

HARRY POTTER AFTER 2020

with LORRIE KIM and JC

Transcript

Episode 4.16

Book 4, Chapter 16: The Goblet of Fire

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 Sixteen: The Goblet of Fire.

Lorrie: Students from all three schools put their names into the Goblet of Fire so it can choose the champions who will compete in the Triwizard Tournament. Durmstrang headmaster Karkaroff freezes when he sees Harry Potter, and then is frightened when he sees Mad-Eye Moody; apparently, they have some history. The Goblet chooses Viktor, Fleur, Cedric and Harry.

JC: Nooooo!

Lorrie: Yeees!

JC: Yup.

Lorrie: So what did you think?

JC: I love, at the very beginning of this chapter, the reactions of the Hogwarts kids to their guests.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Which is fun, because first of all, everyone freaked out that Krum is there. They're like, "Oh, my God, he's the star Quidditch player and he's a student at Durmstrang, and he's here. He's going to be here. Oh, my God!" There's all this scrambling to get an autograph, which is funny. And in the midst of all that, Hermione's, just, scorn for the whole thing. It's so funny. She's being almost super bitchy about it in a way that I love, that I so appreciate. She's like, "I'm not impressed by any of this. I don't know what those people are thinking. Why are they turning their noses up --" It's amazing. It's amazing.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Coming from Hermione, it's just like, "Oh, this is great."

Lorrie: And it's very refreshing. I like that she's there to provide that balance, because we see with Viktor the power of celebrity and how much sway it can have over people when they want to be near power or fame. The foolishness they're willing to put themselves through... Ron is laughing at the Slytherins for sucking up to Krum and then plotting how to do the exact same thing, which is sweet and naive, but it's not a harmless effect. The Durmstrang students sit with the Slytherins and we get some geopolitics here: they take off their furs and they look around, and they're super impressed by the Hogwarts ceiling and the golden plates and goblets. Wherever they come from, which is very cold, is not as wealthy as this. Then we see the Beauxbatons students sitting with the Ravenclaws, and apparently Hogwarts is much colder and uglier than France.

JC: Yes. Oh, my gosh. Yeah, the snort of derision that comes from Beauxbatons when Dumbledore says, "I hope you'll all be comfortable here."

Lorrie: I know.

JC: And they're like, "Oh, yeah."

Lorrie: Yeah. The judgment that really hurts is that they're obviously not faking this. The snort is involuntary and their glum expressions are so much worse than if they were looking snobby about it.

JC: Yeah, yeah.

Lorrie: Oh, dear. Oh, no.

JC: Yeah. And Hogwarts is their home, but by proxy it's ours too, right?

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: "What do you mean you think this place isn't up to your standards? Hey!"

Lorrie: "It was good enough for me!"

JC: Yeah, for sure. "I think it's a magical place. Back off, Beauxbatons snobs!"

Lorrie: "I thought it was actually pretty impressive."

JC: Yeah, exactly. So yeah, it's very interesting, that dynamic, and it makes you wonder: what is Beauxbatons like then, if they think they're slumming it at Hogwarts?

Lorrie: Well, this clearly points to historical rivalry between English culture and French culture and that the French just automatically think anything French is better, and they have, maddeningly, some evidence to back this up. But it's also that the author has French relatives on her mother's side; the way that she writes the superiority and the maddening feeling of cleaning up for your guests and having them not be impressed reminds me very much of family.

JC: Oh, yeah.

Lorrie: When you have the richer or more sophisticated relatives coming to visit. You thought you had been doing okay for yourself in the world but nothing you do is going to be good enough.

JC: Yeah, for sure. I don't know if I've ever... I haven't really experienced that because I grew up working class and I'm pretty solidly upper middle class now, so my family has never come to visit me with that reaction; it's been more the opposite. But I remember a story that my mother-in-law, who passed away about a decade ago, used to tell about when her in-laws came to visit. One of the things that she had to do was bake homemade bread from scratch and make toast with that for breakfast, because they wouldn't eat store-bought bread. They would turn their noses up at it, so she had to learn how to bake bread, and the only time she ever made it was when they came to visit.

Lorrie: Right.

JC: I just remember thinking, 'That's a lot of effort just to make your in-laws not frown at you.' The same mother-in-law would come and visit me and would frown and never have anything good to say about my house either, so it felt like a cycle at that point, but yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah. Fleur, or the girl that we find out later is Fleur -- who we find out later is part veela - like Viktor has the power of celebrity. She has the power of beauty and this annoys the heck out of Hermione. She watches Ron and several of the Hogwarts boys become speechless when they see Fleur. Harry happens to be immune right now because he has a crush on Cho, which is very comforting because even if Cho is described mostly as very pretty, we know she's human.

JC: For sure. There's also... I think we talked about this when we first saw the veela back at the beginning of the book: Harry knows what it's like to have people stare at you for something that's not under your control or that's not your doing.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: I think that we talked about him being able to recognize that, and then that maybe made him a little bit more immune to it because then he sees it for what it is.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: It's not like, "Oh, wow, this is a super beautiful girl. I want to go and be close to her." It's more like, 'Oh, yeah, it's a thing that's out of her control.'

Lorrie: Right.

JC: Remembering that and seeing Harry's non-reaction to her, especially when Ron says, "That's not a normal girl, they don't make them like that at Hogwarts." Wow, Ron. Really? You're going to say that in earshot of the girls that are sitting around you? Okay.

Lorrie: It's true, though.

JC: Yeah. There aren't any veela. They don't have veela-pretty people at Hogwarts, but she can't help it either. Her whole life, she will never know if someone is into her because of the veela side or if they really like her, and that's really sad.

Lorrie: Yeah. She's never been anything but herself.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah. The thing that I like about Ron saying that is he stating a truth, and sometimes we can want to deny it because human competition over the attention that comes with beauty can be so painful. There are people so beautiful that it's impossible to not notice it. It can really hurt to be around. They can't go anywhere without causing a commotion. They can either be miserable about it or they can step up, but the attention that they get is not under their control. And when you're competing with it, oh, that is one of the most painful feelings because there's an element of being human where you can try to opt out of this competition, but you can't. For example, sibling rivalry. Sibling rivalry can make people murderously jealous. If you're a tiny little baby... If you're a new hatched chick and there's only so much room in the nest and your fellow hatchling is cuter and more robust, you know you might get kicked out the nest. You can tell when the caregiver tries to look equally at all the children, but then when that irresistible love fills the heart, you can see it, and that feeling reasserts itself with romantic competition. Also, I don't know if I've mentioned this on the podcast before: there was one incident that happened to me a long time ago; it was tiny and it was not significant, but it really made me angry. This was at a press conference for Olympic figure skaters that I attended as a journalist. These people are really used to being stared at and being beautiful and having charisma, and I was such an amateur in that economy of beauty and charisma. I'm asking a normal question, and one of the skaters decided to turn it on for me and it was not personal; that's part of your job, right? You compete, you earn money with it, and then afterwards you go to the press conference and you're supposed to represent yourself well and show your personality, and be appealing and have a persona and have the journalists find you compelling. He was about my age, so he looked straight at me and he answered only to me in the whole room and he turned that attentiveness on, and it was so painfully captivating it made me so angry. I could not help it, and I wanted to be like Hermione and think, 'Okay, I'm going to...' Nothing good can come of that feeling. It's only painful. I found that inequality in that power so humiliating because it was so involuntary for me.

JC: I was going through my memory banks here thinking if I had ever experienced that, and I'm not sure that I have.

Lorrie: Yeah. And then, of course, there's the experience of going out socially with your friend who's way, way more beautiful and can't help it.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: There's just no competing and you can be mad at them for it, but what are they supposed to do?

JC: Yeah. Yeah. That's true.

Lorrie: Should they try to hide themselves so that you don't feel bad? I don't know. Competition over beauty for attention and love, to me, is just an irreducible fact of human pain.

JC: There are so many things that I want to say here, but they're too personal for the podcast. Yeah.

Lorrie: And I have to say that I don't think the author here gets into the empathy for the person who's beautiful the same way she does get into empathy for the person Viktor Krum, who has the power of celebrity. I think she makes it clear that she's feeling it, too: the hatefulness of somebody who's way more beautiful than you and knows it.

JC: So is this heavily gendered? Okay, beautiful women always get more shit than beautiful men.

Lorrie: Well, it's almost not because the boys, including the Weasley twins, are all portrayed as assuming that Cedric is stupid because it hurts too much to think that someone can be that good-looking and also just talented and nice. What we do find out is -- bad luck -- Cedric really is that talented and nice. He really is just an awesome human being and it's not his fault that he's incredibly good-looking, but we don't get that for Fleur.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: What we get from Fleur is the cattiness, and to me that just reads as the author participating in this feeling of jealousy.

JC: But it also, for me, plays back to what feels to me like the universal truth that in most societies, women's worth is in their youth and their looks. In men's worth, that's a bonus.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: That's not where men's worth is.

Lorrie: Yeah. And it's wonderful that Viktor has the power of celebrity, even though he's totally awkward-looking. We don't get that with Fleur. Yeah. Then the opposite of Cedric... Instead of finding out that the champion is very, very talented, we get Fleur being kind of weak compared to the other champions. Many, many readers have noticed this. One of the reasons I loved the *Fantastic Beasts* franchise: it was immediately apparent from the first movie that this imbalance was finally rectified. There is nobody -- no female character in the Harry Potter books -- that has sympathy from the author for being this helplessly beautiful and for even daring to enjoy it and do something with it instead of being ashamed. But in the *Fantastic Beasts* movie, we get a character who has that divine feminine power and she shows it much more fully in my opinion that yes, it can be delightful and it can also be a pain and there are some problems that come with it that most people don't ever have. What are you going to do? That's who you are. You have to deal with it, and nobody wants to hear your complaints about it.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: So there's Fleur. Ludo Bagman and Barty Crouch Sr. are present at this ceremony because they are the organizers and they are the judges, along with the headmasters of each school.

JC: Yes. There's another moment when the kids are looking at each other and they're all trying to figure out [why] the French students are turning up their noses. They've included dishes from these other places, and Ron's reaction to the bowl of bouillabaisse... I love bouillabaisse, but Ron turns his nose at that and reaches for the black pudding instead.

Lorrie: Right.

JC: The note that I wrote for myself was, "I'm laughing in American," because why would you pick black pudding over bouillabaisse? What the hell's wrong with you, Ron?' It was just really funny, and he kept turning his nose up at very French things throughout this dinner and reaching for the British one instead.

Lorrie: Okay, fine. We're just barbaric over here. Let's get the most barbaric, the most earthy thing. We never see him eating black pudding at any other time. But yeah, Brits are universally mocked for their cuisine; the French, the opposite.

JC: Yeah. I guess from a British perspective, it probably reads more like that. I'm looking at it from an American perspective obviously, but yeah, from a British perspective, I can see like, 'Oh, look at all this fancy French food. Ew, give me some black pudding any day' kind of a thing.

Lorrie: Well, we have the exact reaction that Ron is rebelling against. "I don't want... Take your weird British stodgy stuff away. Ew!" So they bring in the wooden casket that contains the Goblet of Fire, and it's old and it's covered with jewels. Inside of it, the Goblet of Fire is a rough wooden cup filled with "dancing blue-white flames". We have major Holy Grail vibes here.

JC: For sure. For sure. That's a note that I wrote down, too. It's like the third Indiana Jones movie when there's all these beautiful cups and he goes for the plain one. It's like, "This is the one!"

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Yeah. That was my first thought, too, was, 'Oh, my God, it's the Holy Grail.' Yeah.

Lorrie: I love that in this chapter, we have a full acknowledgment of the mythological landscape that this series comes from: the whole British Isles folklore and the Arthurian challenges where knights are bound by honor. This whole magically binding contract thing... 'What magically binding contract?' It's honor. Honor will outlive us all. It's bigger than us all. You have to. So we have this casket with the wooden cup, and then the Goblet judges who is most worthy to represent their schools. That's more just admitting yes, this whole school -- which is modern and has current teenagers with acne sitting at the tables -- is part of this century's old magical tradition. They're just saying, "Yes, this is something bigger than this generation, and it's romantic and it's awe-inspiring and there's something spiritual in it." It's kind of hushed, right? 'Oh, yeah. Okay. I'm part of this.' That sets up the age line that Dumbledore draws. What is the purpose of the age line? It's to show that Harry is like teenage King Arthur who pulls the sword from the stone. No knight has been able to do this. He's not supposed to be able to, but he doesn't even know what it is; he just pulls it out. That emphasizes that Harry has an Arthurian origin story: when infant Arthur was born to King Uther Pendragon, Merlin took the baby away to be fostered in secret because otherwise, political enemies would have killed the baby. Arthur grew up not having any idea who he was or where he came from until he accidentally pulled the sword from the stone and didn't know why everybody's bowing to him all of a sudden.

JC: Yeah. This is a story I don't honestly know very well, so that's really interesting to me. Hmm.

Lorrie: So yeah, it's showing that Harry is a chosen child. What's the age line for? It's to show that no, it can't be fooled. You think you can fool this? No, you can't. So what? Why is this happening? That's the orphan tradition: growing up not knowing who you are, because where you come from is so important and so dangerous that you have to be taken away in order for you to survive. The other thing: "Once a champion has been selected by the Goblet of Fire, he or she is obliged to see the tournament through to the end. The placing of your name in the Goblet constitutes a binding, magical contract. There can be no change of heart once you become a champion." That also reminds me of how sometimes when people become famous for something, they really don't want to be seen as role models for other things. If you can play

basketball well, why do you suddenly have to be a model of virtue? That's not what you ever even cared about. Or there are times when people find themselves thrust into positions of leadership even though they never wanted to be a leader, and no matter what you try to do to say, "This makes no sense, this isn't me, I abdicate, I refuse," nobody cares. Nobody's listening to you; you have to step up. If you don't step up, you'll get the consequences badly just as if you had signed up for it, and it's not really your choice because Harry's going to have to do that. "But I didn't want to." Nobody cares. It's happening with or without you.

JC: Yeah. Well, that's Harry's life, right?

Lorrie: Yep.

JC: That's Harry's entire life. That's interesting, too. That's one of the things that connects the champions here, maybe with the exception of Cedric, because Fleur and Viktor were both in this position where they are looked at and revered for things that are not -- In Viktor's case, it's more that he has this incredible athletic skill, but it's clear that he doesn't really want to be a celebrity. He just wants to play Quidditch.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And Fleur again, as we said before, can't help looking the way she looks or the fact that she's half veela, and Harry can't help what happened to him either. There's this bit of commonality between those three.

Lorrie: Yeah, and Cedric can't help being good looking enough that the other boys in his own school want it to be true that he's dim-witted.

JC: Yeah. Yeah. True. Whoever got chosen for this, this is almost in some sense the worst thing to ever do to teenagers. It's like homecoming queen.

Lorrie: Oh, my God.

JC: 'Let's choose the most beautiful people in the school and then let's put them in a competition against each other, and let's vote for who's the most beautiful.'

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Why do we do this? This is awful.

Lorrie: But there's also the truth that whether we enshrine this in acknowledged ritual or whether we try to ignore it, it's happening socially anyway, and that's the dirty secret. You can try to be civilized, you can try to set up other ways to find self-worth and these are good and I believe in them, but can you ever completely eradicate this? I don't know.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: I do like that George seems aware of that quality when he says to Harry, "You'll try and get in, won't you?" Which is an odd thing to say. Obviously Harry can't. Obviously he's way younger than the age line would exclude, but there's something about Harry that makes George assume that Harry belongs there. George, Fred, and Lee Jordan also assumed that they belonged there.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: They have this, "Well, obviously, we are clever and charismatic enough to be champions. What is this? Rules aren't for us."

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: There is this, "No magical power is also a factor."

JC: There's a couple of things that I find interesting here. Hermione says, "No one under seventeen is going to stand a chance, they won't have learned enough," which is setting us up very nicely for the fact that Harry is going to have to do this.

Lorrie: Oh, gosh, yes.

JC: And I think it's one of the twins that says, "Yeah, speak for yourself," after that. But it's also very interesting that Fred and George and Lee say they only have to age themselves up a few months, so they're just under.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Angelina puts her name in, and Angelina's just over, so it made me think about that frustration of being an older teenager and being so close to being sixteen and being able to have your driver's license. There's a day on which -- at least for me, this was true; it wasn't true for my kid who didn't want to participate -- but for me, there was a day... The day before, even though I knew how to drive a car, I could not drive myself off alone, and then the next day I could. It was like, 'What is this arbitrary date thing?'

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Or when you're eighteen or when you're twenty-one, there's just these...

Lorrie: Right.

JC: And it feels so arbitrary when it's just a couple of months away.

Lorrie: It is arbitrary. It is.

JC: And that's what it made me think, 'Does Angelina really know that much more than Fred and George?'

Lorrie: Right. Right.

JC: There's the accident that she was born on this side of the line versus that.

Lorrie: Yep. Yep.

JC: It's so interesting that that comes up here and that they're pushing against it. They're railing against it. "This isn't fair! I'm almost seventeen. I'm sure I could do this!"

Lorrie: Yes. It also reminds me of age limits for sports, because figure skating is the sport that I'm interested in, so there have been a lot of institutions of minimum age requirements to protect the health of athletes, especially girls. If you can learn the tricky jumps before puberty hits, then you have the advantage of being light and narrow-hipped so you can rotate faster and higher. If you can manage to train the heck out of a 10-year-old, or a 14-year-old who has the body of a 10-year-old, heavy training like that can delay your puberty. If you can manage to drill a small

child that way, you can possibly get them to win even though the damage you're doing to their joints is permanent and extremely dangerous. Do you care about the individual, or are you trying for national status in an international arena? The Communist bloc, the athletic program of identifying very young children who had athletic aptitude and then putting them into these state-sponsored programs where they would definitely get better training than capitalist countries could give their kids since that was individually supported by families, would take the children away from their families and have the state-sponsored drilling. If there was a choice between whether they could drill the young children to get a medal, for the rest of that person's life they suffer really, really bad physical problems. Well, the state doesn't care and this is partly because of poverty, right? Wealthier countries don't have to stake their national identities on athletic performance, but there are countries that it matters a lot to their national pride to succeed at an international sports level. We get that that's what Viktor Krum absolutely is: a representative of that kind of athletic system, because the way that Karkaroff coddles Viktor is so disgusting. It just feels so repellent because the favoritism is overt and slimy and sycophantic. Then he asks Viktor, "How are you feeling? How is your cold? Would you like some mulled wine from the kitchens?" Then there's this other student who pipes up: "Professor, I vood like some vine." A couple things about that which I love: one of them is there's a Bulgarian actor, Stanislav Yanevski, and he's the one who played Viktor Krum in the movies. He does the convention circuit, so he's very entertaining and will talk in front of audiences and he'll say, "No, we do not talk like that." But the other thing about this... Karkaroff says: "'I wasn't offering it to you, Poliakoff,' snapped Karkaroff, his warmly paternal air vanishing in an instant. 'I notice you have dribbled food all down the front of your robes again, disgusting boy --'" I'm about to do one of those things that you, oh Math PhD, throw up your hands at.

JC: Let's hear it.

Lorrie: Yes. This is one of those instances that makes me realize how very little it takes to make a literary allusion, because did you read that and think instantly, 'Oh, that's a *Jane Eyre* reference?'

JC: Oh, God, no.

Lorrie: Right? Because your PhD is in math, right? In the beginning of *Jane Eyre*, Jane has a schoolmate, Helen Burns, who is amazing and spiritual and brilliant, and I think she also has ADHD or trauma or something like that. There's a teacher at the orphanage who always picks on her, and she says things like, "You dirty, disagreeable girl! You have never cleaned your nails this morning!" She physically punishes Helen, who gives really good answers and is obviously a kind person. *Jane Eyre* is another orphan story, a formative famous one by a British woman that is overlaid on local superstitions. For example, there's the Gytrash, which is a word that I have only encountered in *Jane Eyre*, but it's a large black dog that's an omen of death like the Grim. This whole feeling where you think you're reading a novel about people and then suddenly they go all British Isles folklore, like this chapter is in *Harry Potter*; it's that same sense of weaving in and out of fairyland that you get in *Jane Eyre*, which in many places just reads like the grimmest documentary about what it's like to be an orphan.

JC: Interesting.

Lorrie: And "I notice you have dribbled food all down the front of your robes again, disgusting boy," just makes you think, 'Okay, this is the author of a story about an orphan paying tribute to a female-authored story about an orphan.'

JC: Interesting. Hmm.

Lorrie: British folklore. Yep.

JC: Wow.

Lorrie: Right? Yeah.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: No, don't ask me anything about math.

JC: The favoritism that you see there... As much as we've talked about the favoritism of the Gryffindors over the Slytherins, the favoritism that Dumbledore is accused of and does show is nothing compared to that. That feels like such an extreme... Granted, it's one student over another, but it does show that this is what Harry's life could have been. Harry could have been the kid that was completely coddled constantly by Dumbledore, and I think that Draco Malfoy would probably say that that happened anyway while other kids just get completely different treatment. It's like taking that and scaling it up to almost a comic or really exaggerated level. Wow! That's like Cinderella and her stepsisters. It's like a fairytale-level of favoritism and cruelty.

Lorrie: What I really appreciate about how this is portrayed, though, is that she puts in the reason why it happens, which is relative wealth and poverty. Why is it important for people from some countries to have international sport success? They want to prove that they're just as good as the wealthier countries that don't have to treat their champions this way.

JC: It's also interesting to me that when the Durmstrang kids come in, they go and they sit with the Slytherins, to Ron's consternation, and then Draco is immediately cozying up to Viktor. But going back earlier in the book, Draco says, "My dad really wanted me to go to Durmstrang," so it made me think for Draco, 'Here are these kids that could have been your friends, right? You might have gone to that school.'

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And how interesting it would be for Draco to get to know the Durmstrang kids just because yeah, "What could my life have been like?" He probably has lots of questions for them about how certain things are done. There's a whole other story where Draco thinks he's the main character happening over there on the other side of the school, right?

Lorrie: Yeah, and that's annoying to Ron. 'Oh, no! Don't let him think -- he's not! He's not the main character.' So then we see Karkaroff freeze at the sight of Harry Potter.

JC: Ooh!

Lorrie: Harry's legend means something even here, much more than it's ever meant to Harry. And as if that weren't thrilling enough, then we get his terror when Mad-Eye Moody shows up and says, "Yeah, that's Harry Potter," and the color drains from Karkaroff's face. "A terrible look of mingled fury and fear came over him. 'You!'" Wow. Okay.

JC: Yeah. The realization that he was about to spend the better part of a school year on the campus with who he thinks is Mad-Eye Moody, and he is really, really terrified and unhappy about this.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Oh, there's some history there. That's interesting.

Lorrie: And this also shows why Merlin took infant Arthur away and hid him. If we see Karkaroff looking at Harry and then *gasps* being checkmated by the sight of this person who scares him, 'Oh, yeah, maybe baby Arthur and baby Harry... maybe we did have to go put them where nobody was going to try to kill them.' This child means something to people that is beyond himself; he is not safe. It also makes us think... Karkaroff's reaction to Mad-Eye Moody makes us think, 'Why did Dumbledore think that having Mad-Eye Moody in the school this year would be a safe move? Hmm... And does this have something to do with Snape teaching antidotes, too? What do they know about these guests?'

JC: I love how you can read all these scenes with Moody two ways. There's the Mad-Eye Moody that everyone sees, but then there's also Barty Crouch Jr....

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And knowing that Barty Crouch Jr. is himself a Death Eater, but thinks himself better than all the other Death Eaters...

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: And despises all the other Death Eaters for whatever they did or did not do that he thinks they should have done. That adds this other layer to it.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: He is taking some joy in intimidating Karkaroff there. That's really interesting, too.

Lorrie: I know. I find myself weirdly happy for Barty Crouch Jr. that he can take on this Mad-Eye Moody personality to really stick it to this disgusting, awful person, even though... Ugh.

JC: Yeah. The fact that there's this many layers of Death Eater politics...

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: It reminds me of the Republican Party.

Lorrie: Oh, God...

JC: Right? There's the people who are Trump sycophants, and there's people who hate Trump and are trying really hard to figure out how to... Oh, my God.

Lorrie: Yeah. And then the assassination attempts from people who think he's not far right enough.

JC: Oh, my God. Yeah.

Lorrie: For Beauxbatons, those students put in their names, they return to their carriage, and the trio go to visit Hagrid, who they find is dressing very badly for courting Madame Maxime. This is full Lévi-Strauss *The Raw and The Cooked* here. Madame Maxime is obviously the cultured half-giant, and here's Hagrid with his axle grease in his hair...

JC: That he apparently tried to put into a ponytail and it didn't work.

Lorrie: Oh, my goodness... And the patchwork quilt on his bed, which I feel certain he must have made himself, and that makes me go, 'Aww.' Yeah. And in a direct Lévi-Strauss reference, he serves a beef casserole that has a talon in it. Oops!

JC: That was also... yeah.

Lorrie: Okay.

JC: But it also reminds me of Sweeney Todd. The moment when people figure out what's going on is when they find a human fingernail in the pie, and it's like, "Wait a minute, this is not what it seems."

Lorrie: And he also is not going to join S.P.E.W. Nope. That's not how he thinks.

JC: Hagrid is the closest character that the kids interact with on a daily basis who's not fully human, so it's interesting that... I feel like Hermione really had high hopes that Hagrid would be the one who would understand, and Hagrid's like, "No, no, no. You got it wrong. Nope."

Lorrie: He's not a revolutionary. He doesn't have that kind of security. Anyway, he's got other things on his mind at the moment.

JC: For sure, for sure. Backing it up a little bit, I still love the very iconic scene where Fred and George go across the age line and they're immediately kicked out and they have these big long beards.

Lorrie: Right.

JC: And the idea that everybody who tries to cross the age line gets the big, long beard... it's not a gendered thing.

Lorrie: Nope.

JC: Because there was this... I can't remember which student it was. There was a mention of a female student who also had a beard.

Lorrie: Oh, yeah. Laura (sic) Fawcett. She's this Ravenclaw that shows up once in a while. We don't get her story, but we hear about her more than once.

- (**Transcriber's note:** Miss Fawcett actually comes up as **S. Fawcett** in internet searches. While there is a **Laurie Fawcett**, she is not born nor is a student of Hogwarts until well after Harry's time there.)

JC: Miss Fawcett. Whoever Miss Fawcett is also has a beard, so it's very interesting that this is applied across gender lines, right? I cannot divorce my opinion of the author and what the author had said from the way that she uses something which is a very clear marker of maleness -- of facial hair, particularly a really long white beard, so it's age and very male -- that that applies to everybody who tries to go across. Part of it is like, okay, well, he himself (Dumbledore) has a long white beard, so it's a little bit of, 'Okay, I caught you. I know what you're trying to do.' But also, there's just something about the fact that it's applied across the board to everyone. When Angelina says, "I put my name in," and someone says, "Oh, you're over 17," I think Ron or someone says, "Yes, look, she doesn't have a beard, does she?" I just find that really interesting. Whenever something is applied equally to all genders in a way that

the author in real life would have a problem with, yeah, it's just hard for me not to read those in a different light now, those moments.

Lorrie: And that does actually have some connection to the Arthurian roots here, because there is a single-word reference to Arthur having been so young when he pulled the sword from the stone that kings who were adults really resented having to bow down to him and were mutinying; that is, at the end of this chapter, the word 'beardless'. Ron, Hermione and Harry are talking with Hagrid about whether Fred and George were 'beardless' yet, and it's that one word that is an allusion to Arthur and how the kings didn't want to be subject to a 'beardless' boy. It is something about sexual maturation and about kids not old enough for boys to have facial hair being seen as something different from legitimate male, powerful figures. Yeah, then the Beauxbatons girls who don't get chosen are sobbing.

JC: Oh, my gosh. Yeah.

Lorrie: Which also feels gendered. That reminds me of Olympic trials for gymnastics.

JC: Oh.

Lorrie: Things that are seen as hysterically female, but another thing it reminded me of: yesterday, my family took the day off to take my 11th grader to visit a college. Actually, this whole Cup choice procedure does remind me of getting into college, too.

JC: Oh, my God, we're both in this boat right now.

Lorrie: Right.

JC: We both have kids who are heading towards -- Yeah.

Lorrie: Because how is the Cup choosing? It doesn't say.

JC: Oh, my God, you're right. It's very much like that.

Lorrie: When you apply to college, it's not like you get the highest scores or that you're the tallest or whatever. Somehow they're looking at all of you -- or at least several aspects of you -- and the strongest doesn't necessarily get chosen. It's just somehow the best human.

JC: Yeah, and then they will tell you things when you go to these -- Okay, this is a tangent, listener, so sorry, but I also have an 11th grader and we're in the middle of the college thing. When you go to their seminars, or they'll do all these webinars or you go visit them, they'll say things like, "We just want you to be the best version of yourself, whatever that means."

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: "Then we're going to evaluate you by some standards that we can put on our website," but at the end of the day you really don't know what they're looking for or what they're going to see when they look at your materials and what bucket they're going to put you in. It feels like it's completely out of your control, and I had not connected this to putting your name in the Goblet of Fire until you just said that. I'm sitting here going, 'Yeah...'

Lorrie: The Hufflepuffs create this huge uproar when one of their own is chosen because --

JC: Yeah. Yay, Hufflepuff!

Lorrie: Yeah. This is kind of saying, "Well, he was the best person."

JC: I identify as a Hufflepuff, so this read differently to me this time. That moment when Krum's name is announced, all the Durmstrang students are just like, "Yeah, we know."

Lorrie: Of course, yeah.

JC: No one had any illusions that it would be anyone other than Krum.

Lorrie: Go Viktor! Yeah.

JC: And Beauxbatons, with the girls sobbing... They genuinely thought they all had an equal chance, and Fleur got picked and they were all, "Oh, it wasn't me," they were so upset. And who could it have been from Hogwarts? The fact that it was a Hufflepuff... You've got to think the Hufflepuffs think it's going to be a Ravenclaw or it's going to be a Gryffindor.

Lorrie: Right.

JC: Slytherin's just sitting there thinking, 'It should be one of us, but it's not going to because that's how the world stacked against us.'

Lorrie: Right.

JC: So when Hufflepuff gets the champion? Oh, my God. Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And that makes it even worse that Harry's name is going to come out shortly, because Hufflepuff's like, "Really?!"

Lorrie: Yeah!

JC: "This was our chance, and you, 14-year-old Harry Potter, had to go ruin it? Ugh."

Lorrie: The one time. Yeah. So yeah, there's poor Harry, once again, not being normal, but it does not take away from Cedric proving that part of what they're judging here is whether you're a good person with good character.

JC: It's just... At the end, Harry's name being the last line of this chapter just feels so ominous.

Lorrie: Oh, boy.

JC: As a reader, it's like --

Lorrie: 'Oh, no!'

JC: Obviously, when you're actually reading this, you're going to the next chapter. I'm pausing and making myself stop so we can talk about it before we move on, and it's just like, 'Oh, God.' I remember what happens in the chapter, but also I remember not knowing what happens next. What the heck?!

Lorrie: Until then, Harry got to enjoy this whole thing.

JC: Yeah, he was just enjoying it. He was like, 'Yeah, I'm not going to be part of this. I'm going to be watching this this year. This is really cool.' Then suddenly...

Lorrie: Yeah. 'I get to fantasize about it like any other normal 14-year-old while the real grown-ups go at it.' Nope. Nope. "Magically binding contract," all of that build-up about how once it's in motion, there's nothing you can do to stop it... Oh, boy.

JC: And it's so dangerous that they make sure everyone who participates is legally an adult in their world. Seventeen is... You're legally an adult. "It was your choice, and your parents cannot sue us," or whatever.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Yeah. Then we have this whole big mystery: how did Harry's name get in there? Is Harry just so special that the Goblet spit his name out anyway? There's all those things on a first read that I was really wondering.

Lorrie: Right. And now we know that Karkaroff is going to have something to say about it, but that he can be controlled by Mad-Eye Moody.

JC: Oh, yeah. That's true. One of the things in the build-up to all of this is the word 'casket'.

Lorrie: Oh, yes! Yes.

JC: And even when they say 'casket', everyone goes, "Casket?!" and then they bring the Goblet of Fire in, so it's little bits of foreshadowing that somebody's going to die. Just as Trelawney is always predicting, Harry is going to be in a lot of danger and his life will be threatened quite a bit...

Lorrie: "You're in mortal peril."

JC: "Lots of mortal peril." Yes, exactly. "On its way."

Lorrie: "Here, now."

JC: The other thing that I had written down is that Hagrid is teasing a bit about the first task of the Triwizard Tournament and how cool and exciting it's going to be and everyone's going to love it, which is also a sign that no, it's going to be horrible and dangerous and the kids are actually going to be terrified of it.

Lorrie: I did love, too, that when Fred, George, and Lee Jordan are coming in to put their names in the Goblet, they have already agreed amongst themselves that no matter which of them gets in -- if one of them does -- they're going to split the winnings three ways.

JC: Yeah, that's interesting. They made a pact.

Lorrie: Yeah, I love that. It's more money than one person needs to win this, but if they spread it around, then they can use that to get a start in life. Yeah.

JC: Start a business together.

Lorrie: The other thing I noticed, too, is that Angelina gets the racial tokenism. She is defined as a tall Black girl here, but even with that it felt good that there were three major Black Hogwarts students just wandering in and out of this chapter as major characters. We had Dean Thomas, we had Lee Jordan, we had Angelina, and it just made me think: it is true if you have one token, that's obviously tokenism. If you have more than one, that's better. Having three just unremarkably be just characters like anybody else? That made a difference. That made me feel,

'Oh, yeah, that's much more like a normal diverse school setting to me.' That was just something I noticed.

JC: In the beginning, we didn't know any of these kids. As the story goes on, it's nice that those kids can kind of come in and out. All of the kids in the story... We just know their names now. We kind of know what adventures they've been mentioned in and what house they're in, and we can start to build this picture of the Hogwarts student body as being representative of who would be in a school like that in Great Britain.

Lorrie: Next chapter: The Four Champions.

JC: Oh, boy, this is the --

Lorrie: Oh.

JC: When I showed my kiddo, he was like, "Which book are y'all reading now?" and I showed him which one, the first thing he said was, "DID YOU PUT YOUR NAME IN THE GOBLET OF FIRE, HARRY?!" from the movie version.

Lorrie: Yup!

JC: And I just cracked up laughing, because I was like, "That's the one thing you know about the Goblet of Fire: the out-of-character Dumbledore line delivery by Michael Gambon. Okay, yeah.

Lorrie: But this also reminded me of when we talked a few episodes ago about the stability of primes.

JC: Wow!

Lorrie: That prime numbers are magic and that there's security in them because there were only supposed to be three Champions.

JC: Oh, I see where you're going with this.

Lorrie: But no, there are four, and that destabilizes everything.

JC: Right. Yeah, three points determine a plane. A triangle's the most stable figure, and that's why you see it in architecture all the time. Squares are not stable; you build something out of squares, you put a little bit of pressure on the top, the whole thing goes sideways and goes crumbling down. You can't do that to a triangle. So yeah, by adding another point, we have introduced instability.

Lorrie: Yes, we have.

JC: For sure.

Lorrie: Just like Voldemort wanted his soul to be in seven pieces, he has unintentionally divided it into eight, and suddenly he's so unstable.

JC: Oh, yeah. Yeah, there's all kinds of fun factors of that number. Oh, look, there is math in here. That makes me happy.

Lorrie: Yeah, it was funny because when I saw the *Jane Eyre* reference, I thought, 'Oh, JC is going to say something,' and I thought, 'No, primes do recur.'

JC: There's also some magic around certain numbers. Voldemort was shooting for seven, because in the tradition of English-speaking countries certainly, seven is the most magical number.

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: But three is also a really magical number.

Lorrie: It's stable.

JC: Very stable. Mathematically, physically. Yes, very stable.

Lorrie: Until now. Now there are four.

JC: Uh-oh.

Lorrie: Right, and the fourth leg is short and wobbly. Oh, no!

JC: Yeah. Yeah, which is the worst kind of fourth leg to have on a stool or whatever. Yep.

Lorrie: All right, Harry. We'll come visit you next chapter.

JC: Yup!

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.