



Transcript

Episode 4.30

Book 4, Chapter 30: The Pensieve

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 Thirty: The Pensieve.

Lorrie: The Pensieve. Harry discovers the Pensieve, the magical object Dumbledore uses to review memories. So JC, what did you think of this chapter?

JC: Ooh, gosh, I have so many notes on this chapter. They're twice as long as the notes from the previous one.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: But I think the first thing that I noticed about this is that it picks up exactly from the previous one, so this feels like the point at which you just can't stop turning the pages. It's like, pick an arbitrary point in the middle of the scene to cut the chapter... Not completely arbitrary, because you want to know what happens next, but it's interesting that this is kind of that point where it's like, 'Okay, no, we're not stopping.' I made myself stop, but yeah, you've got to keep turning the pages now.

Lorrie: The point of a Harry Potter novel where you just have to make sure you have your snacks and you know you're going to be sleep deprived.

JC: Nothing pressing... Yeah, just do it. Even if there is something pressing, it's going to wait.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Something else that is interesting here... At the beginning of this, Harry looks around the headmaster's office, and there's all these portraits of the previous headmasters and they're all asleep. I think it struck me that with a couple of exceptions, we almost always see the headmasters always asleep in these portraits whenever we're in the office. Then it made me wonder: is that just magically the state they're always in, or are they pretending to be asleep when there are conversations happening so that they're not making anyone uncomfortable? The portraits are kind of sentient, right? Is it an agreement amongst all of them that whenever there's a conversation happening in here, we're going to pretend to be asleep so we don't have the eyes of the previous headmasters looking down all the time? Or are they just always asleep because they're old and tired and they deserve to rest?

Lorrie: I have my own take on what those portraits are, which I think people don't agree with, but then when *Cursed Child* came out it reinforced my take, I think. They are there as memory aids to the headmaster or whoever is looking at them. When you look at them, if you need them -- if you're sitting there thinking, 'Oh, God, I wonder what so-and-so would have thought about this,' 'Wow, I really wish that I could have the counsel of this previous headmaster,' or 'I know I'm breaking precedent, and I know a certain previous headmaster would be totally pissed at me' -- then they come to life based on what you think of them and what you know about them. They do have their own spirit in them, so that when they say things you can hear it in their voice, but it's just a memory aid. They're not real. I was very struck how, when Harry walks in here, the previous headmasters are all peacefully sleeping. To me, that really showed that everything's under control. Dumbledore is in charge; there's security, because this entire chapter there's that intense feeling for me that Harry has entered a sanctuary. After all of the stress and terror he's been through, he has finally gained access to an adult. There's somebody in charge, there's somebody who has answers, there's somebody who can soothe him. There are people much more powerful and wiser than Harry, and he is welcomed here. His degree of faith in Dumbledore is reflected in this 'everything is going okay' feeling of the snoozing portraits. The description of this office all reinforces that sanctuary feeling: it's a very beautiful circular room, the ceiling is really high and the magical artifacts in it are super magical. There's the Sorting Hat, there's the Sword of Gryffindor. This is a sacred space where he can go for answers because he is ready. All this book, people are saying, "Shouldn't you go to Dumbledore?" He's like *groans* There's a bunch of reasons why he doesn't feel qualified or he has some guilt, and now he's completely ready to go ask questions and receive answers. He has faith. He has faith in Dumbledore and there's good reason for him to have faith. Anyway, that's what I got out of the slumbering portraits.

JC: Interesting, okay, yeah. Cool. Okay, I'm going to keep my eyes open for future visits (because I know there will be more of Harry in the office) and think about how those sleeping portraits help set the scene and whether it feels secure or not. I like it. Nice. Ooh, then there's a fun little bit of conversation. Fudge is there and Fudge asks Harry how he's doing, and then the text says "'Fine,' Harry lied." That is a full-on mood.

Lorrie: Yes!

JC: Yes. There's absolutely nothing Harry wants to say to Fudge.

Lorrie: No.

JC: "Mmm. Fine." He's the opposite of fine, but it's not for Fudge's ears, I love that. Oh.

Lorrie: Fudge deserves to know nothing.

JC: Exactly.

Lorrie: I love that there are a few different points in this chapter where you see Harry moving into a different stage of maturity, and one of them is when Harry was "feeling it was pointless to pretend that he hadn't overheard what they'd been saying." He totally belongs in this room full of important people; he calls out Fudge's bullshit about trying to scapegoat Madame Maxime, and Dumbledore is extremely amused and Fudge looks very uncomfortable.

JC: I love that moment so much. Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: There's multiple of these moments in a row here where Harry walks in this room -- the Minister for Magic is in there, along with Dumbledore and also Moody -- and you're right. Harry walks in and there's nothing in his head that's like, 'I don't belong here.' It's like, 'Nope.'

Lorrie: Right. "Nope, I heard you being full of shit."

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: "And I'm just going to say it." Then Fudge basically tells Harry to go back to class, and Harry's like, "No, I'm not going to do that," basically. Yes! This is reinforcing the point that you just made (that Harry knows he belongs here), but also he knows that whatever business he has with Dumbledore is at least as important if not more important than anything Fudge is there to talk to Dumbledore about. In fact, he's pretty sure it's more important.

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: He knows his own worth and he knows his role in all of this, and he's sure of it in a way that in the past he would have been very intimidated, and he's just not. That maturity you were talking about that we're starting to see? Oh, it's amazing.

Lorrie: Yeah. There are two Legilimency moments in this chapter, and Harry gets one of them. He knows to say, "Professor Dumbledore, I wanted to talk to you about something," and then

Dumbledore does a really quick Legilimency on him. Basically, Harry's asking for and getting an appointment with him.

JC: This is the Calendly that Dumbledore has set up as he looks into your eyes. Yeah. That's funny. Okay, I was going to ask you about that, too, because those piercing looks... I thought, 'Okay, I'm pretty sure that's what that's meant to be. I'm going to double check with Lorrie.'

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Because Dumbledore has many piercing looks, and now it's like, 'Oh, okay.' Yeah. That's reinforced later when Harry tells the story and there's zero surprise for anything that he says. Dumbledore's like, "Mm-hmm."

Lorrie: Yes. So with his appointment secured, Harry is left alone in the office and Fawkes "blinks benignly at Harry". Fawkes is magnificent, and that's more of that feeling for me. This is a sanctuary where the god is at home. Things are working as they should. Also, with any mention of Fawkes, I cling to my precious theory that Fawkes was meant to be revealed in the *Fantastic Beasts* movies as previously having been Credence, and that Credence was supposed to be some sort of brother to Dumbledore before that series went to hell and had to change plots and wrap things up.

JC: Oh, that's interesting.

Lorrie: But yeah, Fawkes is obviously a creature who has been through a lot and who understands... who has a lot of wisdom to impart to a child who's going through all this for the first time.

JC: And the presence of Fawkes... You said before there's all these magical artifacts -- there's the sword of Gryffindor and the Sorting Hat and then Fawkes, too. All of that really does shows the power... 'Power' is maybe not the right word, but that sense of safety and sanctuary, absolutely. All these magical things are here. This is Dumbledore's office. Everything's going to be fine.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Or this is a safe place, and Fawkes' presence really emphasizes that to an effect that Fawkes just sort of blinks at Harry. 'Yeah, you belong here, too.' Harry is one of the things that belongs in this space, and I thought that was really cool, too.

Lorrie: Fawkes having been through so many lives, the sword of Gryffindor having survived so many centuries, the Sorting Hat having looked into the head of every single student... It is comforting. Whatever you've got going on, it's just part of human life. There will have been other examples. People have gotten through this before; even if not your exact story, there will be

other things, other people that you can learn from. We're still here. You'll be okay. It's really nice having a phoenix around to look all calm and not agitated.

JC: I guess Fawkes is kind of a familiar, right? The image of this phoenix just hanging out in Dumbledore's office...

Lorrie: Yep.

JC: Does he open the window? Does it go for a fly? It's just so interesting to me that... I guess Fawkes has probably lived a very long life and has seen a lot of things. It's probably very content just to hang out with Dumbledore and get phoenix treats or whatever. But yeah, just the image of, 'Yeah, that's just where Fawkes is, just hangs out.' Oh, I love it. The other thing that I like about this scene -- Harry being left alone in the headmaster's office, in addition to all the things we've seen -- is we get a chance to snoop a little bit through his eyes, which I also really appreciate. Harry's looking around, he's going to check out some things. It's like, 'Oh, we get to do that with him.' That sense of 'Ooh, we're in the office of a really powerful person. What do they keep on their desk? What's in the drawer?'

Lorrie: 'What is this?' Yeah.

JC: 'What's this thing in this cabinet?'

Lorrie: 'Where do you get one of these?' Right.

JC: Yeah. Do you remember those little desk toys that's business-like... My dad used to have in the office little physics toys where you pull a little ball --

Lorrie: One bead will push all the other beads and then get clacked back. Yeah.

JC: Exactly. Yeah. It's the magical equivalent of cool shit in the office. Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah, and thinking, 'Wow, I wonder if this is the only one of its kind in the world and what the story is here, and what century this comes from.'

JC: Which brings us to...

Lorrie: I have one more thing about this: the sentence, "He felt much calmer, somehow, now that he was in Dumbledore's office..." The way that he feels welcome there... I've been thinking a lot about Voldemort lately for reasons that will become clear soon, and this is what Voldemort needed as a student and never got. This feeling of even though you're an orphan, there's some place where you can go for answers to your own mysteries and your own stories... Somebody is around to guide you. Voldemort would have loved that and never got it. But yes, Harry is in the right place.

JC: Yeah. I imagine that there was never a moment where Tom Riddle was in Dumbledore's office and felt as comfortable as Harry feels or as safe as Harry feels.

Lorrie: The way that Tom... either he was able to pull the wool over everyone's eyes (like Dippet, who was the headmaster at the time) or all of his teachers, who all fell for the act... He had that imposter syndrome thing where he wants everyone to fall for the act and he also desperately wishes there'd be somebody who could see through it, and the only person who could see through it was Dumbledore, but that wasn't in a friendly way. That was in a threatening way, and it wasn't like Dumbledore would say, "I see through you. Come into my office and I will help you and comfort you." It's more like, "You know you're up to something, I know you're up to something, and in order for any healing to take place, those plans of yours have to be stopped," which Voldemort knew. It wasn't a secure feeling, since all of them were coping mechanisms that he had developed to get away from the pain, and in order to address his real life, he would have to go into the pain and he didn't want to go into the pain. Anyway, Voldemort didn't get this, but Harry has the good fortune to be there resting, and that is when he encounters the glowing receptacle. You want to introduce us to what he finds?

JC: Yeah. Well, the Pensieve is open in a cabinet because apparently Dumbledore was interrupted by Fudge and just didn't close it up. I do wonder if Dumbledore has any regrets about that or not, but it's introduced as this incredibly magical, mysterious object. I really like the description: "The silvery light was coming from the basin's contents, which were like nothing Harry had ever seen before. He could not tell whether the substance was liquid or gas. It was a bright, whitish silver, and it was moving ceaselessly; the surface of it became ruffled like water beneath wind, and then, like clouds, separated and swirled smoothly. It looked like light made liquid -- or like wind made solid." I love that.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: What an incredible description of these magical memories that are in here, or thoughts. This is a representation of what's happening inside someone's head.

Lorrie: So beautiful.

JC: It's really cool. Yeah, it's a really beautiful description.

Lorrie: I think that the Pensieve might be... I wonder if it's my favorite. It's one of my favorite magical inventions that this series gives us into popular culture. When *Harry Potter* the series was first making a big splash, one of the things that people were impressed with was all of the brilliant puns in the names for things, and I think 'pensieve' might be my favorite one of those. It works so beautifully and gives such a useful image for how to externalize memories -- this is their pure form -- and it also invents something that we don't get in real life. It invents memories being completely objective. In the Pensieve, what you have is the objective memory, and then your interpretation as a human is when you observe the objective memory. We do have cell phone videos and stuff that help us with that, where you would swear, 'No, I remember it this

way, I would swear to it,' and then you see a video and you think, 'Wow. Perception really changes what I remember.' But here you have this authority. That would be lovely.

JC: Yeah. You're bringing up cell phone videos... You and I are both old enough that for a good chunk of our lives, there wasn't access to an easy quick way to set memories aside.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Right? To capture things and then store them for future reference. And now... Gosh, it's only been the last twenty-ish years that it's very common that we're always taking photos and we're always taking videos. We have all this storage space right now; before, you couldn't possibly do that. I know, for me, the closest I've gotten to the idea of a Pensieve is that memory feature that a lot of social media has when you are just cruising along and your Facebook says, "13 years ago today..." and you're like, 'Whoa,' and there's a video that you took and uploaded because it was an important moment in your life. It's like, "I'd forgotten about that until right now." The Pensieve is a little bit different from that because it feels a lot more intentional about which memories you're pulling out, and then you have to go, 'There must be some way to search for them.' It feels a bit like that. You can externalize your memories now in a way and then have them, like, 'Surprise!'

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: 'Here's what you did eight years ago,' or you can go back and search for them.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: "Eight years ago, I'm pretty sure I took a video of that thing," and you can go look for it.

Lorrie: And you can show other people.

JC: Yeah. You can show the people. You're right. You can look at it pretty objectively because the camera lens was from your perspective, but you still took an objective... You took a video, you took a photo, so you can look at that. Just like when Harry and then later when Dumbledore go into the memory, they're not part of it but they're sitting there, looking at it from the same perspective that the original memory was recorded from. It's very much like taking a video and then looking at it again later.

Lorrie: Yeah, and then saying, "Wow! Actually, I never noticed this moment," but that person grew up to be somebody else and you can see the seeds of it here, like what you do with memories or like what we're doing with this podcast...

JC: Yeah, for sure.

Lorrie: Where you take your future knowledge and you compare it to the moment when the memory was first formed.

JC: Oh, my gosh. Yes. What's popping in my head now is that there's this video when my kiddo was not yet walking; he was a sitting-up baby, but not yet a walking baby. We were with all of my extended family and all of his little cousins who were about the same age, and they had put one of his baby toys on the floor that you push buttons and it makes different sounds and different music. The kids were tussling over it, like who gets to push the buttons. Well, two of his cousins were climbing over it and pushing buttons and my kid was just sitting there, and every time it played music, he would start to move his arms up and down in rhythm to the music. At the time, I was like, 'Oh, he's just chair dancing or just sitting there;' My kid's a drummer, so I look back down and I'm like, 'Oh, my gosh!' He was picking up the rhythm...'

Lorrie: It was all there.

JC: Before he could walk, right? The idea to be able to look back and think, 'Do I see the seeds or am I reading into it too much? Maybe. I don't care. This is fun.' Being able to look back, I think, 'Where do I see the little seeds of a thing that I'm now aware of?' I love that ability of having old videos and things to look at. Yeah. I like the idea that maybe we do have a Pensieve after all, sort of.

Lorrie: Do you want to say what today is?

JC: Oh, today is my kid's 17th birthday, I should say.

Lorrie: Right.

JC: Which is like, 'Holy crap, he's a fully qualified wizard!'

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: Kind of.

Lorrie: The kid who, at fifteen, wrote our intro and outro music...

JC: That's how long we've been doing this. Wow.

Lorrie: And has continued to grow as a musician since.

JC: Absolutely, absolutely. Yay!. Happy birthday, C!

Lorrie: The Pensieve, this incredible tool, and Harry does what Harry does and he gets sucked into it.

JC: Oh, before that, I love this quote where he's looking at it and trying to figure out what it is. It says, "He wanted to touch it, to find out what it felt like, but nearly four years' experience of the magical world told him that sticking his hand into a bowl full of some unknown substance was a very stupid thing to do," which is hilarious, because two minutes later he's sticking his face in it.

Lorrie: He does exactly the -- yep.

JC: Yeah. His curiosity gets too much of him, yeah.

Lorrie: But he does, at least by that point, know that there's going to be something worth looking at.

JC: Oh, yeah, because he's looking down into it and then a memory presents itself to him. That makes me wonder... the mechanics of 'how does the Pensieve work', because it's not his, so he doesn't know how to work it. What is it? Why does it choose these memories to show him? Is it just because they were the ones on the surface that Dumbledore was just looking at, or is there something else going on there?

Lorrie: Based on what we see later, I think it's that those were memories that had just been under discussion. What I love -- and this is such a practical thing -- Harry is momentarily frustrated because the room he's looking into is a rectangular room, but the Pensieve is circular. There are corners he can't see into, and that's how his nose gets stuck in the potion. Just that simple geometry frustrating Harry Potter was adorable. So there he is, sucked in, and I as the reader gets sucked right into it with him because these memories are so compelling. They're atmospheric, they're urgent, they're dramatic, and the way that they shift in time... We get pulled into different times, but as soon as we are there, I'm *there*. I'm sucked into the drama that's happening. The scene is set with "an empty chair stood in the very center of the room." Okay, so this whole super magical mood that we have going in this chapter is continuing. Okay, this is another supercharged space that we're looking into. It's tense; it's not serene like Dumbledore's office, but it's magical, and there I am reading this, thinking, 'Oh, this is the kind of world building that gets me really excited. These are allegories for mental processes, so here I am in Ravenclaw heaven.'

JC: We have three big flashbacks here. Something that stands out to me across this chapter, actually, is the fact that in the beginning, Harry's looking at Dumbledore and he's not sure when he is, because Dumbledore looks the same.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And it's not until Karkaroff is brought in and looks young that Harry's like, 'Oh.'

Lorrie: 'Okay, I see.'

JC: 'I'm way back in the past;' he couldn't gauge it. This is showing us, first of all, how old Dumbledore is. He's presented as being Merlin-like; he's very timeless. Maybe he's immortal, who knows... What's really interesting to me is that by the end of this chapter, Harry sees how old Dumbledore is for the first time. Dumbledore ages in this chapter.

Lorrie: He's very mortal. Yeah.

JC: And yeah, he sees Dumbledore at first as the great wizard that Harry's always believed he is, and at the end of the chapter, he's looking at Dumbledore and realizing he's an old man and he looks exhausted. Oh, gosh. That's, again, one of those childhood --

Lorrie: It's maturing. Yeah.

JC: Yeah, maturing, looking at the adults in your life and realizing they're mortal.

Lorrie: Also, the funny thing is that it's Harry's own story that's aging Dumbledore and sending him to his grave.

JC: For sure.

Lorrie: But yeah, there's that movement in this chapter of Dumbledore from god to human, and the perception of him from god to human is Harry's maturity because Dumbledore is the same Dumbledore the whole time.

JC: It also reminds me -- thinking about the idea of the Pensieve looking into the past and your cell phone videos being similar; I'm sure you've had this experience, too -- of showing a video of my kid when he was little to my kid and having my kid comment on how much younger I look in this video. I look at it and I'm like, 'Do I? Yeah, I guess I do.' When you're younger, people who are ten years older than you could be fifty years older than you, right? When you're twelve, people who are twenty are just freaking ancient and that slows down as you get older and have perspective. I see a bit of that in here, too. Harry's view of Dumbledore's age (or his perception of that) shifts a lot here, but it is very accurate to the way that kids look at people. Their grandparents or parents... They're just that age. They've always looked that way, haven't they? Then things happen to make you realize, 'Oh, wait, they are getting older.' Anyway...

Lorrie: Yeah. The way this chapter moves from Harry entering this space that's so much greater than he is and that's going to take care of him... then at the very end of this chapter, it spits him out and he's got to face everything alone. Okay. Gods have concerns, too. But yeah, the first memory we get is what an incredible sleazebag Karkaroff is! Oh, he's so disgusting.

JC: Oh, and all this backstory on him at this point is really cool.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: The fact that we know, he's something -- he's some mysterious... We know that Moody doesn't like him...

Lorrie: Hates him.

JC: Yeah, and now we understand why Dumbledore wanted Moody.

Lorrie: And what an incredible hostility move that was. All of Karkaroff spitting at Dumbledore and being really quick to suspect him was justified. No matter how polite and welcoming Dumbledore acted, for him to have this particular person on staff at that moment is like, 'Screw you. I hate you. I don't trust you at all. You are evil. You shouldn't be out here and free. You should still be in Azkaban.'

JC: 'You should not be running one of the most important wizarding schools in Europe.' Boy, that brought me back to the modern context...

Lorrie: Doesn't it?

JC: The current day. Why are convicted criminals running things? Hmm...

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Wow, so many parallels.

Lorrie: So no, Karkaroff is quite right to be prickly about Dumbledore's politeness when Dumbledore has an eye on him at all times.

JC: A big magical eye.

Lorrie: And I also love, though, that we get a bit of real Mad-Eye Moody here, who is a hard ass. We get one of his philosophical disagreements with Dumbledore, where Moody says something that kind of shocked me and reminds me of Bellatrix in *Deathly Hallows*. He suggests getting all of Karkaroff's information and then sending him right back to the dementors, renegeing on the deal that you make with informants. I thought, 'Wow, that is incredibly filthy. No, you don't do that.' Well, first of all, why would anyone turn informant after that? But Dumbledore's objection is that he doesn't think anyone should be sent to the dementors, let alone sent back to dementors. I had to think, 'Well, what do I think of that?' But essentially, Dumbledore does agree with Moody's take on "filth like this", that Karkaroff, no matter what punishment he does or doesn't deserve, it's not somebody that you want out in the world. Oh, the thing that Bellatrix does in *Deathly Hallows* that this reminded me of is that when the Snatchers bring Harry, Ron, and Hermione to Malfoy Manor, she takes everything they bring and they're like, "Well, where's our prize? Where's our money?" And she just says, "Well, let's just kill them. We have what they want, and we'll just kill them." That's not fair.

JC: Oh, that's interesting. It does show that... Okay, Moody says in the memory that he spent six months tracking Karkaroff down, and now he's really frustrated to see that. He knows exactly how bad this guy is, and now he's basically cutting a deal to squeal on other Death Eaters and be released. As far as Moody's concerned, Death Eaters don't change their colors or whatever. This guy... once a Death Eater, always a Death Eater, and we see later Moody also believes that. But it is interesting, that comparison that you just mentioned with Bellatrix... No -- Compassion's not the right word, but it's a bit amoral, I guess. 'Okay, this person's not of use to us. This person's life... They've done so many bad things that their life is so worthless to me that it doesn't have to adhere to my moral code.'

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: I guess that's what I'm saying. Yeah.

Lorrie: But it's also a power difference where Bellatrix feels like it doesn't matter what lies you tell people who don't actually matter.

JC: Okay, yeah, I see.

Lorrie: Moody suggesting sending Karkaroff back is sliding into that amoral territory that makes me go, 'No, you cannot do that.' I don't know what's happened with the McDonald's employee who allegedly did not get the reward for squealing on Luigi Mangione.

JC: Oh, that dates our podcast episode here quite a bit also, but yeah. Yeah.

Lorrie: But for the reward people to say, "No, you didn't follow the procedure for squealing," yes, because any moment now he could have gotten up and walked away. Are you grateful at all? No, apparently not. You're just happy not to have to pay the money.

JC: Oh, my gosh.

Lorrie: So yeah. Okay, anyway, we see that Moody has a ton of substance and is generally on the side of the good guys, but I don't trust him either.

JC: Interesting, yeah. He seems very... Without getting too much into the anti-police kind of sentiment, the idea that you can see bad things so much that it just completely ruins your perspective of humanity...

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: If you're a police officer and you spend a lot of time chasing down criminals or whatever, you get this lens of the world that's really warped as if most people are like that or there's more of this in the world than there actually is. I can see this happened to Moody. He spent his life

hunting down Death Eaters, so by the end, the idea is by the time of the current moment in the book, the actual Moody... everyone knows he's just crazy.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: He's driven mad.

Lorrie: The garbage bins are after him. Yeah.

JC: Right. It is interesting to think that we're seeing him at an earlier point where he hasn't lost his eye and all this stuff yet, but he has still spent all this time... Every Death Eater that Karkaroff mentions, he's like, "Yeah. Caught him. Caught him."

Lorrie: "Oh, yeah, I know about him."

JC: He's caught them all!

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Yeah, so he's devoted his life to catching all these people.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: It says a lot about him, too, and his character.

Lorrie: And he is right about Karkaroff's basic nature. There's Karkaroff, giving his testimony in the greasiest, yuckiest possible way...

JC: Getting increasingly desperate once he realizes everyone he's turning in has already been captured.

Lorrie: Then he says this thing that's just good world building: "We never knew the names of every one of our fellows -- He alone knew exactly who we all were." Okay, that's just what anybody would do. That's not just Voldemort. Dumbledore does this, too. It's a protective move when you're doing something undercover and dangerous so that information about people's identities and safety can't be tortured out of your people if they got captured, which every once in a while in fandom you see this debate. 'Well, why couldn't McGonagall have been told in seventh year that Snape was really on their side?' I'm like, 'No, you can't do that. That's not going to protect her life if she gets captured.' So yeah, Dumbledore does that all the time and it's just good policy, I think.

JC: Yeah. Keep your secrets close.

Lorrie: Keep your people alive. And then the super greasy apology from Karkaroff: "I give this information as a sign that I fully and totally renounce him, and am filled with a remorse so deep I can barely --" Ew, gross.

JC: Yeah. He's just like -- yeah. And even Crouch is like, "Yeah, yeah, get on with it."

Lorrie: This is to show us what it looks like when somebody is faking remorse. That gets alluded to again at the end of the chapter, but this is part of the long game of this chapter.

JC: We see so many things in these scenes. We see Crouch as the ultimate adjudicator. He's the one who's in charge of all this. He's kind of a judge, but...

Lorrie: He's just in charge. Yes.

JC: Yeah, he's just in charge, right? We see him being absolutely cold-blooded about it.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: None of that gets to him, and then we see with Barty Crouch Jr. later that yeah, nothing gets to him. Once he's made up his mind, no, you're evil.

Lorrie: He's an absolute person. Yeah.

JC: Yeah. That's very, very interesting to see him in that role.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And it does beg the question: what if he had become Minister of Magic? How different would this world have been?

Lorrie: Yeah. When Karkaroff is spilling the names of all these Death Eaters, it reminded me that my friend Irvin Khaytman, who wrote the book on Dumbledore, did this really useful MuggleNet series of columns where he included a thorough accounting of all the Death Eaters as they appear this series. It's very masterfully done what the author does here, where she just puts in references and you can't keep track of them, right? They just show up here and there and Irvin actually goes through and tracks them all, and you can build a surprisingly coherent story about each of the characters and what they do throughout the series. It's just well done so that it's just as messy when you encounter it as a reader as it would be in real life. I'm going to put a link in the show notes to Irvin's series because yeah, this info dump of their names... This is a really good reference, this chapter. Then there's the turning point of the series being revealed. Are you ready for this?

JC: Let's do it.

Lorrie: As we've been noticing, this series shoves Snape at the reader all the time whether or not you want him shoved in your face. That's Karkaroff's big reveal: Severus Snape. That's when Crouch just rolls his eyes and says, "Snape has been cleared by this council. He has been vouched for by Albus Dumbledore." This is the turning point. Everything about Snape not being a Death Eater depends on "Do you or do you not trust Albus Dumbledore?" Dumbledore is entirely certain, and that's on one side. On the other side is the mass of evidence that this guy Snape is really unappealing, has (as far as we can tell) very nearly no redeeming qualities, and he's petty.

JC: Vindictive and everything.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: One of the worst qualities to me is that he is immature while teaching students. It's not a crime -- it's not like killing people -- but it's so repellent. As a student... Anyone who's been in a school will recognize how it feels when you see a grown-up standing in front of you, calling on their authority as an older person, being at least as immature as a kid or more. It's disgusting. That's one of his personality traits, and these are the piles of yucky things against this character that the author is putting on one side of the scale, and on the other is the trust of Dumbledore. What does Dumbledore know that we don't? Or to put it a different way, what does God see in people that we people don't? But he's sure, and he calmly and weightily says, "Severus Snape was indeed a Death Eater. However, he rejoined our side before Lord Voldemort's downfall and turned spy for us, at great personal risk. He is now no more a Death Eater than I am." This is one of those moments in the series where, if you're trying to analyze what's happening, you should come back repeatedly to this statement, right? We see "great personal risk." That is an important marker in this series, and in Dumbledore's world view, it's an important marker of sincerity. It's easy to be personally comfortable and at low risk and declare your allegiances. Then there's the category of people who are comfortable putting other people at risk, which is what Narcissa does with Snape's Unbreakable Vow. It's like, "Snape, I'm really distressed. My child is in danger. *You* can volunteer to die for him, right?" Nothing changes for Narcissa except that she feels better now.

JC: Oh, yeah.

Lorrie: But Snape is like... She's gotten him to risk his own life and he's like, "Yeah, all right, I'll do it." So yeah, she has put somebody else at risk, but then it's another thing to be like Lily and use your own life as a shield for somebody else, and that's what Dumbledore is saying about Snape. "He turned spy for us at great personal risk." That's just a different way of being -- a different way of committing to something you believe in -- but then it turns out in the long game of this series that the most important part of this little speech from Dumbledore is, "He is now no more a Death Eater than I am." Okay, so Dumbledore is putting his own name on the line for Snape -- unless this means something else. "Well, are you a Death Eater, Dumbledore? What

are you talking about?" Whatever he means here, we're going to find out that there's some category of life experience and understanding that Dumbledore and Snape share. We have Moody responding to Dumbledore's speech with "a look of deep skepticism," because whatever Dumbledore sees in Snape (that makes him believe in Snape) that he also sees in himself is something that not everybody knows, not everyone has seen or believed in -- Moody sure doesn't -- and it's going to be difficult for the reader to figure it out. Death Eaters sure as heck don't see this and don't understand it and don't trust it. Here we have, in this chapter, the entire setup for the series from this point on.

JC: Ooh...

Lorrie: Yeah. Okay, for some reason Dumbledore thinks that Snape is no more a Death Eater than he is. Okay, Dumbledore, how much of a Death Eater are you? You're not, right?

JC: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. It's funny. I did not even think about that interpretation. I think that what I took from this is more the bit that you said before about 'How much do we trust Dumbledore?' Not trust as if he's a bad guy or not, but how much we trust his judgment.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Right? I feel like that's a thing that I remember. I haven't read these books in a while, of course, but I remember it popping up again and again. Harry believes that Dumbledore believes in Snape, but he isn't sure that he'd trust jump. Do you trust Dumbledore's judgment here? Is there other things that Dumbledore doesn't know?

Lorrie: Right.

JC: Is he fallible? He goes from being this God-like figure to now a tired-looking old man. Maybe he's wrong, maybe he made a mistake. Maybe Snape fooled him. Is Dumbledore foolable? Maybe.

Lorrie: He could be. He is human.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Is he?

JC: He's human, right. He looks more human at the end of this chapter. There's a lot of that that stands out for me. I don't think I've made the connection to Dumbledore's past before.

Lorrie: But this really goes into the concept of God or some higher power, or if you're a child, the adults that you trust to run your life, having a lot more deep experience than you do, including dark places that you don't know about that they've been to and then come back from, which is what makes them wiser. This is a really good example of what I mean when I say that

Dumbledore is written as God, because the way that characters in this series -- Harry especially, but also readers of this series -- relate to Dumbledore is crisis of faith, and people saying, "I think I believe in God, but how can he let all these things happen? Is it that I don't understand? Is it that God's perception is infinitely greater than mine, and it's on me to work harder and harder to understand? Or is this all just a scam? How can I tell the difference? Am I supposed to just go on blindly believing in somebody that my faith is eroding in? Maybe I don't believe enough." All of these crises of faith, the things that you hear people going through as they question their faith when they are really sincere and devout, is how Dumbledore the character is presented here.

JC: Ah, yeah.

Lorrie: So yeah, this is a crisis of faith. Dumbledore believes in Snape. Why? Because it doesn't look so good for Snape.

JC: For sure.

Lorrie: Whatever good qualities he has must be buried deep down, because they're not on the surface.

JC: Yep.

Lorrie: So we get the second Pensieve memory here. We get the trial of Ludo Bagman, and we find out why Winky talks about him as a bad person. He's a different species of Death Eater. He is not a slimy traitor; he's a dupe, which brings up the question: are fools better or worse than evil geniuses? I don't know. Crouch probably thinks they're worse. He just can't stand this guy. And then oh, God, the whole Wizengamot applauds his athletic performance, which makes Crouch furious and it makes me so mad, too.

JC: Right. The whole thing here with Bagman... a couple things. One is that when he comes out of this, I don't trust that anything he said was true.

Lorrie: Right.

JC: He's not as slimy or sleazy as... He doesn't come across as over-the-top.

Lorrie: Right.

JC: "I repent as Karkaroff did," but he's also playing the nice white boy who made a stupid mistake. Think of his future! It's that level of --

Lorrie: Yes, it very much is.

JC: Oh, God. Yeah.

Lorrie: And they're falling for it, and the question is it might be true. He might just really be that dumb, and as far as we can tell, that is what happened: he's just not very bright. But yuck.

JC: Oh, and the fact that he was promised a job in the Ministry...

Lorrie: I know. Oh, no...

JC: And then I wrote down this quote, but I can't remember who said it. It might have been Moody: "The day Ludo Bagman joins us will be a very sad day for the Ministry."

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: Just going back twenty years to people joking about... Even on the Simpsons, joking about the idea of a president Trump...

Lorrie: Yuck.

JC: It just brings that back to me, too. It's like, 'Yeah, looking back... Oh, my God, so funny, haha.' Yeah.

Lorrie: Sucks. Are you ready to talk about the third memory?

JC: Yes, let's do it.

Lorrie: Oh, God. Oof. The third trial we see is the one of four people including Barty Crouch Jr., and we see Barty Crouch Sr. running the trial. Next to him is his "frail, wispy" wife, who is in the worst distress that a person can be in probably. How does it feel to be the family of the criminal, and then to know that whatever personal family dynamic problems you've had in your life, they are now on trial and up for public judgment and they have hurt people far beyond your own family? You have to be in the position of wondering if you could have seen this coming. And the salaciousness of people getting a bit of satisfaction that Barty Crouch Sr., who has been so judgmental and perfect and dismissive of other people, is getting the come-down of all come-downs. How is he going to take that? Oof... This is a rough, rough emotional setup.

JC: All three of these instances, we don't see the presentation of the evidence. This is just the final judgment, right?

Lorrie: Right.

JC: And in the earlier two cases, you've got Moody saying, "Yeah," or at least with Karkaroff you've got Moody talking about, "Yeah, I caught him and all these other people," right? We hear a little bit about the evidence against Bagman, but it's so interesting that here with Barty Crouch Jr. we get little hints of what the evidence was. We get told what they did, which is that with this

group of people that they tortured, the Longbottoms... They were the ones who are responsible for the Longbottoms' torture, but the image that you're left with there is, "Okay, that's what they did. Yeah, we don't really know the significance of that quite so much yet." The fact that Barty Crouch Jr. is sitting there and saying and crying, "I didn't do it! It wasn't me! I'm innocent!" while his mother is sobbing, you get the sense that Mr. Crouch knows what the evidence is and he's made up his mind. He's taken the stance, and his coldness there reads as -- I guess it's the contrast between this young man who's sobbing and crying, "It wasn't me, I'm innocent!" versus the father who's like, "I know what you did, I've written you off. You're no longer my son. My son is dead!" Ooh, gosh, there's a lot.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: The crying mother, and the crowd, and the people in the room are just darkly gleeful that this is happening. The contrast to the way they reacted to Bagman in the previous memory is this darkness and they're clapping and they're like, "Oh, yeah!"

Lorrie: Yeah. They're happy.

JC: Right. This whole memory feels so dramatic.

Lorrie: Yeah, and it's written so that you can't be sure as the reader if this kid is just making something up because he's panicked or if Barty Crouch Sr. is correct. The other people in the council seem to think that he's correct. The crimes themselves are heinous. There's no argument that the crimes were committed and he's saying that he didn't know, but there's a little bit of a hint that his protests don't quite stand up. When he's saying, "I didn't know, it wasn't me," there's not a consistent story to his denial. And then finally, he goes shrieking to the heart of it: "I'm your son!" That's his last line of appeal, and his dad reveals, "No, you used that one up." Whoever committed these crimes did something really awful and now is not the time for them to have a change of heart about this, because what's clear is that the crimes were not things that you could just do and then realize later, "Oh, no, I shouldn't have done that." They required so much sustained cruelty. Whoever did this was completely aware of what they were doing and it wasn't even necessary. They went far beyond the point that was necessary. They were just being vicious, so anyone who would do this really needs to be removed from society; they're not safe. Was this kid one of them? Well, if he wasn't, he's still hanging out with them.

JC: One of the people here is Bellatrix, who is completely unrepentant. It's basically like, "And I'd do it again!"

Lorrie: She's really, actually, feeling empowered here because she has their attention and she's a true believer. It makes me happy for Voldemort that she actually knows what he needs. Unlike these greasy losers like Karkaroff who don't care for him at all -- or like Lucius Malfoy, where they're really just looking out for themselves -- she says, "We alone were faithful! We alone tried to find him!" Voldemort's issue is these hangers-on, these leeches, "claimed to believe in me, but the moment I was in trouble, they abandoned me just like everybody else... Except for these

people who were telling the truth when they said they cared about me and thought, "Wow, our master is in pain and alone and abandoned. Maybe we should go look for him. Maybe he'd be happy to get a little help." Unlike the others, they weren't lying when they said that they cared about Voldemort as a person.

JC: It sounds like you're saying you're really happy for Voldemort that he at least had Bellatrix.

Lorrie: Okay...

JC: That's one of the core ideas, too, of *Cursed Child*, right? There's a perception that if Voldemort was going to have a partner, that's the person it would be.

Lorrie: Well, she's one of four. The other three, she said, who were also... She's countering Barty Crouch Jr.'s protests, including him in this group of the faithful.

JC: There's not being so faithful in that moment, but yeah.

Lorrie: When she's saying, "He will reward us beyond any of his other supporters," this is a belief that we see her continuing in later books -- which sometimes he rewards her and sometimes he doesn't -- but there's a real reason she believes this. I wonder... I find this whole family setup between Barty Crouch Jr. and Sr. to be so difficult to understand, to identify with. I asked a therapist once: what would she do if she were in this surprise situation where your kid turns out to have done something this awful? She gave me an answer that I could just barely wrap my brain around where she said, "But it wouldn't be like that. These situations don't come by surprise." What?! She said, "No, they're a long time brewing." This is a different therapist that I brought this to -- I don't really understand this either, although I believe her and trust her -- who said that the extremism of a parent like Barty Crouch Sr. is exactly the kind of thing that could cause a child to go in the opposite direction. Okay, I don't really get how that works, but I will take their word for it. Here you have a child who apparently really did all these disgusting things, suddenly crying and saying, "I swear it, father, don't send me back to the dementors --" What should you do then and there? What is Barty Crouch Sr. supposed to be doing here now? I just got so stuck on that, because the answer I got from people who I talked to (who have seen really bad situations like this) is Barty Crouch Sr. could have and should have seen this coming. Part of his response here is that he seems so betrayed, like, "How dare you do this to me!" Should he get the kid off the charges, quit being in public life and devote himself to taking care of the kid and repairing their family from now on? That's sort of like what Sirius said a couple chapters ago when he says, "Should've spent a bit more time at home with his family, shouldn't he? Ought to have left the office early once in a while, gotten to know his own son," but that's like, "In the past he should have done that. I don't know what he should do now."

JC: That's an interesting question. Okay, the only thing I can really compare this to is school shooters, kids who one day just go into their school and slaughter people in their own school, and everyone's always shocked, right? The media will dissect all of this and say, "Oh, well, the parents kept guns in the home and they bought this child a crazy gun for their thirteenth birthday

or whatever," so there's always things that you can go back and you can look back in the past and go, "Oh, we can see all the steps that maybe led to this. The kid was posting about this on social media." You can put it all together, but no one has that picture at the time. I understand you can look back and go, 'Oh, I should have seen,' but in the moment, you see what you want to see more than what is really there. We all do that. That's just how humans work. Barty Crouch Sr. saw what he wanted to see. Yeah, he made mistakes -- he was not a great parent by any stretch of the imagination -- but he was not going to predict that his own son... Even when he saw crazy behavior or behavior that stood out, he was not going to interpret it in the way that it was actually happening. He was going to interpret it in the way he wanted it to be. I think this is the hard thing about being a parent or loving anyone: you see that person through a lens that puts a positive spin, or the spin that you want. It's really hard to break through that and to realize that this person that I care about is actually doing terrible things. It's hard to come to terms with that. "Maybe I've enabled it. I've made it easier for them to do it."

Lorrie: Or caused it.

JC: Yeah. That's a really, really hard thing to do as a human.

Lorrie: Well, we do get the evidence from the last day that Barty Crouch Sr. was alive when he was having the memory of boasting about Barty Crouch Jr. getting 12 O.W.L.s. In that case, he had the material to be the perfect son that Barty Crouch Sr. wanted. That is the hint that whatever the son was up to, he certainly was not communicating it to his dad because obviously that's the kind of dad... There's no communicating. There's no getting your own reality as a human past their conviction that the world owes them what they want. He is such a big man that he deserves a perfect son who is this and that and doesn't have the right to their own destiny or personality; Barty Crouch Jr. not only had no motive to let his dad in on what he was doing, but it wouldn't have worked anyway. But then he did this thing that is so disgusting that he committed a crime that even other Death Eaters would find disgusting. What he did was worse than what a lot of people did. So yeah, it's so hopeless and toxic and no, he's not a safe person. Yeah. When Barty Crouch Sr. is really losing it and yelling, "You are no son of mine! I have no son!" he's disowning at this stage.

JC: And very, very, very publicly. But yet in the future... Anyway...

Lorrie: Right. Oh... It's a situation that's so painful that I can't think of any solutions. Well, I don't know what he's supposed to be doing. That's the point at which we get one of those jump scare moments (or Harry gets one of those jump scare moments) where he hears Dumbledore saying gently, "I think, Harry, it is time to return to my office." Oh, God...

JC: And there's two Dumbledores suddenly. Yeah.

Lorrie: It's not like when Snape does it and you're like, 'Oh, no,' but it's definitely the same kind of sudden reality. 'Oh, shit.' And then this beautiful description: "...He felt as though he had done a slow-motion somersault, suddenly landing flat on his feet..." I thought, 'Oh, that's just how I

feel as a reader.' I was so absorbed in this scene, and then like, 'Oh, my God, wait, wait. We were in Dumbledore's off--' Yeah. I felt the same way. Wow, the power of fiction, huh?

JC: It's interesting, too, that Harry first is like, "Oh, I am so sorry. Oh, crap, I'm in trouble," and Dumbledore is not angry. He seems subdued, but he doesn't seem angry that Harry peeked into the Pensieve.

Lorrie: Well, it was his mistake, and there's no going back on it now.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: But it's also that as the headmaster in general, he has to think, 'Is this a good time for Harry Potter to understand what he has just seen?' First of all, it's too late. He's seen it. 'What do I do to incorporate his knowledge, especially considering all the crap that's happening right now?' These are all things that Dumbledore has to think of really, really quickly because he knew that Harry was in his office to talk about something serious anyway.

JC: There's this little transition scene where we see a few more of Dumbledore's memories just surface, so they haven't walked away from the Pensieve yet.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Oh, no, Dumbledore brings it over to the desk, because he's like, "Okay, we're going to talk about what it says and what's going on here." But he sees this memory of Snape telling Dumbledore that the Dark Mark is returning, which is really cool, and then another one of Bertha Jorkins, who's still a mystery.

Lorrie: And Dumbledore explains, "I sometimes find, and I'm sure you know the feeling, that I simply have too many thoughts and memories crammed into my mind," and Harry's response to that is, "Er," which I love. But in the future, Harry will know exactly what Dumbledore means. Then Dumbledore explains to Harry and to the reader what this magical object is and how it works. He says that when you put your memories in there and swirl them around, "it becomes easier to spot patterns and links," and I felt bliss reading this. Oh, yes, let's talk about how thinking works. Then the narration says, "Rather as a gold prospector would pan for fragments of gold," he swirls it around; that's the silver and gold magic that I bring up sometimes, where the color of your memories that are your own privately are silver -- those are your thoughts and your soul -- and connections are what turn silver into gold. Making mental connections is, to me, one of the great joys of life, one of the great privileges of consciousness in existence. This is fun to me, and this is what Dumbledore needs when he's got so very, very much information. When Harry sees the memory of Snape, he sees "his own face change smoothly into Snape's", which is incredibly disturbing. 'Wait, are they on the same side now?'

JC: But also, this idea that Dumbledore puts Harry and Snape in the same category in his memory, right?

Lorrie: Yeah! Ugh!

JC: He thinks about them together.

Lorrie: Yikes! This is something that I didn't pick up on until this read: when Snape is saying, "It's coming back... Karkaroff's too... stronger and clearer than ever..." Oh, that was the conversation right before Snape wouldn't let Harry into the office when Barty Crouch Sr. was being murdered. That's what he was talking about, okay. It's during this scene when "it struck Harry suddenly how very old he was looking... somehow he never really thought of Dumbledore as an old man." Alright, Harry is maturing and the thought of mortality is entering his mind as he looks at this person who is taking care of him. Suddenly, to Harry, the face of God has become mortal. Ooh... Yeah. I do like how the various small mysteries of this volume have started to get connected in this chapter.

JC: As we're hurdling towards the end.

Lorrie: But there's quite a lot to go. Did you enjoy the moment when Dumbledore reveals that he has been in touch with Sirius the entire time?

JC: Yeah. "I even told him where that cave was."

Lorrie: Yeah. Dumbledore had to make that decision, which I think you and I and many parents know... That moment of, 'All right, I'm going to drop the penny. I'm going to let the kid know that all the secret scurrying around that they thought they were getting away with... The grown-ups were just like, "All right, let them do it.'" When he says he was in touch with Sirius about Harry's scar hurting, Harry goes, *gasps* "You knew about that?!" It's also very reassuring to know Harry does not have to worry about Sirius' decision to come back. Somebody else was in charge of this; it's not just his godfather having a whim. But this decision that Dumbledore reveals to tell Harry about the scaffolding of the adults having plans that they don't always tell children about... From this point on, Harry's always going to have some greater degree of access to Dumbledore. He's not going to be as scared to go talk to Dumbledore. Until now, he was always this tiny little child who doesn't belong in this imposing office with all the grown-ups; this is the turning point.

JC: Okay.

Lorrie: Especially because after this, we see a couple minutes of Dumbledore just pacing and thinking, and he completely forgets Harry's there.

JC: Yeah. I don't know if I thought about, 'Did he forget Harry was there', but I took that as he's allowing Harry to watch him think and pace and process.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: He's letting Harry in to, "This is what I do. People give me all this information; I'm going to take my time and think about it. I'm going to pace around." There's no illusions there, he has not figured this out, he doesn't have the magic answer.

Lorrie: Right.

JC: He's in the process of figuring it out, just like Harry is. It's like when you're letting the kids come to the budget meeting or something, where you're like, "Yeah. Okay, we have a limited amount of funds, so we need to decide what vacation we're going to take or what we're going to do. We're going to buy a new car or whatever, and we actually want your input."

Lorrie: Right.

JC: It's like, "Oh, okay."

Lorrie: "What do you think we should do?" "What? Me?!"

JC: Yeah, you're being brought to the table. Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: For the first time, Harry's at the table, so to speak.

Lorrie: "You don't have it all figured out?" "No. Do you have a suggestion?" Yeah. Then Harry gets such a beautiful opportunity, such a dream come true that Voldemort never ever got: he gets up the nerve and asks, "D'you know why my scar's hurting me?" Oh! That's why Voldemort has been chasing this unfortunate baby, Harry Potter. He has never had anyone to ask, no one's ever been able to give him any answers about his terrible mysteries that torment him. Once he heard the prophecy that there's this baby that's supposed to be stronger than him, now he has hope and he's going to chase down this baby. Harry has that and Voldemort never did. There was always somebody he could ask; it's just that at the beginning of this volume, when he was being encouraged to go ask Dumbledore, he felt so stupid he couldn't, and now he's ready. Bravely, he's saying, "D'you know why my scar's hurting me?" Oh, it's so beautiful! He gets a full answer, where Dumbledore tells him exactly how certain or uncertain he is. He tells Harry exactly why he suspects a couple things and where those suspicions come from and how certain he can or can't be, and the degree of full disclosure there is so trusting and nourishing. Somebody really cares; somebody has thought about Harry in particular and understands what a big deal this is and how frightening it must be and how unprecedented, and why Harry is correct to feel like he's alone and screwed in this. This is not something that happens to anybody else, but yes, it is worth thinking about. It's not something to be dismissed just because no one else goes through it. Dumbledore says, "I have a theory, no more than that..." and then I love this scale that Dumbledore gives for his theories: "It is possible. I would say -- probable," because that's parenting, right? There are things where you think, 'I don't know, it might be this,

I'm going to go on that assumption,' and then there are things where you don't have evidence but you're like, 'You know what? It's a good bet. We'll go this way.' A lot of it's based on human nature because you have to do something, right? You can't just see something happening and not do anything about it, or you end up like Barty Crouch Sr. and it's way, way too late. You have to do your best with what you're guessing at the time, knowing that you could be wrong. Dumbledore says, "It is my belief that your scar hurts both when Lord Voldemort is near you, and when he is feeling a particularly strong surge of hatred." These are two separate causes of pain; later on, when we learn more about Horcruxes, we're going to find out that soul fragments become agitated when they sense each other nearby, because the nature of souls is to want to reintegrate. Bits of soul that are in a Horcrux can briefly leave the Horcrux container if they have formed some sort of emotional connection. This is happening to the bit of soul in Harry's scar, but it's more pronounced in Harry because unlike a proper Horcrux, which is built to contain, that's the thing that Voldemort always wants and has to create for himself and never gets: a way to contain the enormity of his pain -- his gift, his personality -- so he builds these Horcruxes. They are containers where he can put a bit of his soul and it won't escape. Harry is not intentional. He wasn't created to be a Horcrux; it's just that a loose bit of soul found refuge in this sweet baby. There's no container in Harry's Horcrux, and that bit of Voldemort's scar will be more sentient than the parts that are safely contained in, say, a locket.

JC: Okay.

Lorrie: That's part of what hurts so much when Voldemort is near. Voldemort, who has the original bit of soul, is near a lost, crying out part of his soul that's clinging to this really nice child and feeling pain and, because that bit of soul is connected to this very emotionally healthy child, is really in touch with its own pain and crying out. And then separately, when he's "feeling a particularly strong surge of hatred" -- or as we're going to find out later in this series, it doesn't have to be hatred; it's just any strong emotion -- that's something that Voldemort intentionally does when he distributes his Dark Mark to his followers. "Here, you are always going to know what I'm feeling," because that's what Voldemort wants. He wishes other people could know how he feels, and if he can get you to be his friend or something, then you promise for the rest of your life that you're always going to be available to know how he feels, whether you like it or not. You promised. That happens to Harry the same way as it happens to Karkaroff and Snape, and presumably anyone else who has a Dark Mark; they've been noticing that they've been feeling things in the Dark Mark this year that have been dormant all this time. This is Dumbledore explaining these two different paths for Harry's pain, and then we find out that Dumbledore doesn't know what's going on either. He says, "Harry -- did you see Voldemort?" Dumbledore doesn't know what form Voldemort is in, and Harry is thinking, "No, I haven't seen him. He doesn't have a body, but then how could he have held the wand?" Dumbledore is right there, just as confused. This is the mystery being set up, and it's a good mystery, right? Then Harry asks Dumbledore if Voldemort is getting stronger, and that's the second instance of Legilimency where Dumbledore looks at Harry and then is trying to decide what's the level in which he should confide in Harry at this moment, because as we will see continually, the struggle that Dumbledore has is, 'How much should I burden this child with what we know about him and his crappy life?' That's when Dumbledore reveals some connections that he thinks are

probably there between Bertha Jorkins, Barty Crouch Sr., and Frank Bryce. Then when he finds out that Harry doesn't know about Neville and his grandmother and Neville's parents, Dumbledore looks sharply at Harry and you can sense a little reproach in there.

JC: Yeah. It's like, 'What kind of friend are you?'

Lorrie: 'Did you never bother to ask?'

JC: And Harry feels a little guilty. He's like, 'Oh, crap.'

Lorrie: He's like, 'Damn, how did I forget to ask?' which is a feeling he's going to have in book seven, too, when he realizes all the things he never bothered to ask Dumbledore, which really, honestly, is not Harry's fault because he doesn't get that much time with Dumbledore and there's a lot of important stuff to be talking about. Plus, it's very personal! But it was a really poignant reminder to me -- as we are about to enter a new presidency in the U.S. -- that we all are going to have to do this: asking each other our deepest stories, even if it feels intrusive, and knowing each other really intimately this way and knowing where our emotional centers in our lives are... That's something we're all going to have to do to be strong. It's a good reminder to Harry. It's a good reminder to us. Then finally, Harry asks the real question about Snape and says, "'What made you think he'd really stopped supporting Voldemort, Professor?' Dumbledore held Harry's gaze for a few seconds, and then said, 'That, Harry, is a matter between Professor Snape and myself.'" Okay, we have defined the mystery setup of the rest of the series, and those few seconds where Dumbledore holds Harry's gaze... Okay, whatever Dumbledore thinks, he's absolutely certain of it. Okay.

JC: Also, it's very private, yeah. That idea that this is a secret that he and Snape have together... I don't think Dumbledore ever tells Harry, right? It's Snape himself who tells Harry. Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah, because he promised.

JC: Kept his word.

Lorrie: Then Dumbledore does the same thing with Harry. He says, "Don't tell anyone about Neville's parents. That's Neville's to tell." That is a beautiful reinforcement of what Harry has just been through, that he's ready today to come to Dumbledore and he wasn't ready at any other point of this book. So yeah, that was his to do, and by extension, saying it's for Snape to reveal his own secrets. Yeah. We're at the end of this chapter. We started out with this beautiful sanctuary and the sacred feeling of Harry getting to this point where he's ready -- he's ready to ask and he's ready to hear -- and then by the end, Dumbledore looks "older than ever" and has nothing left except to wish Harry luck with the third task.

JC: Yup.

Lorrie: There you have parenting or guiding in a nutshell -- that point where you can't protect them -- and Harry is as ready as he's ever going to be.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Ooh...

JC: Yeah. It's interesting that his perception of Dumbledore changes so much over the course of this chapter.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: As he learns more about Dumbledore, yeah, that's very interesting.

Lorrie: He grows up in this chapter. Well, I love this chapter. It's intense, it's unbalanced. Way, way, way too much happens in it, but without moving a step; it's all mental. The next chapter will be quite different from that. The next chapter is called The Third Task.

JC: And we're going to finish up the Triwizard Tournament, I guess.

Lorrie: It's going to take a while.

JC: That's a long chapter, wow. Okay.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: All right! Onward.

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.