

Transcript

Episode 3.18

Book 3, Chapter 18: Moony, Wormtail, Padfoot, and Prongs

Caroline: You're listening to Harry Potter After 2020, an HP chapter reread 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 Three, Chapter Eighteen: Moony, Wormtail, Padfoot, and Prongs.

Lorrie: Moony, Wormtail, Padfoot, and Prongs. The kids don't believe yet that Scabbers is Peter. Sirius wants to kill Peter. Lupin tells his story; he can tell the whole truth because he's in the Shrieking Shack, which was built to contain his secrets. Unbeknownst to them all, Snape is listening. So, JC, after the last chapter, Cat, Rat, and Dog, you wanted to rush into reading this chapter, right?

JC: I did, and I did not end up rushing into reading it. I waited. I just want to tell our listeners that I'm actually in a hotel in Boston recording this. I tried to find a quiet spot that was not my room, because my room is occupied by other people, so if there's some background noise here, it's me. It's my fault, so I apologize for that distraction. Yeah, I made myself wait a few days before I read the next chapter, because I wanted to be really fresh in my mind when we recorded this. And right before I picked it up to start working on it, the excitement just sort of bubbled up in me. I was like, 'Oh, I want to see,' because I couldn't remember exactly... I knew kind of what happened in the chapter, but there were lots of details that I knew would be fresh to me and that was true, so it was fun.

Lorrie: All right. So when the chapter starts off, I had this 'Wait, what?' moment just from the beginning, because Harry says Sirius killed Peter twelve years ago and Sirius says, "I meant to, but little Peter got the better of me..." That's when I realized I had never put it together before. Oh, so when he was twenty-one, Sirius actually set out to confront Peter and kill him. He was going to do it then and... Oh, that's what he meant when he told Hagrid that Hagrid could have the motorbike, because he wasn't going to be needing it anymore. Oh, he was just going to accept whatever happens to people after they commit murder.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Because he had asked Hagrid, "I would like to take baby Harry," and Hagrid said, "No, Dumbledore said to take him to the Dursleys," and during that argument, when Sirius accepted that, I guess that's when he decided he was going to give up his life for revenge right then.

JC: Wow, in that moment. That's amazing.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Because I do remember thinking about the fact that he gave him the motorbike and said, "I'm not going to need it anymore," and I remember thinking, okay, he already knew whatever happened, he wasn't coming back from it. Maybe he thought he was going to die. But that is interesting. I had forgotten that, even though we had read this earlier and I had forgotten. Or no, maybe that comes later. I can't remember now, but I had forgotten that detail -- that Sirius first wanted to take Harry -- and then he would have made that decision. "Okay, well then, I'm going to go kill Peter." Okay, wow. All right. Snap decision.

Lorrie: Yeah, we learn that in the chapter The Marauder's Map, when Harry is sitting under the table at the Three Broomsticks.

JC: Okay.

Lorrie: And Hagrid is explaining what happened the last time he saw Sirius.

JC: Right. Okay, I couldn't remember exactly when that was. Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah, I had to go look that up.

JC: Oh, my gosh. It was this book. What the heck?! Okay.

Lorrie: A lot happens in this book.

JC: Yes. Oh, my gosh. I like the fact that this chapter starts... It picks up right where the last one left off, with both the kids and the first-time reader in complete disbelief, right?

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: Yeah. It's pretty cool, but also because the kids are in disbelief and we're in this situation as the reader, you realize all is not what it seems and something is going to come out here. We're going to really, finally understand what's happening, who this person is; the kids don't see that yet, but at least as an adult reader, I felt that maybe younger readers would have had a different response.

Lorrie: Oh, I am willing to bet that most everyone's response is, "I have to keep reading. I have to keep reading! What's coming next?"

JC: True.

Lorrie: So Sirius really wants to kill Peter; he lunges, and Lupin stops him. He says the kids have "a -- right -- to -- know -- everything" first. "Ron kept [Scabbers] as a pet." Lupin doesn't know the whole story either, and Sirius owes Harry the truth. That's a really interesting collection of reasons why Sirius has to slow down. All of those are arguments that start to rebuild connections in Sirius, things to occur to him and to appeal to his logic and to his emotions other than just revenge. He's changing right in front of us.

JC: That idea that the kids have a right to know...

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Think about what a right is, and we talked about this a lot: what Harry doesn't have is his own story. This idea that Lupin is saying that Harry has the right to his own story here and he deserves to have that right now -- to get that right now -- that's a really interesting way of framing it, that you have the right to hear the truth. It's also a narrative device to keep him from killing Peter right away, because that would have been a quick end to the series in some sense, right? Everything that happens after that depends on them not getting Peter Pettigrew at this moment, but it's also an interesting way of thinking about the importance of Harry getting a piece of his story.

Lorrie: I'm realizing, as I look at these arguments from Lupin: Sirius has re-entered relationships. Until this moment, he had nobody but himself, so what did it matter if he killed Peter now or five minutes from now? He had nobody to answer to -- nobody was talking to him, nobody cared about him -- and now Lupin is saying, "I don't know the story. These children don't, and James's kid doesn't know." Suddenly, Sirius has relationships that he's responsible to, and that brings life; that brings more reason to live. While they're talking about this, Scabbers is squealing, and that noise from the rat reminds me, 'Oh, yeah, he's listening, too.' This chapter is set up so that we can go back and reread it from every character's perspective; every character has something different going on as they observe what happens here. So yeah, Remus starts talking and Sirius says, "Make it quick, Remus..." That is the first time we learned what the R stands for in R.J. Lupin.

JC: That's the first time we hear 'Remus'.

Lorrie: Isn't that weird?

JC: Wow! That's interesting.

Lorrie: It feels like we didn't ever not know, but no, they named their kid Remus Lupin.

JC: As if he was just destined to become a werewolf, right? Oh...

Lorrie: So yeah, it's safe now to tell the readers what R stands for, now that we know he's a werewolf. Like 'Lupin' wasn't enough of a giveaway.

JC: Right, and the disappearing once a month... I didn't put it together until this chapter. I remember reading this and going, 'Oh, my God!' Or the last chapter, I guess I should say, because he's a werewolf. Yeah. Hermione was smarter than me. I didn't put it together.

Lorrie: Well, yeah. Lupin... Ooh, okay. So Harry says, "There were witnesses... You can't say that it was Peter and not you," and Sirius says, "They didn't see what they thought they saw!" That line is so important because this whole book is about perspective: how you might think you know the whole story, you might not.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: And then Lupin tells them, "...the Marauder's Map never lies," so the Marauder's Map is a piece of magic like Pensieve memories, or like owls being able to find the recipient without a name or without an address. Like the Sorting Hat never being wrong or the form of your

Patronus, you cannot disguise it. There is a quality of magic in this universe that depends on people having an essential self that can be known. All right, the Marauder's Map is keyed to that essential truth about a person. Cannot lie.

JC: Something that I think is interesting about Harry in this section is that in the previous chapter, he was really upset, and in this one he seems really calm... Eerily calm. Once Remus has established we're going to hear the story, Harry's like, "All right," and becomes a little lawyer. He's like, "Okay, so here's what I think is true. You tell me." It's so interesting.

Lorrie: Well, that's when Remus gives back their wands. That's what does it.

JC: Okay, yeah, that makes sense. But Ron is still screaming.

Lorrie: Ron is in pain, yes.

JC: Yeah. Well, also, Ron has a broken leg and Hermione is still... Her voice is trembling. I don't know. In my head at least, Harry's just very calm and rational here. At least that's my impression... taking it in.

Lorrie: And he's thinking, 'Maybe Azkaban has unhinged Sirius after all,' and I'm glad that that mention is in there. This is always a concern; it's good that Harry's aware of it. Actually, it's Hermione that really strikes me as logical. Hermione and Lupin both, more even than Harry.

JC: Well, yeah, they're having a conversation on a different level than everybody else.

Lorrie: Oh, my God.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: They have this logical debate about Animagi that's so funny. When she says, "That can't be true," and he's like, "So tell me why that can't be true," and she comes up with this astonishing recitation of all of the facts that she's memorized. I love that glimpse into the rate of her logic, which is on pace with his even at her age. When she's older, she will outpace him. All of these facts she's committed to memory, and Harry "marvels at the effort that she puts into [her] homework" assignments, and I'm thinking, 'No, it's not that she put it in for homework. She surely did this for joy. "Oh, that's interesting. I want to know more."' Lupin is laughing in admiration, and he's a little less scared of her now, and I just think, 'Oh, it's going to be a big relief when they are on the same side soon, because she is not a comfortable adversary for him.' Then when she says, "There have only been seven Animagi..."

JC: I always resort to the Italian there. Animagus, Animagi. I don't know.

Lorrie: Right. Well, anyway... supposing that they are Animagi, "there have only been seven [Animagi] this century." I always wondered: is that a loophole to say later that Dumbledore is one? Because that trickiness with time is the same trick that we had with Nicolas Flamel. 'Oh, not this century.'

JC: Oh, that's interesting.

Lorrie: Anyway, that was something that I remember looking out for in the rest of the series, and then that didn't pan out.

JC: So we already know that the eponymous Moony, Wormtail, Padfoot, and Prongs of this chapter created the Marauder's Map and that it's got this very powerful, pure kind of magic to it, where it always shows you the reality no matter how people are trying to disguise themselves. Then we learn that three of these folks learned how to become Animagi and kept it a secret, and those kids were freaking great wizards.

Lorrie: Yes!

JC: That's stunning! If only seven registered Animagi -- which probably implies that there were others that were never registered, but the fact that the three of them figured it out and then created this incredibly powerful map? It's like, holy crap! What would they have done if one of them hadn't died and one of them hadn't turned to evil? What could they have become together? Holy shit, right? Amazing.

Lorrie: It's prodigious and it's also really, really illegal, because if you do this and you don't register, you could go to Azkaban. Harry asks, "My dad too?" and this is another step in these kids thinking, as they have been this whole volume, about the nature of rule-following and rule-breaking. Harry's heroic dead father, plus this teacher that they all trusted and Dumbledore hired and all the other faculty, except for Snape, seem to like, plus the scary runaway convict and the traitor: they all did this incredibly illegal thing at the same time that the kids have just had their faith in the law destroyed by the farce of Buckbeak's appeal. This shift is happening, and they're learning this thing about Harry's dad and that generation.

JC: Yeah, it's like learning that your dad was drafted to go to Vietnam, but dodged the draft, burned his draft card and ran away to Canada, and you just never knew. It's like, "Wow, my dad was kind of bad-ass? What?"

Lorrie: 'Huh? What?'

JC: Oh.

Lorrie: "But wasn't that illegal?" Yeah. "And then what?" 'Then what' is that there's a loud creak.

JC: And the door opens, and no one seems to be there. Every person in this room has been under the invisibility cloak at some point, many of them frequently, and no one stops to think, 'Hmm...'

Lorrie: Well, anyway...

JC: Continuing on with the exposition... It's like, 'Oh, my God, does not anyone in this room stop and think that maybe someone has the invisibility cloak?' Yeah. Anyway...

Lorrie: And then Lupin dropping another one of his super-casual asides that's so heartbreaking, where he says, "Oh, it's not haunted... The screams and howls the villagers heard were made by me." Oh, ow. Of course he would say it as matter-of-fact; it happened to him all the time. Then he starts the long downward path to self-blame. He goes, "Oh, if I hadn't been so foolhardy..." and the orgy of self-blame of Remus J. Lupin begins. Oi.

JC: Yeah, for sure. It feels like he's been wanting to get this off his chest for a while, and he's not had anyone to tell it to. He needs to say all of this. There are several things that I thought about here: one is that back when I first read this book, the fandom perspective was that lycanthropy was a metaphor for AIDS.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And it's interesting how that reading doesn't seem as strong to me now as it did then. I guess we're further from the AIDS epidemic, but it really does work as a metaphor for lots of not-well-understood conditions that people might have.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And I think that that's really powerful about it. Oh, there's also this wonderful line right in the middle, where it says, "Harry couldn't see where this story was going," but he felt compelled to listen anyway. I thought that was a really funny way to tell the listener to hang in there. 'We are going somewhere here. Just be patient.'

Lorrie: And I love this line: "[Hermione] was watching Lupin very intently." She can tell that he's ready to tell his story, and this is a Muggle version of Legilimency that anyone can do: just feel for it. Feel when somebody has the truthful emotion that's compelling them to speak. You can listen for that truth.

JC: That's true.

Lorrie: Oh, then he says Wolfsbane is a recent discovery, and that's heartbreaking, too. He says, "It makes me safe." All of this is so sad, because he's somebody who needs to be rendered safe to himself, to others, as long as he takes it the week before the full moon -- which means as long as there's no human error, as long as access to medication continues. It's dependent on a lot of management, on a lot of executive function.

JC: Right. Also, in a post-2020 world, obviously it makes me think about in the first part of the covid-19 epidemic when there was no vaccine and there were no treatments, and people were just dying.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And how terrifying that was, and then when people would go to the hospital, awful things would happen. It was terrible, right? Then we gradually got to a point where we had treatments and then we had a vaccine, so just thinking about the fact that even in the Wizarding world, there are conditions where there's research happening and discoveries being made... It feels like a lot of the Wizarding world is kind of ancient and stuck in time, but I like this reminder that it's not; there are people doing work all the time to improve magic.

Lorrie: Yeah. I remember the difference in AIDS fatalities when various drugs were invented and then fast-tracked for approval.

JC: Absolutely. What a difference it made in people's lives.

Lorrie: And how desperate it was beforehand, thinking, 'Someday, hopefully someday soon, we're going to have treatments and a cure. I'm not going to live to see it.' I had been an AIDS activist for quite a while before starting to read this series, so it didn't work quite as well as a metaphor for AIDS for me. It seemed a little romanticized. It also made it tricky to discuss the Lupin character with some fans who didn't want any criticism of him because this is an AIDS metaphor, and you can't mess with that. Well, he's still a character; it's still fiction.

JC: Yeah, for sure. I'm not aware... Are you aware of any other common fandom fan theories around what lycanthropy represents, other than that one?

Lorrie: It was also partly even just a metaphor for being gay, but it's just any stigmatized illness.

JC: The lengths that Dumbledore went to to allow Remus to come to the school... I think that's a pretty stunning -- Actually, that makes me think about in the late 60s and early 70s: as one branch of civil rights movement, there was a disabilities rights movement, and parents of disabled children (who were in many places around the country completely excluded from public education) protested and fought for the right for their kids to go to school with other kids. Some of it was money, but some of it was just the fear of having these kids. There was a lot of prejudice and a lot of misunderstanding of kids with different kinds of disabilities -- particularly with developmental disabilities, learning differences, and things like that -- what that might do to the school population, so schools had to spend a lot of money. They had to build new facilities, they had to put in wheelchair ramps. They had to do a lot of things that cost money and took away attention and funding from the "normal kids", right? I'm thinking about Dumbledore building the Shrieking Shack, digging this tunnel, planting this Whomping Willow, and setting up this whole system so that this kid with a disability can come and be a part of the school with this accommodation that he needs in order to be able to function, and how much... I don't know how much money this would cost in terms of magic, but yeah. It makes me think of that, too, about the ways that kids with disabilities were traditionally excluded from public education in the United States, anyway -- that's the context I know -- and the effort it took on behalf of many, many people to enable those kids access to a free, appropriate, public education.

Lorrie: Well, I think I'm reading Dumbledore's actions here as Dumbledore wanted to build a test case, because he had just started as headmaster and he disagreed with thinking that it's not possible to offer werewolf kids an education. I think that was part of the pressure that was put on Lupin: to know that he had to be the model werewolf, the person to prove Dumbledore right.

JC: Yeah. That reminds me of the first Black children who integrated white schools in the South, and the horrors that they experienced as part of that.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And the pressure they were under to be perfect.

Lorrie: Yeah. The other thing, too, about the metaphor for AIDS, though, that really did not settle okay with me is that people with AIDS are not actually predators the way Lupin turned into once a month. Werewolves actually are dangerous when they have transformed; people with AIDS are just people who have a virus.

JC: Yeah, I guess that's true.

Lorrie: So the monstrosity metaphor worked in terms of stigma, but there was also something basic about this metaphor that made me feel like I don't think she came from the AIDS activist community.

JC: Yeah. From that perspective, it doesn't work at all. I was trying to think, what would be a good... I can't even really think of a condition without going into very niche caricatures of some mental health conditions. I just can't think of anything that would really be a good

representation, but then again, it doesn't have to represent anything in real life. It's fiction, as we said.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And you can imagine, as a writer, what if there was a kid at this school who turned into a werewolf once a month, or what if there was a kid who was a vampire? How would they function at this school? That's a great thing to explore as a writer.

Lorrie: Right, and the stigma on the lack of access is very real. Going further into Lupin's heartbreaking story, Wolfsbane makes him safe in that he keeps his mind and can stay in his office as "a harmless wolf." Probably still looking like a werewolf, I imagine. He transforms and he still keeps his mind; that doesn't prevent him from being depressed as hell and in isolation all that time. I imagine it must be quite triggering to transform every month, so yeah, it's much, much better. Not happy. It's good, though, that we hear how he speaks of Snape when Snape isn't there or when he thinks Snape isn't there. It's respectful and neutral.

JC: Definitely.

Lorrie: Yeah, he mentions this is the thing that Snape has been brewing for me, but before Wolfsbane was invented, once a month he "became a fully fledged monster". We have that word 'monster'... That's really what Lupin and lycanthropy represent to me: what happens when people are afraid of the monster inside themselves. You can always tell when Lupin is written as thinking about this aspect of himself, because he talks about *what* he is as opposed to *who* he is.

JC: Oh, interesting.

Lorrie: So there's his human aspect, and then there's the part of himself that's a thing... that's a monster. I learned a lot about werewolves (and Lupin in particular) from a scholar named Melissa Aaron, who also goes by 'Moonyprof' in the Harry Potter fandom. I will link to a podcast episode of *Reading, Writing, Rowling* that she and werewolf scholar Renée Ward did together, but definitely a lot of what Melissa talked about was fear of the monster within -- of that being the dread -- and Dumbledore is obviously invested in educating the *person*.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Dumbledore instituted those certain protections as a pilot program. He didn't tell the other families. What do you think of that as an educator?

JC: Okay, that is really interesting to me because there's an incredible history of... School teachers feel like we have an obligation to protect kids, and we do have this... We're 'in loco parentis', we're taking care of kids and have their best interests at heart, and it is not unusual for what the teacher perceives and what the student perceives as their own best interest to be in direct conflict with what the parent perceives to be the child's best interest. A great example of this that we're seeing playing out in the United States right now is kids who are exploring their gender identity wanting to be called by different names, using pronouns other than the ones they were assigned at birth, and not feeling like their home is a safe place to talk about this -- having to hide this from their parents, but exploring this on the social environment of school -- teachers being aware of this and teachers respecting those choices, but not telling the parents about it. As teachers... Five years ago, I was talking with my students -- my pre-service

teachers: what do you do when you have a kid who has told you, "These are my pronouns and this is the name I want to go by, but my parents don't know"? My answer at the time was, "when you're talking to the parents, you use the name that's in the book. Don't out the kid to the parents." That was common wisdom amongst teachers, and conservative parents absolutely do not want to hear that, and they do not believe that teachers who do that have their children's best interest at heart. It makes me think of that situation. As an educator, you're siding with the child often and not the parents when you perceive that the child is in some danger from the parent. That's a hard call to make, and that's even a controversial thing for me to say, it feels like now. Ten years ago, that would not have been a controversial thing to say.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: That's weird.

Lorrie: What about the families who don't realize that they're sending their kids to school with a werewolf?

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: And Dumbledore's decision that his protections will be enough, and that they don't need to know this.

JC: Yeah. Kids were getting Petrified last year.

Lorrie: Yeah, right.

JC: Yeah. I don't know, do you have to sign some kind of waiver when you send your kid to Hogwarts?

Lorrie: You'd think...

JC: In the process of Wizarding education, but all the parents went to the school, too, except for the Muggle-born parents, right? The Wizarding parents know what they're getting into; the Muggle-born parents have no clue. Oh, my gosh. Yeah.

Lorrie: I guess it was worse back then, when Apollyon Pringle was the....

JC: Oh, man.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: But I think about people who send their kids off to boarding school who have no clue what's happening in their kid's daily lives. It can't be that different. I can't even imagine, but yeah. Can you imagine sending your 11-year-old off to live somewhere else nine months of the year, and you just don't know what's happening?

Lorrie: Ouch.

JC: In the days before electronic communications, they could line up at that one phone and call you once a week. Otherwise, you just didn't know. Yeah, they broke a bone; maybe they'd send you a note, I don't know. I don't know how it works. It's a good question, it's a good question. I'm not defending Dumbledore here, but I understand. I understand.

Lorrie: No, this is a thing. Yeah.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Oh, Lupin talks about how -- when he was riding out his transformations as a student -- that he would bite and scratch himself because there were no humans around for him to bite. That description of self-harm... That self-harm is encoded into this series so vividly. It's sad and painful.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: And insightful about one of the causes of self-harm.

JC: Yeah, for sure. I hadn't really thought about it from the self-harm angle, but yeah, that's really true.

Lorrie: Who do you have to take it out on?

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Well, you don't want to hurt other people, but you're going through some things.

JC: Right, and self-harm is a whole other category of behavior that's really complex and a sign of pain.

Lorrie: Well, we have it here in this volume with Peter Pettigrew, we're going to find out.

JC: True.

Lorrie: And series-wide, we have it with Voldemort and Horcruxes, so it's a major theme.

JC: It also makes me think about all the fanart that I have seen over the years of child or young person Lupin bandaged up and looking beat up; in all the fanart of the Marauders, where they're all kids in school, Lupin's always slightly small and has bruises and bandages, and everybody else is.... Yeah. It's like, aww.

Lorrie: Medical trauma.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Lupin says that Dumbledore encouraged the rumor that the Shrieking Shack was haunted. That is the first indication that this is one of Dumbledore's tactics: that encouraging rumors is part of his arsenal, and that will set us up later to realize, 'Oh, that's where the story comes from that Snape is not trustworthy, and that's why he's not made Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher.'

JC. Yeah, that's true.

Lorrie: Because people are saying, "Well, everyone knows." Who knows? Who said? Nobody seems to know.

JC: Using misinformation strategically.

Lorrie: Dumbledore knows how to do that. The first of Lupin's really self-baring statements -- that he just comes right out and says that he was terrified that when his friends found out what he really was that they would desert him -- you can't get more straightforward than that. Of course he was afraid of that. And then he says, "Instead, they did something for me that would

make my transformations not only bearable, but the best times of my life. They became Animagi." That is a remarkable instance of turning a curse into a gift. It's thrilling! He had playmates; they took risks for him, they did something super difficult to lighten his burden. The romance of that is incredible, plus, also, the risk that they could land in Azkaban for this. It's easy to see why the Marauders -- why the image of them doing this for each other and having adventures together -- seems to have seized fandom imagination so richly. Yeah.

JC: Yeah. It's fun to imagine the days before it got dark.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: What kind of adventures... Oh, my gosh. I think that anybody who ever spent any part of their childhood running around with a little gang of friends can recognize themselves in that, too. The other thing that I think is funny is that they feel like a boy band in a way.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: This idea that you've got these four characters and they are all very different, but together they make this unit. Yeah.

Lorrie: They're bonded. It's also a continuation of the excitement that Harry feels in the first book -- when he first gets his cloak and then he gets to sneak around and roam the castle at night -- because I always associated that in the first book with that feeling that a mother of a baby has when the baby goes down for the night and then you can write your stories. But here they're taking it further: they're roaming the school grounds and then the village. Meanwhile, Sirius is trying to hurry Lupin along.

JC: He's got a rat to kill.

Lorrie: Yeah, and he's looking at Scabbers "with a horrible sort of hunger..." and we're going to see that soon with the way Snape looks at Sirius.

JC: Oh, there's a moment in there when Lupin talks about how they all became Animagi that Harry says, "What sort of animal? Even my dad? What sort of animal?"

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And before Remus can answer him, I think Hermione asks a question. It's funny that he's cut off, because obviously that would be a major spoiler for a moment at the end of the book if he did find out now, but it's very interesting.

Lorrie: I love that. That's step number two to that amazing reveal.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: It's also a reminder that when we go through this chapter in our minds from each character's perspective, of course Harry's perspective is going to be about James. So important. Of course that's more important to him than what Hermione brings up, which is super important. She says, "That was still really dangerous! Running around in the dark with a werewolf! What if you'd given the others the slip, and bitten somebody?" And just as she sometimes does with Snape, here Hermione functions as the more mature version of what Lupin should have been thinking at the time. She's got the perspective of defense and safety -- exactly as she did with the Firebolt -- and just as Snape sometimes avoids Hermione's gaze, well, Lupin's been

avoiding Hermione, too. And not that different, actually, from the way Harry and Ron sometimes avoid her, because she's right.

JC: And he doesn't deny it. He says, "Yeah, that haunts me to this day."

Lorrie: Yeah. Yeah.

JC: Yeah. I think the same way that anyone might look back on stupid shit you did when you were young and think, 'God, what was I thinking?' Now, most of our stupid shit would have hurt just us and probably not change the life of someone else, but yeah.

Lorrie: It's not usually this risky.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah, he says that there were a lot of "near misses" and they would "laugh about them": "I sometimes felt guilty about betraying Dumbledore's trust, of course... he had admitted me to Hogwarts when no other headmaster would have done so, and he had no idea I was breaking the rules he had set down for my own and others' safety. He never knew I had led three fellow students into becoming Animagi illegally. But I always managed to forget my guilty feelings every time we sat down to plan our next month's adventure." We have watched Harry go into Hogsmeade the whole book with Hermione hissing at him, "Don't do it, don't do it," and he forgets why it would be a bad idea and is set on doing it. Then we get that motif repeated here.

JC: It's that very human, young-person... The way that kids' brains develop, and at this age, it's pretty well documented, that risk-taking behavior. It's very developmentally appropriate for teenagers to act this way.

Lorrie: You just can't grasp.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: You can say, "one plus one is two," that "if you do this, it's dangerous," and yet you somehow can't grasp it.

JC: Right. I read something recently about teenage brains, and even the brains of young adults and how they process risks so differently. One statistic that was interesting was that if you look at young people who've had kidney transplants, the rate of failure due to not taking the right medicine is extraordinarily high in people in their early 20s. They know what will happen if they don't take it, and they still don't believe that it's going to happen in some way. It's just the way that human brains work, and it's wild.

Lorrie: There's just some connection that isn't quite happening. This then sends us back to the moment that Lupin tells Harry, "Your parents gave their lives to keep you alive, Harry. A poor way to repay them -- gambling their sacrifice for a bag of magic tricks." Remus Lupin, you are projecting your guilt onto Harry Potter.

JC: One hundred percent, and in the same way that parents will chastise their children for doing things that they would have done.

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: It's hard to look back and understand how your brain worked then because your brain doesn't work the same way now, and now you're like, 'Oh, my God, that was so stupid. I can't believe... Surely, my kids won't be that stupid,' and then your kids are that stupid because that's how kids are. Yeah, it's so funny. It's like, 'Remus, you've just fallen into the parent trap.'

Lorrie: No, except -- except -- that it's different in that, in his own words, "And I haven't changed."

JC: Oh, that's interesting.

Lorrie: He's still regressed, and that's why there was so much venom in the way he guilted Harry. If he was securely adult and then watching and going, "I can't believe you're doing this," that would have been one thing, but he hasn't changed. "Lupin's face had hardened, and there was self-disgust in his voice," and that self-disgust really, really catches at me. He says, "All this year, I've been battling with myself, wondering whether I should tell Dumbledore that Sirius was an Animagus. But I didn't do it. Why? Because I was too cowardly. It would have meant admitting that I'd betrayed his trust while I was at school, admitting that I'd led others along with me..."

JC: That is so human, though, and so real, isn't it?

Lorrie: See, I hate that!

JC: But people do it! Oh, my God.

Lorrie: But I'm not sure why "that is so human" is a response that so many people come forward with right away to cushion Lupin, when my response is horror. Yeah, you should have said something.

JC: See, I think I do this. I think that there are plenty of times when I -- Now, the stakes are not as high, but there are plenty of times that I have information that I probably should reveal about a person or a situation and I don't, because I know it would reveal things about me that I don't want to have to deal with. Now, the stakes are never this high -- it's always smaller things -- but I totally get that feeling. I understand that. That shame... It's shame.

Lorrie: This is where the self-disgust -- this is where my empathy with the character of Remus Lupin and how he functions in the story -- breaks down, because I'm straight-up horrified. To me, it feels like his self-disgust is immobilizing, but also potentially indulgent. "Oh, I'm so disgusted with myself." Yeah, well, could you put that aside for a moment and do what you ought to do? Go be self-disgusted later after you go do the thing that you damn well know you should be doing.

JC: It's hard to do the right thing, I think. I'm not justifying it, but I understand that and I see that people do that a lot. It feels real to me in the sense that it's a huge character flaw that feels like something that happens a lot to people, for better or worse.

Lorrie: So yeah, I have been struggling, ever since I first read *Prisoner of Azkaban* or this series, with what it means that my response to Lupin in this position is so frustrated. I feel judgmental. Remus, do something! One thing that I definitely have to recognize is, well, at this moment, he's no longer in denial, because obviously, he has come really far to be able to recognize this and to articulate it. I'm trying to understand how much of this is because I have a different kind of personality, and how much of it is because he reminds me of stuff that I do all the time that I

hate in myself so much that I'm not aware of it. I don't know. It could be both, but yeah, I have a really recoiling kind of response. As you say -- because it is something that people do -- sometimes I have to tell myself, "Self-disgust... Don't let that take over, because that can be an excuse to be immobilized for a while." Then he says, "...and Dumbledore's trust has meant everything to me." This is escalating. He can't reveal the truth to Dumbledore because that would make Dumbledore not trust him, so it builds and it gets worse and worse and worse. Isn't this how imposter syndrome compounds? Somebody thinks that you're so good, and you know deep inside that there's something that you should be coming clean about and you don't; you try to please them more and more and more and act like how you think you should be acting, and then they think that you're such a good person and you just feel worse and worse.

JC: Yeah. Yeah. I think so.

Lorrie: So we have that situation with Lupin, and we're going to see later that Dumbledore's trust has also meant everything to Snape. What we're setting up here is partly a competition for a father's attention.

JC: Oh, interesting.

Lorrie: Both of them want Dumbledore's goodwill, and Snape has been, in a very sibling rivalry kind of way, tugging at Dumbledore's sleeve the whole book, saying, "I'm telling you, I'm telling you, you cannot trust this whole Lupin situation." What we've been talking about for the past several minutes has been no, you really can't, because everything that has made things a little bit safer for Lupin is all dependent on human flaw not working. What we're afraid of here is not the monster. Lupin the werewolf is not the risk. Lupin *and* any other human being -- as a human being who might forget things, who might be an adolescent, who might not be perfectly straightforward with themselves at all times -- that's the thing that, because we're human, is going to fail us when the stakes are this high. That's no different for Lupin than it is for any other human being. It's not the werewolf that's scary here.

JC: I didn't realize until reading this chapter that this is probably the first time that Snape is aware that they were Animagi, because I don't think he knew.

Lorrie: Yeah. Oh, if he had, he would have turned them in.

JC: Right, so Lupin was really the only one who knew that this is maybe how Sirius was getting into the castle.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Obviously, Snape would have told Dumbledore, but they kind of hit home because Snape didn't see... Even though we later learn what Snape's Patronus is, which I'm a little bit confused about... yeah. I don't know. We'll get to that later a few books down the line.

Lorrie: But yeah, if Snape had known this... If Snape had known that Lupin knew this and wasn't telling, he would have had Lupin punished long ago. He had no idea. So, yeah, Snape has now just learned this.

JC: And he is... Yeah. We haven't even gotten to the part where we acknowledge --

Lorrie: We don't even know he's here.

JC: Yeah, at this point.

Lorrie: And then Lupin says that he owes so much to Dumbledore, because Dumbledore is the only person who has hired him. He has been "shunned" his adult life, "unable to find paid work because of what I am." *What*, not *who*. That implies that it's not exactly a secret that he's a werewolf. There are places of employment around that know this; it's just that when he was teaching at a school, it was kept quiet, and that has implications later for when he's outed as a werewolf to the students. Has that ruined his life? Was that a giant secret? Not exactly.

JC: But it is interesting -- and maybe that's one of the functions of the Buckbeak plot in the story -- that Lucius Malfoy didn't know. That's interesting to me, because we would have known about it if Lucius Malfoy knew. It's like the PTA president from hell.

Lorrie: So...

JC: No, worse. He's on the school board. He's the conservative guy on the school board who actually everyone's under his thumb. That's even worse. Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah, who threatens people and bribes them. Lupin says, "I convinced myself that Sirius was getting into the school using Dark Arts he learned from Voldemort, that being an Animagus had nothing to do with it..." That is the point where I just go, 'Wait, what?'

JC: Yeah, that seems like a stretch, Lupin.

Lorrie: That is a hell of a lie to invent to tell yourself.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: To justify not giving Dumbledore a piece of relevant information. Seriously, is it just me?

JC: Yeah, that's where I'm like, 'Oh, Lupin. Oh, Lupin. No, no, honey.'

Lorrie: Can I get a reality check here?

JC: You have to be pretty self-delusional there. Okay, so when he got the map, I think that's when he thought, 'Okay, now I can keep an eye on Harry and I can look for Sirius, and I can keep everybody safe.' I think that, before he got the map, he probably was at a point where he was close to thinking, 'I've got to say something.' But once he had the map, that was an excuse to still not say anything.

Lorrie: What did he think he was going to do? Because he has just said he did still think Sirius was the murderer.

JC: I think he'd do exactly what he did this time: he was watching the map, he saw Sirius on the map; he saw them all go there, and he knew exactly where to go.

Lorrie: So if this is a guy that learned Dark Arts from Voldemort and he was going to show up with his wand and do what?

JC: Yeah, I don't know. He didn't think this through, clearly. I don't know.

Lorrie: Yeah, exactly.

JC: I don't know. Yeah, yeah. There's a lot of ways you could also say, "Okay, the writing of this is not..." At the end of the chapter -- or maybe the end of the next chapter -- we have a good sense of where everyone's loyalties lie. You just have to hold on for a little while, but yeah.

Lorrie: I actually trust the writing of this really strongly. I think Lupin is drawn as somebody who had so many conflicting feelings about this that actually, the logic didn't add up. He ends this paragraph with: "...so, in a way, Snape's been right about me all along." Yeah, and once again, Lupin is fair about Snape when Snape is not around.

JC: Which is good in this sense.

Lorrie: Yeah. Lupin has been parrying all of Snape's accusations and insinuations all year with this really... I keep coming to the thought of imposter syndrome, this gnawing sense that there's something inside that he's hiding. Then he explains that Snape doesn't like Lupin because Sirius involved him. "Sirius... played a trick which involved me," and that wording I have always had trouble with, too. A trick that involved you, Lupin, that would have made you into a murderer and a monster, that would have ended your education definitely, gotten you locked up or worse, definitely ended Dumbledore's career, totally would have cost an uproar at Hogwarts. But that's his fear: his greatest fear is he's afraid of being the monster, and somebody that's his friend thought it would be funny to weaponize that monster. Is this what friends do: he's exploiting this disability and his greatest fear? I always had trouble with what... What did Lupin do in his mind to be okay with this so that they remain such close friends afterward? Maybe this is part of the mistrust between them that led them to suspect each other when somebody had turned, but this is always where I couldn't follow along with the fandom shipping the two of them. I know there are definitely Lupin/Sirius stories that deal with this betrayal and them working it through as adults, but yeah, the weaponization of Lupin's greatest fear, that is frightening to me. That's actually monstrous to me, that you would do that to a friend.

JC: It doesn't feel out of the realm of possibility, though, for someone who was supposedly a friend to do that to someone else.

Lorrie: Yeah, no.

JC: Right? Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And if you were a person like Remus who didn't have any friends and didn't expect to have any -- and he'd had this huge fear that as soon as they learned the truth about him, they were going to abandon him -- then maybe it's really hard to come the terms with that in a sense without it being like, "Well, maybe I deserved it all along."

Lorrie: Or maybe it's either that or have no friends.

JC: Yeah. Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah, I have zero problem believing that this would happen in high school.

JC: Yeah, like a bullying thing gone wrong.

Lorrie: Yeah, or that somebody you thought was your closest friend would then turn around and weaponize this disability of yours.

JC: It's very Regina George, isn't it?

Lorrie: Oh, God.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: But it doesn't seem like Sirius ever realized that's what he was doing. I don't mean now, because you know now after twelve years of Azkaban, yeah, he has arrested development. He's way saner than most people would be after twelve years in Azkaban, but at the time even... Anyway, it's the relationship between Lupin and Sirius after Lupin realized how Sirius set him up potentially that that's where all my questions are. But that's also the brilliance of fanfic: how much richness you can get out of that.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Oh, God, Sirius' arrested development is so sad, because he's thinking about what if Lupin had eaten Snape and he goes, "Served him right, sneaking around, trying to find out what we were up to..." So yeah, did he really actually deserve to die for that? The regression and the arrested development here, it's so painful thinking, 'Wow, at what age did this person start to be incarcerated?' That's where he's been forced to stay all this time.

JC: Yeah. There's also a line in there when Snape's name first comes up, and Sirius has this, "Ugh, Snape" reaction, and then Lupin says, "Oh, yeah." Lupin is very like, "Yeah, we didn't get along. We didn't get along with each other." He's very careful in the way he's phrasing this stuff, and that he says something about, "Yeah, Snape didn't really like your dad very much." Then he said, "I think he was just jealous of him playing Quidditch," which is like, 'Did you pull that out of your ass, Lupin?' Why would Snape be jealous of someone's Quidditch...? I don't know if he actually knew why Snape didn't like James and just didn't want to say or what, but that just felt really weird to me. Who would believe that?

Lorrie: Well, it does have precedent because when Snape confronts Harry and says, "Your dad used to strut, because a small amount of talent on the Quidditch field made him think he was better than the rest of us." I think James having status as a Quidditch star... It was a thing.

JC: Yeah, that's more like 'you're popular and for a stupid reason,' rather than 'you play Quidditch really well and I'm jealous of that.' I guess I don't know. Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: It just struck me as odd. That's not why Snape doesn't like James, but okay.

Lorrie: Yeah, it's definitely misdirection to keep the reader's attention away from something that will become important later. After Sirius says, "Oh yeah, Snape would have deserved it," then Lupin sounds so grown-up in contrast when he says, "Severus was very interested in where I went every month." Okay, Lupin is, in fact, a grown-up.

JC: And there's a little parallel between Snape and Hermione, too, right?

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: You've said multiple times that Lupin avoided Hermione, and it's that little reminder of Snape. If Snape figured it out, then Hermione is going to figure it out.

Lorrie: And he says: "Sirius thought it would be -- er -- amusing to tell Snape..." to go after a werewolf. Okay, that is this minimizing that always makes me uncomfortable. He says yeah, "He'd have met a fully grown werewolf --" which echoes "fully-fledged monster" from before. We're really dealing with Lupin's worst self-image here, and then we find out that James was the Hermione of this quartet. He was the one who said, "You told Snape what? You can't do that!" and risked his own safety to get Snape out of there before something really irreversible happened.

JC: And how close it came.

Lorrie: Oh, God.

JC: That he got close enough to actually seeing the werewolf. Yeah.

Lorrie: So yeah, James put himself at risk, and then Lupin says Snape "was forbidden by Dumbledore to tell anybody, but from that time on, he knew what I was..." which raises the immediate question after trauma: in whom was Snape allowed to confide? How was Snape processing what had just almost happened to him? What *had* happened and then almost got worse? How could he feel safe after if Dumbledore is saying you're forbidden to tell anybody? Which person is Dumbledore concerned about, and who does Dumbledore not care about? Which leads me to wonder: as an educator, how would you have handled this?

JC: I have no idea. Oh, my God. I think... yeah. Okay, I will admit: until I read your book, it never occurred to me to think about what Snape went through here. I don't know what I thought before. It wasn't even on my radar. Okay, Snape... Okay, yeah, James saved Snape. Okay, Snape's fine, and then "don't tell anyone you saw a werewolf, Snape." That was all... I read it completely at that level. But yeah, if you've got kids involved in a traumatic incident, you have to deal with all the kids who were involved. I don't really know what happened here as far as... Also, we're just getting Remus' side of it. We don't really get Snape's side of it, at least not at this point. Maybe there was more to it than that, but I don't know. I don't want to think that Dumbledore just said, "Suck it up, Snape." We get that impression, but knowing that we learn a lot more about the relationship later on and how Dumbledore feels about Draco and how he takes care of other kids, it's hard for me to believe that nothing happened there. Maybe we don't have access to it... Unless you have some evidence that nothing happened there, that Snape's just got to suck it up and move on.

Lorrie: It looks like that's what he got. We never get any evidence that anybody said to Snape, "Your classmates set you up to get killed." No acknowledgment. We never get any evidence that the Marauders were ever punished, which also brings up how Harry never got punished for his head appearing in Hogsmeade.

JC: True.

Lorrie: What we get is, "Oh, no. Lupin has a condition, lycanthropy, and we want him to be able to get an education anyway; we don't want word to get out, because of course we have to protect his education. All of us want that more than anything, don't we, Severus?" And Snape is there, going, "I'm fifteen and I just almost got eaten. They thought it would be funny to kill me. Am I the only one who's upset about this?" The assumption that Snape would care more about Lupin's privacy than what just happened to him, coming from a headmaster, coming from a father figure... I cannot see a way in which that wouldn't have had an impact.

JC: Oh, for sure. Yeah. I guess... I don't know. I don't know if I completely buy that Snape's experience was brushed aside. That seems not completely... I don't know.

Lorrie: You just can't believe anyone would be that awful.

JC: I just can't believe that Dumbledore could be that awful. I don't want to believe it, Dumbledore in particular. Even if it was quiet and... I don't know. It's hard for me to imagine that Dumbledore would be that cold to 15-year-old Snape, having seen what happened when Tom Riddle got brushed aside. I just don't know that I believe that Dumbledore would be that callous with a student who was so clearly on the edge as Snape is, and at this point kids are starting to head towards joining Voldemort, right? Dumbledore had to be aware of that dynamic happening in his school.

Lorrie: But Dumbledore was also super invested in protecting Lupin.

JC: You can be invested in protecting a lot of people at once. I think it's hard to balance that. What I'm thinking about here is I've never personally experienced the situation, but a situation where perhaps you have a student at your school who has some kind of emotional disturbance; when you have kids like that, they're usually in self-contained classrooms in schools, and there are people who are trained to work with them, and there have been incidents where kids have gotten out of the containment and have caused harm to other children. Now, if that incident is related to their disability, they can't be expelled or punished for it, so in that case the kid would not get any punishment. But then other kids have been hurt by this perhaps, so that is a difficult situation for a school to be in, for parents to be in, for the kids to be in. That's the closest thing I can think of here: some kid luring a kid out of their contained classroom and instigating something that then caused harm to another student. It's hard for me to imagine that the first kid there would not have gotten punished in some way, but it's also important that everybody in the situation would be made to understand, "Look, this happened; it wasn't the person with the disability's fault. It's terrible if this happened to you. Let's figure out what we can do to make it better for everyone." That's the closest I can come to imagining this thing in the real world. And in that scenario, I'm still putting Dumbledore in the position of the Special Ed lead or the principal of the school and knowing how they would react, so it's hard for me to think of Dumbledore not responding in that way, I guess, just because. But again, he's a fictional character. He lives by his own rules.

Lorrie: And also, sometimes things get handled this badly in real life.

JC: True.

Lorrie: And there are people who are disregarded, so that when they say, "Well, what about me? I suffered too," people look at them like, "Who cares? Some people matter more than you." That's definitely how Snape would have experienced it. That's what Lupin is reporting now: "He was forbidden by Dumbledore to tell anybody, but from that time on he knew what I was...." Now Snape has a secret about Lupin that not only does he have zero motivation to keep except that Dumbledore has told him, he has active reason to be really resentful that he wasn't told ahead of time. If he had been, then he could have defended himself, and Snape being, as he is, all about self-defense -- this information was withheld from him -- what we are going to see in the rest of this series, as far as I can tell, is consistent with a scenario where Dumbledore just said, "Snape, you're not allowed to say anything about this," and then never followed up. But how I interpret that is that in Book Six -- when Dumbledore will not approach Draco and put

Snape on the case -- he is remembering that he mishandled this and that he is trying to do better in sending a sympathetic person for Draco, because he and Snape now work together and we're going to see that Dumbledore has to live with the consequences of how he handled this and mishandled it with Snape twenty years earlier. But I do know that sometimes things in life get handled badly.

JC: Oh, for sure. Yeah.

Lorrie: And people are so worried about protecting somebody who's vulnerable that somebody who seems less vulnerable to them gets treated worse.

JC: Yeah, definitely.

Lorrie: Harry says, "So that's why Snape doesn't like you, because he thought you were in on the joke?" Yeah. Nobody told Snape otherwise. And then we get a classic Snape moment, the way he horrifies you by showing up exactly where you don't want him to be: "'That's right,' sneered a cold voice." Oh, Snape's appearances are perfect and horrible. He's wearing the invisibility cloak; it works for him, too. How long has he been standing there?

JC: Since that door opened.

Lorrie: So even before you're done with this chapter, this chapter directs you to go back and start over from the beginning. Reread from a new perspective. From the very moment that the chapter ends for every character, that's amazing. You've got to go back. 'Wait, wait. What?' What does Snape know? What does he not know? What part was he here for? He has now heard how they talk about him when he's not there, and the kids know how that feels for Snape because that's exactly what they were doing on purpose the year before, when they took Polyjuice and went into the Slytherin common room. He has now heard... Once we, the reader, go back and reread -- because oh, my God, Snape is under the cloak! -- now, we realize he has heard about the illegal and untrustworthy things the Marauders did while Dumbledore was making accommodations for a werewolf to attend school safely. That brings us back to the moment when Snape is angry at Harry for sneaking into Hogsmeade. "So, everyone from the Minister of Magic downward has been trying to keep famous Harry Potter safe from Sirius Black. But famous Harry Potter is a law unto himself. Let the ordinary people worry about his safety! Famous Harry Potter goes where he wants to, with no thought for the consequences." Okay, he built the Shrieking Shack for Lupin, he ordered a Whomping Willow from some catalog and had it planted there. That's totally a safety violation that could kill a student. Got that tunnel dug, got all the staff into it; Madam Pomfrey walked him into the Shrieking Shack once a month. "Let the ordinary people worry" about Remus Lupin's transformations. He's just going to transform and run out of there and run around Hogsmeade, oh, my God, as a werewolf. That speech from Snape was the chapter where Snape finds the Marauder's Map and summons Lupin in the fireplace, and Lupin covers for Harry and confiscates the map. Did Snape look like the unreasonable one then, and does he now? Holy...

JC: Yeah, that whole chapter was a lot of fun looking back on. We talked about at the time that there were so many levels of conversations happening in that chapter, and that Snape and Lupin were having a very different conversation than anybody else in the room was aware of, and it's so interesting.

Lorrie: Yeah. Snape has now heard that what Lupin was doing at the time when they were students was so much worse than Snape even thought at the time, and Snape had a low opinion of it at the time. Snape had just heard Lupin confess that Lupin withheld from Dumbledore that he knew a way Sirius could have been entering the castle, and Lupin knows that Sirius still thinks Snape deserved to die.

JC: Yep.

Lorrie: And is being friendly with him, knowing that.

JC: He also did not come in during the discussion of Peter Pettigrew.

Lorrie: Right. He has no idea, so Snape still thinks that Sirius is the mass murderer and that Lupin still thinks so. Just imagining how much "I told you so, Dumbledore" must be coursing through Snape's body right now... it is overwhelming. He has been trying to tell Dumbledore, "I told you, I told you." Lupin abused trust as a student. Fact. He hasn't been forthcoming as an adult protecting Harry against Sirius, either. Fact. Snape is there under the cloak, bursting with it all, and does not know that it was Wormtail and not Sirius who betrayed Lily and James and killed all the Muggles; does not know that Wormtail is still alive, let alone present. But what Snape *is* back in the Shrieking Shack, where Sirius intended him to die or be turned into a werewolf as a student. He's back there. He now knows that James and Lupin were not in on the prank to kill him, but he still thinks Sirius is a murderer and that Lupin is friends with him anyway. By this point in this story, Lupin has had the moment where he tells his story, and boy, was it very deep. He has faced himself, he's brought a lot of it out; he has been introspective, he has come clean. We, the kids, Sirius, and Scabbers have heard all of it; Snape has not heard all of it. That's where we are.

JC: Yep, and that was a really short chapter that we just spent an hour and a half talking about. It's what, eight pages? It's the shortest chapter in this entire book. That's so funny.

Lorrie: Yeah. Meanwhile, Sirius is like, "Hurry up, Remus, hurry up. I want to do what I came here to do."

JC: Actually, it's six pages. It's not even eight. At least in my book, it's six pages, which is like, wow. A lot happened in those six pages.

Lorrie: And I was watching myself on this reread to think, 'Was I too harsh on Lupin?' But I have the same response I always have. 'You told yourself *what?* You didn't tell Dumbledore because of *what?* You let *what* happen because you didn't want to admit something you did as a teenager? What did you think you were going to be doing instead?'

JC: I think, in a lot of ways, Lupin being back in Hogwarts has regressed, right? He's back in that same environment again and subject to a lot of the same shame, and I think that's part of what's going on with him in this story.

Lorrie: All of them.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Sirius never was allowed to progress. Snape was never particularly mature and has regressed. Lupin, in many ways, is the most grown-up of the three of them.

JC: Hermione's still the most mature person in the room.

Lorrie: They're all scared of Hermione. Well, Sirius isn't, but...

JC: He just doesn't know her yet. Give him time.

Lorrie: Well, also her cat loves him.

JC: True.

Lorrie: Sirius has bigger problems.

JC: Yeah, Sirius is... Yeah. Sirius has bigger problems, that's for sure.

Lorrie: But these three adults have been through so much. It's surpassingly pathetic. Every time I think about Sirius and how his life was kept at twenty-one and wasted like that, it's so painful to think about.

JC: Honestly, every adult in that room has a trauma.

Lorrie: Yep.

JC: Incredibly traumatic story. Wormtail has lived as a rat for twelve years. Good Lord. All four of those people are messed up.

Lorrie: Yeah, and doesn't seem to be sorry that he has shed so much blood. If he has any regrets about having turned in James and Lily, we never hear about it.

JC: The next chapter is called The Servant of Lord Voldemort, so I think that we'll be getting some more of that story.

Lorrie: Yeah, yeah. There's so much story and so many perspectives that each person has to get their own chapter. There's so much going on.

JC: And we're getting close to the end of the book. Oh, my gosh.

Lorrie: There's so much still left.

JC: We haven't even gotten to the Time-Turner chapter yet. Oh, my God.

Lorrie: No, we still don't know how Hermione's been getting to all her classes.

JC: Oh, my gosh. Oh, my gosh. Yeah. I'm looking ahead. We have The Dementor's Kiss after that, and then we have Hermione's Secret, so we're still a couple of chapters away. Wow.

Lorrie: Yeah. There's a lot going on.

JC: There's so much left that has to happen, so yikes.

Lorrie: Yeah. Hopefully Ron will get some medical attention on that leg pretty soon.

JC: Oh, poor Ron. Oh, yeah. There's one moment when, I think, Sirius falls on his broken leg.

Lorrie: Ouch!

JC: Oh, my God. Oh, this poor kid, and it's a bad break, too, the way it's described.

Lorrie: It's bad.

JC: It's not a fracture.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: You'd have to have surgery and metal put in your leg in the Muggle world. You'd be off of it for six months. Yeah.

Lorrie: I never realized, until you pointed it out in the previous episode, that Ron's broken leg is written so that it's not necessarily Sirius that did it. I always assumed that Ron held on with his leg and that Sirius yanked so that it broke, but no, there's absolutely nothing to say that it couldn't have been a branch of the Whomping Willow that did it.

JC: It's unclear. Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Very interesting. Yeah, okay. Ron's got a little ways to go before he's going to be... Ugh, poor guy.

Lorrie: Yeah, and Scabbers has been squeaking this whole chapter.

JC: I don't know how Ron has managed to hold on to this rat. Have you ever tried to hold on to a rat that really wanted to get away from you?

Lorrie: No.

JC: Or any kind of a rodent? Oh, my God. They go boneless on you. They can get through any...

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: You can't hold on to a mouse that does not want to be held.

Lorrie: Right. Right.

JC: You can't hold on to a cat that doesn't want to be held. It's worse.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Even though they don't have knives on their feet, it's just they're tiny and they're... Ugh, so I just don't know. I'm suspending my disbelief here that Ron is able to hold on to this rat, because oh, my gosh. Or maybe Scabbers calmed down because Peter really wanted to hear the story. I don't know.

Lorrie: Ooh! If I were Peter... Yeah. Despite myself, I would want to hear.

JC: And now, I'm curious: is Peter excited when he finds out that Snape is in the room, because now he thinks he's going to not get killed by Sirius?

Lorrie: I don't think so. We will talk about Peter's character in the next episode, but I don't...

JC: We'll find out.

Lorrie: I don't think Peter considers himself as someone who attracts allies.

JC: Oh, not as an ally, but more like relief. Oh, he was kind of waiting; at the end of this conversation, he was going to be killed by Sirius, but maybe not now.

Lorrie: Huh.

JC: I don't know.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Well, next time.

Lorrie: Yeah. Well, that was a rewarding chapter, huh?

JC: Definitely! All six pages of it.

Lorrie: All right. Well, I'll talk to you next about The Servant of Lord Voldemort.

JC: Okay!

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