

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 Seven: The Boggart in the Wardrobe.

Lorrie: The Boggart in the Wardrobe. Snape is abusive to Neville in Potions class. In their first Defense Against the Dark Arts class, Lupin gives a practical lesson on how to deal with boggarts, which take the shape of their worst fears. Wow. This chapter... I feel ready, I think. What about you, JC?

JC: Yeah, it caught me by surprise. You had been talking about how big this chapter was going to feel when we got to it, and it's not that I didn't believe you, but I just hadn't thought about it in so long. I know that the first time that I read this book, and perhaps also the second and even when I watched the movie version, this played very differently in my head than it did this time around. It's very interesting to see how different it felt years later as a parent, as a teacher, as an older person with all the accumulation of experience in my life, and also the ways that we talk about some of the issues that come up here differently now than we did at the time this book was written. There's a lot to dig into.

Lorrie: There really is. You just reeled off at least three or four ways in which your perspective changed on this chapter.

JC: Yup.

Lorrie: I don't even know where to start.

JC: We'll go chronologically, and then when we hit things...

Lorrie: Okay. Well, what do you recall of your response to it the first and second times you read this chapter?

JC: I think my initial reactions were that finally, they have a teacher who's actually going to teach them Defense Against the Dark Arts, and he's going to teach them how to handle difficult situations. Up to now, this idea of "What were the Dark Arts?" We only have a little bit of an idea. It had this feeling of sex education in schools.

Lorrie: Ah, yes.

JC: This idea of, "We're going to teach you some theory, but we're not going to dig into this too deep because you're not ready," or, "The best defense is to never do it. Don't engage with it."

Lorrie: Right. "We are not ready."

JC: Yeah. "We're not going to teach you how to do any of this." That's the way that it had felt up to that point. Then this chapter, when reading this in the past, it felt like finally, there was a teacher who was like, "I'm going to teach you something really practical. I'm actually going to show you how to take care of yourself, how to protect yourself against the bad things that really are out there, and we're going to start right now. We're going to start from day one. You're going to learn stuff and I'm not going to hold back. I'm not going to treat you like babies. I'm going to give you the tools you need." It felt like that.

Lorrie: Yeah. Now that you're talking about it that way, it made me realize this lesson is written so that the reader experiences the lesson at the same time that the students do. Just as they're learning, we're learning; there's nothing magical about this that makes it impossible or inaccessible to us. We can just do the same thing.

JC: Yeah. It is a lesson on how to handle your worst fears. How to handle fear, a really intense fear.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: That's my surface read of it, back 20 years ago or whenever I first read this book, that that's what it's about. 'There are bad things out there; here's how you

deal with them, here's how you handle fear,' which is a valuable lesson, absolutely, for these kids. There's no doubting that. There's so many more complex layers to it now than there were the first time.

Lorrie: Okay, so that's what you remember from then. What do you remember changing when you read it as a parent?

JC: As a parent... It's not that I didn't think of these kids as children before, but now that I've had a child who's passed through that age, I remember him dealing with things that he was afraid of or watching him struggle with issues that made him worry, what kinds of things he had nightmares about. I think that's a lot of it, is that experience of having watched a child grow up. It's easy to look back on your own childhood and not really see it from the outside. You saw it from the inside, so seeing it from the outside is a different experience, I think.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Also, all the time that I've spent as a teacher. When this book came out, I had a little bit of teaching experience under my belt, but I had only been a teacher for four or five years, probably, at that point; now, I'm pushing thirty years teaching, so it's a lot different. I just have a different perspective on the ways that adults should help kids handle difficult issues and strong emotions. Trauma-informed instruction is a thing that I

was not aware of even maybe ten years ago, to be honest; there's a lot more attention paid in the work that I do now around social and emotional learning for kids, how to build classroom communities that make kids feel safe, how to help when kids are triggered by trauma from their past, how to recognize that's what's happening, how to help them, how to sort of protect them from themselves and from the other kids in the environment. These are all things that I know a lot more about now, so seeing it with that lens, this whole chapter made me want to file a complaint against Hogwarts with whatever educational authority it falls under, to be honest. There's a lot of bad school things happening in this chapter.

Lorrie: Fascinating. Oh, I can't wait to get into that. And then, shall we talk about the worst boggart in the wardrobe? What's different reading this chapter now from the experience you had in 2004, say? For me, the big thing is the transphobia.

JC: Yeah, it's part of it. It's not the biggest thing, weirdly, to me. Yeah, it's just one, but there's the big overarching... wow, bad shit is happening in the school, the way that adults are exposing kids to things and not protecting them. What about for you, back when this book first came out? I don't know if you read it when it first came out in 1999 or a few years later. What was your first reading of this? What was your reaction to this chapter then?

Lorrie: Let's see... The year I read it was 2003, so I had friends who had read and loved it and talked about it and I knew about the fandom. People had told me universally that the best character, the one that they loved the most, is introduced in this chapter (which is Lupin) and just how much they loved him. I went into it looking for that, and I saw the moment that it happened: when he is the first person, finally, to push back against the unmitigated bullying that has been permitted, that Snape commits on Neville. Okay, that's it. That's the moment that the fandom's love for this character has been cemented. I... wasn't entirely on board, and then when Lupin orchestrated this mass bullying of a class of 13-year-olds -- which is the age group that is the most deadly if you're going to weaponize them as a group to ridicule somebody. When I saw that, I was kind of shocked, but obviously what Snape had done was so reprehensible and nobody else was stopping it. Yeah, I knew that this was important for the fandom, this moment, and I wasn't sure how I was going to take it, but it was a very disturbing chapter. Everything that happens in this chapter is so upsetting, and there's such mob dynamic. Then I also had utter rage at the end of the chapter toward Lupin about how he treats Hermione, which I think puts me in the minority. I haven't heard a lot of people respond to that, but I had a really strong reaction to that. So all in all, this was the chapter when things really heat up in this book. We've been introduced, all the players have been named, and now...

Wow, we're right in it.

JC: It's interesting. Now that you mention it, the way that Lupin rounds up the 13-year-olds and has them, without Snape being present, retaliate against Snape in a way that is... Yeah, we'll talk about the transphobia of that in a bit, I'm sure. I think I didn't really understand it at the time, and I probably didn't pay much attention to it because I was still reading the book so much from Harry's perspective at that point. On subsequent readings, after knowing who Remus is and what his previous relationship had been with Snape, I looked back at this and I thought, 'Oh, they're still kids. It's still schoolyard pranks. They're still bullying each other, they're still being mean to each other. Lupin is still bullying Snape when he gets a chance, or he's being a Marauder.' It felt like that was the level of it, like they somehow hadn't grown up and moved past these childish behaviors. That was the reading I had, let's say, the second time I read the book.

Lorrie: The thing that I found fascinating, and so subtle and well done, is that I don't think they are any more immature than a bunch of other 33-year-olds I know.

JC: Yeah, that seemed old to me when I read the book, because that's probably the age I was when I read this book the first time. Now, I'm like, 'Oh, my God, babies.'

Lorrie: No. Yeah, this immaturity is quite understandable

to me, but the way that the children are being brought into this dynamic -- without their consent, without their knowledge -- they're not given the background. They are being used as actors in this ongoing drama, and this affects their teaching, how they're taught; this affects their learning, this affects their lives, and that's such a good illustration of how it feels to be a kid in a world run by adults. You don't even know why you're being pushed and pulled in these different directions and what adult agendas are; then when you ask them, they'll tell you something that is obviously more about what secrets they're keeping from themselves and each other and not really about you, and you're left to deal with that. So there was that, and then... I entered this fandom as a Snape fan, and it's a cliché how tiring it is to try to talk to somebody about the development of Snape's character through a million words of story through many, many years and have them shut off all considerations with, "Neville's boggart. I'm not talking about him. Snape is trash." Yeah, that has been established in order to set the starting point for who Snape is, and the work he has to do in order to accomplish whatever he can before he dies five years later (and many, many trials later, and many personality changes and losses later). Yeah, this is a good illustration of who he is at this point before the start of his second chance in life. But if you're going to shut it off right there and not talk to me about it, on the one hand, that is a really valuable demonstration of what's important to each reader in the story. 'Okay, this is something that when I deal with something like this in

my life to protect myself, I need to be strong, and this is part of how I have to approach things.' It has been tricky, as somebody who deals with the character of Snape, to deal with; sometimes, people have the impulse to take that personal reaction and then try to legislate what is and isn't permitted in the discourse.

JC: Right.

Lorrie: There was a conference that my friend Shannon Sauro, who is in fandom as pennswoods, and she was one of the people who ran SnapeCast)... She and I were co-presenting on Snape at a conference, and we found through social media that there were people planning to come and disrupt our presentation and have a demonstration against us because anything that wasn't completely condemning Snape -- anything that would consider him as a character instead of talking about child abuse -- was then somehow perpetuating abuse. Fortunately, when we notified the conference organizers, they did let people know: Yeah, don't protest other people's presentations.

JC: "We're talking about a fictional character, people."

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: You're not defending Henry Kissinger.

Lorrie: "We're here to discuss fiction. That's what this

conference is; this is part of the fiction, and this is the discussion we're having."

JC: Oh, that's so frustrating.

Lorrie: But this chapter is a great demonstration of why the issues around Snape -- with all the complications and all the intense emotions, hatred and trauma around his story -- why that's important, because yeah, we really get the ugliness of this character here. That was the perspective that I was coming from in 2016 when I was writing the first edition of my book on Snape, thinking this book, *Prisoner of Azkaban*, is a really important whole year in Snape's miserable life. But this chapter in particular... the fact that you have to stop this man. You have to stop him from just being allowed to say anything he wants to these children, but do you have to stop it by getting mob mockery of him according to stereotypes that have to do with gender, with age, with attractiveness... This is transmisogyny. The tricky thing here was that many people in the fandom, who were honestly triggered by how Snape treated Neville, were so thrilled that finally, somebody was pushing back they didn't want to hear any criticism of how it was done. Meanwhile, I'm thinking, 'Okay, people laugh at this when Lupin comes up with this hilarious image. It's so funny. Who's laughing and who isn't laughing?' It's not equal. Many more people are laughing, and the people who aren't, it's a minority in a way that's frightening. According to issues that are frightening, where it's really

easy to see that the momentum of mob laughter can be turned from Snape to you, the person with your own reactions, not amused because you know how this feels. It makes a really stark and frightening division in the readership.

JC: Yeah. I don't honestly remember what my reaction was to that. I don't know how strongly I reacted to that at the time. I really don't remember. It was a long time ago now. But something that occurred to me later was that the whole idea of the scene was a way that you can deal with fear by turning it into something else.

Lorrie: Right.

JC: The fact that Lupin made a choice there to tell Neville what to do. It wasn't, "Neville, think of something and make this funny."

Lorrie: Oh, my God. Yeah.

JC: Neville could have said, "I'm going to make Snape turn into a balloon animal version of Snape, and then I'm going to pop him with a pin."

Lorrie: Right. Exactly.

JC: Why not that? Why did Lupin pick that?

Lorrie: Right.

JC: I'm not sure at what point that occurred to me as a reader of the books, but I think that was the moment when I stopped and went, 'Oh, shit, this is not good.'

Lorrie: Because there are prejudices that are always latent. To stimulate them in these children and then weaponize that: that's oppressive and terrifying. It's really hard to be a voice against that momentum, even as a reader in a fandom, to try to say, "Look, I'm not saying that Snape wasn't abusive, but do we retaliate by introducing a form of oppressiveness?" because we know that the power of prejudice has so much momentum that it can fight against even as abusive a professor as Snape. Who are you throwing under the bus for this?

JC: Ooh, that's a good way of thinking about it.

Lorrie: And it also reminds me of when people say, "Why do I have to be woke? Why do I have to be respectful of people's pronouns? Okay, okay, it's a decent thing to do. But look, this person's an asshole. Can I be transphobic now? At what point am I allowed to stop being on my best behavior and revert to prejudice?" This comes up regularly in social media discussions of someone who was formerly one of my favorite performers ever: Ezra Miller, the first actor associated with Pottermore to be out as non-binary. People did refer to Ezra as non-binary using a variety of pronouns,

because Ezra uses, in addition to they/them, also uses he/she. Then when Ezra had a number of charges against them for various serious crimes, people said, "Well, I'm just going to call him 'he' now. He doesn't deserve to be gendered properly by me, because look at his crimes." Gendering people correctly isn't something conditional that you decide to grant according to your privileged position and your judgment, but It's one of the first things to go.

JC: Wow.

Lorrie: The pushback that I experienced when I said I'm troubled by how Lupin coached children to respond to this bully... I did frequently get, 'Yeah, well, Snape's evil and trash and Neville's boggart, so I don't care.'" Yeah, these are two separate issues, but Lupin made them one.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Then there's another issue you get into, which is the Lupin fandom in Harry Potter. Oh, boy, the powerful things that Lupin represents that are so good for survival. It's really precious to have a character who can genuinely represent the awful struggles of having to deal with disability, having to deal with prejudice, with even self-hatred, with secrecy, just plain fatigue from being sick. It's really difficult to critique this character when he means so much to people for a different reason, which

brings up in this instance -- more than in many instances -- the question: how much agency do we chalk up to Lupin in this scene, and how much do we say that was the author? Generally speaking, it's quite shaky to say, "Well, the author didn't write her own character the correct way. We, the fans, understand her character better than she does." First of all, that's an issue that can never be resolved. Who's going to decide that? But this is one of those cases when I actually ended up going there. The Lupin that I gathered as a personality from the extremely subtle, rich portrayal offered in the series, would he have? Is this because the author is limited? Wouldn't he... Anyway, yeah, I ended up not sure how much I can say what I think of this character as a human being. First of all, all characters are created by the author.

JC: They are all fake at the end of the day. They're not real. They don't actually exist.

Lorrie: They are created in service of a story. But how much of my unease with what Lupin does in this chapter... How much of that is attributable to the character that he's supposed to represent, and how much of it is just directly my discomfort with the author? I was thinking about this when I wrote the 2016 version of my Snape book; then in 2021, when I was approached to do a revised, expanded edition of my Snape book, that was a couple years into TERFpocalypse when there was a huge backlash in the

reading public -- and in the general mainstream public -- against J.K. Rowling for turning so much of her efforts into transphobic speech, initiatives, political action. I had to decide, first of all, if I wanted to write again in this universe, and if I did, how? Revisiting this chapter was one of the two main differences that I decided on to expand or revise from the 2016 edition. To write about Harry Potter after 2020, after the issue of transphobia has changed how people view this series, it requires a conscious stance. I'm now thinking, while we've talked a lot about this chapter without going into the chapter at all...

JC: We haven't talked -- yeah, exactly.

Lorrie: There are many, many things I have to say after that, but we should probably start the chapter discussion first, and then I can go back to more details.

JC: Okay, yeah, I guess because we start in Potions, don't we?

Lorrie: We do!

JC: Yeah, we start in the Potions class with Snape going after the Gryffindors at every possible turn, and Draco Malfoy knowing that this is maybe the one space in the school where somebody is on his side. The cruelty that Snape shows in this scene is pretty hard to read. It was hard to read the first time around; it's hard to read this

time around for a lot of reasons, but also, knowing what's going on behind the scenes here, I can't help but think about the fact that Snape is having a pretty shitty year. This person, who he knows is dangerous and shouldn't be here in this school from his perspective -- who was one of his tormentors when he was a kid -- is now someone that he has to make a potion for every month and cover for his class. Understanding all of that and knowing, okay, Snape's pissed off, and he's going to take that out on the people that he doesn't like. Obviously, he should not be doing that, and we'll talk about the ethics of that in a little bit, but I can see his increased irritability in this scene and understand where it's coming from.

Lorrie: Yeah, his not-very-good defenses are even thinner than usual. He didn't start out as a nice guy, but he's being tested. So yeah, the chapter starts by establishing his favoritism. He says, "Settle down," to the late Slytherins, and Harry's like, 'Wow, that's not how he would treat us.' Then there's this beautiful bit of Ron characterization that is possibly my favorite bit of Ron writing in the whole series: "Ron had spent the last quarter of an hour carefully shredding his own roots into exactly equal pieces." He's doing his Potions homework, and then Snape, laughing, knowing that Draco is faking his injury, Draco says, "Well, I can't cut my roots." Snape says, Ron, switch with Draco and give him your 'beautifully cut roots,' and everybody knows what's going on. But I love that Ron cares, because we don't

often get a view into him just being a student, a scholar. He doesn't even like this class.

JC: True.

Lorrie: But he has pride in his work. I just love that. It's so beautiful. Yeah, so he shoves his "beautifully cut roots" at Draco. Then we also get some quantification: how much does Snape affect Neville's cognition? We get a number here: Neville's "great fear of Professor Snape made things ten times worse." Ooh, so Neville's Potions ineptitude is ninety percent Snape-related. Okay, we have a number! Then, when Neville is not doing well in Potions because of this guy, that's when it starts and Snape does the thing that never works: try to teach somebody by raising their fear and says, "What do I have to do to make you understand, Longbottom?" at which point I want to write a little note to Snape saying, "Consequences punishment doesn't work. Cut it out."

JC: Gosh, there's so many layers in this. I think the bit about Neville as well... We know a lot more about how brains work now than we did 20 years ago, and I think that the author understands that it's hard to learn when you're afraid. The thing is that this is actually true for biological reasons. When you're afraid...

Lorrie: Yep. Yep.

JC: When you're under stress... Basically, what

happens is that when you're afraid, when you're stressed, you have a really hard time accessing your working memory, so you are unable to think.

Lorrie: Yep.

JC: A classic example from my field of this is when kids are taking a math test, and they have any kind of math anxiety; even under other circumstances, they could have worked the problems. They look at the test and they can't do it. Nothing makes sense.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: This is a well-documented phenomenon of learning. Obviously, Snape has never taken any courses in education and probably wouldn't care to, but it's just a classic example of how people don't understand the impact of stress and fear on the brain and how that impacts them. Okay, that's me with my teacher hat on. Neville's never going to be able to learn in this environment. It's just not going to happen.

Lorrie: And we already know that Neville has short-term memory problems to begin with, for the same reason.

JC: Right. It's an awful situation. It's awful to look at it from a teacher perspective and think, 'God, this person...' Now, teachers do this to kids all the time. This is not rare.

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: Every semester, I have my students, especially my students who are going to be elementary teachers, write about their experiences with math throughout their lives, good and bad. Ninety percent of them have a story about some teacher who made them feel three inches tall, who told them they were stupid, who told them they were never going to get it, who basically ruined any chance that they had of being successful. Math is the kind of subject where, once you have a failure, it's really hard to make that up because it builds on itself. We talk about that in class -- about how important it is not to do this to children, first of all -- but I've been working with elementary school teachers for 25 years now, and it doesn't change. Every year, every semester, I ask this question. I ask them to write about this, and every semester they all have the same stories. It's not changing. This is a really common experience. In addition to that, sometimes it's not just about that they couldn't do the math; sometimes, it's about gender, sometimes it's about race.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Sometimes, it's "Mexican kids can't do math." Sometimes, it's that level, and they're very young; they're 20, and they're coming in and they heard this 10 years ago. Yeah, it's a common experience, so in that

respect, it makes sense to put it in this chapter and to have Snape be the teacher who does it, because this is something that people experience all the time.

Lorrie: That's the first thing I think of when people say, "This shouldn't even be in a book. This is a terrible way to teach. Why don't they make him do this or that?"

Well, I don't know about you, but I recognize this classroom dynamic, and it's not just teachers who do this to children. Parents do it to children.

JC: Oh, for sure.

Lorrie: Although it can be corrected, the painful thing is when people as teachers do this to children but they remember how bad it was when they were on the receiving end as children. Somehow, those two beliefs have to be reconciled if they're going to go on to be teachers. 'Did this work for you when you were little?' Snape also, I think, in his character has that phenomenon where he's constructed differently from Neville. When he was traumatized for various reasons as Neville was, he responded differently, and he's treating Neville in a way that might have worked better on himself. I can see kid Snape motivating himself by saying, "I can't afford to make a mistake because my survival's at stake. Come on, rally," but that's not how everybody is.

JC: For sure. Yeah, yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: I think also... I don't know. Again, I don't have any particular expertise in this, but my feeling is that adults who do this to children... It's not necessarily malicious. It's often about being disappointed in... It often comes back to themselves. It's pretty well documented that when you see somebody doing a thing that you know you do, that -- rather than turning that inward and reflecting on yourself -- you'll take out your anger at yourself on this other person, particularly on a child who can't really fight back.

Lorrie: Right.

JC: Someone you have power over, and that's a really common dynamic. I think that's often what's happening with teachers and parents in this situation, and sometimes just calling people's attention to what they're doing can help. This is one of the bits of parenting advice that I got really early on: if you wouldn't say it to your partner or to a good friend, don't say it to your child.

Lorrie: Wow. Yeah.

JC: "Why are you doing this? What's wrong with you? Are you stupid?" Imagine the worst things that kids maybe hear all the time from parents, from teachers, and would you say that to your partner? Would you say

that to a good friend? If you wouldn't, then stop and think. Why are you saying it to someone who's powerless to say anything in response? I feel like that is a really transformative piece of advice that I really held close to my heart as a teacher and as a parent.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: That's one read that I take on Snape here: it's about him, I guess is what I keep coming back to. It's all about Snape. It doesn't even matter who's in the room. Neville's an easy target.

Lorrie: Well, Neville reminds him of himself; he's telling Neville what maybe would have helped himself rally at least in the moment and it's completely not working. What he's trying to do, since Neville is not getting the potion right, is to bear down and put more negative attention on Neville and threaten him so that the fear of this negative attention will somehow create unknown reserves in Neville that he can draw upon. That is the risk of anyone who's going to try to be a parent or a teacher. This will happen. Projection is part of human interaction. You have to be aware of it, and you have to have tools to fight it. Obviously, no one has approached Snape successfully with this, so here he is, trying to up the stakes for Neville to make him feel even worse if he messes up. Then Hermione, being a normal human being with empathy and also Neville's friend, speaks up and offers to help Neville in a way that would actually

get better results, and Snape says, "I don't remember asking you to show off, Miss Granger," which goes further toward establishing the impossibility of Snape's character that he can't be reasoned with, because this is the direct contradiction of the way he was illogical and petty in the first book when he scolded Harry for not helping Neville. Okay, Snape is saying flat out, "These are the rules. I'm going to make it impossible for you to not deal with whatever I'm projecting out there." Hermione... If she's going to be herself and care about helping a friend and also helping somebody learn (which, as we know, is super important to Hermione and should be important to a teacher) Hermione will have to do it covertly against Snape's instructions. She's going to have to behave outside classroom law or disobey the teacher; that's the set-up he's dictating and she doesn't fool him. This is part of the theme in this book of following your conscience, knowing that that makes you an outlaw in some way. Then Snape does this thing that is so wrong.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: There are a lot of hair-splitting debates that I've seen among fans about different mean things Snape does and whether they constitute abuse or almost abuse, or just he's a real jerk but it doesn't constitute -- anyway. This, of course, is completely different according to each person's own experience and to context, so it's not something that can be settled so

easily in the text, but it's really valuable as a conversation between readers within the fandom. What does Snape do? Is it abusive? blah, blah, blah. "At the end of this lesson we will feed a few drops of this potion to your toad and see what happens." Okay, that's abuse. He is putting someone in a position of harming their own pet. That's twisted.

JC: Right.

Lorrie: Yeah. This is clear.

JC: I think it's popular science, but this idea that most people who end up being serial killers started out torturing little animals.

Lorrie: Oh, hurting animals. Yeah.

JC: The idea of something that's helpless and completely powerless to fight back.

Lorrie: Although I would argue that's not the dynamic Snape is calling up here. What he's calling up is the distress that people feel towards somebody that they want to protect. Why would this be a particularly cruel thing to do to Neville? Because Neville doesn't want anything bad to happen to this toad, and Neville is already down on himself for being incompetent; to yoke those together is inspired in a bad way. Yeah, so this is a moment of very twisted abusiveness, and all of the

children are being held hostage to this scene. Even being in the classroom and witnessing it is a harmful experience, and everybody there has to decide how they're going to process it. He's dividing the classroom into people who are going along with this and people who are uneasy with it; people who know that they're being made into enemies and they have to rally around Neville, people who are delighted at the sadism. There's all these very primal, untrustworthy human emotions swirling around that Snape has commanded with this. Meanwhile, there's this other side drama going on where Draco comes up to Harry and starts taunting him about Sirius Black.

JC: Oh, my God. Yeah.

Lorrie: Harry has no idea what he's talking about, and Draco's saying, "Well, I wouldn't be staying in school like a good boy," which Draco thinks is a good entry to taunt a Gryffindor. Gryffindors hate doing nothing. Snape does the same thing to Sirius later; he taunts Sirius for not being able to do things. It turns out that that was a good attempt, Draco, but it's not the right tactic to use on Harry. Harry is not motivated by vengeance. Draco is betting that Harry knows what Sirius Black did and wants to go out and hurt Sirius for it. Turns out -- and Draco doesn't know this yet -- Harry is more motivated by his 'saving people' thing. This attempt by Draco doesn't quite hit the mark, but Draco accidentally hits a better mark where Harry says, "What are you talking

about, Malfoy?" That's Harry's biggest motivation: knowing that there's a piece of his own story out there. He doesn't have it, but other people do and they're not giving it to him. That's Harry's biggest thing, and Draco is delighted to discover that he has accidentally come upon this. That drama is going on between Draco and Harry, and then everybody gathers around to watch Neville feed Trevor his potion. Then the narrator of this book gets in on it and takes a side; I can't be certain, but I believe that it wasn't conscious on the part of the author. Neville's there with his toad: "The Gryffindors watched fearfully. The Slytherins looked excited." So we have classic group dynamics of bullying and sadism here. Then when the potion works, this "wiped the smiles from every face." That's not mathematically accurate here. It wiped the smiles from the faces of people who are against the Gryffindors.

JC: Ooh, interesting.

Lorrie: This is not a neutral narrator; the narrator's siding with the Gryffindors. Whether or not that was intentional on the part of the author, what I would say about it is if I were her beta, I would have flagged that. I would have said, "Look at what you're doing here. Are you sure that's what you want to be doing?"

JC: Yeah, I completely missed that. I was totally in the space of just watching what was happening with the toad.

Lorrie: What do you mean it wiped the smiles from every face? Which faces? Whose point of view is this? What eyes are we looking through at this scene? You see what I mean, though, when I say that if an author had submitted this to me for beta, I would have said, "Look at that."

JC: Here's my question for you, then, because the story is from Harry's point of view anyway: what would you suggest that the author do differently there? What would be your suggestion?

Lorrie: I think she could have just added the word 'Slytherin' -- that it wiped the smiles from every Slytherin face -- because then it's more like somebody reporting what's happening.

JC: So what does it do to not have that word, then, to not have the word 'Slytherin' there? How does it affect the scene?

Lorrie: If you're reading this and you don't want to see the scene as though you were one of the Gryffindor children, it's a lot harder to notice it and set up an alternative viewpoint in yourself that's fighting the narrator and the author. Obviously, you're supposed to feel like you're one of the Gryffindors, but that's not how the whole series is written. Many scenes aren't like that; many scenes you're supposed to be able to see multiple

perspectives. This one, it slips into the Gryffindor-only team perspective, so as a reader, you're doing some work or you're letting the author tell you how to see it in a way that isn't consistent with the rest of the series. The third book is where I think there's the beginning of more subtlety about trying to understand the Slytherin characters as people and not as two-dimensional villains, and this is an area where the text itself is still in transition, I think. So the potion works correctly on Trevor. It wipes the smile from every face -- or every face that was already smiling -- and this is where I ask you as an educator, JC: what Snape has just done -- creating more and more fear in a student who's already struggling, and then forcing this staged production with the entire class as witness, testing whether or not he's going to harm his own pet that he doesn't want to harm -- what would you recommend that a school do?

JC: Oh, man. That's a big question. Just take a step back and think about how this chapter is structured. If you think about Neville in this chapter... Well, first of all, we get two lessons in a row on how to bully people.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Snape has just given a masterclass on how to be cruel to a person who is powerless, and then Lupin gives a class on how to respond to that with more bullying. The kids are learning that here's how adults do it.

Lorrie: Oi yai yai.

JC: There's so much that's wrong with that, but also, that's real. In the United States, almost every state has a code of ethics for teachers. That is written into law for the most part. Most of the time, in most places as part of teacher certification or taking the job or whatever, teachers have to acknowledge that they are to abide by this code of ethics; it will be things like professional responsibilities and what to do and not to do with personal information and not to expose kids to danger. Because we're adults working with minors -- it's that 'in loco parentis' situation, where you are legally responsible for the safety of children under your care -- states are very careful about setting up these legal responsibilities; if you violate this code of ethics, there are different ways of responding to that. Some of them can be at the school level, some at the district level; in the worst cases, it'll go to the state level, and the state will strip you of your certification and then ban you from working in the state in a public school. That's the worst thing... Well, no, jail is the worst thing. If it's an actual criminal offense, then yeah, there's more to it than that. There's different ways of handling it. I have no idea how this would work at Hogwarts, because it seems like there's no code of ethics in place when I look at that. But just thinking about how many adults I saw break what would be the code of ethics in my state -- which I actually, incidentally, just taught this week in one of my

courses -- I can just go down the list and go, "That one, that one, that one..." Most times in schools, someone reports that this happened. A parent or a student goes to the administration, says "This happened to me," and then there's an investigation, and then whatever consequences and however much it needs to be escalated go from there. Interestingly enough, most violations of codes of ethics -- and this is from a dissertation someone wrote in 2018 about this -- are either non-school related criminal activity (so your teacher's actually done some crimes outside of their job, and you're supposed to be an upstanding citizen and not a criminal, so that's a firing offense), sexual misconduct with students (which is probably, obviously, on the list), failure to disclose previous crimes you committed, physical aggression towards students, and then endangering student health or safety (physical and mental health). Those are the big categories that most of the time teachers are losing their licenses or getting fired over or even going to jail over in some cases. The largest percentage of violators -- no one will probably be surprised to hear this -- are male PE teachers.

Lorrie: Oh, my God.

JC: So there's lots of interesting things to unpack there.

Lorrie: My brain has just gone somewhere else. I'm in my happy place.

JC: But most minor violations will usually be handled at the school or district level, where teachers will get reprimanded and they'll have to maybe do some training or something like that. In the case of what Snape did here, that's 100 percent a firing offense, and lose your teaching certification and never work in this state or whatever as a teacher again. That's endangering the health and safety, and he's already done this a bunch of times -- just the times that we've known in the book. It's a firing offense.

Lorrie: Well, can you tell me exactly what... If you were explaining to somebody, "We are firing this teacher, this is exactly why," how would you put that?

JC: I guess you point to the particular piece of the code. Typically, teachers will not endanger the health and safety of students under their care, mental health, physical health. As a teacher, you're not supposed to let a kid take an aspirin in front of you.

Lorrie: Right.

JC: You have to say, "No, go to the nurse's office right now." I just heard a story the other day from one of my students that at their high school, a teacher was frustrated with a student and grabbed their backpack when the students started to turn away. The student fell and wasn't even hurt; the teacher got fired because they grabbed the student in a way that could be perceived as

aggressive or violent, so the codes are pretty clear. It all comes down to, "Don't touch the children. Don't express anger at the children; keep your calm. Don't put children in a situation where they could be mentally... Don't allow children to get bullied in front of you." All of that stuff, all of those things, are things that teachers can lose their jobs over, and Snape has done every one of those things in this chapter, honestly.

Lorrie: Well, this creates a culture clash when American 2024 readers read this, because the world that Snape is written in -- England around the turn of the century -- they're not as sensitive as the American standards that you just described from 2024.

JC: Oh, sure, yeah. And people of our parents' generation got hit by teachers in schools.

Lorrie: Right. We have this phenomenon where we have present-day American readers not even knowing how to grapple with the extremity of what's being permitted in Snape's classroom. 'Why is this even being allowed? Where is Dumbledore?' Well, what would have been expected of a headmaster in the Muggle equivalent of the world that is being portrayed here in a British boarding school? I don't know exactly, but definitely not the way Americans think about things in 2024.

JC: For sure. And we talked about this a bit in the last episode, but that whole British boarding school genre of

literature has a bit of a *Lord of the Flies* element to it, where it's... Yeah.

Lorrie: And actually, we have seen a reference to this in the previous chapter when... Okay. What would you do if you found out that a teacher did what Trelawney did and singled out individual 13-year-olds to predict their death?

JC: Yeah, that seems... That's also a violation, but one where, because it was in the context of the subject matter, that seems like a reprimand, an apology-provided situation. I'm thinking the modern-day equivalent of that would be teachers not handling sensitive subject matter appropriately and putting kids in positions where kids have to say, "I'm triggered by this," or we're having a discussion about enslaved people and their experiences and you're not handling this in a way that's very sensitive. That's the equivalent of it in a sense, where that teacher would be pulled aside and given a very strict talking-to and then we'd have a big talk. There would be an apology sent out and what we're going to do to fix the situation. I think that's kind of the equivalent.

Lorrie: She targets individuals, and she tells them, "According to my expertise..." What we have here is the knowledge that she always does this. She does this every year, and it has the effect that you mentioned on focus or on short-term memory, where McGonagall is

trying to teach a class and the kids' brains are shot, and she goes, "Oh, it's that." She says, "If it weren't for the fact that I never speak ill of my colleagues," and then she doesn't, so that gives a small hint into the Hogwarts culture. Yes, you're aware of the stuff that your colleagues do. I don't know who makes the rules -- if Dumbledore set them, or if they were in place and Dumbledore's just observing them -- but that is a hint that we got in the previous chapter.

JC: It's also interesting, too, that in the case of Trelawney and Snape and Lupin, we're talking about people who are there not because they're great teachers, but they're there because they are needing to be protective in some way. They aren't even there to be teachers, really.

Lorrie: We haven't even gotten out of the Potions classroom. It is what it is. This chapter is what it is.

JC: For sure, yeah.

Lorrie: And I'm not willing to compromise on this chapter's length.

JC: It's just going to be a long episode.

Lorrie: So many painful truths about human society get brought up here. One of them is Harry and Ron saying to each other, "Do you get the feeling Hermione is not

telling us something?" as she's not acknowledging the weirdness about her schedule. This is a really good parallel to what we find out later about how Lupin was not able to hide his lycanthropy from the other Marauders, eventually. This can only succeed for so long. You're living with these friends; they're going to notice.

JC: Makes me wonder who else knows. Dumbledore knows, McGonagall knows. Do any other teachers know?

Lorrie: About the Time-Turner?

JC: The Time-Turner.

Lorrie: I think they all have to know.

JC: You would think so, yeah.

Lorrie: There's a lot that the teachers keep secret from the students that they all know. Then we head off to Defense Against the Dark Arts, where Remus Lupin gives a practical lesson; we see just what a relief and a thrill it is to experience learning that way when he says, "Oh, this isn't going to be a book lesson, we're going to be *doing* something," and the kids can't believe their luck. It's immediately obvious that this is the right way, and Lupin does the best job, I think, of any Defense Against the Dark Arts class. I am slightly sad. *Fantastic*

Beasts: Crimes of Grindelwald, when that movie came out, we saw younger Albus Dumbledore teaching the same class the same way. I'm slightly sad that that took away Lupin's ownership of this method, but I'm going to do one of those fan things where I'm going to think that Lupin invented it anyway, just because he does such a good job. He is the character who introduces this effective method.

JC: A couple things that occurred to me there: one was I thought, Okay, they're thirteen now. Is there some kind of educational theory that's running through this? At the ages of eleven and twelve, the kids aren't quite mature enough. It's not until that third year when they've got some other stuff under their belt that we're really going to allow them to start doing this, to start casting these spells, so that was one thought that I had there. Another thought, though, was how interesting it is that this is Harry's model for how to teach Defense Against the Dark Arts, so in a couple of years when he becomes Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, he does what Lupin does here. It's 100 percent practical. Yeah.

Lorrie: So on their way to class, Peeves shows up and he drops a hint of the past. He starts taunting Lupin as "Loony, loopy Lupin." Lupin is prepared for this, because if that happened to me, I would be scared, and he doesn't seem to even break a sweat when this happens. He just pulls out his old bag of tricks on how to shut up Peeves and gets more respect from the students.

JC: The feeling that you get as the reader is that he's like, "Oh, Peeves, you old trickster, you!" He's very calm, and we haven't seen a lot of teachers like that other than Dumbledore. "Yeah, there's all this chaos happening, and I'm just going to quickly zip and then moving on, kids." Yeah.

Lorrie: But what Peeves could do to him is really serious.

JC: For sure.

Lorrie: And then we have the thing Snape says, which, in my opinion -- just because of who I am and what hurts me to remember -- I think this is the worst thing Snape ever does to Neville. I know, you could ask 10 people and get 10 different answers, but he says: "Possibly no one's warned you, Lupin, but this class contains Neville Longbottom. I would advise you not to entrust him with anything difficult. Not unless Miss Granger is hissing instructions in his ear." That he would poison a student's experience with a new teacher who's never met him, in front of the teacher, the student, and all the students' peers...

JC: Yep. That is another big violation, by the way, of every teacher code of ethics ever, and this is something that I talk about explicitly with my students. "You are going to be tempted..."

Lorrie: Oh, yeah.

JC: "When you're in the teacher's lounge, to talk shit about a student you don't like, and that it is unprofessional. You do not do it, and these are the reasons why." And that is a big... you'll get in trouble. You're going to get reprimanded, you're going to have to do training. Don't do it. Teachers are going to try to draw you into it, and you just have to be the professional and be the bigger person. And the fact that they're in the teacher's lounge...

Lorrie: Oh, my God. Yeah.

JC: Right. Ugh! I was just like, 'God damn, Snape.'

Lorrie: Yeah, and that Neville hasn't even had a chance.

JC: To do it in front of the kids, too. This is real, though. Teachers really do this.

Lorrie: Yeah. The humiliation aspect, yeah. The theater.

JC: That humiliation is such a powerful drug, and it's one of the reasons why this is in every code of ethics for teachers ever. Teachers will do that. Teachers will talk shit about other teachers, or students, in front of students. Ugh, yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah, and he also sends that oblique message to Hermione that defines the terms of their relationship. He sees her; they're not allies. He's going to set things up so she has to be a rule breaker, but he also won't stop her or punish her, so you can't opt out of this atmosphere he's creating. Then that's when Lupin says the thing that makes him such a beloved character, I think, to so many readers: "I was hoping that Neville would assist me with the first stage of the operation, and I'm sure he will perform it admirably." Wow, someone's standing up to Snape.

JC: And protecting Neville, and demonstrating complete confidence that Neville will be able to be successful.

Lorrie: And he's saying, "I see the twisted dynamic that you're setting up, and I'm saying that's twisted." He's calling out what Snape has just done and he set it back to neutral. "No. In this classroom, we think well of humans. We let them do the things that they're supposed to be learning."

JC: "We're going to have a growth mindset about Neville Longbottom, Mr. Snape."

Lorrie: Oi yai yai. So there's that dynamic, and I have so frequently fantasized: wouldn't it have been great if Lupin had left it at that? Then it would have been so much better.

JC: Or had gone with the balloon animal strategies. I'm just going to rewrite the scene in my mind.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: We're going to turn Snape into a balloon animal Snape that you can then pop with a pin. Yes.

Lorrie: Or even if he had said, "Severus Snape has just presented this dynamic; we're going to reject it. That's not how we do things here. That's not the way to learn. Now, back to the lesson," just to call it out and to try to halt it that way. So yeah. Anyway, that's that threshold moment. Then he teaches the kids this brilliant method of disempowering your fear by envisioning something funny and getting the group momentum to help bring the fear back to manageable size. When I had the fifth grade reading group, I asked the kids, "What is Lupin teaching here?" and this kid just said, automatically, "Fighting fear through community and humor." Wow. Yeah, that's it. Yes, full marks.

JC: I remember seeing a comic about this scene and it was like, "All right, kids, time to open the trauma closet."

Lorrie: Yeah!

JC: Now "trauma closet" is the term in my head that I can't help using here. I see that there's so many levels on which to think about this scene. One is this is the

world they live in, there is bad shit out there, and let's start with one in a controlled environment. "Let me show you how to handle it, and let's just practice it right now." Okay, yeah, that's the world they live in, that totally makes sense. From a 21st century perspective, it's like, "Holy shit." You're going to ask and then say, "Wow, when I open this door, the thing that you fear the most is going to appear in front of all of your 13-year-old peers..."

Lorrie: Everybody.

JC: "And you're going to have to deal with it on the spot." What the fuck are we doing to these children?

Lorrie: You might not even know what it's going to look like until you see it yourself. Yeah.

JC: Yeah. And I think that the first time I read this book, I didn't know what that fear would be.

Lorrie: Wow.

JC: Now I do, and I wouldn't want to see it myself. I wouldn't want anybody else to have to see it.

Lorrie: Yeah. I don't trust people to know. I don't trust people to have that knowledge about me.

JC: The ammunition you're giving me, for one thing, but

also the horror of what could have popped up. Now, this is a room full of children who've been relatively sheltered, so it's things like a spider, et cetera. Harry's really worried about 'Why did Lupin stop me from experiencing the boggart,' but Lupin didn't know any of those children. He didn't know...

Lorrie: Right. He made a bunch of assumptions.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And teachers do this all the time, when teachers walk into conversations about things and they haven't really thought through what might happen.

Lorrie: Oh, yeah.

JC: So even something as ordinary as having a discussion in your classroom about moms...

Lorrie: Oh, yes. Right.

JC: In an elementary school classroom, and all the awful things that can happen that you as a teacher may not be prepared for, and you're going to end up with crying children. Lupin hasn't thought this through, but again, none of these people has any teacher training.

Lorrie: I do love that it's done this way for the book, even though -- in terms of moving it to an actual classroom -- yeah, that breaks down.

JC: Yeah. It's still in the world of fantasy, for sure.

Lorrie: Yeah. When it comes to reading it allegorically -- where you're writing this for individual children reading, who can then take the lesson that they're reading about and applying it into their own minds -- it's just in your own head. You don't have to tell anybody else. In that sense, to me, this is a completely successful method. I really love it. Then we get this uneasy difference between what Lupin assumes will happen for Harry; Lupin lets Harry know that he's making this assumption that Harry's in a different category. I don't even want to talk about what he grooms the children to do... Okay, let's just do this. Neville reveals that his boggart is Snape, which the students laugh at -- I think not laughing *at* Neville, but just like, "Okay, that's funny and unusual, but we know exactly why that would be true."

JC: They've just walked from another class where... yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Okay, before we move on, can I just say I'm pretty sure it's just Gryffindors in this class, or are they with another group?

Lorrie: All the students that I see mentioned are Gryffindors.

JC: So there's at least that.

Lorrie: There's some safety, yes.

JC: There's some safety there, yeah.

Lorrie: Right. In *Crimes of Grindelwald*, when we have this scene, it's a mixed class and there are definitely people seeing their enemies' biggest vulnerabilities. But that's why the *Fantastic Beasts* movies are adult movies, and why *Harry Potter* is a children's series. So yeah, this brilliant Riddikulus charm... The students are learning that, and then when everybody finds out that Neville's boggart takes the form of Professor Snape... This was the thing that I talked to... when my older child was seven and was reading the series for the first time -- or, at this point, I was still mostly reading it to her -- and we got to the whole dressing up Snape in Neville's grandmother's clothing. She was upset at Neville for doing that to Snape, and I said, "Whose idea was it?" and she got it right away. She goes, "Oh, it wasn't Neville's idea." It's not the kid's fault. Lupin is coaching. He says, "'Hmmm... Neville, I believe you live with your grandmother.' 'Er -- yes. But -- I don't want the boggart to turn into her, either.' 'No, no, you misunderstand me,' said Professor Lupin, now smiling. 'I wonder, could you

tell us what sort of clothes your grandmother usually wears?' Neville looked startled, but said, 'Well, always the same hat. A tall one with a stuffed vulture on top. And a long dress... green normally... and sometimes a fox-fur scarf.' 'And a handbag?' prompted Professor Lupin. 'A big red one,' said Neville. 'Right then,' said Professor Lupin. 'Can you picture those clothes very clearly, Neville? Can you see them in your mind's eye?' 'Yes,' said Neville uncertainly, plainly wondering what was coming next. 'When the boggart bursts out of this wardrobe, Neville, and sees you, it will assume the form of Professor Snape,' said Lupin, 'and you will raise your wand -- thus -- and cry Riddikulus -- and concentrate hard on your grandmother's clothes. If all goes well, Professor Boggart Snape will be forced into that vulture-topped hat, and that green dress, with that big red handbag.' There was a great shout of laughter." At this point, I want to give a shout-out of love to fandom cosplayers who have made beautiful treasures of cosplaying Boggart Snape. It can mean so many things when a fan chooses to put their love and labor into this image. One of the things is, for example, reclaiming the power of the old hag as an image; another is the brilliance required to create a vulture hat that can then be disassembled and taken through security screenings when you're flying to a con. I've seen so much genius around Boggart Snape cosplay, and in the past year I've been approached by fans asking me with concern: "I've read what you wrote about this scene in your book. Do you think it's okay? Do you think it's ethical? I brought

that cosplay. Do you think I should not wear it?" What I've told people is, "I think that the fandom understanding of this image of Boggart Snape is completely different, has its own life and its own meaning. I love it, I love what people do with it, I love what people identify with it." So there's that.

JC: I think it's very powerful reclaiming a thing, putting love into it and redefining it. Takes some of the power away from the author.

Lorrie: And it has so many other associations for people. So Neville follows Lupin's directions; Snape shows up, and the Snape Boggart's clothes get changed into Augusta Longbottom's clothes and her huge crimson handbag, and there's a roar of laughter. How would you recommend that a school deal with what Lupin has just done?

JC: I think, once again, we are at a code of ethics violation, but there's a lot of layers to it. It seems like the kind of thing where there would be some serious conversations with the teacher but also with the students, and the teacher would have to then come back and talk with the students and say, "Look, I did this thing and I should not have done it. These are the reasons why, and let's talk about how you felt in that situation." There's lots of conversations with a lot of people that would have to be had here, because whenever you have an adult modeling behavior that is

harmful and essentially teaching children how to cause harm -- especially in the context of a lesson like this -- it's a different vibe from Snape just being cruel to chosen people in his class. That's also horrible, but this is in the context of instruction, and instruction about something really important, so it feels like a lot of people would have to be involved in that and it would need to be rectified.

Lorrie: How would you describe what Lupin has done and why it's a problem?

JC: I'm trying to figure out -- which thing would you point to?

Lorrie: Right?

JC: I think I want to come back around to... The teacher explicitly taught kids to harm other people, or to do something harmful and disrespectful, in the context of this practical exercise. I'm trying to think what that would look like in our world. Would it be like teaching kids to punch a Nazi? Would it be like that? I don't know. I'm trying to think what would be an equivalent.

Lorrie: Well, the thing is, if you're teaching kids to punch a Nazi, there's a number of problems there, but it's not scapegoating.

JC: Yeah, it's not scapegoating.

Lorrie: It's not a third party.

JC: Okay, so I'm thinking about the fact that right now at the time that we're recording this, a really big issue in schools, but on college campuses as well, is how to have conversations around the conflict in the Middle East.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: So how do you have conversations about atrocities that are happening without scapegoating any particular group of people? There are plenty of instances already of teachers handling this badly, to the point that a lot of teachers are just like, "You know what? I'm not going to touch it, because I don't trust that I can do a nuanced job of this." That's happening at universities as well, so maybe that's a better example. I think 'scapegoating' is the appropriate word there, but to think about... There's so much happening here that I have problems with, honestly.

Lorrie: Right.

JC: I get that we're in a fantasy world, but the whole idea of putting a kid in front of a trauma closet, not putting any trigger warnings on any of this, and not having any sort of precautions in place for what would you do if what the boggart turns into is something unimaginably

horrible that traumatizes everyone in the room... I don't know. There's so many things going wrong here, I don't know where to start. "Don't do this lesson!" I don't know, but it's a classic Hogwarts lesson. It's like rolling a condom on a banana. It's the classic lesson that apparently you have to experience at some point during your time at Hogwarts.

Lorrie: Is this chapter too big for us?

JC: We've been talking for an hour and a half.

Lorrie: Oh, I've not even started. Oh, God.

JC: Oh, my gosh.

Lorrie: So is this transphobic, what Lupin has done?

JC: I don't know how else to describe it.

Lorrie: Right?

JC: Put a man in women's clothes and then mock that, with the intention of it being mockworthy or funny... I don't know how else you interpret that.

Lorrie: And it's disempowering.

JC: And disempowering, and then you're using the word Riddikulus... That a man wearing women's clothes is

inherently 'ridiculous'; it's the first use of the spell. It's hard not to say that's transphobia. That's taking the idea that any man who would do that is ridiculous in some way, they've worthy of being mocked. Yeah, I don't know how... I don't even know what word... Transmisogyny, for sure.

Lorrie: So when I was thinking about how to rewrite this chapter for the 2022 edition, the post-TERFpocalyptic edition of my Snape book, I realized my tone was really diffident because I was not very well educated. I had not done very much work as a cis person to educate myself on transcritical perspectives; my lack of confidence was showing through in my argument, so I hired some sensitivity readers from the community. I found ten Harry Potter fans from trans and non-binary communities and sent out queries, and I paid them because that's part of what I do for offsetting any funds that I spent that might eventually benefit J.K. Rowling or Warner Brothers. I don't want to be funding transphobia. Sometimes, because of what I've chosen to do, I will buy something that is licensed, and then I try to offset that with donations to trans rights organizations or to individuals. So I got the ten beta readers and I asked them: what is your reaction to the Snape Boggart scene, any aspect of it? Do you feel that your gender influences your reaction to this scene? What is your gender as you define it, if you feel comfortable answering? Did your feelings on this passage change after TERFpocalypse? And what do you think might be important to include in a

discussion of this scene? I believe that's the first time I used the term 'TERFpocalypse' and I didn't define it; no one had the slightest doubt what I was talking about. I was very glad to have asked several people; ten is a good number, I felt, because it showed me the range in opinions, and that was so helpful. Also, I wanted everyone to know that no one person is speaking for a whole group; you're just speaking for yourself. I did that, and then at the same time, I hired a professional sensitivity reader named Charles Waltz, who was a longtime Harry Potter fan and had done academic work in the fandom. He wrote his 2010 master's thesis on trans HP cosplay "back before that became a complicated proposition." That was a really moving experience to go through with Charles, because after his transition and then after TERFpocalypse, he didn't engage with Harry Potter for a long time, even though he had really loved that series and it had been a big part of his life. So re-approaching it with this work, I asked, "Are you willing to do this? Would you like to take this on?" He was very interested and gave me priceless feedback, because sensitivity reading is emotional labor, for which I paid him. I'm thankful whenever anyone has the energy to take one for the team and be the person providing education at the time. I asked a number of specific questions as well as the overall ones, and the first thing was, "What do I call this?" because the phrase that I was starting with was 'anti-trans harassment'; that seemed, to me, accurate, but it didn't have any emotional resonance. Charles suggested 'transphobic

bullying'. I thought, 'Okay, but I needed permission.' This is just an etymology geek thing: I needed permission to apply the word 'transphobia' to something that I don't think is about fear. I think this is bigotry without fear. I think it's just plain-out hate, so I wasn't sure... What do you call it when it's just hate? I don't think it stems from fear of trans people. It's something colder than that. Charles wrote back: "You're right that the phobia linguistically points to fear, but semantically, its range includes aversion, hatred, discrimination, etc. Anti-trans harassment, while technically accurate, also dampens the impact in a moment where the charge of the word 'transphobic' is necessary to draw attention to the seriousness of the problem. Also, I think this is more appropriately called 'bullying' because of the very personal mob hatred dynamic." Ah, Charles... wow. Thank you. Great, done! That's the term I used, 'transphobic bullying'. Then he also pointed out that I had written that Snape in Augusta Longbottom's clothing was an image with sexist/ageist implications, and he suggested that I add 'cissexist', which he explained as "assuming only cisgender identities and expressions are valid." Okay, so I did that. I had described the boggart as Snape in women's clothing, and this was embarrassingly basic, I should have realized; Charles said, "No, say 'Augusta Longbottom's clothing', because calling certain clothing 'women's' or 'men's' naturalizes the policing of certain clothes as masculine or feminine. It takes agency away from trans people." Yeah, he's right. And the way Charles defined the joke -- the joke

that Lupin was making, the punchline: "The gender expression is involuntary. The crux of the humor for a cisnet gaze is Snape's emasculation through forced feminization and the resulting incongruity of gender signifiers." Wow. Yeah, that's it. There you have it. He encouraged me to be more specific. I said, "Lupin has legitimized a form of hatred." He said, "Clarify what kind: a form of transphobia, a form of hatred which hinges on the ridicule of gender expression perceived as feminine or incongruous for a man, a form of hatred which builds the confidence of a cisgender boy by rendering gender expansiveness ridiculous..." So yeah, priceless feedback from Charles. Then I said to Charles that I was alarmed when Lupin used the word 'forced'. "If all goes well, Professor Boggart Snape will be 'forced' into that vulture-topped hat." Charles said, "That hinges on a lack of consent." What we're talking about here is an act of violence of men against men using trans signifiers, and it only makes sense if transgender expressions are already considered ridiculous and abject." Then I said to Charles, "I wrote that it can be funny to imagine Snape in a vulture hat, or, depending on your life perspective, it can also be not so funny." Charles made this point that came to be so fundamental to me: "This is an important point about gaze. What this effectively does is shut out non-cisgender readers while elevating a transphobic gaze. Forcing a Snape Doppelganger to wear Neville's grandmother's vulture hat is only funny if you're in a position and inclination to designate some gender expressions as illegitimate." Once Charles laid it out for

me that way, that helped me realize what I wanted to do as a writer was make a deliberate choice to center a gaze that would not participate in transphobia. So then I talked to Charles about the problem that sometimes readers don't want to hear any criticism of the boggart scene, because they're so glad to see something happening in response to Snape being a classroom bully. Charles was so precise in his response about the dynamics of accountability: "It's like when someone who does an objectionable action is called 'fat'. Fatness can't be made a synecdoche for the objectionable action. Similarly, the force of this scene is to yoke together Snape's objectionable qualities with perceived gender transgression. This is particularly problematic because Snape's characterization as deceptive and vindictive map on to transmisogynistic stereotypes." Wow, yeah. And then Charles helped me with the ending for this, because I did want my critique of this transphobia in the scene to coexist with the good elements of this scene also, because this scene is so complicated. I had originally written in my draft, "Even accounting for these complexities, Lupin's Boggart class is the best demonstration of official Defense Against Dark Arts teaching." Charles said, "Would drop this clause because it can be perceived to excuse what happened before." Yeah, he was right. Okay, this is what I ended up writing because of Charles's feedback: "Lupin's Boggart class is the best demonstration of official Defense Against the Dark Arts teaching we see in the series. He teaches an essential skill well to the greatest

number of students. He shows how good it feels to learn through practical action and how group efforts can make things easier. But because his teaching has been effective -- he has been kind to Neville and Snape has been so abusive -- it can be trickier for readers to identify the damaging aspects of his response to Snape." That's how Charles helped me close out that discussion of that passage in Chapter Three of my Snape book.

JC: I really appreciate, from a writing perspective, your talking about the experience of working with sensitivity readers in this case, because I think that it's such a great example of how important that is; for other people who are listening to this, who may be writers, I think you've highlighted why that's such a critical practice for writers to engage in, so I think that's fantastic. Also, it's really interesting to listen to the way that your thoughts evolved on this as you worked with sensitivity readers. That's really fascinating for me, from the perspective of someone who really is fascinated by learning and how people build up to perspectives and come to understand complex issues. I found that part fascinating, too. It's really interesting to listen to the -- ethnography is the wrong word, but I don't know... a detailed narrative of how you experienced that process in conjunction with another person, because -- I'm going to go all Vygotsky here, but the way that meaning is made between people who are using language to do, describe, and discuss what's happening, and how they're both making

meaning of it together and then the meaning is in the middle. That's a really interesting example of that and of your writing process.

Lorrie: It took a lot of love to go through this. Charles had to go back into the love that he remembered from 2010 and earlier, and it took a lot of love from the ten sensitivity readers that I recruited from various communities to go through what this series had meant to them and how they responded to TERFpocalypse and to tell me. I'm going to thank the readers: of the ten sensitivity readers that I hired, in addition to Charles (Waltz), the seven who wanted to be identified are Kai DellaVecchia, Tara Hlavinka, Peat Lawrence, Veridian Montaña, Damon Peter Reichman, Sebastian Romrell and Satis. Thank you, folks. Just when I think that I don't have any more strength in me to respond to this chapter, there's a part that gets me all over again. We do find out later Harry notices that Lupin doesn't call on him and they do talk about it later, and it's for an overt reason, which makes sense in the story, but he also won't let Hermione address the boggart and we never learn why. She notices.

JC: Yeah, that felt like a little bit of an... Yeah. At the end of this chapter, I thought, we never do find out, and that was like... why don't we ever... Hmm.

Lorrie: Yeah. She says, "'He seems like a very good teacher,' said Hermione approvingly, 'but I wish I could

have had a turn with the boggart--' 'What would it have been for you?' said Ron, sniggering. 'A piece of homework that only got nine out of ten?'" We do get the payoff from this setup later on: during the year-end examinations, Hermione fails this question in the DADA practical exam. She can't vanquish a boggart and she bursts out screaming that McGonagall is telling her that she has failed, so Ron is pretty much correct and this is left as a joke. Hermione is a special needs student. Lupin is not only not teaching to her; Lupin is doing a really good job of teaching to the middle, to the majority of the class. This is in contrast to Snape, who doesn't know how to teach anybody except someone who thinks exactly like him, which makes him a great teacher for Hermione actually. She learned tons from him even though he's a nasty piece of work, but she learns more from him than she does from teachers who are kind but don't teach to her. She does not learn anything in Defense Against the Dark Arts this year except what Snape taught her. Lupin refuses to teach her. He doesn't teach her how to fight a boggart; he prevents her, and she fails it. This is so frequently how special needs students who are on the gifted end of the spectrum are treated, where not only do they not get the accommodations that they need; they're not even given your basic teaching. They're either completely ignored or they're used to co-teach. They're told to teach the other students, and there's an attitude of anger. 'Why are you even considering yourself deserving of any special attention? You can just figure this out on your

own. You're privileged. You don't deserve as much attention as the average student gets, let alone a special needs student. You're on your own.' And then, if those students don't perform well, everyone's shocked. But Lupin has just left her uneducated. He has refused to teach her, and he won't tell her why; he never does. But what we find out later in this volume is that he is scared of her.

JC: Okay, I see what you mean.

Lorrie: He is straight-up afraid of Hermione. When she reveals that she knows he's a werewolf, he says very nervously, "Yep, brightest witch of her age." He's been afraid of her, and when he says, "Oh, did you figure that out because of Professor Snape's assignment?" and she goes, "Partly..." Yeah, no, she could have figured it out anyway, Remus, and you knew that.

JC: I'm trying to reconcile this idea that he comes into the room and he doesn't know any of these kids, really. He knows who Harry is, but he's got all of this... He makes everybody open the trauma closet, so my first thought on this was, 'Why did Hermione not get a chance?' I knew that for Harry, he really thought that whatever... He saw on the train and also knows that Harry has genuine trauma in his past. There was at least a moment of, "I'm not going to expose all the children in this room to that." That made me wonder: was it a conscious choice to exclude Hermione, and if

so, what did he think Hermione's fear would be? I guess my question for you is: do you think that, at this point, he was afraid of what Hermione's boggart would turn into, that it might be him? Or do you think that it was just to give Hermione as little instruction as possible?

Lorrie: I don't think it was about what he thought Hermione would show as her fear. There's a word that gives away that it's Lupin's own fear. "Five each to Hermione and Harry." 'But I didn't do anything,' said Harry. 'You and Hermione answered my questions correctly at the start of the class, Harry,' Lupin said lightly. 'Very well, everyone, an excellent lesson.'" That word 'lightly'. When Lupin is nervous, he's super casual and he's light; that's how he responds to Peeves, when Peeves calls him 'looney'. He gives five each to Hermione and Harry, and Harry says, "But I didn't do anything," and Lupin mentions Hermione, too. He's nervous about something; it's on his mind. It's not exactly one for one, but it feels like he gave Hermione's turn to Neville because... Okay, so the boggart turns into the spider and Ron takes its legs off. Then the boggart comes to a halt at Harry's feet, and that's when Lupin hurries forward and says, "Here," and then he turns the boggart into a silvery white orb. Then he banishes it with Riddikulus, and then he says, "Forward, Neville, and finish him off!" Then "Neville charges forth, looking determined. 'Riddikulus!' he shouted, and they had a split second's view of Snape in his lacy dress before Neville let out a great 'Ha!' of laughter, and the

boggart exploded, burst into a thousand tiny wisps of smoke, and was gone. 'Excellent!' cried Professor Lupin as the class broke into applause. 'Excellent, Neville.'" This is great. Neville has truly made strides here; Lupin has made that happen. He hasn't given Harry a turn; we know why. He hasn't given Hermione a turn. Did he give hers to Neville? Did he help one special needs student at the expense of another? It's not one for one, but that's part of it. He's speaking lightly, so we know it's about his own fear. We've just seen the silvery orb. Hermione has no idea why he hasn't called on her, and Hermione would have some idea if there were anything going on, but she doesn't know why. Then later on, we have him saying, "How did you know I was a werewolf?" and she says, "Oh, three reasons." Meanwhile, I'm left here upset because this reminds me of times that gifted students are given less instruction than everybody else — not even appropriate instructions, but none — and then fail.

JC: It's interesting. I have such a different experience to all of this. Part of it is having been a teacher, especially being a math teacher and seeing the ways that in a math classroom, the gifted students are the only ones often who are getting any attention from the teacher, who are getting the positive attention from the teacher. It's really common to walk into a math classroom and see the Hermiones, or the ones who are interacting with the teacher, who are getting praised. That's a really common experience; it's the kids at the other end of the

spectrum who are being completely ignored and not taught anything. I'm thinking from a math perspective. Wow, that's so interesting... And watching Lupin work with Neville here, because Neville is the kid who just came out of Snape's class traumatized.

Lorrie: Yep.

JC: As a teacher, every day you have to look at the kids you have in your room and you have to think, "Okay, what can I do here?" Yeah, you're thinking it's a room full of individuals, but you also think you have to think of them as collective and there will be individuals that stand out to you any particular day. On this day, it was so clear to Lupin that Neville was the one who needed him, who needed something extra, and very often kids with learning disabilities are the ones who don't get the support that they need. There's an assumption of, "Okay, well, you have your list of accommodations, I provided them," or "I don't have the same expectations for you as I do everyone else in the room, because you have some kind of disability." Neville is clearly regarded by Snape, and who knows by who else, as someone who just is never going to be... He might as well be a Squib. The low expectations that at least Snape has for Neville... Lupin directly addresses that and is like, "No, I'm going to have high expectations for Neville. In fact, Neville is the one who is going to start and finish this lesson and show that he can do it, and I'm going to coach him in ways that are really problematic, but I'm

going to coach him to do that." That's what I see in this scene: I see a teacher looking at the room and saying, "Okay, I cannot give every single kid in this room what they need today, but this kid is the neediest one, and I'm going to do my best to make a difference there." Now, that's just looking at this scene today and I don't remember... Going forward, I'm going to definitely pay more attention to how Lupin interacts with Hermione. That's what my read on that is, from the perspective of being a teacher.

Lorrie: And I'm fighting that. I think that's quite a mainstream fandom response to it that I've been fighting because it's been significant to me, because the chapter ends on that question. It's not a throwaway. It's meant to linger. After everything that has happened in this very eventful chapter, why is that the ending? Why is that the unanswered question that's presented as a mystery to be solved later? That's interesting. And why is giving Neville the attention he needs presented at the expense of your basic rights that Hermione, as a student in the class, should have? Why is she not allowed at all to participate in this lesson? Why is she being shut out on purpose, to the point that people notice and the teacher won't say? This was really personal to me, because when my older child was in grade school and could have been perceived as a Hermione, she very much was not getting extra or any attention in class for her own learning. She was not only left to say, "Well, you can just figure it out on your own, read the textbook and figure it

out," but she was deliberately seated next to one child who, by second grade, had, I think -- I believe it was dyslexia. He couldn't read, and through that year she taught him to read, and that was her role in class as a fellow second grader. The next year after that, she was deliberately seated next to the kid with really severe ADHD. The one who -- I like this kid a lot, he's very likable. Every time I looked at him, I pictured Animal from the Muppets. He was really difficult to address in class while trying to teach a class, so my child was deliberately seated next to him and came home from school exhausted every day. Could not learn her own stuff because he was always talking to her. He was always talking.

JC: Yeah, what you're describing here is a really well-documented phenomenon in the literature and it's heavily gendered. It's always a girl.

Lorrie: Yep.

JC: It's always a girl who is perceived by the teacher as being really smart and being more mature than the other kids, and that girl is always put in charge of typically a boy who has problems, and it's incredibly gendered. It's such a known phenomenon that it has a name that I can't think of right now, but yeah. This is something that we explicitly address with particularly elementary teachers, because we're like, "Don't do this. Don't do this to kids. It's unfair on so many levels."

Lorrie: I call it 'exploitation'.

JC: Yeah. It's labor. You're asking... Yeah.

Lorrie: Unpaid child labor.

JC: Yep. Yep, absolutely. And I'm sorry that that happened to her. That's really shitty.

Lorrie: All year.

JC: It's so shitty.

Lorrie: And when he wasn't talking to her, he was falling off the back of his chair because he was balancing it precariously. Great kid. I remember being really touched when we ran into his mom in the neighborhood, and she just looked straight at my eight-year-old and said 'hello' to her in this super thankful, appreciative way. "I understand what you, little eight-year-old girl, are doing for my child." Obviously, the kids were friends, but it was exhausting and it had a really bad effect on my child's ability to do her homework that year, which resulted in some major problems the following year. And yeah, there was very much an attitude of, "What are you complaining about?"

JC: Yeah, the idea that that's what well-behaved girls are for...

Lorrie: Yeah. "Who cares? You don't have a problem."

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: And she got less instruction than your average student in that class, while being overburdened. We see Hermione has just saved Neville's toad.

JC: Yeah, and Hermione is really taking that role on with Neville.

Lorrie: And Snape is putting her in that role and telling her, "This is where I'm forcing you to be, and I'm going to pick on you for it while it's happening. Just go ahead and stop me." Lupin is refusing to teach her and not telling her why; then she ends up failing that question in her year-end exam, and the only thing she learns in Defense Against the Dark Arts is from the mean guy this year.

JC: I'm trying to remember, and we'll see as we go forward, what other Defense Against the Dark Arts lessons we see.

Lorrie: We'll see.

JC: My memory of this book is spotty.

Lorrie: So, yeah. Anyway, I have issues with Lupin, and

they are very much what we've been talking about all along as the issues that people have when somebody reminds you of your own issues. But yeah, I know that this chapter made this character extremely beloved to a really large number of Harry Potter fans, and for me, oh, there was a lot going on.

JC: It's an incredibly complex chapter.

Lorrie: I have never thought about this until now, but the questions I've been asking you - what would you have done if you were around teachers who had just had the two classes that Snape and Lupin just taught -- and I thought, 'If I knew them as people, I would have had a much easier time talking to Snape about what he had just done.' In my life, I have talked to people who are like Snape, so I know what I would have done is just walk into his office, saying, "What the heck was that? What is wrong with you? You know what you did!"

JC: Okay, here's what I'm imagining: the administrator at a school, twice a year, has to go and do an evaluation of all the teachers. This is required by the state, and there's a form that you are trained on, blah, blah, blah. I'm imagining the post-conference conversation with Snape.

Lorrie: Oh, my God. Yeah.

JC: Also, the pre-conference would be really fun.

"Snape, what are your goals in this lesson? What should I be looking for?"

Lorrie: Ugh.

JC: Oh, my God. I can imagine having that conversation with Lupin. I cannot imagine what that would look like with Snape.

Lorrie: With Snape it would be really easy. "You know exactly why you did that. Don't give me that shit. You know exactly why you did that." With Lupin, his lies to himself are so difficult to grapple with.

JC: The other thing that I would say, though, that's interesting about this is -- again, I'm imagining this imaginary POP cycle. We call it a pre-observation/observation/post-observation conference. I'm imagining a POP cycle with Snape versus Lupin, and the thing is that Lupin would be the easy one because he would know what things to say. As an observer, you would go, "Check, check, check, check, check. I'm seeing lots of great things happening here. Some room for growth that we talked about in the post cycle. Great."

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Right. Maybe the administrator would notice like the transphobic bullying piece of this, maybe they wouldn't; my money is on one more than the other. I'm having a

hard time even envisioning that cycle, how that would happen with Snape at all, because it's not as simple as yelling at him and telling him what he did wrong. That's not the way that the profession works.

Lorrie: No, no.

JC: The complexity, as an administrator, of how you would do that...

Lorrie: Well, I'm not a professional, so I don't have to worry about that, but this is an essential quality of the character Remus Lupin: he is so slippery. He knows how to present himself so that he comes off as the good guy.

JC: As a matter of survival, I think.

Lorrie: See, this is what I hear as people making excuses for Lupin, even though that's not what's happening, because that's how I would hear it in my own head if I was thinking about it to myself.

JC: Oh, that's interesting. Yeah. I'm imagining... I'm thinking the dude's a werewolf and doesn't want anybody to know...

Lorrie: Yeah, I know.

JC: So how does he present himself as "not a werewolf?"

Look the other way!"

Lorrie: Yeah. I have a bunch of people in the fandom saying, "Oh, but don't you understand how hard it is for him?" and I'm like, "Wahwahwah," which I realized, "Oh, that's how I would say it to myself, if I thought that I was lying to myself." The projection... I can try to help projecting, especially if people point it out to me or if I notice it myself, but it's a thing that happens.

JC: There's a whole big issue here, too -- and then we'll get to this later in the book, I think -- why did Lupin take this job in the first place? Why is he here? The very real question of, "You hired a werewolf? At a boarding school?! Hmm, that doesn't seem like a great idea." It doesn't seem like a good position for Lupin to accept. I don't know. I think we're going to learn more detail about that later, but there's a little bit of, "Okay, look..."

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: I can't even think of what would be a good example, especially if you start thinking about Lupin as a metaphor for disability. I can't even begin to think of an example of what this would look like in a modern 21st century context.

Lorrie: I actually was a guest on an Alohomora episode where they discussed the chapter where Snape walks in with potion and Lupin drinks it, and Harry is freaking out

going, "How can you drink something Snape brewed? Don't you know?" We got a lot into disability, and what Dumbledore and Lupin are trying to learn through experience might be possible in a society that is very discriminatory. Lupin is, in many ways, a test case with all of the stress that places on anyone who's going to be a token or a first, or a pioneer or a perfect example, like a Jackie Robinson. You can't be a person; you have to be a saint.

JC: Oh, that's interesting.

Lorrie: But they don't know. Dumbledore and Lupin don't have the experience to know ahead of time what protections Lupin might need. They're doing this for the first time; that is in fact something that people have to do if they're going to try to change discrimination, and the kinds of mistakes you make can be really high-stakes. But anyway, there's a serial killer on the loose, and there's somebody who knows him better than anyone in the world who also needs a job because nobody's hiring. Not werewolves.

JC: Interesting. It's incredibly complicated.

Lorrie: Yeah, and he's good at the job. He's a good teacher.

JC: He is. He would absolutely get good marks on my evaluation of him, with maybe a really strongly... Pull

him aside, "Look..."

Lorrie: You cannot... you can't scapegoat a completely innocent population that's so easy to pick on because the bigotry is lying latent, waiting for any bad actor to weaponize. You can't do that. That's actually evil. Don't do that. That was harmful.

JC: And this is a point, too, where we talked the very beginning of this entire podcast about fatphobia, and where you have to think to yourself, 'Is this the author or the character?' You raised this point at the beginning of this episode as well. Is it the author or the character? I'm curious to know what you think here.

Lorrie: I think it's the author. I think she thought, 'What would be a comeback to Snape's bullying that would be so total that it would be a triumph, unquestioning, that would create good feeling?' I think she thought, 'This... this is hilarious, everybody will think this is funny.' It's just like the sentence, "The smile was wiped off of every person's face." Who is this 'everybody'? What assumption does that reveal, and who is making that assumption in both cases? Because writers are human, and because books are made of words and writers choose each word, I think it's the writer. Yeah, I would love some other irrefutable response from Lupin to shut down Snape's bullying that would call out what Snape was actually doing and how damaging it was and put a stop to it in some irrefutable way, not by harnessing the

power of bigotry against a completely unrelated set of people.

JC: Right.

Lorrie: This was apparent before, but after TERFpocalypse it's become a completely different, extraordinarily painful issue.

JC: And I think that I want to put this one on the author. I think this is the thing we were talking about: that people really have strong feelings about characters, and they really want to see Lupin. They want to love Lupin for this, they want to hate Snape for that. Boy, this is one that I want to say it's out of character for Lupin; this is the author. That's what I want to say there.

Lorrie: Yeah, I know. We want to protect what beautiful meaning this character has created. There are so many powerful things about Lupin that have become beautiful within the fandom as a community, and we want to protect him from the author. This is a very strange position to be in as re-readers post-2020: even though it is a fairly ridiculous stance to say that anybody knows a character better than its author, that's just one way of expressing this desire to protect the real love from human bias. What do we do with our resistance to the wrongness of being called upon to group-bully and scapegoat a completely innocent group of people unrelated? Well, now we know how to vanquish

boggarts.

JC: Yep, among other things. There's a lot of things we know after this chapter.

Lorrie: All of us except Hermione.

JC: Well, Harry, too, I guess, in some sense. Harry didn't really get a chance to...

Lorrie: Harry gets a private lesson later.

JC: With a boggart?

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Oh, I forgot about that.

Lorrie: Yes, he does. Harry gets special tutoring.

JC: Oh, God, of course. That's the whole point, because he's not exposing him to a real dementor to teach him the Patronus charm. Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. I forgot that it was a boggart. That's how long it's been since I've thought about this.

Lorrie: Hermione gets nothing.

JC: And Hermione does not get that chance. True.

Lorrie: Nobody cares. She's gifted. I'm mad.

JC: I'm still happy for Neville, though. Neville gets a few moments in this entire series to feel successful. They're so rare... No one should ever get their moment at the expense of someone else, but also they should get a moment. Everybody can't have the moment at the same time, I get it. Oh, my God.

Lorrie: It's so very nearly perfect. There is a flaw that shows up in the next chapter, which is that because Snape hears how this was done, he "bullies Neville worse than ever."

JC: And it wasn't even Neville's fault.

Lorrie: Right, Lupin has left Neville unprotected for that. As somebody who has been elevated by a teacher who was on some sort of mission (and then later I paid for it from responses from other people), yeah, it's not always the safest move. You do have to protect the people that you're elevating. Anyway, this is not to say that Lupin is a terrible person or that it's a bad book. This is a very accurate, incredibly rich, complicated and true demonstration of what life is like.

JC: Yeah. It's incredibly complex and rich and accurate. Human emotions and groups of people -- Oh, my God, yeah. All the things we've talked about.

Lorrie: This is a good book, this is a good story, these are good characters, and is the opposite of simple. Well, the chapter after this is called Flight of the Fat Lady, in case you thought we were...

JC: Oh, even better!

Lorrie: In case you thought we were done with issues.

JC: Oh, boy!

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Gosh, looking forward to that one.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Thanks to everyone who's stuck with us for this very long episode, I'll just say that.

Caroline: You've been listening to Harry Potter After 2020 with hosts 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.