

## Transcript

### Episode 1.13

#### Book 1, Chapter 13: Nicolas Flamel

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 13: Nicolas Flamel.

Lorrie: So, JC, we're now on Chapter 13: Nicolas Flamel.

JC: Yes.

Lorrie: In this chapter, the kids finally figure out who Nicolas Flamel is; they learn something about how to be readers; and Snape decides, for some strange reason, to referee a Quidditch match, which is so suspicious that Harry decides he's going to tail him and see what he's up to. So yeah, it's heating up. You ready to talk about it?

JC: I am. And I'm curious to see what your take on this is, but for me, I love watching Neville through this chapter. Neville has a beautiful little character arc.

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: Also, Harry, Ron, and Hermione and the other kids in Gryffindor -- the team -- there's just so much richness here about what does it really mean to be a Gryffindor. I love that piece of this chapter. There's a lot of little notes I have that I made throughout about where that's popping out to me. I'm sure you have a completely different take on it.

Lorrie: I was sitting here thinking, "Wow, did we read the same chapter?" This is great. No, this is fantastic.

JC: It's going to be fun, yeah.

Lorrie: Have I told you recently how thrilled I am that you're agreeing to do this project with me? Oh, my God.

JC: It's so much fun.

Lorrie: It's such a pleasure. Thank you so much.

JC: I look forward to it.

Lorrie: Tell me more about what stood out to you.

JC: At the beginning, we're told that Harry's nightmares are getting worse: he's having these nightmares where he sees the green light and the laughter, and the fact that they're getting worse is interesting to me. I don't know if we're supposed to take any meaning from that -- about the activity of Voldemort in the background -- or if it's just Harry's anxiety, and I'm curious to know what your thought on that is.

Lorrie: I read that allegorically as just what happens to people when they get more of themselves, more integrated. The things that you were repressing, because you didn't have the resources to deal with them, start coming to the fore. He has just seen the faces of his own desire in the Mirror of Erised. His sense of self is really strong; his memories are starting to come back.

JC: Okay, yeah, that makes sense. I tend to take all of these little details much more literally, I think, than probably I should. But it's easy for me to get lost in the weeds sometimes by thinking about, "What does that mean? It must mean something; it's telling us something about the plot," when often it doesn't. It's always interesting for me to hear your take on that.

Lorrie: Well, I think it's super useful to have both of us talking about it, because when this series succeeds the best is when it works perfectly on both those tracks. I believe that the whole series is written allegorically, and things like scar pain or wandlore are all things that she made up in order to prove her deeper allegorical point. Other people can read it completely on a surface level and it makes sense; it works when it works well. There are times in the story where that level starts to fray a little -- and that happens especially in *Deathly Hallows*, when she was racing to get her story finished -- where the allegory is stretched and the details of, say, wandlore or whatever are hard to follow because she's using them to cover the emotional story that she's telling. But as we can see with this first book, I'm sure she wrote it and rewrote it so many times. The layers are perfectly managed. Yeah, I think that we can read it allegorically like I do, or on the surface level like you do, and they work together really well.

JC: That's cool. The next thing that stands out to me is -- I'm going back to my Gryffindor theme -- Wood tells the team that Snape will be refereeing the next Quidditch match, and that means different things to different people. For most of the team, they're like, "Oh, God, it's not going to be fair," which, fair, right? There's no reason to expect that he's going to referee this fairly. Harry, of course, is immediately like, "Well, he tried to kill me in the last one. Now he's going to be up there so he'll be able to do it again!" There's all these interesting interpretations of what is happening here. Looking back, we know why Snape -- well, I think I know why Snape is refereeing the match: because he's trying to protect Harry from Quirrell or from whatever was happening before. That idea, that unfairness that the kids are sensing, is really interesting to me, because they've already learned there's no point in going and complaining to anyone. They're not going to go to Madam Hooch or to McGonagall and say, "This isn't fair!" No, they're just going to accept it, they're going to make the best of it, and they're going to strategize around it. Maybe that's more of a sports thing than I'm aware of. You look at who you've got. "Oh, God, we got that referee; they always call the stuff heavy, blah, blah, blah. We need to adjust our strategy." Maybe that's normal for sports, I don't know.

Lorrie: I was thinking it was just a bureaucracy thing. When you're a student in school and you know that they do things a certain way, you can go to the administration and complain and they'll just say whatever it takes to make you go away. "There's nothing we can do about it."

JC: Yeah, that's definitely the thing. There's nothing you can do about it.

Lorrie: I'm going to go through the chapter chronologically, so I'll get to Snape's 'sinister desire' to referee a Quidditch match in a little bit.

JC: Ooh, okay.

Lorrie: The first thing that stood out for me in this chapter was: "They had almost given up hope of ever finding Flamel in a library book, even though Harry was still sure he'd read the name somewhere." The whole phenomenon of *Harry Potter* being a series that got children reading -- taught children how to read and be readers -- this is such a beautiful example of that, because it's right there in plain sight. Way back on the Hogwarts Express, we get told who Nicolas Flamel is; this is one of the first indicators to the eight-year-old reading this book that it's worth it to go back. 'Does that jog your memory? Well, you know what? You can go back and check. Oh, look at that, there it is,' and it will pay off. The way that you remember that as a reader is exactly the same way that Harry is thinking, "Wait, wait. I know there's something there, but how do I know where it was? There's so much information that goes by in a day." This is just a beautiful example. This series did teach people to read by picking up clues that authors put down here and there, which is not that different from how you put together information as you go about daily life. "Oh, you know what? I did notice that." That's beautiful. The next thing I see is a lovely bit of practical advice for the traumatized: "Quite apart from wanting to win, Harry found that he had fewer nightmares when he was tired out after training."

JC: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Lorrie: That's so practical.

JC: You just physically exhaust yourself, yeah. Oh, yeah. That's interesting, too.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Something, too, about the chocolate frog card. The other thing is listening to you talk about that and how it taught kids how to read by paying attention to things like that. Children read a lot of different things, not just books. There's always this discourse that happens in reading communities about are comics literature or whatever, so the idea that the clue for this came from a chocolate frog card, I think, is a really interesting point, too. As a kid who grew up -- I grew up before the internet. I was the kid -- and maybe you were, too -- who would read the back of the cereal box...

Lorrie: The cereal box. I was thinking about cereal boxes.

JC: At breakfast, because my brain had to be doing something. If I didn't have a book in my hand, I would read all the little ingredients -- everything on the back -- and I read it twice before; four times before, I would read it again. There's something important there, and it's okay. That counts somehow. I don't know, I found that very affirming.

Lorrie: My eyes would rest on surfaces, hoping that they would yield text.

JC: Yeah, that's so familiar.

Lorrie: I was hungry for it.

JC: Right, but that idea that the important clue came from this chocolate frog card -- which some kids would collect or some kids would throw away, but adults probably wouldn't pay attention to. It's just a chocolate frog card.

Lorrie: Well, I'll get to my take on that in a bit.

JC: Fun. Nice.

Lorrie: My next chronological point that stood out to me was something that you pointed out when they said Snape is refereeing, which was: "All very well, thought Harry. But he had another reason for not wanting Snape near him while he was playing Quidditch." This is Harry reacting to the dynamic that is Snape's dynamic toward Harry the whole time, and it's so hard to figure out: protectiveness without affection. That is Snape's whole attitude toward Harry, and it's right there in front of us the whole time. Throughout the whole series, we see Snape protecting Harry without feeling the slightest affection toward him, and people are thinking, "What is his deal?" That's his deal. It's rare, and this serves to me, in my mind, two larger purposes: one of them is, as we know, that the way for Harry to win against Voldemort is through powers that Voldemort doesn't understand. Voldemort and his Death Eaters do not -- and will never -- understand protecting somebody that you actually dislike. They wouldn't even protect people they like. This is beyond their understanding. Snape can hide behind this forever; they will never catch on. The other related, larger theme that this brings up to me is that this is the most difficult kind of self-sacrifice. This is where *Harry Potter* goes into Christ allegory: dying not only for people you love, but for people who would hurt you the moment you save their lives. They would go right back to hurting you; they might even be evil, but that's what you're trying to achieve. It's easy to die for people you love, which was the basic and, therefore, universal sacrifice that Lily did for Harry. "Well, if Lily did that, then any parent could have." Yes, that's the point: any parent could have done that. There's that, and then there's Harry and his friends jeopardizing themselves for each other, which is still like, "Yes, you love that person." Then there's Snape jeopardizing himself for Draco, whom he likes; and then for Harry, whom he doesn't like. And at the end, you have Harry sacrificing himself for people like Wormtail, or pulling Draco out of the Room of Requirement being on fire, knowing that the moment he gets Draco out of there, Draco could turn right around and kill him, maybe. That is why, to me, it's important that Harry and Draco never stop being enemies, because there is a very understandable and potent urge within fanfic to try to reconcile them, or more. 'Please, see the commonalities, have some empathy; please change.' That is super useful and important on one axis; on the other axis, which is this one, it's no, the enmity has to be real and never resolved, partly because life is like that. There are people where you will just always hate them and there's nothing you can do about it, but also because of the lesson that dying for your loved ones is one thing. Dying for people who would kill you is something else, but it may be that that's where the truth is or where this story is going. Yeah. Anyway, here we have an example of Snape, who cannot stand Harry and actually goes out of his way to be unpleasant to Harry -- and is protecting him -- and nobody has any idea what they're looking at because this is not easy for humans to do.

JC: Right. Yeah. It is really interesting -- after having read your book, actually -- to go back and read the series again because obviously, I know to read more layers into what Snape is doing

all this time. Little things like that -- which it's not a little thing -- but the idea that he's here to protect Harry even though he doesn't like him and he's doing it anyway. We'll get to the Quidditch match later, but the man gets on a broom.

Lorrie: He's not being very gracious about it.

JC: Yeah. "Snape on a broom!" That's one of the notes I have, "Snape on a broom!" What the hell!

Lorrie: Yeah, that's what he thinks, too.

JC: Yeah. But before we head into that, we have this scene that goes back to the theme that I love in this chapter: Neville coming back into the Gryffindor common room with his legs locked together because he's been cursed by Draco, and the way that the trio helps him out. I love that scene so much. I have a soft spot for Neville; who doesn't have a soft spot for Neville, honestly? He's this kid that Harry really can identify with, because Harry knows what it's like to have been bullied your whole life. And poor Neville gets to Hogwarts and he just keeps getting bullied.

Lorrie: Oh, gosh, yeah.

JC: One of the things that I find fascinating about this series --and we've talked about this before -- this idea that just because you have magic doesn't mean that your life is better. It doesn't mean that people aren't going to be shit to you; it's just another way to operate in the world, having magic. People are still human, and there's still going to be awfulness and bullying and all this stuff. First of all, Hermione lifts the curse, and then they pull him into their group and cheer him up; there's this moment where Harry says, "You're worth 12 of Malfoy," and the fact that Neville believes it.

Lorrie: Retains it.

JC: He retains it because he spits it back out at Draco's face later. It's just so powerful because I keep thinking, when I read that scene, probably no one has said anything like that to Neville before. No one had stood up for him; no one had said, "You're great, ignore them," in a way that meant something to Neville, so I love all of that. Then we have Harry giving him the chocolate frog, which is just such a sweet little moment because it brings us back to that 'chocolate as a cure for whatever ails you' thing that goes through the series. Also... I don't know. I love it. I know it's a plot device, too, but there's just something about Harry's, "Here's my last chocolate frog, take it." Aaawww.

Lorrie: You are worth comforting.

JC: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Lorrie: 'Whether what I'm even saying is true or not doesn't matter.' The lesson that Harry is imparting to Neville is that Harry cares.

JC: Yeah. And that means a lot.

Lorrie: Yeah. I'm looking at this line, which is one of my favorite funny little lines: "Harry told the other two about Snape's sudden, sinister desire to be a Quidditch referee." It's not sinister, but it's great to put it that way. That is a good hint that -- remember during the Quidditch match, when the broom was trying to kick Harry off, and we're thinking, 'Where are the grown-ups? Are

they even noticing this?' Yes, they are. This is the evidence. The grown-ups are watching; they do have a plan; it's on a different timetable from the kids' plans, and it's on a different scale. This is another one of those wonderful gifts that this book gives me where I think about children reading it, thinking, "Okay, just like in real life, grown-ups have their own thing going on, and it's harder to figure out and it's sometimes opaque." I love, too, when Hermione releases the leg locker curse off of Neville: look, she's already applying what she learned about countercurses and counter jinxes. She is learning how to fight harmful magic, or undo it. It's Hermione. Yeah, I have become surprised at how much I'm seeing Hermione's individuality in this book. Before, I thought she was a stock character; she's the smart friend, the smart girl. But no, her individual personality is really shining through for me on this re-read, and I'm loving her.

JC: And the intense way that the three of them have bonded by this point. I really love that, too.

Lorrie: You mentioned how notable it is that the clue about Flamel comes from the chocolate frog card. What I take from this is that this is a higher authority than reference books. Chocolate frog cards are where the culture has collectively decided there's a legendary basis to things that are important to them that they all share. Are you important enough to be in a reference book? Yes, lots of figures are. Are you important enough among those figures to be put on children's candy for people to know about, to be happy that they see you, to know what they owe you in their culture? This ties into the question of how important and successful a person Ron will become in his life. Yes, he's going to attain chocolate frog status; that's different and better than having your name on a list of trophies. This is exactly the kind of thing that Voldemort doesn't understand: this is the cultural inheritance that Ron has, uninterrupted, from being a pure blood. Voldemort, like Harry, comes from this Muggle background where he doesn't have that culture. But unlike Harry, because he is avoiding friendship and devaluing this sort of thing, he's not going to learn about it; Harry is. On the card itself: his work on alchemy "with his partner, Nicolas Flamel." This is where this series signals its vast greater ambition. This is going to be about alchemy; this is going to be about transmutation of lead into gold. This is going to be about human aspirations, saving people's souls, and mysteries. I love an expression of ambition. Alright, we're talking about actual alchemists who actually lived. The thrill of that has not gotten old for me that this completely magical mysterious figure was a person that lived for real; you can find him in the Hogwarts library, you can find him on chocolate frog cards, and you can find him in our history books. What?

JC: And he's still alive at the time of the telling of this story. Yeah.

Lorrie: And it thrills me, too. The loneliness of Dumbledore's genius is one of the things that haunts me the most about this series. It thrills me to see that he has a partner. He has a peer. Oh, thank goodness. It makes me so happy for him. Then the next words are: "Hermione jumped to her feet. She hadn't looked so excited since they'd gotten back the marks for their very first piece of homework," and I think, "Oh. Maybe, someday, two peers." Then we get the famous reference to this giant old book, where she says she got it out of the library for a bit of light reading. Love! I remember at the time, I was veering away from identifying with Hermione because at this point, we haven't seen enough of her struggles as a Muggle-born to see what a brilliantly written, potentially Black character she is. But I have, at this point, seen enough of her, so I thought, "Oh, no, this is really close to the stereotype of the Asian girl who's super geeky, completely unpopular, always looking stuff up, and unathletic," in which I was smack dab in the middle of that stereotype as a kid. I was sort of afraid: "Oh, no, I don't want this to be that." It was really wonderful and surprising and welcoming to me later on as the series went on, when

people said, "Hermione is a person of color; she's Black," and I felt like we dodged a bullet. "Oh, good. Good, good, good," because this whole bit of light reading as an 11-year-old, having no friends and not wanting to go anywhere near sports? Yeah, I remember that.

JC: Interesting, interesting. Oh, before we get to the Quidditch match, there's also this really interesting line here that I would love to hear your take on as well. Harry is noticing that Snape has ratcheted it up. It's really intense. Then there's this line that says, "He sometimes had the horrible feeling that Snape could read minds," which -- we know that Snape can read minds. What is Snape seeing in Harry's mind right now? What's happening behind the scenes here, from your perspective?

Lorrie: Well, let's see. The earlier part of that paragraph, there's this sentence: "Harry didn't know whether he was imagining it or not, but he seemed to keep running into Snape wherever he went. At times, he even wondered whether Snape was following him, trying to catch him on his own. Potions lessons were turning into a sort of weekly torture, Snape was so horrible to Harry." Here we have peak Snape protecting and loathing Harry at the same time. I think Snape is just keeping tabs on him because somebody is trying to attack this kid. Somebody tried to get this kid thrown off a broom, so he's just increasing surveillance. Snape being near Harry puts him in a foul mood, and he's an asshole to him. The Legilimency here... Well, first of all, I love the way that Legilimency is introduced in this series from the beginning, but we don't get the reveal about what it is for so long because that is such a grown-up thing, knowing that sometimes kids are too young to be initiated into adult knowledge. Then there comes a point when they are initiated, but the grown-ups are doing it the whole time. We the reader have not earned the right to know what this is yet, but yeah, it's happening. I think it's more that Harry is getting the experience of being scanned; it's very intrusive. Also, since Snape dislikes him: that feeling that, I think, most children have where there's some teachers -- where you feel like apologizing and saying, "I didn't do it," even though you weren't doing anything. They look at you and you're like, "It wasn't me; whatever it was, it wasn't me." Yeah, being looked at with suspicion that way, being scanned. I don't think there's all that much in Harry's mind at this point for Snape to be finding. But if there's, for example, Voldemort's voice going on in his head, I think Snape might be looking for that. We do know that, as you pointed out before, Harry is starting to have an increase in his nightmares. Something is happening. Snape is just trying to be vigilant about what it is.

JC: It's been a while, obviously, since I've read the series. Thinking about how Legilimency works again, how much Snape could actually see and what he would see: I guess the one question is, does he know that Harry knows about the Sorcerer's Stone/Philosopher's Stone? The book I'm reading is Philosopher's Stone. Does he know that Harry knows about this, because at the end, which we'll get to, he makes a point to Quirrell by saying, "Students aren't supposed to know about this. That's why we're not talking about this in the castle." I'm wondering if he's seen that in Harry's mind. Does he know that Harry knows about it at this point?

Lorrie: I'm guessing no. I'm guessing that he realizes it might be an issue, but he doesn't do anything that would tell us as readers that he suspects Harry of knowing. It's more, "I'm watching." On the one hand, everything Snape does is completely suspect according to Harry. On the other, we have one of the first instances of Dumbledore's omnipotence being established; the incredible reassurance and safety that comes with knowing that Dumbledore is there. When the Quidditch match starts, Fred Weasley says, "Dumbledore's come to watch,"

and Harry instantly is so relieved. "Okay, if Dumbledore's here, nothing bad can happen." There's something about the Dumbledore/Snape dynamic that Harry has picked up on. What he has not yet picked up on: "Perhaps that was why Snape was looking so angry as the teams marched up to the field. Something that Ron noticed too. 'I've never seen Snape look so mean,' he told Hermione." Now, we know -- having read and re-read the series -- no, Snape is looking that angry because it was not *his* own sudden, sinister desire to be a Quidditch referee. Dumbledore is making him. He doesn't want to be doing this. His worst nightmare is being up in front of the whole school with Quidditch, while Potter and his brood are whizzing by.

JC: This is the only time in the whole series that I can think of where Snape is actually on a broom. Maybe there's some feather -- We know he can fly without a broom.

Lorrie: Yeah, we find out way late. No, he's on a broom during the Flight of the Seven Harrys in the beginning of *Deathly Hallows*.

JC: Okay, yeah.

Lorrie: Now like Hermione and Neville, he's one of those smart, jumpy, unathletic children who is not at home with rough and tumble sports; later on in this chapter, we see that when he finally gets to get off the broom, he's white-faced and tight-lipped.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: If I had to... oh, God.

JC: Right, exactly. One of the first things that happens is one of the Weasleys aims a Bludger at him.

Lorrie: Yes. Yes.

JC: He's right to be nervous about being up in the air on this broom.

Lorrie: In fact, it's just like being in high school all over again. And then there's that moment -- I swear, all of my sympathies are totally with Snape in this moment: "Up in the air, Snape turned on his broomstick just in time to see something scarlet shoot past him, missing him by inches. The next second Harry had pulled out of the dive, his arm raised in triumph, the Snitch clasped in his hand." If that isn't exactly how this story functions. Snape has to watch over Harry, so he has to be near Harry. Everything about Harry's story comes straight for Snape's traumas. How much do you want to bet Snape has had literal nightmares about being stuck in a Quidditch game with Potter -- not this Potter -- coming straight at him?

JC: Because we know that James wouldn't have been nice about it either.

Lorrie: No, and fortunately for Snape, I cannot imagine that he ever let himself be on a broom near James Potter. But I bet it's his nightmare, and here it is, happening in real time. Oh, no.

JC: So who told Snape, "You're going to referee this game?"

Lorrie: Dumbledore.

JC: Dumbledore, that was my guess. Yeah. And then Dumbledore's like, "I'll be there, too, in case anything happens."



Lorrie: "This is your job. When you sold your soul to me on the mountaintop, you said you would do this. Well, the bill's coming due. You said you would. You are the real Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher because this suspect person is who we're using as the decoy this year to take the brunt of the curse. Since we don't have a real Defense Against the Dark Arts person, and Dark Arts are happening on the Quidditch pitch to Harry, you're up. You said you wanted it. You're up." Then we get a moment that shocked me the first time I read it, and it shocks me every single time again. At the end of the match, "Snape spat bitterly on the ground." Usually, he does bad behavior and I'm like, "Ugh, yeah, I know. I've seen teachers do that." I don't think I've ever seen a teacher do that.

JC: And it feels a little out of character for the Snape in my head.

Lorrie: It's extreme.

JC: Yeah. That doesn't seem like something he would do.

Lorrie: I don't know if that's because this is raw early on in this series before he's been refined, but it's here. It's canon. He's so bitter, and he's not concerned about making friends. But I think we can conclude from that action that it was not his idea to be a referee.

JC: He also does that spitting bitterly on the ground right after Dumbledore has his hand on Harry's shoulder and says, "You've kept working here. That's great. I'm glad you've been keeping busy." And Snape has been trying to keep up following him around. I can just hear Snape being like, "Oh, fuck my life." Dumbledore's like, "Keep it up. Harry!" Snape's like, "Great."

Lorrie: Snape doesn't hear that.

JC: Oh, okay.

Lorrie: Dumbledore says it quietly so that only Harry could hear. Still, Snape sees the hand on the shoulder and the kindness, which I'm sure was not the dynamic earlier when Dumbledore says, "You're going to be Quidditch referee," and Snape says, "I haven't been on a broom in years." "I don't care. You're going."

JC: Oh, my gosh.

Lorrie: "I don't even remember the rules of Quidditch." Yeah.

JC: "How am I going to be the referee? I'll just take points off of Gryffindor."

Lorrie: Yes. He did. Yeah, nobody tells him, "Give those points back."

JC: He wouldn't last five minutes anyway.

Lorrie: But he'll take his petty revenge where he can.

JC: So, going back a little bit. When there are scenes that are not from Harry's point of view, they always stand out to me because so much of this is from Harry's perspective. But we have the whole scene during the game with Ron and Hermione and Neville in the stands, and Ron and Hermione are ready for battle. They are prepared: they've got a curse ready to go, they've practiced it. They are focused. There's no banner with sparkly letters this time. They are on, and they're so focused on the game. Then we have Draco coming through to stir up trouble again.

Going back to my Gryffindor theme: what I love about this is that this time, Neville jumps into the fray.

Lorrie: He thinks about it, yeah.

JC: Right. Draco is insulting Neville, and Neville comes back with the line, "I'm worth 12 of you, Malfoy," and I love that Ron backs him up. Ron's like, "You tell him, Neville!" and Ron's focused on the game. Draco's trying and trying to taunt. Anything he can throw at them that will stick, he's going for it, though he seems to be ignoring Hermione at this point; it's mostly the boys he's going after. Then they started to fight and Ron's like, "Aaah," and then he jumps him, and they have this whole big thing, and then suddenly it's over because Harry's caught the Snitch. But there's this whole scene of Neville just stepping in. I think this is the first time that he knows that he can fight back because someone's going to be there to back him up. He's not alone. He aligns himself now with these other folks. That idea of: What does it mean to be a Gryffindor? That courage is found in friendships, and it comes from your relationships with other people. When you have a reason to be courageous -- when it's just about you, you'll just take it; when other people are there to draw strength from and you've got someone to protect potentially, that's when Neville shows, "Oh, you do belong in Gryffindor." I just love all that.

Lorrie: Guess what? You can express your anger. I love that we find, no, he gets thoroughly trounced.

JC: Yeah. He ends up in the hospital, but everyone's like, "Oh, but he'll be fine." Yeah. But the important thing was that he stood up and he fought back, not that he's in the hospital.

Lorrie: Yeah, no. But yeah, he got to express his anger.

JC: Yeah, he got to do that and that's amazing. Oh, I love it. I love it so much.

Lorrie: There's a similar moment for me from Harry being happy about how quickly he ended the game. "He couldn't ever remember feeling happier. He'd really done something to be proud of. Now, no one could say he was just a famous name anymore. His happy, happy, happy sense of ownership. 'That's me, I did that.'" Yeah. Anyway, similar to your theme of 'what's a Gryffindor,' it's just these kids starting to get a sense of self.

JC: Yeah. I have a note about that feeling, too. It's interesting that we don't really see the game from Harry's perspective. We see that he catches the Snitch and then we come back to Harry, but that feeling of, "Finally, I've proved myself. I've done something that they can't say, 'It's just because you're Harry Potter.' No, I did this."

Lorrie: Yeah. He would have had this skill no matter what.

JC: That's an amazing moment as a human being to have an accomplishment. If you get recognized for it? Oh, even better! I love that. But it's also interesting that there is all of this revelry, but then Harry holds back. One more thing I wanted to say about the fight with the kids: the way that Draco was coming in and just trying to start trouble. The kids can sit wherever they want. Why would he purposely walk by where these kids are sitting? He's just trying so hard to stir up trouble. I love this: the way that, in the first few books in particular, it's not really until -- I don't know, maybe it's book four or five. I can't remember now. But at this point, Draco, in his own mind, is their nemesis, and he's just an annoyance to them. He's not even on their radar as a nemesis. They don't think he's dangerous; they just think he's annoying, and it's funny to

watch this play out over and over again. He's casting curses on people and he's being a little shit, but he's not really that important in Harry's life at this point. Later on, that changes -- and it's so interesting when it changes -- but I just find these little moments funny. 'What are you thinking, kid?' He's so unhappy that he's not the center of attention that he's just going after everybody else. It's very interesting.

Lorrie: This is another example of someone being told that they're not the main character. Snape ignores Hermione with the message, "You're not the main character." Draco is so confused to find that he is not the main character. We find out later he's been raised by his father to think, "You have to be the main character; you're a failure otherwise." I haven't listened to a lot of wizard rock, but I have enjoyed what I've heard from Draco and the Malfoys. They are so clever, and their songs and lyrics do such keen analysis. There's this one song sung from Draco's point of view that says something like, "They wrote these books about my years at Hogwarts." Draco, they weren't about *your* years. No, he has no idea, but that comes up again in *Cursed Child*. In most ways, Draco as a father is realistic and is not replicating the weird stuff that Lucius tried to indoctrinate him into, but as with real life, there are some things he can't get away from; some residue he's not free of. Even though his child is Scorpius Malfoy, the most anxious little genius ever -- who is hated and considered to be the son of Voldemort, even though that's his son -- he somehow tells Scorpius, "You have to be a leader." If he were, for one second, able to see Scorpius as the individual that he is, he would know how ridiculous and slightly cruel and irrelevant and outdated such a concept would be, but he is getting this straight from what Lucius has drilled into him. What we have, then, is Scorpius so confused; this is what happens when a father doesn't see his son. "How can you look at me and say that? Whatever you're looking at, it is not me." So yes, that's Draco. Meanwhile, Harry has other things on his mind: Harry doesn't have time to be a Quidditch hero. He has to trail Snape.

JC: It is so interesting to me, too, that there's this hooded figure that comes out of the castle and Harry's like, "Oh," and he recognized the figure's prowling walk. He knows what Snape looks like when he's walking? That's interesting to me.

Lorrie: Yeah. Creepy. So here's Snape -- he's being the referee, which he hated -- and then he runs and changes.

JC: Puts on the cape and the hood.

Lorrie: And then he has to go track Quirrell. He is very overworked. This never lets up. I used to call him Mr. Overtime. When he catches up with Quirrell -- every once in a while in this series, we get a line about Snape that is true from every angle. I love those, because normally it's like, "Oh, it depends on your perspective. You don't know whether to trust him. Is he lying?" He says, "You don't want me as your enemy, Quirrell." No matter who you are and what side you're on, you really would rather have Snape on your side. I like this. It makes me proud of my guy that he's this scary, formidable, powerful wizard.

JC: I will have to go back and look at the dialogue there. And we have the really interesting line about -- Okay, so a couple of things: we hear this cutoff line of, "Your little bit of hocus pocus, I'm waiting," which is very interesting. Then we have the famous line of, "We'll have another chat soon when you've had time to think things over and decided where your loyalties lie," which is so mysteriously interesting. Yeah.

Lorrie: And ripe for misinterpretation.

JC: Definitely, definitely. The fact that Harry falls off of the branch a little bit and misses part of it, but all he hears is "your little bit of hocus pocus;" we learn later what that is, but the fact that Snape calls it hocus pocus is so insulting. "I don't take you seriously."

Lorrie: "Quirrell, we're not impressed."

JC: "Whatever bullshit you're going to do, whatever. Get it done, but I'm watching you."

Lorrie: "You really think you're going to--" Yeah. By the end of the chapter, we get a classic bit of *Harry Potter* series misdirection, where Harry jumps to all the wrong detailed conclusions but generally has the right sense about which direction to go. He says, "We were right. It is the Sorcerer's Stone. Snape's trying to force Quirrell to help him get it. He asked if we knew how to get past Fluffy, he said something about hocus pocus. I reckon there are other things guarding the stone apart from Fluffy. Loads of enchantments, probably." He's not entirely wrong; all the details are wrong, all the assumptions are wrong. This is a really good setup for the pattern that this series is going to follow, and what it tells the reader about how long we should take seriously Harry's initial assumptions. Okay, it's going to turn out not to be that exactly, but it's worth following along, and it's not going to be nothing. Something's going to be there. So yeah, publishing changed after this series because some kids became readers who wouldn't have been. What comes after that? Next chapter, we'll be talking about Norbert the Norwegian Ridgeback. Dragons.

JC: Wow. Oh, and then things really start to get exciting. Oh, we're going to get more Draco in the next chapter, too, which I'm looking forward to: more Draco being a little shit, which is one of my favorite things. Actually, the first time I read the series, I was all about Harry's perspective, and then the second time through, it was looking at everyone else. I didn't latch on to Snape in the way that you did; I looked at the other kids for the most part at that point and thought about what was happening in their lives, and I rapidly became... 'obsessed with Draco Malfoy' is one way to say it. I'm just fascinated by what the heck was happening with this kid, but oh, my gosh. Yeah, I'm excited.

Lorrie: At this point, I had not latched onto Snape. I just found him incredibly ugly and annoying and petty and embarrassing. When you see a grown-up act like that: "You're a grown up, cut it out." But yeah, I was starting to experience the way this series pushes Snape at you, even when you're trying to look at something else.

JC: Ah, that's true.

Lorrie: Nope, he's the story; can't get away from him, as Harry will tell you. Well, I'm looking forward to talking about the next chapter.

JC: Yes, looking forward to it. We're really getting towards the big action now. I'm excited.

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