

# HARRY POTTER AFTER 2020

with LORRIE KIM and JC

## Transcript

### Episode 4.15

#### Book 4, Chapter 15: Beauxbatons and Durmstrang

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 Four, Chapter Fifteen: Beauxbatons and Durmstrang.

Lorrie: Harry writes to Sirius that he's fine and Sirius shouldn't risk coming back, but Sirius sees through this. Mad-Eye Moody teaches Harry how to fight the Imperius curse. The Beauxbatons and Durmstrang contingents arrive for the Triwizard Tournament. Here we go!

JC: Ooh! Yeah. It felt like a lot of things happened in this chapter. I love that it starts basically with Harry sending this very transparently false letter to Sirius, and the way he writes it always makes me think of that moment in the original Star Wars (Episode 4) when Han Solo... They're in the Death Star; Luke is rescuing Leia and Han's here trying to hold off the Stormtroopers, and this voice comes over the intercom. "Who are you? What's going on there?" And he's like, "Everything's fine! It's all fine! Just a minor meltdown, reactor malfunction." It's got that tone of, 'Oh, everything's fine. You don't have to worry about me. My scar wasn't really hurting all that much.' Yeah, it's very transparent. Then Sirius' answer to him later is, "Nice try."

Lorrie: Yeah. I love this correspondence. Harry's letter and Sirius' response, to me, is a perfect teen and guardian interaction. Just the way that Harry is so worried that he lies and Sirius is the grown-up here and says, "Yeah, I see that you're worried, but you are the child. I am the grown-up. I'm going to take care of you." It's so beautiful, and "Nice try, Harry" is a perfect sentence all by itself.

JC: Yeah. There's this really interesting, early morning melancholy of the scene: Harry getting up early and then taking the letter that he's written to Sirius all the way up to the Owlery, and there's all these owls and they've all settled down for the day so they can get sleep, and there's owl crap all over the floor and he's sliding around in it.

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: It's a part of the castle we haven't seen before, but it's clear that Harry's been there before, so it's an interesting little bit of world building. 'Oh, yeah, this is where all the owls live; there's a tower.'

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: If you want to send a note, you've got to hike up there through the owl shit and find your owl.

Lorrie: And because of this correspondence, Harry is learning about the flaw in the plan: "He had been so sure that Sirius's reply would alleviate his worries rather than increasing them." That's the problem: he has Sirius to love, and that gives him security -- and he craves more security. But when you love someone, it means you have something to lose. Oh, well, Sirius will be the grown-up and we'll just override that. Then we get the payoff: "Harry couldn't deny that the idea that Sirius was much nearer was reassuring." I kind of didn't understand, when I was first reading this series, why so many people loved Sirius Black, because he obviously has some instability, some issues. But with this, I can see.

JC: Yeah. I think that was the first time that I read this, too. It feels like Harry has a parent figure for the first time in his memory, someone who really cares about him who's going to put themselves at rest to take care of him. That was absolutely at the heart of my fondness for the character of Sirius Black.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: He's like Harry's big brother/uncle/father figure and he's not perfect, but yet he's there for Harry. I love it.

Lorrie: Yeah. Just the absolute assurance that nothing in Sirius' life matters to him as much as Harry.

JC: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah. And that's never in doubt.

JC: For sure. The other thing is that he says now he's nearby, which I assume means that he's hiding out in Grimmauld Place, which we won't find out about until the next book.

Lorrie: I'm not sure it does mean that, because there are spaces that Dumbledore knows about where he tells people to hide. We will find out later.

JC: Okay.

Lorrie: So they go back to class. They go to Moody's class.

JC: And this is interesting. This whole lesson is very interesting...

Lorrie: Fascinating.

JC: Because he's going to cast the Imperius curse on everybody. Hermione is the one who's like, "Isn't that illegal?"

Lorrie: Uh-huh.

JC: He's like, "Well, if you don't want to be here, there's the door." Okay, Hermione's going to shut up at that.

Lorrie: Yeah, and his reasoning is sound. He says, "Dumbledore wants you taught what it feels like. If you'd rather learn the hard way when someone's putting it on you so they can control you, completely fine by me."

JC: Yeah. This whole thing is very interesting to me, because whose idea was this to teach them this? We know, for fake Moody, that this is a skill that he has, that he learned the hard way how to throw off the Imperius curse. I'm just thinking to myself, 'Why is this something that is important for them to learn right now?'

Lorrie: Well...

JC: It's early in the school year. Does Dumbledore really know? Was it Dumbledore's idea? Did Moody say, "Hey, this is something I want to teach them," and Dumbledore was like, "Yeah, that sounds like a good [idea]"? I'm wondering what the behind-the-scenes of this is. No one at any point said we should probably alert their parents or get some kind of parent permission to cast Unforgivables on your kids? Yeah.

Lorrie: Well, one thing we do know is that at the end of the last book, Voldemort's servant got free. Wormtail got free and ran off, presumably to find Voldemort and maybe bring him back. Then we hear that Frank Bryce has died and Bertha Jorkins has gone missing, and Dumbledore sees evidence that maybe Wormtail has made contact with Voldemort and that it might be good to prepare for some sort of ambush, but we're about to find out in the next chapter that there are events happening at Hogwarts this year that might increase Dumbledore's need for security. Then, of course, the Dark Mark at the end of the Quidditch World Cup reinforces this whole notion that there are some attacks that it would be good to prepare for them. It also reminded me, when I took a self-defense class for young women, just how much emphasis they put on practice. Knowing how it feels... Explaining to somebody what you can do if you're attacked is one thing, but actually feeling it makes all the difference because the people who are attacking are used to doing this kind of thing all the time, and if you have absolutely no idea what's coming, you don't want to be learning that for the first time and thinking it through while it's happening. It reminded me of one of my favorite Harry Potter scholars, Tim Snyder, who published this book *On Tyranny* a month into the Trump presidency. It's a handbook on resisting authoritarianism and it has practical advice and strategies. It begins with an emphasis on learning how to recognize what's happening before it's too late, when authoritarianism starts to creep into life and into your own mind and how to make sure that you recognize that before it's got its hooks in you. He says in the book that the Harry Potter series provides "a beautiful, historically resonant account of how authoritarianism emerges in an institution." He says, talking about events that happen a little later: "If the Ministry and Crouch had acted in a properly timely way, if they reacted to the appearance of Voldemort when he appeared, if they had faced the truth which was uncomfortable at the time, none of this had to happen. It could all have been avoided. It's the human resistance to that truth which is slightly inconvenient which you then have to adjust yourself to, and which then forces you to oppress the person who's telling the truth." We'll see later in this volume that this happens to Harry when the Ministry doesn't want to accept his evidence that Voldemort is back. What Dumbledore is doing here, by setting up these lessons with Moody, is with foresight he is expecting that this might happen, and he's having Moody teach the kids to face the truth when it's so difficult to accept. Don't learn it the hard way

if you can help it; be prepared. So yeah, Dumbledore has ordered these lessons with this ramped-up timeline, because Moody does say that usually... Casting Imperius on the kids is something that they do do at Hogwarts, but usually for older kids; they've changed the timeline so that the younger kids are having this experience too, because there has been actually a change in the danger level, so it's not as theoretical as it has been.

JC: So we're having the Hogwarts equivalent of shooter drills now, and we're learning about the decision-making that you have to make in an emergency like kids do in schools, where you have these whole lessons around "How do you decide what to do in a crisis? Let's pretend that we have one, and let's go through the process of making choices about where to hide and whether to try to escape, or to hide in the classroom and what weapons do we have available." The kind of stuff that kids learn in classrooms now is what it's making me think of.

Lorrie: And that there were times when this was much more common, and this kind of knowledge was a lot more present in everybody's minds. Then there was recently a lull of several years where people relaxed because it wasn't happening so much anymore, and Dumbledore's re-instituting these lessons because nobody wants to hear this, but it might be happening again. Of course, nobody wants to hear it. Nobody wants to put masks back on; everybody wants to pretend that the pandemic is over. There's much more resistance now to the idea of lockdown than there was when it had never happened before. Dumbledore is being a scientist about it and foreseeing that it doesn't matter whether you want to deny it or not; if it's coming, it's coming. It's better to be prepared. I love the way *Imperio* is described when Moody casts it on Harry. "It was the most wonderful feeling. Harry felt a floating sensation as every thought and worry in his head was wiped gently away, leaving nothing but a vague, untraceable happiness. He stood there feeling immensely relaxed, only dimly aware of everyone watching him." Wow! The first time I read that, I was so blown away. That's not at all what I expected. I thought it would feel terrible.

JC: Interesting, isn't it? It sounds like the description of a drug.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Right? When people talk about... I've never done hard drugs, but when people talk about the kind of euphoria you might experience with some kinds of narcotics.

Lorrie: All the anxiety around having to live in the world and be responsible for yourself just wiped away. I hate when people say, "Look at a baby's existence. How blissful. I would love to be back in that," because that's not my experience of being a baby. That's not what I see babies going through. The powerlessness and the danger is pretty awful, but they look at babies that are sleeping -- that are being held, that are comfortable, that are being tended to -- and that would be so nice for somebody else to take on all the responsibility and just exist and be cared for.

JC: It would be nice for a little while.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Yeah. One thing I don't really understand about this scene is that Harry almost immediately pushes back against it and it's not really explained why that happens. He's seen everybody else in the class. I've never seen one of these, but I've heard before that these hypnotists will do shows and they'll get people to come up on the stage and they'll hypnotize them and they'll get

them to do all kinds of crazy stuff, so it reminds me of that. But it's not very clear to me why Harry instantly, very quickly, thinks, 'Oh, no, actually I don't want to do that,' and pushes back right away.

Lorrie: I love how profoundly this description of Imperius emphasizes that free will is a burden, and how nice it is to give it up and regress to infancy. Harry's experience of infancy was not blissful. Harry's experience of letting somebody else be in charge of what happens to him has hardened him. He doesn't trust. Why should he trust? If he hadn't resisted life at the Dursleys, he would completely have no selfhood and also possibly be physically crushed to a pulp at this point. If he had accepted their version of who he was, that he was incurable -- he has to. It's not safe to let other people define you or be in charge.

JC: Interesting. Okay.

Lorrie: He does not have fantasies of regressing, but he is an exception because not everybody comes from as traumatized a background. So yeah, to me, this characterization of the removal of free will is so brilliant and it's so original and profoundly true, because it does show that Harry, when he has to challenge the desire to have free will taken away in people around him, he's going to be up against something that is really powerful. Who wants to be told, "Stop feeling secure and happy and safe and face truth that is relentless and uncomfortable?" With Harry, he knows that if you feel completely happy and safe, it's an illusion.

JC: Okay, yeah, that makes sense.

Lorrie: But what did it take to rob this child of that? This is the conflict that Mrs. Weasley always embodies, which is that she knows how brutal it was for that to be destroyed in Harry, but in order to re-impose that sense of safety on him, she'll say, "Oh, well, don't tell him the truth. He deserves to be happy." Yeah, it's too late. He is actually in danger, you know.

JC: Yeah. He's maybe naturally primed for it or has maybe a little bit more of an ability to throw off the Imperius curse than others for the same reason that the dementors affected him so much worse than they did others. Again, that's a mark of trauma.

Lorrie: Well, it also reminds me, at the beginning of the Trump presidency, when there were illegal things being proposed like a Muslim registry. You could instantly see who had been living a privileged life and who hadn't, because some people would say, "Oh, come on, that's not really going to happen. He's just saying that; he won't really do it," and other people saying, "They're already doing it." "Oh, well let's just give him a chance. Let's see." It's not a matter of giving him a chance. You haven't lived it and seen it, but some people know already. I saw that with me and police, too: I actually was raised believing that police means safety, and there's a big difference between me and people who their only experience with police is that they will arrest you whether you've done anything or not. I thought, okay, it shows up right away. What degree of safety do you feel, what degree of trust? Yeah. I was watching during the Trump presidency to see. Alright, what evidence does it take for various people to start believing, 'Oh, that wasn't a joke. That wasn't hyperbole. Wait, it's actually happening. Oh, no! Oh, no, that happened to somebody like me! Oh! Did you know that when he talks like that, he's not kidding?' Yes, we knew. We'll see that with these kids, as the series goes on, the point at which more protected people start believing it because it happens to them. Somebody of Harry's age is not supposed to have lived a life where he knows about this already, but it happens and Harry's resilience and resistance is not the only way to respond to it. It does make him heroic

and admirable, and it is a very touching thing about this particular character. When you see little kids in real life who their response to adversity is to resist in that way, it is really touching and painful.

JC: Okay, so given that fake Moody... (Barty Crouch Jr. is in here playing this role) He seemed genuinely excited that Harry could throw this off or that Harry made a lot of progress. Even doing it a handful of times, he could almost completely resist it by the end, even though his kneecaps had been fractured, apparently. That's horrifying to me that he's hobbling out. Send the kid to the nurse, oh, my God.

Lorrie: You can't see me, but I'm clutching my knee right now.

JC: Oh, God, yeah. It felt like there was almost a bit of pride there. "Yeah, I learned how to do this, and here's another kid. Yeah, this Harry Potter kid..."

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: You had said -- maybe it was like the last episode or another episode or two back -- this idea that he wants the Dark Lord's adversary to be the best adversary he can give him.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: There's a sense of, "Yeah, this kid... Yeah, he's going to be such a great adversary, for he's worthy of the Dark Lord." I'm getting that sense of his glee here, too.

Lorrie: Yeah. Well, he doesn't doubt Voldemort's power, so he's not actually threatened. He knows that Voldemort is incredibly powerful, but nobody understands why this kid is prophesied to be Voldemort's equal, so let's see it. Let's see if he's his equal; otherwise, it's just embarrassing. "I can't believe this is my opponent." But also, yeah, I'm sure that Barty Crouch Jr. is proud of his own ability to resist Imperius. I don't know, maybe he has some kinship. "Yeah, go you!" I love the description of what happens when fake Moody orders Harry to do something and Harry obeys and resists at the same time, when you were saying: "He had both jumped and tried to prevent himself from jumping -- the result was that he'd smashed headlong into the desk knocking it over, and, by the feeling in his legs, fractured both his kneecaps." This is such an amazing description of how it feels to have inner conflict, and how inner conflict can actually physically damage us. When we know we have to do something and yet we're really resisting it, it takes a toll on you physically. That made me wonder: there are times when I criticize myself bitterly because I'm self-sabotaging and I thought, well, maybe I should think of it this way instead: that I have competing urges. I'm in the middle of trying to fight something that is very compelling but maybe against my best interests, but this is also, on a different level, a clue about a vulnerability in Voldemort. We have just learned that when you cast an Unforgivable curse, for it to be successful, you have to mean it. What does it do to your Unforgivable that you've just cast if you have competing urges? What if you are somebody who wants to kill Harry Potter but you have taken Harry Potter's blood and love to remake your own body, so now it's in you? What if part of your soul, unbeknownst to you, is sheltering in Harry Potter because of that part of your soul having a yearning for human connection so that unbeknownst to you, when you're attacking Harry Potter (unlike when you attack any other human being) it's a bit like attacking yourself? Do you resist? This doing something and resisting it at the same time, and the incredible, physical pain it causes and the toll it takes on you: this is a clue about Voldemort. Do you have anything?

JC: Yeah. I guess the next thing on my list is the description of all the academic stuff they're now studying. I just found that interesting.

Lorrie: Yeah. They're being pressured for next year's exams, and I like that the narrator says, "Professor Snape was forcing them to research antidotes." How forcing them? No, he's just assigning it as a subject. It's just in the curriculum, that's all.

JC: "I'm forcing you to learn algebra."

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Exactly.

Lorrie: "He had hinted that he might be poisoning one of them before Christmas to see if their antidote worked," which, of course, is very effective. Actually, in this series, he never does poison anyone.

JC: They believe that it's a possibility, so much that it motivates them to learn, apparently.

Lorrie: Who's willing to gamble that it's just a bluff? Nobody.

JC: Because it seems like something he would do. Oh, my gosh. Yeah, so we get that one. I love the bit where Trelawney loved the made-up predictions that Harry and Ron wrote.

Lorrie: Finally, yes.

JC: So much that she wants them to write more, and they're like, "Crap, we're running out of ideas."

Lorrie: Students of the week.

JC: Yeah. And then we get a mention of the goblin rebellions. I feel like I've read a lot of meta in the past about what the goblin rebellions are about, and I cannot remember any of it, but it seems like they spend a lot of time in History of Magic talking about the goblin rebellions. It's a really big topic. It's like the Civil War or something for Americans, or World War II. It's a really big deal, so I don't know if there's anything more to that, if it's a nod to something like that or if it actually has some other meaning that I don't remember.

Lorrie: Well, I don't know that it's another meaning, but later on in Deathly Hallows, when we see the trio dealing with goblins, then it does call to mind that there's an ancient conflict between wizards oppressing goblins and goblins knowing that this is unjust. Why would goblins want to do what wizards tell them to do? Apparently throughout history, goblins have not wanted to do this. Why are goblins running the bank for wizards? I guess the goblin rebellions have been put down... at least for now. What's in it for the goblins?

JC: Interesting.

Lorrie: But yeah, that's as far as it gets. I do like that it hints at a lot of dark conflict.

JC: Yeah. This feeling that the teachers are starting to put into them of, "Okay, look, your O.W.L.s are at the end of next year and you have a lot to learn between now and then." I know that this is just the British school system with the big tests that used to be O-levels and A-levels, and now it's the GCSE. I can't remember which way the acronym goes, but they are these big exams you have to take at the end of school to get credit for what you've learned. And of

course, we're in the era of accountability. We've been in the era of accountability for about twenty years now in the U.S., but it's a different feeling, I think, because the tests in the U.S. are more testing the school and threatening the existence of the school more than they're threatening the kids, right?

Lorrie: Oh, gosh. That's true.

JC: But yeah, it just made me think, 'Oh, yeah, that's right. Yeah.' If you're in a tested subject, whether it's Algebra 1 or Biology or English, yeah, you have to pay attention to that. Anyway, it's interesting to see that starting to pop up now, now that they've had a few years under their belts at Hogwarts.

Lorrie: Yeah. Then in Care of Magical Creatures, we get Hagrid keeping Draco in line by referring to the ferret incident.

JC: Yes, yes, which is really interesting.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Because obviously, we know that Hagrid has no problem using Transfiguration as a punishment, so it's interesting that he brings it up there, but it's also interesting that clearly all the teachers in the school know that this happened and probably have different feelings about it. Some people are like, "Oh, that was horrible, we shouldn't do that," and some of them are like, "The little shit probably deserved it," and other ones are thinking, "Hmm, I wonder if I can use that." I think it is interesting that it does work and Draco is quieted down a bit from what he was the year before, but we get that little reminder as the trio are leaving that Draco had basically caused a hell of a lot of trouble for Hagrid the year before with the hippogriff, with everything that happened.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Even though Hagrid should not be doing that, it's hard not to go, 'Okay.'

Lorrie: Yeah. I can't blame Hagrid.

JC: I don't feel bad for Draco here.

Lorrie: No. No, Draco tried to get him fired, Draco tried to get the hippogriff murdered. Nope, nope, nope. It's not like Hagrid was the one who turned him into a ferret.

JC: Nope. Indeed.

Lorrie: He's just bringing it up.

JC: Yeah. But that is pretty rough to have a teacher pull up your most humiliating moment as a reminder. Everyone knows this happened. "I'll repeat it if you don't get in line." Oh, boy. "My father will hear about this."

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: I'm sure his father did hear about it.

Lorrie: So then they talk about the Triwizard Tournament and Cedric comes up, and then we have the jealous bias of Ron and a bunch of male characters against Cedric because he's



handsome. "That idiot, Hogwarts champion?" This whole stereotype that if you're gifted in your looks, you can't possibly have normal intelligence, too; that would just be unfair. Hermione says correctly, "No, Cedric is not an idiot," and later as we get to know him, we see ample evidence that he's just a decent person, but we're about to see that we don't get the same about Fleur. The narrator participates in the jealousy about Fleur being unfairly attractive.

JC: Oh, interesting. Okay. It's interesting, too, to see the start of Ron's crush on Hermione starting to happen here too. "You're supporting him because he's good-looking" kind of a thing. "That's the only reason that you've noticed him at all."

Lorrie: Because they know that guests are coming, the whole school is anxious and scrubbing.

JC: All the cleaning that's happening made me laugh because they're cleaning paintings that haven't been cleaned in hundreds of years.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Suddenly it's like that idea that if your whole family is coming for Thanksgiving or something, you look around your house and you go, "Oh, crap. I need to pick up... I need to scrub this down." You start noticing, "Wow, these floorboards are dusty, and oh, my God, there's a cobweb there."

Lorrie: "Have I always been that dusty?" Yeah.

JC: "I just live like this?"

Lorrie: "I bet their house isn't this bad!" Yeah.

JC: Oh, my gosh, yeah.

Lorrie: I so identify with that, and the way that McGonagall has a short temper because she's feeling insecure...

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Oh, man, I feel that.

JC: Yeah. Poor Neville. Neville gets the brunt of it. "Do not let anyone from Durmstrang know that you can't do that one simple thing."

Lorrie: Right.

JC: Oh, poor Neville. Then we have when they come into the Great Hall for lunch, and there's a lot of interesting things that happen in the scene. We get Social Justice Warrior Hermione, SJW Hermione, suddenly being suspicious of her history textbook, the one that she has memorized and has been reciting from for years now, and suddenly she's like, "Hmm. Who wrote this book? From what perspective? How is it biased?" Yeah.

Lorrie: She calls it, instead of *Hogwarts: A History*, "A Highly Biased and Selective History of Hogwarts, Which Glosses Over the Nastier Aspects of the School." You can see the semicolons and everything, and she's actually right.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Because of course, people who benefited from house-elf exploitation have no motive to write about it.

JC: Yeah, for sure. It's so interesting, though, to see Hermione's awakening to this cause and how familiar it feels. Boy, I remember being a fourteen, fifteen-year-old kid, and I see my own kid do the same thing.

Lorrie: The outrage.

JC: The outrage. "Why does no one care about this?"

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: "Everyone's lying!" Yeah.

Lorrie: Complacent.

JC: Yeah. It's really well done.

Lorrie: Then Fred and George refused to have anything to do with S.P.E.W., and George argues that the house-elves are happy.

JC: In my reading of it this time, they're opening a door for her to say, "Haven't you ever gone down to the kitchens and met them? Why don't you do that?"

Lorrie: Yes, they are.

JC: "Go down and see for yourself."

Lorrie: Which is true.

JC: I don't know, I think she does do that. I don't even know if she does that later or not, I can't remember.

Lorrie: Yes, she does.

JC: Oh, she does, okay. But that idea of "Why don't you go and see for yourself? You can just go to the kitchens."

Lorrie: And they are right. She knows nothing.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: And Hermione says -- oh, no -- "That's because they're uneducated and brainwashed!" Right.

JC: Hermione, no...

Lorrie: Wherever she pulled that from, it wasn't from actually knowing any house-elves, that's for sure.

JC: Right. Exactly. She's never met a house-elf other than Winky in that box at the World Cup, right?

Lorrie: Right.

JC: So yeah, Winky. But that's also that naivete of "I know why those people... how those oppressed people are..." without actually asking them. Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah. She's completely projected that onto a whole class of beings that she has not met, and George is basing his stance on something. The pride that George has witnessed in their work from the house-elves, that's a real thing; he has experienced that, so he has encountered their culture. She hasn't seen anything that would either support what she has just said or disprove it. Okay, that's a good point. And it is nice to think, 'Well, if George is saying that they're happy, it's nice to know yes, they have this whole culture where they have work pride. Yeah, they can make things function.' So yeah, there's that starting.

JC: And it is interesting that there's references, too, to the fact that Hermione is not making any progress with the whole S.P.E.W. thing. Sometimes people will just finally buy a pin just to get her to stop, but no one's wearing them.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Yeah. This whole scenario felt very familiar to me. It's like, 'Oh, Hermione.'

Lorrie: Well, if you're dealing with that age group, you'll be pretty well served to assume that if not every year -- maybe every other year -- something like this is going to come up. Somebody's going to be on a tear about something. Okay.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Just be prepared.

JC: For sure. Yeah. Interesting that Fred and George also seemed to be... There's a mystery going on with them, too, that the kids don't know what's happening. But yeah, they are scheming as well.

Lorrie: And irritable about it.

JC: And not happy about it, yes, about someone who is not responding to their messages and not taking them seriously.

Lorrie: And then we have grand world-building: we get the visitors from other countries.

JC: I like the description of: they get out of class early, and then they have to line up in a very specific way and they all have to look perfect. You can just tell all the teachers are like, 'Please make us not look bad.'

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: "Just line up. Get that thing out of your hair; straighten that up."

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And they have to stand there and just wait, and it's cold.

Lorrie: Yeah. They really could have been told in advance how the other schools are coming, but I kind of admire the administration's decision to just let it be a mystery.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Keep their attention. Keep 'em wondering.

JC: Yeah. There is that idea that adults often have about children of how important it is to have that experience of something for the first time. We don't want to spoil things for people. There's something about... We take pleasure in watching other people experience something new. I think we do that a lot. If you ever have wanted to share a movie or something with someone and you're watching their face during the exciting parts... 'Yeah, yeah!' Also, from a narrative perspective or from a writing perspective, it's also a good way, obviously, to heighten the surprise for the readers, but it is fun that it's like, 'Okay, this is going to be a big deal for these kids to see these visitors coming. They will never see this again. Let's make it special.'

Lorrie: Yeah. That shows respect to your guests to really know that this is a huge deal and that they made all the effort to come here. You should know that it's a big deal. I love the detail of Madame Maxine's Palomino horses only drinking single-malt whiskey.

JC: That is hilarious, because first of all, these horses are described as being elephant-sized, so they're massive. I'm like, 'That shit's expensive.'

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: How much single-malt whiskey would Hagrid have to acquire? Yeah. It's funny, but yeah, also the reality of it is like, 'Damn, an elephant can drink a lot of water in a day. Hmm.' But then the carriage from Beauxbatons arrives and there's the description of the horses and this beautiful carriage. It's very like Cinderella, the imagery of it. When it lands, when Madame Maxine gets out, again we've got these funny descriptions of the size of things, that her shoe was the size of a child's sled and things like this, which are really funny. But I found the physical description of her to be very interesting, because she's not particularly described as feminine at all. She's othered pretty much immediately, not only because of her size but a lot of her features are described in ways that are more typically masculine ways of describing people.

Lorrie: I found her physical description to be really beautiful and compelling. Now I have to look it up.

JC: I don't trust the author, I guess. I'm like, 'Hmm.'

Lorrie: "A handsome, olive-skinned face; large, black, liquid-looking eyes; and a rather beaky nose. Her hair was drawn back in a shining knob at the base of her neck. She was dressed from head to foot in black satin, and many magnificent opals gleamed at her throat and on her thick fingers." And then she's described as having a gracious smile. I found her really attractive and compelling.

JC: Okay, that's interesting. I think maybe in comparison to the way that other female characters have been described -- and again, she's part giant or something -- I found it, I was like, 'Hmm.' I guess I'm so suspicious of the author's descriptions now that yeah, it's hard for me not to take second looks at some things.

Lorrie: When we see Karkaroff coming, he says, "Dear old Hogwarts." Is this where he went to school?

JC: Karkaroff had an interesting description, too, because his voice was described as 'fruity' and I was like, 'What does that mean?'

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: What's going on there?

Lorrie: And 'unctuous', yes?

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: "Fruity, unctuous voice," so he's not trustworthy. He's a salesman.

JC: He's described as having yellow teeth and looking around very shrewdly at everything.

Lorrie: Right. Alright, so we don't trust him.

JC: But then we meet the students, too, these poor Beauxbatons students who are freezing.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And not dressed for Scotland, apparently.

Lorrie: No.

JC: And also the description of them looking up at the castle, like, 'Oh, God, this is where we have to live,' knowing that they put so much work into cleaning and fixing things up. Oh, my gosh. And there's not that many of them either; there's just a dozen students who have come, and how strange would that be? I'm just thinking about... I know it's a big deal, but your headmaster and a bunch of your best students, a subgroup, have gone for the rest of the school year right there. They're spending the whole school year there. Oh, wow, that's a lot.

Lorrie: Exchange program.

JC: They make a lot of arrangements for leaving the rest of your school in good hands, right? Also, the description of the Durmstrang ship arriving, too. It implies that there are all these other magical ways of transport that we haven't heard about. It's described a bit like a Portkey but somehow this ship can just appear in bodies of water wherever.

Lorrie: Yeah, I was a little worried for the giant squid.

JC: Yeah. For a second, it was like, 'Maybe the lake was going to drain.' I was like, 'Oh, no! Hope all of the fish and the merpeople and everybody in the lake are okay.' So yeah, that ship, and then those students are dressed for the cold. Overdressed, maybe. Yeah, it's fun that we're meeting other magical students from other places. I think that's one of the things that I remember really enjoying about this book the first time around.

Lorrie: The automatic expansion, a whole new dimension to the scope of the magical world. Yeah, and I like how the glimpses of how different and foreign these things are implies all the depth of difference. Just because we don't see it doesn't mean it's not there. Then there's the thrilling conclusion of this chapter: Who's there from Durmstrang? It's Viktor Krum.

JC: Viktor Krum. KRUM.

Lorrie: Yes, who is one of my favorite minor characters. *Love* Viktor.

JC: And poor Viktor has a cold, and they're like, "We need to get him in the castle." Well, they probably want to get in the castle for other reasons so he's not out here being stared at by

people, but yeah. Wow. So now, this is going to be interesting. Viktor Krum, who just played in the World Cup, is a student at Durmstrang and he's now going to be at Hogwarts. Ooh, how interesting!

Lorrie: Everyone step it up!

JC: Also, going back to Madame Maxime, I got excited in this chapter for her and Hagrid's friendship/whatever relationship. The whole description of, "Well, our groundskeeper will take care of them." "I don't think your groundskeeper can handle my horses." Oh, yeah, he probably can.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: I don't know if we see the meeting of Hagrid and Madame Maxime on the page. I'm not actually sure. I guess I'll find out shortly, but it's just fun.

Lorrie: Yeah, and a bit of pride in Hagrid.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Oh, he's up for it.

JC: Yeah. Also, Hagrid's been such a lonely figure for so much of the book being the half-giant, and this is the first time we've met anybody who is even remotely like Hagrid. To see Hagrid as kind of a second-class citizen in the British wizarding world he's not really part of is because of what happened when he was younger and his wand got snapped, but Madame Maxime shows you if all that stuff hadn't happened, would he be a fully qualified wizard? Would he have the same respect? Could he have risen to the same kind of station as Madame Maxime has in her world? Very interesting things.

Lorrie: Yeah, I do love that we're shown that her students unquestioningly revere her. It's kind of refreshing. Our next chapter after this is called The Goblet of Fire.

JC: Oooh!

Lorrie: Hopefully our guests will have settled in and will get good Hogwarts food, and we'll get to see what they think.

JC: It's also interesting that that's chapter sixteen. We're getting close to... I would say maybe we're almost a third of the way through this book, but this book is so much longer than the other ones.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: At this point in the first book, we were really close to the end if not nearly at the end. So yeah, it's funny.

Lorrie: We haven't even hit Halloween yet.

JC: We haven't even... Yeah. There's still so much that we're still building up to. We don't even know what the Goblet of Fire is all about yet.

Lorrie: Well, we'll find out soon!

JC: The castle is clean, the guests have arrived...

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And now it's time to see what's going to happen next, see what this Triwizard Tournament is actually going to be about.

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](http://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.