a way that teachers speak to each other -- a spoken language -- that garbles the words just enough so that students can't quite understand what they're saying, but teachers can understand each other.

JC: If that's true, then I don't think I was ever very good at it. My experience with kids has been that kids understand a lot more of the teachers talking about them, and they get a lot of the awful messages.

Lorrie: Oy. But yeah, there's all this behind-the-scenes, grown up shabbiness.

JC: That is one of the interesting things, too, you're right about, reading the whole series as an adult. When you start to see what the adults are doing just out of the picture, or you hear snippets of conversation as an adult, you can interpret those things differently than as a kid or even a teenager reading this would. That's very interesting.

Lorrie: The fact that Snape goes to Filch: if you're ugly and defensive like Snape, you go to somebody who would understand that. He's not going to go to Sprout.

JC: He didn't go to Madame Pomfrey.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Why not go to the –

Lorrie: Yeah, to the hospital wing, where all the students can see you hike up your robes and look at your scrawny leg hair. And when he says, "How was he supposed to keep his eyes on all three heads at once," I thought. "Oh, that's it. That's the trio: that's Harry, Ron, and Hermione."

JC: Oh, that's interesting.

Lorrie: They're all, of course, nothing compared to Snape, but the three of them ganging up together and trying to divide his attention: there's potential there.

JC: That's interesting.

Lorrie: And then we hear what Harry suspects, which is, of course, wrong. He thinks Snape tried to get past the dog, that Snape is after what it's guarding, and that Snape let in the troll. Harry, he's on the right path; his attention is going in the right direction, but he doesn't know the rules about how to figure out this guy either. That's what he's thinking. And as you noted, Hermione correctly says, "No, he wouldn't." If you remember what it was like reading this series as the books came out -- one every few years -- there was all this discussion about how you can tell what the truth is going to be because it's what Hermione said.

JC: Yeah, I remember that.

Lorrie: Yeah, and when Harry says something, he's on to something, but it will turn out to be more complicated than that; whatever Ron says is a red herring unless it's super obvious. So obvious that Harry and Hermione dismiss it, in which case Ron turns out to be right. It was very pleasing on a middle-grade level to have engaging fiction that so obligingly helped to teach you how to read. This whole series is an instructional on how to pick up clues and weigh them against what you know about human nature and where you think the story is going. That's the whole phenomenon of *Harry Potter* being heralded as the series that gets children reading, including children who were never able to overcome their barriers to reading before; the way that it pulls you along and gives you clues, and steadily gives you a diet of rewards for having noticed things. I am grateful to this series. It's delicious. I noticed when running the discussion group with fifth graders that it was ideal for that. It makes you feel a little bit clever. The way that you have to judge things -- Harry thinking, "Okay, this is what's going on," and Hermione saying, "No, it's not" -- they can easily transfer that to their own lives, what they can make of different adults in their lives. It checks out.

JC: That's something I've always appreciated -- in books, movies, any kind of media -- where there are clues for the viewer/reader, and if you put them together, you can figure out things that are going on before the main characters do and how rewarding that is.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: I really appreciate movies and TV shows and books that do that, and this is such a great example of that, as you were saying.

Lorrie: So then we have...

JC: We have the Quidditch game!

Lorrie: I really adore that when Harry's excited, because he's playing Quidditch for the first time and good things are happening for the Gryffindor team, he does loop-the-loops.

JC: Oh, that's very cute.

Lorrie: It's adorable.

JC: It is very cute. Taking a step back, there was an interesting moment for me that read differently when they're in the locker room or whatever. I wanted to say green room; that's not the right term. Locker room. Oliver Wood says, "Okay, men," and Angelina Johnson says, "And women!" Now knowing when this book was written -- and you were around in the early 90s, you remember -- there was such a movement in the late 80s and early 90s to push people to change the language. Men/man was used as a generic term for everyone, and there was a huge push to say, "No, men and women, he or she," all of that. 30 years later, we are thinking of language differently. Now, instead of saying men and women, it's like, "Oh, no, that's enforcing a binary. We need to say 'people' or 'y'all'" -- which is my favorite one -- or 'they' instead of he or she. That just read differently to me and I know it's a product of the time, but knowing the author, it hit me differently than it had in the past.

Lorrie: Yeah. It is true that for the time, it was progressive -- what's happening here -- and that masculine was considered default. Also, the way she wrote Quidditch was progressive in that it was a sport that didn't divide by gender. Actually, I think, in a later volume, the Slytherin team falls under some criticism because they only pick boys for their team.

JC: Oh, interesting.

Lorrie: Because they're just going for brawn, and obviously there are advantages to being another type of athlete as well. You don't just need to be big. But this seems to be a fairly gender-equal, gender-accessible sport. When I was reading the description of the actual match, there's a point where Harry sees the Snitch and he goes for it, and then there's a block from Marcus Flint. It's genuinely exciting. "Ow!" I felt it! "Oh, go, go Harry," and then, "I didn't see that coming." That was well done.

JC: I also really like the way a lot of the action of the game is conveyed very humorously through Lee Jordan's commentary.

Lorrie: Yeah. Love Lee Jordan.

JC: That's such a great choice. It tells us a lot about the character. It's funny, but it also conveys a lot of the game without having to write all this explicit description of action, which the author has said is something she doesn't like to do. I actually enjoyed that commentary. It's really fun.

Lorrie: I liked the exchanges between Lee and McGonagall.

JC: Yeah. That's funny, too.

Lorrie: That was excellent dialogue that showed a lot of character, and it shows, again, the part of McGonagall that's not above being a rabid Quidditch fan and partisan. But she yells at Lee Jordan for being partisan.

JC: I know. Yeah.

Lorrie: Even though she herself is, too.

JC: I also like the fact that Madame Hooch is the referee here, and McGonagall is clearly in charge of things here. There's that role of McGonagall as being in charge of running the game;

we have these two women who are running the sport that, maybe in the past, has been a very male sport, but there are attempts at making it more gender-equal. Can't remember what term we decided on there, but making it more accessible to lots of people. It's nice to see that. It makes me think about living in Texas, where football's king: there's a teacher that I work with at a local high school who, at least as of last year, was the first and only female head football coach of a Texas high school.

Lorrie: Oh, wow.

JC: She's also a Black woman, so her stories about going into these good old boy conferences of other football coaches in the state and being looked at in particular; she's got stories. Anyway, it just made me think a little bit of that, too. We need more women in sports.

Lorrie: Yeah. I think Rowling wrote Quidditch to be more gender-equal earlier on than a lot of real-world sports were; McGonagall as a student was a Quidditch player, and a very excellent one as part of her backstory.

JC: I want that backstory.

Lorrie: Well, it's online. In 2016, 2017, there were a series of online Pottermore backstories.

JC: Oh, yeah. It's in the Pottermore stuff, which I never read, so that's cool. I should get on that.

Lorrie: I think that must have been 2016. So yeah, McGonagall and Quidditch: it's a love story that goes back decades.

JC: That's fantastic. Well, before we get into the big event of the game, there was one more thing I wanted to mention, which was the Potter for President banner that Hermione had charmed so that the letters flashed. It was such a little subtle, "Oh, of course, Hermione -- who's been at Hogwarts for three months -- can do that kind of a complicated charm." It's another bit of evidence of really how accomplished she is.

Lorrie: You know what that reminds me of? When we make spreadsheets, and Caroline goes in and she codes them with colors and with little dog ears in the corners with notes, showing where everyone's going to be at what time and who needs to think of -- anyway. It's the same spreadsheet that I just set up with all the same information; it's just fancy now, and it's so much more informative.

JC: But it's also -- from the early 90s -- like the Lisa Frank version for the banner.

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: It's right on track for her age, too. "What would make this -- sparkly letters would make this better. I know how to do that." It's really Lisa Frank. I love it.

Lorrie: Yes. Then Harry's broom gets really scary. Genuinely terrifying; he's hanging off his broom by one hand, 100 feet up or whatever that is. Wow, scary.

JC: And also the fact that none of the adults seem ready to jump in and do anything about this. You have an 11-year-old who's probably going to fall and maybe die. Aren't you going to intervene? They're all just going, "Oh, no, what's wrong?" It's up to the kids to save him? Really?



Lorrie: The Weasley twins are trying to be underneath him so they can catch him if he falls.

JC: Which is a great backup, and I'm sure they would have, but yeah.

Lorrie: But yikes.

JC: Yeah, that whole scene is so interesting because of the fact that, again, it's Hermione. Hermione is the one who decides that Snape is jinxing the broom because she recognizes all the signs of it. That, for me, is a really interesting moment because that's the moment when her doubts are erased. She was like, "I don't know, I don't think Snape is that kind of a person," but then after that she's pretty convinced, it seems. And then her actions: she's like, "I'll take care of it," and she just goes. Then she sets fire to a teacher's robes?

Lorrie: I know. I love it.

JC: So surreptitiously that no one in the stands around him knows, and then knocks Quirrell over in the process. But all of the things that she does there are so different from the character that we saw in the previous few chapters. Not that she wasn't brave or she wouldn't have done that, but to set fire to a teacher's robes, that's a big deal. That's where you go, "Oh, that's why she's in Gryffindor."

Lorrie: I've been wondering ever since I read this for the first time: what makes her change her mind? Because she was correct the first time when she said, "Oh, he wouldn't do that," but now suddenly she thinks it's him. This is not supported by the text; this is my headcanon reading: I'm thinking he's been ignoring her. She's mad. She has been standing up, she's been waving her arm, she has known the answer. She's been able to give him everything he claims to want from the students; he ignores her. She is not going to be ignored. But if he is going to ignore her, she's going to then exploit that.

JC: Oh, I see what you mean. Uh-huh.

Lorrie: What is the worst thing for Hermione? A teacher who refuses to look at or acknowledge a student. I would believe anything of somebody who would do that. That would make me mad enough to set him on fire. If he's not going to look at me, if he refuses to acknowledge me, I can get away with anything I want. I could set him on fire and he wouldn't even know. And as far as we know, we have no evidence that he ever figured out who it was.

JC: It's the nice girl privilege, poking its head up again a little bit.

Lorrie: But it's not 'nice girl' in this case; it's personal. He won't pay attention to her, he won't look at her, and that's not about being a nice girl. That's about I don't know what, but it's pissing her off. This is the first time and definitely not the last time that she uses her invisibility in Snape's eyes to get away with something that Ron and Harry never could.

JC: Oh, interesting. Uh-huh.

Lorrie: And after this, she really very rarely suspects Snape ever again. She suspects him after he kills Dumbledore, which she's supposed to. But generally after this, she's always been back to saying, "No, he's not a nice person, but I know he wouldn't do that."

JC: Do you think that's because, through the rest of this book, she seems to also be convinced that it's Snape and then finds out how wrong she was, and she corrects her impression of him? Do you think that's what's going to happen there, so she doesn't make that mistake again?

Lorrie: Yes. I think this is one of the many times that Hermione's few mistakes are corrected by Snape; she goes back and learns it for real, because this is the introduction of Hermione's notion that you can learn everything from books, and what you assume based on book-learning is going to be correct. This is the way that this author writes. Hermione says, "I know a jinx when I see one, Hagrid. I've read all about them. You've got to keep eye contact, and Snape wasn't blinking at all. I saw him." That's a trademark of this author where she says something that is true, but it's worded ambiguously enough that it could be interpreted in opposite ways. So yeah, Snape wasn't blinking at all because he wasn't casting a jinx; he was casting a counterjinx. Hermione has an ongoing theme in this series about jinxes and counterjinxes, and how you use them against each other and how useful they are; this is one of the times that she understands, "Okay, jinxes are more complicated than I thought. You can't go to the simple conclusion." So yeah, I think associating this simplistic misreading with an error she made about Snape does help her change how she thinks about it for the future. She doesn't make this kind of mistake again. This also establishes Hermione as the reader of the series, which comes up over and over again in subtle ways and also super obvious ways: she's the one who gives Harry *Quidditch Through the Ages*; she's the only one who's read *Hogwarts: A History*. One of my favorite things that shows her as the reader is when she knows Lupin's name on the Hogwarts Express, and Ron says, "How do you know that?" and she says, "It's on his luggage." She read it, Ron.

JC: Yeah, exactly.

Lorrie: Yeah, but the thing that this sets up: the way I read the series is that Snape is the story. If you keep your eyes on Snape, then you can read the story; Hermione is the reader. He can't make eye contact with her because he has to be undercover for the whole story.

JC: So, you say the reader. Can you say more about that?

Lorrie: She's the person who reads in this story. She can see things that are legible through reading, including Snape. He is the story; he can only fulfill what he wants to fulfill if he goes undetected. Hermione understands him; he can't let her see him. You know how with Legilimency, you don't want to make eye contact? Harry's always saying, "Oh, God." Snape is looking at him and he's trying to look away, but he can't and Snape is reading everything. Hermione does that to Snape, and if he acknowledges her -- there are many times when he shows up somewhere and she's not there, and that's how he gets away with something, with a deception. For example, in *Deathly Hallows*, when he shows up with his Patronus, and Ron and Harry have no clue whose Patronus it is. Well, guess who's not there?

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: I don't know. Did I explain what I mean when I say Hermione's the reader?

JC: Yeah, yeah, exactly. Although it seemed like there were a few different ways that that word could go, and I was trying to make sure I was following that correctly. But yes, thank you.

Lorrie: But I think I mean them in all the ways. Through her reading, we get this story -- even if it's just *Hogwarts: A History* -- and that's definitely how Ron and Harry get some of their homework done.

JC: Yeah, true, and get some information.

Lorrie: But yeah, the fires on his robes: that's one time that Snape pays the price for not making eye contact with Hermione and not acknowledging her.

JC: Interesting. And then we get Harry catching the Snitch by almost swallowing it, which amazingly comes back later. That is an important thing.

Lorrie: That is possibly the most thrilling callback. It comes so much later, and it's so important. Yeah. That's mind-blowing to me, that somebody could keep that in mind for that many volumes over that many years, and the payoff is so glorious.

JC: Yeah, it's a great payoff. It's also interesting to me that Harry, Ron, and Hermione were whisked off to Hagrid's hut right after this. Instead of celebrating the win -- or instead of, I don't know, any teachers coming and trying to figure out what happened talking to Harry, like, "What happened?" -- everyone just went on. "Okay, great. That's done, that's fine. Gryffindor won, yay!" Again, as an adult who has been responsible for children, I'm like, "Oh, my God," but anyway. They're whisked off to Hagrid's hut, so everyone's still screaming and cheering and they're not even there anymore. They're off talking to Hagrid, because they're really concerned about what happened with Snape, and they had this whole big conversation. My favorite detail in here is that we learn that the three-headed dog is named Fluffy. That's amazing.

Lorrie: Yes. Here is where I'm going to take a little detour, if this is okay. I'm going to read a story.

JC: Ooh, okay.

Lorrie: This is a story about how entwined *Harry Potter* is with my family, with raising children. When my older daughter was five -- and I used to call her 'Self-Possessed Tot' -- she wasn't reading yet but she wanted bedtime stories from *Harry Potter*, and so she would insist on my telling her stories and they sort of had to be original. There was one time when I made up one about Fluffy, and it worked on her so well -- she was so charmed by it -- that I went and wrote down how it went, and here it is from 2009.

"Once upon a time, there was a dog with three heads. He wanted to have human friends like other dogs, but he knew he never could. He was just too big and scary, and no human was big enough to handle his sharp, bitey teeth -- until he met Hagrid. And Hagrid said to him, just like people said to other cute dogs, 'Aren't you adorable? Oh, look at you.' And Hagrid ruffled the dog's ears, and ruffled the dog's ears and -- Tot said with me, giggling -- 'ruffled the dog's ears.' 'I think I'll call you Fluffy.' The dog was so happy. Fluffy! He had always thought that if he ever got named by a human, it would be something like 'Nightmare' or 'Ugly'. 'Or I hate you,' chimed in Tot. But Fluffy, a nice sweet name just like other dogs got? 'And his fur was fluffy,' chirped Tot cheerfully. So Fluffy came home with Hagrid, and Hagrid got a nice dog bed for him, and looked to his left and looked to his right, then got his flowered pink umbrella and said, 'Engorgio!'

"Why isn't Hagrid allowed to do magic? He's a wizard!"

"Fluffy put his head between his paws, and put his head between his paws, and -- all together, now -- 'put his head between his paws,' and went to sleep.

"Ahem. '*And went to sleep.*' Good night, Tot."

"Six more kisses, Mommy!" Okay, so I kissed her six more times. Snooze

JC: Aaawww, That's so cute. I love how you gave that dog a whole, big backstory.

Lorrie: Because that's the joke. Fluffy? His name is Fluffy.

JC: But also, it reminds me of -- have you ever read *Good Omens*?

Lorrie: I read it in 1991.

JC: Okay, so there's a whole plot point where -- for listeners, the Neil Gaiman *Good Omens* -- where the child who is literally the son of Satan gets a dog, and this hellhound comes. As soon as the boy names the dog, it will become his dog and then he just calls it Dog, and it turns into this little cute Jack Russell Terrier.

Lorrie: This is like a heck hound.

JC: Yeah, exactly. This is what I was thinking of when you were telling that story. But yeah, I love the way that Hagrid sees creatures throughout this, and I think when he finally gets to teach the Care of Magical Creatures in the third book, his whole world is opened up. He's like, "I want you to see all these things and see them for what they are, and how beautiful they are." Harry, Ron, and Hermione try so hard -- and we'll get to that later on -- but I'm thinking about it already because of Hagrid's love of animals that are otherwise maybe -- not that they're unlovable, but difficult to love.

Lorrie: It's your classic monster story -- like how Sesame Street uses monsters. These are monsters; they're relatable. Because children aren't pretty; children are angry and ugly, and they drool just like Fluffy and they may have three heads and who knows what. They have very bitey teeth. And no matter how monstrous you are, there's somebody who's bigger than you, who sees you this way and will adore you and call you Fluffy, just like nice children get called. That was the bedtime story aspect of it that I thought my kid would like. We get it all just from the choice of name.

JC: I guess the last thing that happens in this chapter, which is interesting, is we start this pattern that we see quite a bit. I think -- throughout the rest of the series but definitely in this book -- of Harry and Ron and Hermione saying, "Here's what's going on," and Hagrid going, "No, that's not what's going on; what's actually going on is blah, blah -- oops."

Lorrie: Oops. Yeah.

JC: And that happens to comical effect, but here we hear Nicolas Flamel's name.

Lorrie: Yes. This is more of Hagrid being the person between boundaries. Can he keep his mouth shut? No, of course he can't. But yeah, he's a very useful character.

JC: It's also interesting here, too, that Hagrid tells the truth to the kids, even when it's a truth that he's not supposed to tell them. I can't think of a single time -- and again, I may eat these words - - that he lies to the kids or tries to mislead them. He's just honest with them.

Lorrie: No. When he does, he's so transparent. But when he tells Harry, "No, of course Snape has nothing against you. Why would he have anything against you?" He says it so transparently that Harry's thinking, "I don't know why he's lying to me."

JC: Yeah. Another thing that I associate with Hagrid is that Hagrid is going to be honest and he's going to let things slip that he shouldn't, and that he's just a very loving person. But yeah, when you talk about he's on the boundary there, or he initiates people back and forth. His hut becomes this space that's separate from the school. Things happen in the hut that can't happen anywhere else. Just so interesting.

Lorrie: Let's see. What do we have coming next?

JC: Coming next: The Mirror of Erised.

Lorrie: Oh, it's about to get intense.

JC: Yes. We are up to chapter -- so that will be Chapter 12, which means we have six chapters left, I think.

Lorrie: Well, we're really coming into the heart of it now.

JC: And there's a lot left to happen. I'm like, "Oh, my gosh."

Lorrie: Well, we're getting deep now. We've passed Hallowe'en, which is when the huge themes start getting put into motion. Then the action starts to build, and then around Christmas/New Year is when you get deep and dark and heavy; then the New Year is when you start to have to try to sort through all the things that got kicked up over the dead of winter. Then you start building momentum to the pace of the finale of any *Harry Potter* book, which is just faster and faster until you're trying to outrun your own eyeballs. "What's happening? What's going to happen? What's going to happen?!" But yeah, now we're starting the descent into the underworld. It's going to get deep.

JC: Alright. Looking forward to it.

Lorrie: Yes. Me, too.

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