

Transcript
Episode 3.5
Book 3, Chapter 5: The Dementor

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 Five: The Dementor.

Lorrie: The Dementor. The kids take the Hogwarts Express to school. Professor R.J. Lupin is in their compartment. Dementors stop the train for a search and Harry passes out. Snape looks at Lupin with so much loathing that even Ron and Harry are startled. Well! Eventful. What do you think of this chapter, JC?

JC: Oh, there's so much that happens in this chapter. Wow. It's a long chapter, too, but I was blown away by the amount of new stuff that we get in this chapter, and it's stuff that you take for granted for the rest of this series in a lot of ways. We got Lupin, we got the dementors, we got the carriages that take the kids into Hogwarts, we got some more information about how the Wizarding World works. There's so much happening here. We're about to get the Time-Turner. Well, we got the Time-Turner, but we don't know it yet. We got Hagrid as a teacher, we've got inner faculty drama happening between the adults. Oh, there's so much happening.

Lorrie: Yes, and we're still at the Burrow. One thing that stood out to me was that Mrs. Weasley is doing this shady girl-bonding talk with Hermione and Ginny. They're giggling over a love potion she once brewed.

JC: Oh, yeah, at the Leaky Cauldron in the morning. Yes.

Lorrie: Oh, thank you, at the Leaky Cauldron. And that's kind of shady.

JC: Yeah. Yeah, because love potions become a plot point later in the series. Yeah.

Lorrie: A little dangerous.

JC: But that idea that it's something that young wizards, teenagers, just do -- dose each other with the love potion -- is a little bit disturbing.

Lorrie: Yes, it is. Naughty.

JC: Naughty, exactly. There's also little fun details at the beginning of this chapter. It feels like it re-situates me with — we're still in Diagon Alley and they haven't gone to Hogwarts yet. That little detail that Tom brings Harry a cup of tea every morning... I thought, 'Oh, my gosh, no one's ever done that for him before,' that little bit of human kindness.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Oh, that was just so sweet. And we get to see more of the Weasley family, who were all also staying at the Leaky Cauldron. So at this point, we all know that Percy has a girlfriend, Penelope Clearwater. We learned that at the end of the last book.

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: It's interesting, too, though, that he has a photo of her, and there's this moment where tea gets spilled on the photo, I think. Then in the photo, she's hiding, like 'Oh, no, I've gotten dirty from the tea.'

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: It made me think again about this idea that comes up later in the series: the Wizarding photographs or portraits that are painted -- the connection that those have with the world -- somehow the people in those objects can react to what they see outside of their frames, and what that's like if you have a photo of a loved one who's passed away or a photo of someone who's no longer in your life for whatever reason. It raises so many interesting thoughts about being able to talk to your grandparents who've passed away or being able to yell at your ex who treated you badly.

Lorrie: Oh, gosh.

JC: Right? That magic is fascinating to me.

Lorrie: Then we head to the Hogwarts Express, and Ron gets sandwiches that are not corned beef. Molly remembered; she made the extra effort for him.

JC: Interesting.

Lorrie: And that made me realize in this book, *Prisoner of Azkaban*, it's such a happy book. Every single character gets something they want except for Snape.

JC: Except for Snape. Of course.

Lorrie: Yeah. Hermione gets the Time-Turner, Ron gets these sandwiches — he gets that extra attention that he keeps asking for, Sirius becomes free, Lupin gets to teach, Harry gets a godfather.

JC: And he gets a little bit of his story back, which is a theme that you've talked about a lot.

Lorrie: Yeah, no, it's a good outcome for every single character except Snape. It's a terrible, terrible year for Snape.

JC: Oh, my gosh. It's very interesting to me: while Mrs. Weasley is handing out the sandwiches is when Mr. Weasley pulls Harry aside finally to tell him. He doesn't know that Harry already knows about Sirius Black, but this is where we get that little moment from Mr. Weasley of, "Don't

go looking for him," and Harry's like, "Why would I do that?" Oh, great, Arthur Weasley. Now you've planted the seed that maybe Sirius Black is someone really interesting.

Lorrie: Mr. Weasley says that three times: "Whatever you might hear, promise you won't go *looking* for him." Three times. It's like, 'Okay, Harry, there's more to your story right here and everybody knows it but you.' What do you think Harry Potter is going to do? And what I love, too, is this scene, Harry takes care of an adult. He tells Mr. Weasley, "Honestly, it's okay" that he already knows. "This way, you haven't broken your word to Fudge and I know what's going on."

JC: Ah.

Lorrie: That's a new level of maturity.

JC: Yeah, for sure. I hadn't thought of that, but yeah, you're right. He understands that adults can get in trouble for being on his side or trying to help him. Like he was with Hagrid in the previous book, he's really anxious for people not to get hurt because of him; he tries to take care of them. That's a great point.

Lorrie: Yeah. So they get onto the train. All the compartments are full, except one with a sleeping adult in it.

JC: Oh, the introduction of Lupin here is so interesting to me coming back to it after all this time, because I realized that we're given a lot of clues about who he is here. But also, I have so many more questions now that I had before. He has a case that says "Professor R.J. Lupin" on it.

Lorrie: "R.J. Lupin." Uh-huh.

JC: And the lettering is peeling, it says, so does that mean he's been traveling around and doing a lot of teaching in other places? Has he been a teacher for a while? Where else did he teach? What's up with that? And then the fact that he looks ragged and sleeps the entire time: was it just a full moon, or is he pretending to sleep? I have so many questions.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: So many. And why is he on the train? Hermione says that no adults usually ride the train, so is he there because he's that desperate and he had no other way to get to Hogwarts? Or is he on the train because he knows what's coming and he's there to protect the kids? So many questions!

Lorrie: Right, right. My favorite thing is when Hermione knows it's Professor R.J. Lupin, and Ron says, "How d'you know that?" (because of course that's the kind of thing Hermione would know), and she says, "It's on his luggage." That's my favorite example of Hermione being the reader in this series. How does she know that? She read it, Ronald. And I think we don't find out his first name until Chapter 18.

JC: Oh, okay. Wow.

Lorrie: But Lupin is quite enough of a hint, don't you think?

JC: You know, it should be. I remember the first time I read that, I had no idea he was a werewolf, despite the fact that so many hints are dropped in this book. And it was one of those things where I was like, 'Oh, wow, how did I miss that?' I think because I was reading so fast and not thinking that hard.

Lorrie: Well, I was laughing at "Lupin," and then eventually when we find out his first name is Remus, I was like, 'Okay, overkill.'

JC: That is kind of overkill, isn't it? For sure.

Lorrie: In a lovable way.

JC: It's like, "Your kid is destined to be a werewolf. What name do you give them? Okay. All right, for sure."

Lorrie: So he's young, going prematurely gray and looks ill and exhausted, so I think it probably was that a full moon had just ended. Then we hear his shabby luggage is held together with "neatly knotted string". That 'neatly knotted string', that's a detail that's supposed to make us love him. We're supposed to respect this character because he has dignity. It's lovely, to me, how that tiny little detail establishes that permanently.

JC: Yeah, that's really true. That idea of, he took care to do that: he doesn't have much, but what he's got he's taking care of, and trying to make it look interesting or nice or pleasing to him.

Lorrie: And he's got a lot to put up with somehow. He's sleeping, so Harry tells Ron and Hermione all about Mr. Weasley's warning. Lupin sleeps through it all, and there are only a couple times that Lupin stirs. They keep looking at him, like, 'Did he hear or is he sleeping?' He's totally out cold, except for there's a point when Ron and Hermione begin to fight and then he stirs a little, and they look at him and they stop fighting. Then Malfoy, Crabbe and Goyle come into the compartment and he stirs a little; Malfoy says, "Who's that?" and they leave. Other than that, he's totally out cold.

JC: Yeah, that and the Sneakoscope going off, which — the Sneakoscope is such an interesting addition to the story. This idea that somebody's being sneaky, but you have no idea who, and there are multiple people in every scene where it appears who could be the sneaky one.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Is it Scabbers? Is it Lupin? What is Scabbers thinking when he peeks out of Ron's pocket and sees who that is? Oh, my gosh.

Lorrie: There's the general uselessness of something that unspecific, but it also reminds us that the atmosphere in this whole book is that there's untrustworthiness around and people are on edge. But it could also be something completely benign, because then they answer a question that you had a couple chapters ago, JC, when you wondered about Errol being sent from Egypt

with a gift for Harry, and Ron says, "I wasn't supposed to be using Errol... he's not really up to long journeys..."

JC: It's a freaking long journey.

Lorrie: Okay, there you go.

JC: So yeah, there was more.

Lorrie: Yeah. It was Ron's idea -- and no, he shouldn't have done that -- and that's why Errol was so exhausted.

JC: Aaawww.

Lorrie: Yeah. Oh, on the Hogwarts Express, they eat "chocoballs full of strawberry mousse and clotted cream". That sounds so delicious. When I had the fifth grade reading group, I made that for them.

JC: Oh, wow.

Lorrie: Yeah, I combined freeze-dried strawberries and whipped cream, and I filled some chocolate molds with them.

JC: Oh, wow.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: That sounds really nice.

Lorrie: Yum.

JC: I'm going to get stuck on Lupin, I think, for a while. When we started this, I talked about the fact that I was really interested in the Sirius/Remus ship, so I paid a lot of attention to Lupin throughout this book because I knew that people were shipping this character with another character by the end of the book. I'm really fascinated by what might have been happening in his head. If he was lying there, pretending to be asleep -- which good Lord, if there's a bunch of teenage 13-year-olds coming into your compartment, I'd pretend to be asleep, too. What the heck? I'm wondering what went through his mind when he realized who was in his compartment, that this is Harry. He knew he was going to meet Harry this year, but to have Harry come into his compartment, I feel emotions about that. 'Oh, here's this child of my friend's, and I know that he's had this tragic beginning to his life and other crazy things have happened, and now I'm finally going to meet this kid. I'm going to not be able to tell him who I am to him, but I'm going to be here and I'm going to protect him. I'm going to make sure he's okay.' All the feelings.

Lorrie: Well, we get a hint later in this chapter about what Lupin was doing on the train.

JC: Oh, okay.

Lorrie: Which we'll get to when we get to it.

JC: We'll get to it. Okay, cool. Wow. I must have missed that, so I look forward to finding that out.

Lorrie: It's tiny, yeah.

JC: Okay. We'll find out when we get there, then.

Lorrie: Oh, yeah, another thing the kids talk about on the Hogwarts Express is how Harry wants to get to Hogsmeade, and Ron suggests getting Fred and George to help. There we go, we've established the outlaw theme to this book. A lot of the decisions that are made in this book are going to have to be outside of the law, and here's Lupin snoozing away.

JC: One of the original Marauders. I love it.

Lorrie: Outside the law. Ron says that Harry will be okay going to Hogsmeade because Sirius Black won't attack them if Ron and Hermione are with Harry, and then Hermione goes, "Do you really think he's going to worry about attacking Harry just because *we're* there?" Yes. We will find out later that numbers matter and solidarity matters. Except for strategically stirring a couple of times to stop fighting, Lupin then wakes up and says: "'Quiet!' said a hoarse voice suddenly," and the hoarseness of his voice makes me think, oh, yeah, there must have been a full moon. He must have been screaming.

JC: Oh, yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah. And then "a shivering light... illuminated his tired, gray face, but his eyes looked alert and wary." This is a man who's shaky in his body and his powers might be shaky, but his intellect is really sharp. That introduces the dementors. Wow.

JC: Right. So this idea of the train stopping and the rain is beating against the window, it's a beautiful horror movie setting. I think in the film adaptation, they did a really good job of making this scene just as scary as it had been in my head and the book. That description of the coldness that Harry feels and how horrifying the dementor looks, it's so interesting. I think at the point at which this is first described in a first reading, you don't necessarily know that these are the Azkaban guards that had been talked about yet. We only find that out afterward, when Ron is telling Harry.

Lorrie: Right.

JC: So at this point on a first read, the feeling is: what is this thing and why is it on the train? And is it after Harry?

Lorrie: Oh, my goodness.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah, and the rattling breath that's like death. Oi. The dementor starts into their carriage and Harry feels himself "being dragged downward". This is Harry having a trauma flashback. At this moment, so many timelines in that one train carriage are colliding and collapsing. The train is in the middle of going from the Muggle world to the magical world. Harry doesn't know it, but two of his father's old friends are in the carriage with him at the moment; another one is on the loose, and now he's about to go hurtling into the memories of his own past. At that point, he hears these "terrified, pleading screams. He wanted to help whoever it was, he tried to move his arms, but couldn't..." We are witnessing the origins of Harry's saving-people-thing, when baby Harry witnessed his mother being attacked mortally and wanted to help her and couldn't, and that's as far as his flashback goes. Then Ron and Hermione revive him, and Ron looks really nervous when Harry asks if anyone else heard all the screaming, because just the previous year Harry had heard the basilisk and no one else had.

JC: When Harry hears voices, everyone's like, 'Oh, shit.'

Lorrie: And there was a dementor, so is Harry hearing something real that nobody else does or is it all in Harry's head? When bad things happen to Harry, oh, goodness. What's going on? But then we see this delicate detail: "Ginny and Neville looked back at him, both very pale." They're handling it worse than Ron and Hermione, because their degrees of trauma are also extraordinary, almost as bad as Harry's. Ron's response here is more like a control: he says he felt like he'd "never be cheerful again". That's your baseline response to a dementor, but the kids who have been traumatized have it worse. Even though it's not a competition to judge who's had the most trauma, it is necessary to be aware, say, if you're a teacher trying to take care of a student who has that in their background that may need your help. This flashback of Harry's where he's so ill... people might mock trigger warnings, but they're not meant for people who are moderately discomforted by something. Trigger warnings are for people who have this kind of extreme, uncontrollable reaction that Harry's just had.

JC: Absolutely. I think about trauma-informed teaching practices. That's something that teachers will get training in and that I do as part of my job: work through a lot of 'what are these practices and how do they help students?' With pre-service teachers, you have to understand that when kids are having a trauma response, they're going to behave in ways that they are not responsible for.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And that you as an adult have to understand that it's not personal.

Lorrie: No. Yeah.

JC: And that you have to react in ways that are going to not escalate the issue. There's all these things that we do. I'm by no means an expert on this, but that idea of how a teacher in a classroom would have to respond to trauma is a really big thing I know we talk about at my work. But yeah, I think this is a great metaphor for that, because the more trauma someone's experienced, the bigger their reaction to the dementors is going to be.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And then you have the scene later of Draco Malfoy like, "Oh, you fainted, Potter?" Harry is really self-conscious for the rest of this chapter about what happened to him and he doesn't understand it, and he doesn't understand it for a long time. Why? It's that same kind of feeling of kids who have experienced trauma -- or not even a child -- anyone who's experienced trauma having this response and realizing that it's beyond your control, and how terrifying that is and how it makes you different from people you perceive as normal.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Oh, gosh, it digs into all of those issues in such real, gritty ways.

Lorrie: Yeah. And then we get chocolate!

JC: And then we get chocolate. I love it!

Lorrie: Lupin has this enormous block of chocolate. He shares it out, and I think it must have been the second time I read the series when I realized, oh, he carries it for himself. Oh.

JC: Interesting. Okay, so here's my question: I read that as... This is a guy who clearly doesn't have much.

Lorrie: Right.

JC: Why would he have an enormous block of chocolate? That seems expensive. My thought was he knew he was going to be heading to Hogwarts and there were all these dementors, and that he would need to protect himself, but also (since he's on the train) protect other people, too. So yeah, I read that as this is him planning in advance and spending some of his hard-earned cash on this protective measure.

Lorrie: Yeah. I think all of the above. Yes, and as you mentioned, we get the thestrals here and they're invisible to Harry at this point.

JC: I wonder who they're not invisible to at this point. Luna, I guess, but we haven't met Luna yet.

Lorrie: Neville says he could see them.

JC: Neville can see them. Okay, yeah. It is interesting that yeah, at this point, there are kids at Hogwarts who have seen it.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Okay, so what is your take on the idea of why Harry doesn't see them at this point? If he saw his mother get murdered by Voldemort, why does he not see the thestrals?

Lorrie: I don't think he was old enough to understand what he was seeing.

JC: Ah. That's interesting, okay.

Lorrie: I think seeing them is not about necessarily witnessing a death, but of going through the change that happens when you know that you've seen such a thing. They get to Hogwarts and McGonagall says, "Professor Lupin sent an owl ahead to say that you were taken ill on the train, Potter," which reminds me: oh, yeah, there's a point after the dementor when he excuses himself from the compartment and he tells the kids he has to go talk to the conductor. Oh, he didn't have to talk to the conductor. He was sending a report back to the people who had stationed him on the train with Sirius Black's assumed target. I see. Okay.

JC: Oh, okay, so that's what you were talking about. That was the clue. Okay.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Interesting, because my thought was, 'Where did he get an owl?' That was honestly the thing I was thinking. Like Hagrid, did he have one stuffed in his coat somewhere? Oh, wow.

Lorrie: Yeah, so they had stationed him there and said, "When and if anything happens, let us know," and that's what he did; Madame Pomfrey approves greatly of Lupin dispensing chocolate.

JC: Yeah, that's a great moment.

Lorrie: The detail about Madame Pomfrey approving of Lupin is to show Harry that Lupin has the trust of the other staff. So far, with the neatly knotted string, we've seen that he's a dignified person and we're going to like him; with McGonagall and Pomfrey's comments, we see that the staff feel like this is "one of us. We trust him."

JC: Also that he's going to be a good Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, because last year...

Lorrie: Right. Oh, boy.

JC: Yeah. They basically didn't have a Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher at all, and they may not have one again for a while, so this is going to be a good year for Harry to actually learn Defense Against the Dark Arts.

Lorrie: So then Hermione gets her conference about her course schedule. Yay!

JC: Aaawww.

Lorrie: And that made me realize, okay, this whole volume is about people who need extra time. Sirius needs extra time because his time was stolen from him: twelve years. Harry needs extra time because he has to recover from trauma. Lupin needs extra time because for a quarter of

the time, he is out of commission with chronic illness and he needs accommodations. Hermione needs extra time because she's an oppressed minority, and she has to work harder than the majority to even hold her own. She's already lost time for being an oppressed minority, so that's where she is in this. When Dumbledore shows up, then we get the line, "You couldn't help trusting Albus Dumbledore," so we can mark as readers, okay, at this point in this series, he is still the venerable father figure. There are no cracks in his character at this point.

JC: And I love the way he slips in that dementors can see through invisibility cloaks. Just dropping that in there.

Lorrie: I don't know why he would even say that, but yeah. Factoid.

JC: 'Just to let you know.' Yeah, that was great. I think, too, that moment when they come back from the meeting with McGonagall and they walk into the Great Hall and everyone's staring and pointing at Harry: that felt bigger than it has in the past books, and I thought that's a marker of Harry becoming a teenager and becoming suddenly really self-aware. The year before, kids would point and he was miserable about it, but it felt different this time and it felt in that way that teenagers are just hyper aware of what their peers think about them. He was super embarrassed.

Lorrie: Yeah, and having just killed a basilisk months earlier, he can't deny that this is just going to keep happening to him. They do have reason to gawk and point. We have this sentence: "Look at Snape!" Just as Hermione is the reader in the story, Snape is the story. That's my take on it. This is a moment where we, the readers, are baldly directed to pay attention to Snape, as though someone has taken us by the chin and turned our heads.

JC: That's a great visual.

Lorrie: This is where the story will be, and to me, this is the second instance in this chapter of time working a little bit differently. This moment -- "Look at Snape!" -- it's emphasized and drawn out so that every reader hears Ron's instruction and pauses to turn and look at the extraordinary expression on Snape's face, which is caused by emotions that reach into the past and obviously have some connection to why Snape loathed Harry before even meeting him. The text says: "It was common knowledge that Snape wanted the Defense Against the Dark Arts job." That is a masterpiece of passive voice, unattributed. 'Oh, is it common knowledge? Says who?' And then Harry and everyone, they're all "startled at the expression twisting his thin, sallow face." When Snape is described as 'thin' and 'sallow', that's more neutral than when he's described as 'ugly' or 'greasy', or having a hooked nose or sneering. 'Thin' and 'sallow' are sympathetic ways to describe Snape. More sympathetic.

JC: Ooh, interesting.

Lorrie: This is a point when we're supposed to see him as a person that has feelings that bear consideration. Not necessarily that we have to like him or be sympathetic about him, but we have to think, 'What is going on here? He has feelings, too.' He's not just a source of malice. There's some reason why he is looking at this nice-seeming guy with 'loathing', and it says:

"Harry knew that expression only too well; it was a look Snape wore every time he set eyes on Harry." Obviously, something about this involves Harry's story.

JC: I think the other thing, too, is that even if Harry doesn't understand that point yet, it immediately sets him up to know that Lupin is someone that he's going to like and trust. He already has a reason to like and trust Lupin.

Lorrie: Right.

JC: If Snape looks at Lupin the same way he looks at Harry, then that's like, 'Okay, we're going to get along.'

Lorrie: Yeah. What is it? "The enemy of my enemy is my friend."

JC: Right, right.

Lorrie: Yeah. Before the series ended, I remember people sometimes wondering, 'Maybe Snape doesn't hate Harry. Maybe he's putting it on as an act to fool Voldemort,' but no. There is one constant in the Harry/Snape dynamic in canon, which makes the Snape mystery all the more vexing: no matter what, Snape's loathing of Harry was entirely real. Ron gives us that moment that I call a "fermata moment." There's a little sign over it to say, "Hold this open for a bit; just think about this before, and then you can move on." And we hear Hagrid's gotten a humongous promotion. Yes!

JC: Okay, kind of a promotion. So this is what stuck out to me: first of all, there's a funny line that comes before it, when we hear that the previous Care of Magical Creatures teacher is leaving "to enjoy more time with his remaining limbs." That's really funny.

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: But then it's mentioned that Hagrid took on this teaching job in addition to his gamekeeper duties, and as someone who works in schools, I was just like, "Of course he did. Of course. You already have a full-time job. Oh, there's this other thing you can do that's got more prestige and yeah, but you have to do it on top of the stuff you're already doing." I'm sure they're paying him more, but still. It's not like he got a new job; it's that they added more job to the job he was already doing. To me, that's exactly what being a teacher is. I laughed.

Lorrie: Meanwhile, I'm just happy for him, that this is something that tells people he's been cleared and he's been restored to good standing in Dumbledore's eyes, because he didn't get his wand back. He's never going to be a fully qualified wizard, and he's not going to get back the decades of his life where he was accused of doing this, but still he has been exonerated, and that's something that Dumbledore made happen.

JC: And it has been his dream. This is a dream to have this job, and of course he's going to jump at the chance. It just struck me as funny.

Lorrie: It is, once you put it that way. Oh, dear.

JC: It's like, "No, no, you're not just going to be a professor. You're going to be the gamekeeper and a professor." Wow, he's got lesson plans to do for, what, five, six years of students? He's got those classes. Oh, yeah, yeah. Full teaching mode and he's still a gamekeeper, but he's honored to do it.

Lorrie: Yeah, and when Hagrid talks about that, he says, "Great man, Dumbledore." That's a theme that we're going to see repeated throughout: that Dumbledore is a great man because he believes in giving people second chances at life, and that is, in fact, greatness. Yeah, it takes a greatness of spirit to not just think of somebody as dead to you, canceled.

JC: For sure, for sure.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Can I just say that I'm so glad they got to enjoy the feast? Last year, they missed it, and ugh. There's always a feast that they miss somehow, but just the fact that they got to have the opening feast despite all the difficulty that happened on the train; and that feeling at the end, when Harry goes up to the dorm and he's like, "I'm home."

Lorrie: Oh, God, yes.

JC: Ugh, that's so cool. And so are we, as the readers. We're back at Hogwarts. Yes! Now it really begins.

Lorrie: Yeah. The little bit of grief I have at the end of this chapter is when Neville always has trouble remembering the passwords, because disability is a major theme of this volume. Neville and memory, that's another form of disability; difficulty with short-term memory (which is perhaps caused by anxiety) and the password system is cruel, and it just made me wish that there were accommodations for Neville. It made me wish that there were alternatives to remembering the capricious, mysterious passwords, and we'll see that this actually is harsh on Neville later in this book and no, nobody helps him out with it.

JC: In the first book, there was a night that he was just sitting outside the dorm because he couldn't remember the password; they stumbled out and found him.

Lorrie: It happens to him, yeah. So yeah, this is a good glimpse at all the different things people have going on: that Neville has the memory issue; Hagrid has permanent losses due to having been scapegoated decades ago, and that he is not a full teacher, but there's some exoneration that means a lot to him; that Hermione has reason to look happy after talking about her schedule (we don't know what yet); and who knows what's going on in Snape's head when he looks at the mild new teacher.

JC: Okay, so I want to talk about the Time-Turner a little bit. We're going to see more Time-Turners, but I'm thinking about it right now. So there is a 'would you rather' icebreaker that I do with my students, where I ask them, "Would you rather have a pause button or rewind button for life?" They decide which one they want, but when I first did that in my head, I was thinking that

the rewind button is like a Time-Turner. You could just go back and have another hour or whatever it is that you need, and being able to create extra time for yourself... For those of us who are overscheduled or stressed out or living our lives in ways that are perhaps not sustainable, that idea that there would be this piece of magic that would give you more time when you need it -- oh, my gosh -- it sounds like a dream. So Hermione's smile there, I feel that in my toes. Oh, she's going to get to take extra classes, and she's going to get more time to learn more, as much time as she wants, so yeah. Oh, I'm so excited for her.

Lorrie: And she had to earn the privilege.

JC: And what a privilege it is! She's thirteen. Then it makes me wonder: are there other students in the school, or is it just Hermione?

Lorrie: Well, we find out later it's just Hermione.

JC: Just Hermione. Wow, that's very special.

Lorrie: And yeah, this is an example of there not being a gifted track at Hogwarts, but Hermione gets one tailored to her.

JC: I'm glad there's not a gifted track at Hogwarts, though, because of the... Wow, do I want to get into this? Because of the history of gifted tracks at schools being a tool for segregation within a school. Who gets in the gifted tracks and when were they created, and by who were they created and why? If there was a gifted track at Hogwarts, it would have all the purebloods in it, is my feeling.

Lorrie: Would it?

JC: I think it would. I think it would have all the purebloods in it, because who would write letters to the Ministry and to the Regents Board of Hogwarts or whatever they're called, demanding that some kids need extra? "No, they don't need to be mixing with the Muggle-born kids." That's kind of what gifted programs... that's where they came from. "My kid shouldn't be in that room with those kids who don't..." whatever.

Lorrie: Oh, dear. Oh, dear.

JC: So it feels like that would be an interesting thing to explore.

Lorrie: Meanwhile, I'm really invested in Hermione getting what she needs.

JC: Yes.

Lorrie: And we're going to see later that I hold some grudges against Lupin, because I don't think he provides that for Hermione.

JC: Ooh, interesting.

Lorrie: But McGonagall does.

JC: Nice. Oh, we're getting into it now.

Lorrie: I know. Yeah. So we have started with the flashbacks for Harry.

JC: I think, too, that it was well into this book before I understood what the dementors really do, and it might have not even been on the first read; it might have been later. Honestly, it might have been like the fifth book, but there's a point at which it is explained to Harry, I think by Lupin, that the reason why it affects you more is not that they're attacking you more. It's that when you pull off the happiness, your trauma is all that's left, and it's really big compared to other people. Draco Malfoy, nothing; Ron, nothing. Those are kids that don't have those kinds of traumas in their background, but you pull their happiness off and it's... eh.

Lorrie: They're only horrified. They're not incapacitated.

JC: Right.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: It took me a while to really understand what the dementors were doing. I think the first read through this, I might have thought they were targeting Harry, so it took me a while to get it.

Lorrie: That's right. That's right. That's something that we know because we've read the series before, but at this point, we don't know why Harry suffered so much. But we do understand more of what it must have felt like for Hagrid when he was sent to Azkaban recently.

JC: That's true.

Lorrie: Dementors are such an iconic, important concept in popular culture that was introduced by this series that I think is original, and that's something I'm grateful for and that I don't want to give up. We know what it is, how draining it is because of dementors, to be reminded of the worst memories of your life, and that, I think, does give kid readers a boost in understanding what trauma flashbacks are: that the memory you relive during a flashback is experienced by your body and mind as happening again for real in real time. That's why they're so draining.

JC: And the idea that it affects people in different ways, and to understand that and to be empathetic about that, understanding what it's like.

Lorrie: I thought we were going to take a lot longer in this chapter, but maybe because it had been a while since I had read it, we're at the end of my notes.

JC: Yeah, mine, too. We got to the end of the chapter.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Then we talked even more, so yeah. Cool. I guess we're going to have to start getting better at that anyway, right?

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: They're getting more dense.

Lorrie: Yes. I don't know about you, but I'm dying to find out why Snape is looking at Lupin that way.

JC: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. There's a lot of fun things to come.

Lorrie: Yes. So the next chapter we're talking about is Talons and Tea Leaves.

JC: Oh. Okay, yeah.

Lorrie: So I guess we're going to see a couple of new classes that the kids have never had before.

JC: Fun.

Lorrie: Well, I will talk to you then.

JC: Yes!

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