

HARRY POTTER AFTER 2020

with LORRIE KIM and JC

Transcript

Episode 3.2

Book 3, Chapter 2: Aunt Marge's Big Mistake

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 Two: Aunt Marge's Big Mistake.

Lorrie: Chapter Two, Aunt Marge's Big Mistake. Aunt Marge comes to visit. She has always abused Harry, so the Dursleys are nervous about what might happen if she pushes Harry too far. This may be the most intensely fatphobic chapter of the series. It's also full of scapegoating, corporal punishment, eugenics, dehumanization: themes that get darker in the series starting with Book Three. JC, whoa... this chapter.

JC: It was really... oh, man. Coming back and reading this again. I was dreading it, to be honest.

Lorrie: Oh, yeah?

JC: Again, it's been a long time since I read this book. My memory of it was pretty awful, but it was so much worse than I remembered, and I think part of that is being a parent now. Either I wasn't a parent the last time I read this or my baby was a baby at the time. I was dreading seeing the abuse of Harry in this chapter, but it was so much worse than I remembered.

Lorrie: And what were you expecting when you opened it to read, and what were some of the things that were startling that you had forgotten about?

JC: Well, first of all, the title of the chapter itself. I'm scratching my head about 'Aunt Marge's Big Mistake'. What's the big mistake? There's so many awful things that she does in this chapter that it's like, "Which one do we..." Yeah. There's the one that broke through Harry's attempt at keeping himself small and non-responsive, but anyway, yeah. It's a strange chapter title, and I was looking for which one's the big mistake. Everything she does is a terrible, horrible choice for

a human being to make, so there was that. There's the whole fatphobic thing, which honestly faded into the background after a while because there was so much of it.

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: Yeah. Everybody was pig-like and had wobbling chins, and all the awful adjectives used to describe many of the people in this chapter. I think another thing that stood out to me, though, were the family dynamics, and I don't think I noticed that before. What's the relationship between the adults in this room? Petunia reminds me so much of my late mother-in-law in many, many ways: the way her appearance is described, the way her mouth is always pinched, there's lots of things that remind me of her. I also remember my mother-in-law telling me stories about dealing with her in-laws, and how she walked on eggshells around them because she wasn't good enough for their son. She had to do so many things to make up for the fact that she came from a lower-class background than he did, and she bent over backwards to please them and nothing she ever did was good enough for them, and I just thought, 'Oh, man.'

Lorrie: I know.

JC: That made me feel for Petunia in that situation. Wow, what does it take for me to feel sorry for Petunia? Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: There's a lot of dynamics that this brought up that I don't think I thought through the first time I read it a long time ago.

Lorrie: I honestly think that the fatphobia is so horrific in this chapter that it was hard for me to look deeply past it. There were so many shields I had reading through this chapter usually, trying to skim over all of the equation of fat with terrible personality traits. And then when I took a deep look, 'Wow, there's a ton going on here,' and it's sketched so lightly with such deep thought underneath it. Ironically, a lot of the dehumanization that Aunt Marge is critically presented as putting onto Harry, the author is doing to fat characters in the series.

JC: That's interesting.

Lorrie: That whole dynamic is so... yeah. My head whirled. There were so many negative references to body size, to large body size. I think the weirdness of the chapter title, which I hadn't even thought about until you just brought it up: Aunt Marge's Big Mistake, I think that's a joke about what happens to her at the end. I don't think it's about anything she did. I think it's partly grotesque body humor in a certain genre of children's fiction like Roald Dahl, where it's funny to see monstrous revenge happening to unreasonable adults. I think it's... yeah, partly that; partly, maybe it's to show that okay, in the end, Harry did get some of his own back. There's pressure and pressure and pressure on Harry all throughout this chapter, and then it's

like, 'Oh, no, no, Aunt Marge made a big mistake. *Big* mistake.' It sort of is a title that sums it up; I counted, and there were at least 24 references to large body size.

JC: Oof. Yeah.

Lorrie: And that's not even counting things like 'small, piggy eyes' or greed, just body size. Then it's combined with these insinuations about laziness and lack of self-discipline, and facial hair on a woman again.

JC: Yeah, that's the other thing that really stood out to me this time that I don't think stood out to me before: Aunt Marge is not only an awful person because she's so incredibly fat and mean to Harry, but also she looks vaguely man-like and that she looks very much like Uncle Vernon, except she has slightly less of a mustache. I just thought...

Lorrie: Right. Yeah.

JC: Wow.

Lorrie: This torrent of body shaming is relentless, and I very much had the same experience that you described where, after a while, I just managed to tune it out because it was such a wall of shaming. I thought this is where the reader has to employ some sort of strategy for reading.

JC: Not unlike Harry does in this chapter. Yeah.

Lorrie: Obviously, you and I and many millions of people decided that even though the fat shaming is horrendous here, the series is worth sticking with; many people didn't. Many people said, "Okay, I'm noping out right here," or in previous volumes. But if you decide, "You know what? There's enough here, so I'll just put up my shields and go on with it," what strategies do you use as a reader? There's distancing: as we mentioned, part of my strategy was just holding my breath and skimming over those parts. Containment: "Okay, that's the category. This is the kind of body shaming going on." There's refutation, and that's something that fandom has always been really good at with the fat shaming element of this series: with dignity, stating the truth about how bad character and body size don't correlate any more than anything else. This is tired and wrong. I would also like to say one of the distancing and containment strategies I've seen people use is saying, "Oh, well, it was the time. At that time, people wrote that way."

JC: "It was the 90s. It wasn't that long ago."

Lorrie: Noooooo! No, no, no, no, no. In the 90s, people read this and went, "What is wrong? Nobody writes this way."

JC: Yeah, it stood out then. Yeah, for sure.

Lorrie: This is the author; this is not the times. Then there has to be self-affirmation done in the community of fandom going, "This is a thing." Naming that fat shaming is possibly the biggest, most sustained damage from this narrative, clearly without merit. "Okay, this is not unconscious bias."

JC: Right, exactly.

Lorrie: Yeah, and I think the element for me that takes it to that level is because there's a feeling of overriding disgust. There's a rant element, like she can't help herself. I'm not saying that's not part of human nature; get me on stuff that I rant about and I will go off, but you're supposed to edit that out.

JC: For sure.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: So I know better than to do this, but I did it anyway. A month or two ago, I was scrolling through Facebook as you do, and things pop up in your feed. Somehow, some Harry Potter fan group things had popped up in my feed. It was one of those things where someone had made a GIF of a quote from J.K. Rowling, and it was something about her saying that she didn't want her daughter to ever feel ashamed of her body size. It was basically this whole body-positive thing but it was J.K. Rowling saying it, and I just read it and went, 'Oh, hell no.' I went into the comments and no one had mentioned her. This isn't fandom people; this is people on Facebook who like Harry Potter. There's probably some fans in there. I thought, 'I'm going to do the thing you never do and I'm going to make a comment,' so I made a comment and I got a lot of negative reaction that you might expect. A lot of it was the typical fat-shaming responses in response, but a lot of people that replied to me just didn't see it. I thought, 'That's amazing,' because in all the fandom communities I've ever been in, it stands out and people talk about it, and the fact that I was in more of a... I don't want to call it a casual fan community, but maybe that's the best way to describe it.

Lorrie: Mainstream.

JC: Mainstream, yeah. It just didn't register, and I thought 'Oh, wow, that's interesting,' so I walked away and didn't look back. But wow. I don't know how much this registers with more casual mainstream readers of the series than it does with the kind of fandom groups I'm used to being in.

Lorrie: Well, for me on my first reading, that happened to me because it was so clearly part of setting up the Dursleys as a stock horrible family, and it very much reminds me of Roald Dahl-like caricatures of British monstrosity. They were supposed to have certain attitudes, and they were supposed to have no self-awareness and to project, so I skimmed it. "Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay, these are stock characters." Then I was so repulsed by the fat-shaming characterization

that I just skimmed it. My brain muted it, and part of that was because it's so opposite of the values that the series is purporting to teach.

JC: That's a great point. Yeah.

Lorrie: So it didn't cognitively square with what I was reading and yeah, I skimmed over it. My brain muted it in a way that I'm embarrassed about. I'm not anymore, but at the time when people pointed it out to me, I'm like, "Where?" and then they said, "Oh, the Dursley chapters." When you read one of these books and you flip through the part where the Dursleys abuse Harry and you focus on him getting away from it, and then once he gets away, then the adventure starts and you begin your true self, you don't like to linger in the cupboard under the stairs with all the spiders. Yeah.

JC: I think one of the interesting things about the Aunt Marge character, too, though, is that it makes just living with the Dursleys seem a lot better somehow. I think Harry even says that at some point in this chapter.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: It's so awful having Aunt Marge there that Harry wishes he were just at home with the Dursleys. That would have been so great.

Lorrie: I know. Nostalgic for everyday abuse.

JC: Right, just for the everyday abuse.

Lorrie: Well, that brings me to the second thing that I noticed, which was the concept of invisibility as a strategy and as a state. The Dursleys never notice Harry; he walks in and out of a room, they make no acknowledgment. This is, of course, depressing, but it's also safer than being the focus of notice which, as soon as Marge shows up, oh boy, he's not invisible. This happens to Harry a few times, especially in Book Five when Dumbledore won't look at him. But since I have Snape goggles, this very much is relevant to the way Snape lives, where he can't be seen for his true self; if he is, then his game is up. It's a survival strategy, but it's not natural. It's not what the human soul prefers. People prefer to be seen and left alone and appreciated for their true selves, but it is a strategy for survival sometimes, and when you have to adopt that strategy, your powers are curtailed a lot. That's what we see over and over again in this chapter: things that Harry can't do to defend himself because invisibility is his best survival bet at this point.

JC: Yeah. Something that stood out to me reading through this chapter, too, is that everyone seems uncomfortable with Aunt Marge being there. Maybe with the exception of Dudley who gets paid for hugs and kisses, which is wow. Oh, that's a whole other train of thought, but anyway... Petunia is obviously really uncomfortable with Marge there, Vernon is continuously on edge, and the fact that Harry is not allowed to be invisible at this point says something about the

power dynamic between Marge and her brother: whenever Marge comes to visit, whatever she says goes. Even though they're terrified that she's going to find out what Harry really is, they also don't feel like they could just send him away. This is the thing that blows my mind about this chapter. I know that we're telling a story where something awful happened to Marge and that's kind of the point, but stepping back from what's happening in the narrative: the fact that they just let Marge run the show and Harry has to sit there and take tremendous amounts of abuse -- whatever they feel about Harry -- they're all nervous. It's just wild to me, and I know there are people like that; there's a family member that comes and everyone's on eggshells the entire time that they're visiting, but it's just interesting to me that Marge is in that role here, and it just makes me wonder, 'What is the backstory between these two?' Also, there's a few other things that stand out to me about Marge: she's not a parent herself, and we know how J.K.R. feels about mothers. I think everyone who is a parent has had the experience of having the probably well-meaning person who doesn't have children come in and criticize your parenting. That's what it feels like, too. She's criticizing Harry's dead parents, but she doesn't have kids of her own. She has a gazillion dogs that she dog-parents, but she's not a mother. The way she's described in the book, it's not even completely clear that there's anything feminine about her. A lot of her behavior is not stereotypically feminine. There's so many layers here of what's making her seem like an awful person, but it makes me think about what the author thinks about women who are childless by choice. Yeah, it feels like there's a lot of social commentary happening on this level of women who don't get married and have children: here's what an awful monster they can become when they just live with their cats or their dogs or whatever.

Lorrie: Oof. Your comments are making me wonder if the function that Aunt Marge serves for Petunia and Vernon is they are really concerned about looking normal, she's a really good test case. "She's coming anyway, so if we can maintain this facade in front of Aunt Marge, then we're okay. We can maintain it for everybody." This is the big test, because yeah, they could have sent him away. But this is a choice that Vernon is making, because in this case it's Vernon and Petunia hoping to remain invisible. If everybody knows that they have a nephew and then they have to send the nephew away, then they're visible. "Why? What's going on?" No, they would like to remain invisible. They would like it to be, "Yes, of course we have a nephew and he's here. Don't act weird." She's a really good representative of the busybody judgmental attitude that is the voice in a person's head.

JC: Oh, interesting. Uh-huh.

Lorrie: Yeah, when the narrative describes Petunia as the nosiest woman in the world and spent most of her life spying on the boring, law-abiding neighbors, I felt a pang of sadness for her. Oh, wow, she is desperately looking for the secret to being considered normal. What can she find? What guideline does she have for feeling like she can be happy with herself and at peace? She's looking for evidence, and yeah, it's sad.

JC: Again, it's my mother-in-law. She reminds me so much of my mother-in-law in that way. My memory of her is just being that person who would look out the window and look at what... Oh. Yeah, and she'd tell you everything about everybody down the street, at the house across the

street, who they were, that their grandchildren were visiting, their son was this, their daughter, whatever. Go down the line. Petunia in this chapter... I don't know, there was something about this chapter that really pinged Petunia with my mother-in-law somehow. From my perspective -- maybe not from my mother-in-law's perspective, maybe not from Petunia's perspective, but surely from mine -- it seems sad and empty that your whole life is sitting in your kitchen and looking out the window at what the neighbors are doing, and then doting on your child as much as you can because that's the only outlet you have. Yeah. There's something that feels sad about that to me.

Lorrie: Yeah, and she wants to love. She does. She loves her husband, she loves her child, and she wants to know if that's okay. Oof.

JC: I didn't think this chapter would make me feel bad for Petunia, of all people.

Lorrie: It happens, though.

JC: It's so weird. Harry's the one I should feel sorry for, though Harry has some agency, finally, in this chapter.

Lorrie: Oh, my goodness. Yes.

JC: That's the big thing that stood out to me: yeah, he's in the middle of being horribly abused, but he's got a lot of agency around how he's handling it.

Lorrie: He finds it. He finds it, and I think the subterranean sympathy for Petunia is very much at play in how Harry experiences all of this, because even though she and Harry aren't allies, they do have common enemies. I was especially struck by the way she was portrayed as, 'Well, she's not fat; she's thin and pinched.' When they're drinking wine and Aunt Marge is getting very inadvisably sloshed, Petunia makes coffee. We don't hear of anyone else drinking the coffee; Petunia's drinking the coffee with her pinky finger sticking out. It's this pretentious coding. "Look, you think you're superior to me, but I do not relate to you here," and it's making this very subtle point: well, Petunia may not be a source of love for Harry -- she may not serve very much function as kin -- but she is at least a reminder that he used to have kin.

JC: Uh-huh. Yeah, that's true, and it's Petunia's connection to Harry that Vernon is trying so hard, and that's what Marge picks on the entire time. She puts Harry down. She doesn't put Petunia down. She pats her hand at one point and says, "I'm so sorry you have to deal with all this," but the whole thing is about putting Harry down. I think that image, too, of Petunia side-eyeing the dog drinking out of the saucer...

Lorrie: Oh, my God, yes.

JC: And the book even says that Petunia hates dogs, and she would not have a dog in her house.

Lorrie: She winces.

JC: The fact that that's the kind of relative Marge is: she's just going to bring a dog, and only one dog this time. Who knows how many dogs she's brought in the past, but she brought a dog to a house where the dog was not welcome. It's the littlest... ugh!

Lorrie: "The dog will drink tea out of my saucer." "Oh. Oh, will he?!"

JC: Yeah, and probably piss all over the carpet and tear things. Oh, my God. I'm like, why am I feeling sorry for Petunia? Anyway, we should probably get back to Harry.

Lorrie: Well, this might have been Aunt Marge's big mistake: the point when you realize that the Dursleys have a line that they won't cross. When she turns to Petunia -- not to Vernon, not to the both of them, but to Petunia -- and says, "If I were you, I would notify that school and advocate the use of extreme force in this boy's case." You can feel Petunia and Vernon... Vernon hastily changes the subject. They wouldn't do that.

JC: Right. That's true.

Lorrie: I didn't know what they wouldn't do, where Harry was concerned. They wouldn't do that.

JC: That's interesting, yeah.

Lorrie: And this is coming after... There's this theme of capital punishment that runs through this chapter. They think it's capital punishment that they want, but it's actually genocide.

JC: Right.

Lorrie: Because when the Muggle news mentions Sirius Black, and without knowing anything about Sirius except that he looks like an inmate, Vernon says "hanging's the only way to deal with these people." You don't know anything about him; should he turn out to be innocent, you won't really care. For Aunt Marge to be recommending to Petunia, "I recommend that they physically hurt this child extra," that combines with the dehumanization theme where Aunt Marge, at one point, not only physically hits Harry when she visits and set her dog on him -- which is a hunting injury and possibly killing thing to do -- but she gives him dog biscuits. That is deliberate dehumanization that people do on purpose to justify genocide. The weird, psycho, uncomfortable thing about this is that the chapter is doing the same thing constantly referring to Dudley as a pig.

JC: That's true.

Lorrie: Okay, so we shouldn't give Harry dog biscuits, but it's okay to make fun of Dudley for having a fourth serving of pie. Okay.

JC: Or the fact that we gave him a pig tail a few books ago that he had to have surgically removed.

Lorrie: And the word 'porky' gets used in this chapter.

JC: Oh, my God, the 'porky' and the 'piggy'. Yeah.

Lorrie: Oh, my God. This is a hard chapter to take in as a reader. It's throwing a lot at you.

JC: Definitely. There was this really interesting sentence at the beginning where it said Harry had been forced to call Aunt Marge 'aunt' even though she's not a blood relative. I had to stop and puzzle over that for a while. I can understand that he doesn't want to call her Aunt Marge because she's such an awful person and use any kind of familiar form of titling.

Lorrie: "She's not my aunt."

JC: Yeah, but I don't know. It really struck me as strange. Like a lot of people, I grew up in a culture where if there was an adult that was really close to your parents (whether they were a cousin or a really good friend) you just called them 'aunt' or 'uncle'. That's what you call them. An adult of your parent's generation who is close enough to be family was called 'aunt' or 'uncle' regardless, and still to this day, I call people 'uncle' when they're actually a fourth cousin or something. That struck me as odd, and I thought, is that not a British thing? Yeah, she's technically not Harry's aunt, but I don't know. That stood out to me.

Lorrie: No. I think that, to me, goes to the weird, uncomfortable position that adoptees are in where blood relation in so many ways doesn't mean anything. It's who loves you and who takes care of you that's important, and there's the conflict all the time with knowing that you're curious, desperately craving more knowledge about your blood relations while knowing that this says nothing about the emotional bond between you and them, which could be anything. But no matter what it is, it's guaranteed to be intense and probably painful, and so easy to mythologize as something ideal that can be terribly disillusioning when you find out some reality behind it. Blood relation, does that make anything better or more real? No, but you can't turn off the wondering either. You can't pretend that it's not a major craving in human nature to know more about this. It's so complicated that maybe most of the time you just leave that whole mess alone, but it does come up once in a while. You look at a particularly horrible person who's being presented as someone you should be grateful to, and you're thinking, 'You're not my real aunt.' I think it's showing that it's one of the things that Harry has to deal with that's so much more complicated and insulting and horrendous. How can he settle this? His parents are dead. There's so many accusations and so much being flung at Harry in this chapter that he cannot refute, even though he feels that these things can't be true. But how can he refute them? He didn't know his parents.

JC: Okay, this brings me around to another big question that I had about this chapter: why does Marge hate Harry so much? At this point, she's barely seen him. She comes to visit once a year, it sounds. Maybe they see her at holidays, I don't know. Why does she hate Harry? Why did she look at this kid when he was two and decide, "This kid is to be ground beneath my heel every time I see him for the rest of his life?" Are there any hints about that in here, or is she just a horrible person who just hates everyone? I don't know. She's like, "He's not a blood relative." I don't know.

Lorrie: Well, there's the ingratitude. Why is there a human fantasy of capital punishment for everybody who deserves it? What makes you feel better about wishing death on someone? Does some security get reinstalled when you feel like, "Okay, that threat has been eliminated, order has been restored, I feel better now"? There's this whole narrative that's dying to come into play, even though nobody really has the truth of it. What did James Potter do for a living? She's dying for the narrative to be that he was on welfare or something, and Harry yells, "No, he wasn't." How does Harry know? Nobody knows. This narrative is waiting to take over, is threatening to take over, regardless of any connection to the truth. Meanwhile, Vernon and Petunia know more of the truth, which is, "No, he did have a function and we don't talk about that." There's all of these narratives swirling around, some of them having more power than others to stick, and this is the unfairness. Probably the closest thing to Aunt Marge's Big Mistake is that she can abuse Harry in so many ways, but when she presses him on the fact that he doesn't even have his own story to fight back with, that's the thing that will always set Harry snapping. Keep his letters from him, he will snap. Insult the story that he doesn't have, insult him because he doesn't have them and abuse that and rewrite his story at will? No, that's intolerable to him. The one clue I see is Marge has gotten progressively drunker, and then when she says about James and Lily -- they died "in a car crash (drunk, I expect)," and that's in parentheses -- I'm like, okay, that's the closest thing I see to a clue: this has to do with projection. There is a function of projecting everything you're anxious about yourself and hate about yourself and finding scapegoats, 'scapegoating' meaning taking a completely innocent other being and loading it up with all your projections and then sending your negative concerns about yourself away in them. Or, as Harry says, he's not being sent away; Aunt Marge wants him right there so she can just load him up with more and more and more of whatever she dislikes or feels uneasy about.

JC: It's interesting. There are a couple moments when even Vernon is trying so hard to change the subject out of fear of what Harry -- of what might happen. But also, he just seems genuinely uncomfortable with it. You were talking earlier about what's the line, and it's interesting to realize that yeah, everyone in the room is uncomfortable. The idea of being in a room and watching one person have to take this kind of abuse and not choosing to do anything about it, or maybe feeling you can't do anything about it or whatever.

Lorrie: Constrained.

JC: Yeah. Ugh. Everybody in this room, with the exception of Marge, knows that this is wrong, but doesn't feel like they can say anything or do anything about it.

Lorrie: They would do something about it if they didn't feel constrained, which makes me laugh so much when Marge obviously should be cut off from more alcohol, but there's a point at which Vernon is so desperate to change the subject that he empties the entire brandy bottle into her glass.

JC: That's going to end well.

Lorrie: Oh, he's desperate.

JC: And that's the other image: all through this, Dudley watching television, and it's a very 90s kid way of dissociating from all the bullshit that's happening around you. It's mocked in the series a bit -- Dudley being addicted to television -- but in the same way that kids look at their phones now. It is a way to distract yourself.

Lorrie: "I'm checking out."

JC: You're checking out. Distract yourself from the horribleness around you that you can do nothing about. It's not directed at you, so just check out. Dudley is checked out this whole time.

Lorrie: It's like, 'What is going on here?' Because earlier in the chapter, we see that Dudley's favorite entertainment is watching Vernon bully Harry. It's even noted that Dudley stops watching TV to get off on this. Oh, and when Dudley remembers the time that Ripper the Bulldog treed Harry and that Aunt Marge didn't call him off until midnight, it says that Dudley gets "tears of laughter" when he remembers Harry being treed. That continues the Schadenfreude theme that we had from Chamber of Secrets, where it is a total human thing to really enjoy the misfortune of people you dislike, but this is a volume that will take it so much deeper, how pervasive and harmful it can be and how it doesn't spare anybody. The same person can be the victim of it and can do it to someone else at the same time, as the author is doing with body shaming. It really hit me this time on this read. "As Marge doesn't know anything about your abnormality, I don't want any -- any funny stuff while she's here. You behave yourself, got me?" That hit me so hard as what neurodivergent kids hear about needing to mask: the equation of ways that they are and things that they can't help because that's who they are -- equations of that with deliberate bad behavior -- and the obviously, demonstrably false, oft repeated belief that the solution is to beat it out of people. That has never worked.

JC: That you should be able to control yourself.

Lorrie: Yeah. And that when they don't...

JC: Yeah. "We're normally really patient with you and we let you be weird, but we know that if you really want to, you can control it. If you don't, we're going to beat it out of you, and then maybe you'll..." Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah. "Look how good we've been every time we didn't beat you, but this is what we really think of it."

JC: Right.

Lorrie: Of course, with Harry they'd never actually pretended that they didn't want to beat it out of him.

JC: Sure. For sure.

Lorrie: They're trying to get it out of him, one way or another, but Marge is coming, so now it's really, really important. This was a pretty harsh thing to read, because I remember when my little one was very small and I didn't know how to parent somebody with ADHD. I tried to be understanding and I tried to accept, okay, there are some items that this child will always lose and I don't want her to go without them, like mittens when it's freezing out.

JC: Water bottles.

Lorrie: Really special toys that were coveted and maybe not so cheap. And the assumption that, 'Oh, well, once they lose it, let that be a lesson. Then they'll try harder next time.'

JC: Oh, yeah, no.

Lorrie: I tried to get away from that because no, that's obviously not fair. It's mean to anybody who's just lost something to say, "Well, see?" That's...

JC: It's very Schadenfreude.

Lorrie: That doesn't help anybody. But I do remember sometimes saying, "Okay, I got you this one, but this time be super extra careful, okay?" And the poor kid, what can they do except just miserably say, "I promise, I promise," and then they lose it again. I fell right into that, thinking that undoing anything I tried to do about trying to understand this by revealing that what I thought every time the kid lost something was, "Oh, they weren't being careful." No matter how much I tried to pretend like I understand, "Okay. No. This is just a different mindframe," no, I revealed it. Yeah. I tried. I hopefully do less poorly on that now, but it does sound like that.

JC: It's hard, yeah. It's really hard to unpack it, for sure.

Lorrie: And okay, the funny stuff that's not voluntary, that's just because such things exist. Behaving is not the issue, and beating people for it doesn't cure anything, but it does traumatize people. Oi.

JC: I do like the fact that Harry basically tried to bribe Uncle Vernon to sign the permission form. He knows it's going to be hell for him no matter what. "If you want me to act a certain way, then

you're going to sign my form." That's ballsy, really. The fact that Harry is, after being at Hogwarts for a couple of years, coming into some sense of, "Oh, I am capable." Look what he did last year. Jeez! "Yeah, I'm capable, and I have to come here and I have to live with these people, but I don't have to put up with this bullshit." That is one thing, one of the positive notes of this whole chapter for me: Harry has a lot more agency than he has in the past. At the end, he's like, "Fuck it. I'm out of here."

Lorrie: Yeah. Yeah.

JC: Almost literally.

Lorrie: But it's bribing and it's coercion. No, it's blackmail? Coercion?

JC: I'm not sure what the word.... Yeah. We're making a deal or something.

Lorrie: Yeah. It's definitely a threat. Yeah. One thing I love about when Harry is starting to negotiate the terms is when he mispronounces St. Brutus's Secure Center for Incurably Criminal Boys on purpose. He calls it St. Whatsit on purpose to remind Uncle Vernon, "Look, I'm going to slip." He's pushing it. Because Vernon does that; he refuses to give proper names for Wizarding things, like 'Voldything' or 'dementoids'. It's a way of retaining power, yeah. But the threat about saying, "You have to claim that you go to St. Brutus's Secure Center for Incurably Criminal Boys," that's another Snape thing. This is one of the hardest things for human nature when you have to accept that others think ill of you when you are innocent, but there's some reason that you can't defend yourself, there's some constraint. Sirius... we find out in this chapter that defines his life. He can't care. He cannot afford to care that people think this of him. He has to survive and he has vengeance on his mind. He can't care about this; it's too costly. But for Snape, it's more long-standing and it's more compromised. Everybody thinks that Snape is too evil for the Defense Against the Dark Arts position, and he's not. But because of his game, he can't defend himself, and unlike Sirius, he really was at some point guilty. That polluted self-blame just complicates the issue, so it's really stressful for people to not be able to say either, "No, I'm not evil," or, "I was, but I can change. I have changed. Please believe me." That's part of what ends up making Snape somebody who is brave, even if you don't like him. It takes a lot of strength to endure that, especially when you know that there's some way in which you have nobody but yourself to blame. That's costly. And then when Harry's negotiating with Vernon, he says, "Knocking the stuffing out of me won't make Aunt Marge forget what I could tell her."

JC: That's a power move right there.

Lorrie: It's a power move and it's also a powerless one, because Vernon has run out of threats. He can beat Harry, he could kill Harry, and Harry just has nothing more to lose. He's like, "You can kill me," but that's also the tone of freedom fighters, people who think, 'You know what? In our struggle, there are fatalities. I might not live to see the future that I'm fighting for, but because hopefully other people will, I'm going to keep fighting.' It's depressing, and this is one of those things where you realize no, there really are children who are in this position where they

say, "Go ahead, do your worst. You've already done your worst to me. You can beat me, but you can't control the truth. You can't control people's thoughts. You don't have any leverage over me. I'm not afraid to die. I'm not afraid of your beatings." Oh, and then what? Then what do you do as a tyrant when you're faced with that? Oof.

JC: From here on out, you're only going to be harming yourself.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: "I'm willing to sacrifice myself now. You're only harming yourself from here on out." Yeah.

Lorrie: And that's one of the things that makes Harry different from other children, because a person isn't supposed to be broken this hard.

JC: Yeah. Imagine Draco Malfoy has never had to think these words. He's never been in this position. Neither has Ron or Hermione.

Lorrie: Hermione does. I would argue that Hermione has reached this position, because she was almost killed the previous year for being a Muggle-born.

JC: Okay, that's true. Yeah, yeah.

Lorrie: And she had months in the hospital wing: first, because her attempt to fight back against that went wrong since she's only a kid, and then second, because she was Petrified. She wasn't thinking then, but she had a long time to mull over what status she has and who can protect her and who ought to be protecting her, but is scrambling. The forces of good are not ahead. We've seen Hermione cross over, and then in Book Six we're going to watch Draco cross over to being this broken and having nothing to lose. And then in Book Seven, we'll watch Ron cross over, and the age at which this happens to you in childhood is a marker of privilege. Oi.

JC: Yeah, for sure.

Lorrie: But oh, there is something utterly beautiful. Harry's life is better now. He gets to send Hedwig to shelter with Ron and Errol.

JC: Yes.

Lorrie: Oh, he has allies and this can help him protect his dependents, and that is definitely a step-up in maturity. We'll see through the series that being responsible for less powerful beings under your control -- and then accepting that this means that sometimes you can't protect them -- that's what changes children into adults. But yeah, this time he gets to do it.

JC: Yeah. The fact that he sent a note with Hedwig, too -- and it doesn't say in the text what the note contains, so it leaves it to our imagination -- but he's obviously sending Hedwig off for a

reason, and with Ron he's probably going to be honest what the reason is, so someone else knows and cares. That's big.

Lorrie: Yeah, and they'll know what he's talking about. If all he said was, "Take care of my owl, not safe here, Muggles," that's all he needs to say. Just from a craft background, I do love that with the tiniest of strokes, we get such a strong picture of Aunt Marge's life: she's got this friend named Colonel Fubster.

JC: What the heck is with Colonel... I thought Colonel Fubster was another dog for a little while. I was like, 'Who is this? Who is Colonel Fubster?'

Lorrie: I know, it's hard to tell. And we also know that she has this friend named Yvonne who, in the beginning of Sorcerer's Stone, was on vacation in Majorca.

JC: Oh, this is the one who ate a bad whelk or something?

Lorrie: Oh, my goodness.

JC: Or was it Marge that ate the bad whelk?

Lorrie: I think it's Marge that ate a funny whelk. They live with dogs and they look down on certain kinds of people. It's so economical; with just a few words and a name and an observation that he's retired, we get such a strong picture of this bit character's life. I'm impressed. Oh, and then there's the conflict that gets explored over and over again not only in this series, but also in the charity that Rowling has set up with her fortune, Lumos -- which is bent on getting orphans or -- sometimes they're not orphans -- children out of large institutions and into, if not their relatives' homes, at least smaller places with more human contact. There's the line: "Harry was bursting to say that he'd rather live in an orphanage than with the Dursleys," because Aunt Marge is saying how good Vernon and Petunia are that they took him in, and if it were her she would have sent him off to an orphanage, and that is something that kids in abuse situations might think. "Well, I don't know what an orphanage is, but it can't be worse than this." Later on in Book Six, in Half-Blood Prince, then we get a closer look at what challenges kids and orphanages face, and this is the argument that so many fans, so many readers, have with Dumbledore and can't forgive him. "How could you put Harry in this abusive home, knowing what kind of people the Dursleys are?" Well, actually, as horrible and unthinkable as this may seem, being in a small home where you do get reminders that you had kin, it does give you something that would have been even harder in a large institution. This is, yeah, pretty stark.

JC: The image of Harry reciting the Broomcare book to himself as a mantra to keep himself focused on getting through it or to protect himself, to distract himself -- whatever, however he might describe it -- that is really interesting to me. That idea of, 'There's nothing I can do but take it, and I'm just going to sit here and recite this book,' and he keeps doing that. It's interesting as a strategy that he's developed, and clearly it's one he's used before, maybe even with Aunt Marge. But that idea that it gets to the point where he can't ignore it anymore.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: It gets so bad that even that doesn't work, and that's the only strategy he had left to keep himself calm. But God, he put up with a lot.

Lorrie: Oh, my goodness. The thing that stood out to me was that it reminds me of when people say, "Here's a strategy to get through something difficult; promise yourself a reward later." This strategy has never worked for me. Deferred gratification: eh, not so much because it might not come, but mainly because going for what you want -- gratifying yourself -- is not necessarily the biggest motivation. It doesn't necessarily have the biggest payoff. We will find Harry learning more powerful strategies, one of them later in this book with Lupin when casting a Patronus, where Lupin trains him on which kinds of thoughts do better for this kind of mental protection and which don't. When it's just like, "I like brooms, I have a friend who cares about me and sent me a broom book, I get to spend more time with brooms," that will get you so far, but not as far as the kind of memories that Harry learns to use with Lupin.

JC: Ooh, this is a great point. I had not thought of that. But yeah, this is setting us up for him later learning a better way to deal with it.

Lorrie: And the kind of memories that make it easier to produce a Patronus are memories of the strength you got when you had an emotional connection with a loved one. He thinks about Ron and Hermione and he gets the Patronus, so that is more a lasting source of internal strength than rewarding yourself.

JC: So in that way, Marge is a preview of the Dementors.

Lorrie: Oh, yeah.

JC: It's this person that is going to make you feel horrible and awful, and sucks every bit of happiness out of you.

Lorrie: Oh, my God.

JC: Ooh, I hadn't made that connection before.

Lorrie: That's so true, because the Dementors feed on your happiness. You can't look happy in front of Marge; it'll just get her going. She wants you to be miserable, and certainly Marge would probably be one of those memories that Dementors bring back for Harry.

JC: Yeah, for sure.

Lorrie: She's really the embodiment of the negative voice in your head.

JC: Yeah. What's the one thing... she asked him a question, he said yes, and she says, "Don't say yes in that ungrateful tone!" What?! We can talk about tone policing and all that, too, but also it's such a clear signal that there's nothing he can do. There's nothing he can do.

Lorrie: There's a very, very tiny path he can tread that will be the least damaging.

JC: Yeah, but there's always going to be damage.

Lorrie: Everything he does will be damaging; doing nothing will also be damaging, but yeah, he has to learn these things. The other lesson that Harry learns about how to do something more powerful than think about deferred rewards comes with Occlumency, which Snape tries to teach him in Book Five, but because Voldemort is watching everything, can't. What eventually turns out to be: we later see Harry learn it on his own in Book Seven, and then in Cursed Child we see Snape explaining it to Draco's child. It's thinking about somebody you love. When you have love -- or in Harry's case grief, where Dobby is concerned -- when you have this connection to somebody that you're in a position of protection over, that is more powerful than anything; that's even more powerful than a Patronus when you think about somebody you want to protect. When Harry and Snape have their first Occlumency lesson, the very first bit of Occlumency that Harry successfully produces is when he feels Snape invading his memory of kissing Cho, and he goes, "No! No, no, that's mine. I don't want you looking at Cho." He manages to eject Snape and Snape is impressed. That's another way that you move from being a child to an adult: to have the experience of having people under your protection that you love, and if something bad happens to them under your protection, then you accept that you're going to be full of incurable grief. That's where we get this connection to the series' theme about the power of a mother's love, which does not have to be a mother; Harry was not Dobby's mother, but it's a protective love for people under your power. So at this point, Harry, having turned thirteen the previous week...

JC: A day, yeah. Oh, yeah, because Marge was there for a week by the time we get to the finale.

Lorrie: He's becoming more powerful. He has just been able to send Hedwig away for her own protection, so he's getting there, but really, how much can you ask of an abused 13-year-old? He's starting, and yeah, you hit on a couple points that were so resonant to me. When Marge is scapegoating him and saying, "A good thrashing is what's needed in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred," and Petunia yells at Harry to do something with his hair, which is impossible, Harry thought earlier that there was no point in making his hair lie flat. "Aunt Marge loved criticizing him, so the untidier he looked, the happier she would be." Very Dementor-like. When you have a scapegoating happening, there's no pleasing a scapegoater. It's not that they want you to improve. They don't want you to change; they want you to stay there so they can scapegoat you. They want to punish you for their own discomforts that they're projecting onto you. This is a dynamic that we see currently in the news with anti-trans initiatives or abortion restrictions. It's not that there's some way to get care as a trans person or to have an abortion that would please these people. They're setting up roadblocks on purpose because the point is if you die trying to

fulfill these roadblocks, they don't actually care. They don't mind; in fact, they might prefer that, and that's the leap that is really difficult for people to make when fighting these initiatives. "What do they want, all of us to die?" Well, scapegoaters do not want their enemies accommodated; they want their enemies eliminated. Do what you've got to do, because it's your human right to defend yourself. And then when you mentioned tone policing, whoo. I'm going to go on a tangent now.

JC: Ooh, yeah, please do.

Lorrie: This reminded me of this unforgettable moment on Project Runway, which I love. This was an episode from 2021 about tone policing: there was a team challenge and a white man and a Black man were on a team challenge together, and they were arguing. They were both really stressed; the white man -- who, to be fair, was going through trauma of his own at the time, unrelated -- he really lost it. He started shouting and cursing at the Black man and insulting him a lot, who was, of course, very angry, but he repeatedly refused to engage even though it was incredibly unfair and really out of control. Kept not engaging, not engaging, and he looked very grim about it. He did not look like he was accepting it; he looked like, 'No, I know what's happening. No way am I going to let this happen.' Then the next day, the Black designer gave this explanation to his teammate that blew me away with how succinct it was and how generous, although not friendly. He said, "White men always get the chance to react first, think later. Black men don't get to do that. If you react, you're looked at as a bad guy, so what I'm telling you is, 'think first, and then process.'" And I was so in awe, because if I had been in the moment like that, my heart would have been pounding. I don't know how he got the strength to be that succinct and true, but he really was pointing out: the white man did not think there that their argument was about race because he didn't *have* to. He didn't have to be aware of that. That episode, when it was airing, one of the models who's Black did a little tweet about, "Oh, boy, this is the episode"; the Black designer, all he wrote back was, "Chiiiiiiiile..." with eight i's. I responded back and I said, "I have to thank you for the incredible strength you showed," and he said, "You are surely welcome," but that was astonishing. All you can do is know which traps not to fall into. The fact that this person was conscious enough to name the trap's power...

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Anyway, I had forgotten that, but reading Aunt Marge getting Harry to admit how badly he gets punished at Saint Brutus's and then saying, "I still don't like your tone, boy." Oh, that brought me back.

JC: Yeah, yeah.

Lorrie: There's an exact type of subdued and deferential that you have to be and hold your breath. Yeah, anyway, that episode from 2021 showed somebody not being subdued or deferential.

JC: Yeah, it's making me, in my head, think through times that I've been in a room where I saw that happening. In my experience, because I'm in academia, it's mostly between men and women; it's harder to tease out race, though there's a couple incidents where I think that was happening, too, but that same inherent power dynamic that Harry is experiencing here, of knowing that there's nothing I can do or say in this moment that's going to help me get out of the situation.

Lorrie: It's only going to get worse.

JC: It's only going to get worse. Yeah, I just need to keep my head down and take it.

Lorrie: We're going to not engage. Yeah, that lesson of pointing it out, wow. Powerful. So yeah, the sentence, "Aunt Marge... wanted Harry under her eye at all times, so that she could boom out suggestions for his improvement." That goes back to the theme of invisibility. He can't be invisible with her, but that also shows -- with the rise of anti-trans legislation or any other kind of oppressive legislation -- when you work to become more visible, backlash might come. It's not what anyone would choose, but just know that that might happen. Then Marge escalates, and she says, "If there's something rotten on the inside, there's nothing anyone can do about it," meaning Harry came from bad stock. She's insulting Petunia, which also reminds me of how Snape must have felt with the Death Eaters all the time when they're making fun of wizards who don't come from wealthy backgrounds, and him just saying, "I know you know where I came from." But it also reminded me of fandom debates where fans dismiss a person or a character as "garbage." I know that's coming from a place of trying to defend the self against an onslaught of abuse, like when people say that about Rowling, but it's dehumanizing to dismiss an entire being as garbage. Even if you don't care about dehumanizing the other, it creates an internal atmosphere of dehumanization that makes that possible, which is never safe.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: And this is the opposite of Dumbledore's strength. Dumbledore believes that even somebody like Snape or Draco -- who have gone over, who have committed crimes, who've committed evil -- even somebody like that can still be appealed to. Even if they really genuinely have something rotten on the inside, it's still possible to do something about it if you consider that person to have human worth, if you don't think that a person is garbage. I know there are people who don't believe that and I do respect that there are reasons why somebody can get to that point, but I do think this is a strength to keep believing that even if there is something rotten on the inside, there is still something you can do about it because a person isn't garbage.

JC: Yeah. It's like the classic Anne Frank quote that there's always something there. It also is making me think about, in fandom circles, the way that people often are punished by the group and treated, dehumanized. It's absolutely very dehumanizing.

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: Yeah. You and I both know people that that's happened to in really horrific ways, and it's very much Aunt Marge's perspective of, "Oh, they were a garbage human all along. They're not worth anything. Goodbye."

Lorrie: Yeah. And I think as humans who have this urge -- which is, I think, a not uncommon human urge -- be wary of the appetite, that bloodthirsty appetite, that feels good when you get to go after somebody and scapegoat them. There's a hunting surge of satisfaction. I would be careful. That's not going to turn out to be safe, I don't think. Oi. So yeah, there's Marge pushing all of Harry's buttons, and Harry thinks he's still an underage wizard; he was forbidden by Wizard law to do magic outside school. That's going to turn out to be a theme of this volume. What do you do when it's not legal for you to have or protect your own basic human rights? 'Law-abiding' does not necessarily mean 'right'. We're going to find that out.

JC: And we see that in Book Five, too. The beginning of that one, for sure.

Lorrie: And in daily life, as people say, "No, just because it's law doesn't make it right; slavery was completely legal." Then with Marge saying that Harry looks like a runt and that she had Colonel Fubster drown a runt last year, we have arrived at eugenics. Yeah. Not subtle.

JC: Just when you think it can't get any worse...

Lorrie: Yeah, no. She's giving him dog biscuits, she's bringing up drowning runts. If that's what endgame seems to be pointing toward, it's not hyperbole to conclude that that's what people are trying to do to you. That is in fact what they're trying to do to you. That is what they're getting at. Harry yells that his parents did not die in a car crash, which is very dangerous because that is not a safe thing to say around the Dursleys, who've been depending on this cover story. Okay, Harry's reached his limit. Then when he throws his tantrum and he blows up Marge, and he storms upstairs to get his stuff to leave, "The cupboard door burst magically open as he reached it." That's when I realized, oh, this is the foundation of the Obscurial storyline in the *Fantastic Beasts* movies. In this case, even though Harry has been suppressed his whole life living with the Dursleys, being told "hide your magic," they didn't deny that he was magical. They knew that's what he was; they just wanted him to lie about it. But in this intense week with Aunt Marge, it just got so very much worse, and in the *Fantastic Beasts* movies we find that there is a phenomenon within Pottermore where if a child's magic is suppressed brutally and totally, then they may develop an Obscurus. It's like a splitting of the self; when they enter that state, the Obscurus leaves them and becomes all destructive and can create immense immeasurable danger. Oh, yeah. To get to the state of having an Obscurus, it requires even worse pressure than Harry's been under. But this week with Marge... that shows you what it looks like.

JC: That's so interesting. Obviously, the first time I read this, the *Fantastic Beasts* storyline didn't exist, but it's really cool to see that connection. That's really interesting.

Lorrie: Yeah. When Harry's like this, you don't have a chance. Just get out of the way.

JC: Yeah, and yeah. And he goes and gets his shit and he leaves, which is a relief even though it's also like, "Oh, my God, he's 13. It's at night. Where is he going to go? Oh, my God," which gets answered, I think, in the next chapter. But that whole explosion of his is very satisfying from the perspective of the reader, even though there's even more fatphobic darkness in the image of Marge blowing up like a balloon. 'Oh, she's getting even fatter.' What?! I think she blows up like a balloon. There's also the whole idea of oh, she's full of hot air. There's some other ways you can interpret that, but that's very satisfying, though. You were saying, earlier in this episode, that fantasy of this monstrous person being punished or having some disastrous end as a result of their monstrous behavior, that is very satisfying.

Lorrie: And Vernon is desperate. "Harry, you can't leave. You're the only one who can put her back," and Vernon has good cause to beg Harry to stay. "No, no. You have no power over me. Goodbye."

JC: "That's it. Goodbye."

Lorrie: "I don't care. Deal with it yourself."

JC: Yeah. I don't know what ever actually does happen to Aunt Marge. Do we ever find out?

Lorrie: I think they had to take her to a hospital.

JC: What, deflate her? Is it like in Willy Wonka, they had to juice the girl that turns into a blueberry?

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: Oh, my gosh. What hospital are they taking the magical victims to?

Lorrie: Yeah. I don't remember, but I think we do get to find out. But yeah, that's another Roald Dahl reference, isn't it? The blueberry from Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.

JC: That's what it feels like. Oh, my gosh.

Lorrie: Grotesque Brits.

JC: Yeah. Earlier, there's the moment when Aunt Marge's wine glass explodes in her hand when she says something particularly awful.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And in my head, it's a glass of red wine, and it goes everywhere. There's glass everywhere, and Marge dabs with her napkin and says, "Oh, don't fuss over it, Petunia," and I'm thinking

Petunia's like, "There's red wine all over my nice linens, all over the floor, it's splattered on me, and I'm not even allowed to get up and do anything about it!"

Lorrie: "On my best linen, which is pure white." Yeah, "I'm just going to sit here."

JC: Again, I'm feeling for Petunia there, having to put up with all of this awfulness. Ugh, and Vernon seems like he enjoys Marge's visit, and probably Dudley, too, but I don't think Petunia enjoys having this person in her house at all. It makes me wonder what Petunia's response was to Aunt Marge blowing up. Probably horror, because now they're going to have to deal with it and they are going to not look normal, but oh, man. Yeah.

Lorrie: Probably guilt, because it's her side of the family that is abnormal like this, that caused this, and the temptation to displace her anxiety and blame Harry. Because as awful as the visit was, Petunia had passed all the tests. She'd made a great dinner; Marge complimented it. The visit had gone great. Petunia did what she set out to do.

JC: It is frustrating to think that okay, now it's all Harry's fault, even though they all were in the room and watched Harry get beaten down verbally for an entire week. It's hard for me to even process how you would sit in a room and watch that happen to a child and not do anything about it.

Lorrie: Yeah. It's a very harsh version of what Harry has endured in Snape's classroom. When she says, "I don't like your tone": the time that Snape punishes Harry for not helping Neville because he accuses Harry of wanting to look better than Neville. What? That's a really extreme version of, "Wow, doing nothing will also get me into trouble." But this is a good example of how Harry is equipped somewhat to deal with that kind of bad situation at Hogwarts, because this is worse.

JC: Yeah, that's true. That's actually a really great point: Harry does put up with a lot of awful crap at Hogwarts, but it's still better than what he dealt with at home.

Lorrie: He had learned from living with the Dursleys how to handle this, and he has to try to train other people. "No, no, don't do that. I know." Wow, this was a stressful chapter.

JC: Yeah. We had a lot to say about it, too. Oh, my gosh.

Lorrie: It's hard on the reader.

JC: For sure. And I think that Harry leaving at the end of the chapter is, like I think I said before, very satisfying. It's also kind of shocking, though. That's extreme. Harry has never flat out left the Dursleys. He gets his trunk, he gets his stuff, and he's like, "I'm out of here." That's pretty extreme for a kid to get to that point, where it's like, "Whatever is out in the world is better than what was in there. I'm out."

Lorrie: Yeah. Not only does Harry not know what he's going to do once he leaves, we don't know what he's going to do. Nobody has explained to us what happens in the Wizarding world when you break the rules this badly. Oh, no. Oh, no.

JC: Yeah, that, too. A lot of magic happened in front of Muggles, so are letters or owls going to start coming and delivering letters to the Dursleys about this? Yeah.

Lorrie: So much worse than that, yeah. So yeah, next chapter better have some answers for us. It is called The Knight Bus, and we will discuss it then.

JC: All right. The Knight Bus.

Lorrie: Wow. The universe is expanding.

JC: For sure.

Lorrie: I guess I'm looking forward to it after I recover from this one.

JC: Yeah, it'll be good to see Harry dealing with the magical world and not awful relatives.

Lorrie: Yeah. Now what? It's got to be better than this.

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