

## Transcript

### Episode 4.36

#### Book 4, Chapter 36: The Parting of the Ways

**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-Six: The Parting of the Ways.

**Lorrie:** The Parting of the Ways. Fudge storms into the hospital wing, refuses to believe Voldemort is back, and decides Dumbledore is the enemy. Snape shows Fudge his Dark Mark and goes off to do something dangerous. Harry gets his Triwizard winnings and the survivor guilt sets in. It was eventful and emotional, this chapter, yeah, JC?

**JC:** Yes. You know that one GIF that's the "flames on the side of my face"?... I think it's from some old Mel Brooks movie.

**Lorrie:** *Clue*.

**JC:** Oh, it's from *Clue*, you're right.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** And it's just like, "Oh, my God." Yeah, that was a lot of the chapter, me with the flames on the side of my face. Yeah.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** I forgot how awful Fudge is. I remember all through the fifth book... I had forgotten that started here, so reading how awful he was in this chapter -- how unreachable, how unmovable by facts he was --

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** And oh, my God! I think that the first time I read this was so long ago... It was probably during the George W. Bush presidency era. Not that we weren't then dealing with people who just did not care about the facts and had their own agenda (because we were), but it's so much more now.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** Somehow, it's bigger now, and so Fudge just became the stand-in for every politician that I hate during this chapter. I came out of this with a hatred of Fudge. Before, I was like, 'Oh, my God, Fudge... he's so disgusting. Whatever, he's so disgusting, he's so annoying.' Now I'm like, 'HATE him. HATE him.'

**Lorrie:** Yeah. He seems bumbling, and then you realize, 'No, actually, this is the seat of evil right here.'

**JC:** So that was a surprise. I did not expect that.

**Lorrie:** Yeah. The smugness and the active way that he's gearing himself up to not listen... Watching him make the choice is astonishing in a bad way.

**JC:** And it also made me question some other choices. I go back and think about some other things that he's done in a different light. Yeah. He's not just bumbling and self-serving; it's something more.

**Lorrie:** Yeah. It's a commitment to not seeing into the future. This is the kind of politician where I always wonder, 'What did you think was going to happen? How did you think this was going to end?' But the immediate payoff... It seems like it would be profitable, so they go for that.

**JC:** Yeah. Ugh, okay.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** There's a lot of things in this chapter, too, that I imagine Dumbledore is also kicking himself for by the end. That's the other thing about it: Fudge's betrayal here even surprises Dumbledore. Dumbledore had faith that Fudge would do the right thing in this situation, and then Fudge didn't, and even Dumbledore is shocked at the end.

**Lorrie:** Yeah, because it's a deliberate choice.

**JC:** Yeah.

**Lorrie:** It's not just 'that's how people are'. People do what their natures dictate; he made a choice.

**JC:** Yeah, and there is something really terrifying about seeing someone like Dumbledore realize that.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** The younger characters... 'Oh, they're too naive to realize this is how politics works' or whatever...

**Lorrie:** Right.

**JC:** Dumbledore has seen some shit, right?

**Lorrie:** Right.

**JC:** He's been around for a lot of the awful things that have happened in the last half-century of the magical world here -- he was involved in most of them -- and the fact that he is shocked...

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** Fudge is a little terrifying. Wow, how deep does this go if even Dumbledore didn't necessarily see it coming?

**Lorrie:** And he's just had to deal with the reveal of Barty Crouch Jr. having fooled him, so Dumbledore's had to think really quickly.

**JC:** Yeah, about who he can trust and who he... yeah. It's been a big day for Dumbledore, too. He's had a lot of shocks, like finding out that the guy he thought was Moody has fooled him for the entire year, realizing that Harry almost just got killed, Voldemort is back...

**Lorrie:** Cedric...

**JC:** Who can he trust? Yeah, Cedric... A student has died on his watch in the middle of this Triwizard Tournament.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** All the things that have happened here... It's going to come back to 'Dumbledore didn't see it coming and couldn't do anything to stop it,' and that's got to be rough.

**Lorrie:** Although I do like that the Dumbledore we see this chapter is thinking forward already...

**JC:** Yeah.

**Lorrie:** Like, 'I can blame myself later, but right now...' He's very good. He's multitasking really admirably in this chapter, where he's saying, "Okay, Harry, you stay here. I'm going to go talk to Fudge; then I'm going to talk to Cedric Diggory's parents, and then I'm going to come back," and he's sending people to do what needs to be done, which I

think may be a Gryffindor thing. It's like a clarity of mind and priority in the moment... in a moment of crisis.

**JC:** It's also very much an ADHD thing, but I don't think Dumbledore has ADHD. It's a very classic ADHD thing. Under stress, people with ADHD are super able to focus and get shit done.

**Lorrie:** Right.

**JC:** That's who you want next to you in an emergency.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** But yeah, Dumbledore was absolutely able to focus in this moment, delegate, think through all the things that need to be done. He doesn't forget Cedric's parents, even in the middle of this incredible emergency of Voldemort coming back and having to deal with it all, and he's thinking about taking care of everyone here. In the previous chapter, he had sent McGonagall to get Sirius (who was in dog form) from Hagrid's garden; he had sent Fudge to go get the Veritaserum --

**Lorrie:** Snape, yeah. Snape to get the Veritaserum...

**JC:** And then at the beginning of this chapter, he leaves McGonagall guarding Barty Crouch Jr., and Harry noting that she looks very determined, holding her wand very steady. Then he sends Snape to bring Fudge so that Fudge can question Barty Crouch Jr. himself, a decision that he might regret -- will regret -- and then he takes Harry up to see Sirius, who's up in his office. So there's like boom, boom, boom, orders, orders, orders, and I love the fact that everyone just goes, "Yes, I will," and they go do their thing. There's no question.

**Lorrie:** So Harry goes up to the office and he gets a little bit of healing time.

**JC:** Yes.

**Lorrie:** He gets to be with Sirius and Fawkes for a moment.

**JC:** When Harry sees Sirius, in my head that's a run-and-hug-him moment, but it's not in the book. No, they stand at an arm's length and Sirius puts a hand on his shoulder, and you can kind of see there's a little bit of awkwardness there. 'How do I comfort this kid who has been through something?' Sirius doesn't even know the details yet. He just probably knows what he's heard coming from the grounds, and that moment of a kid that's not yours but to whom you have a relationship, like a niece or a nephew or a neighbor kid or something... 'What am I allowed to do here? What are the boundaries of comfort? What does this kid need from me?'

**Lorrie:** Well, I also like, too, that we sense Sirius has been so nervous -- anxious about what poor Harry has been through -- he wants to give Harry a little bit of space to relax and tell him, because he's just been wondering, 'What on earth has just happened?' But obviously, the kid is in shock and needs to be taken care of first.

**JC:** I love that Fawkes comes to sit in Harry's lap.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** Fawkes just takes care of him, and Fawkes' song makes him feel better and he heals his leg with his phoenix tears...

**Lorrie:** Oh, that's beautiful. Yeah.

**JC:** Yeah, and just that Fawkes really cares about Harry. It feels really big in that moment. How many other kids have come up to that office and had Dumbledore's phoenix come and sit on them and take care of them?

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** I bet none.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** It's a big deal.

**Lorrie:** 'Kid, you're going to need this.'

**JC:** Yeah, and it's Fawkes' choice, right? Fawkes is recognizing in Harry something special, so that's really amazing.

**Lorrie:** Yeah. You can't order a phoenix around.

**JC:** No. They're kind of like a cat, but a lot worse in some ways and better in others. Yeah, you can't make a cat... The cat chooses you. I think Fawkes has chosen Harry here.

**Lorrie:** Then Dumbledore asks Harry to recount everything that happened. We just published episode 8.2, our interview with Dr. Brent Satterly, where we asked him about this particular scene where Harry does not want to relive everything that's just happened. Sirius asks, "Dumbledore, does it have to be right now? Doesn't Harry need to rest first?" and Dumbledore gives a speech about how if that would help, he would let that happen, but it won't, and in fact, it's better for Harry to get it out. We asked Brent about that, because I've had some people say, "You know what? That's not good for trauma. Dumbledore should have given him some rest first." Basically, what it seemed like Brent said back (as a social worker and somebody who works with traumatized people) is that it depends on, case by case, what the person wants and needs and that

yeah, it was not great to take the choice away from Harry here. But then also, when I'm looking at the situation here, I also think Dumbledore is right in that they do need to know as soon as possible what happened, because sometimes there's stuff that has to be attended to right away. I don't know that I would have felt it was safe to let Harry go without saying everything that happened just then.

**JC:** Yeah, I agree. We've talked about this -- we talked about this with Brent, we've talked about it outside of the podcast a little bit, too -- this idea of what's the best thing for Harry here. I think that the need for everybody to know exactly what happened and what they're up against outweighs Harry's feelings here, because at this point Harry and the reader are the only ones that know what happened in that graveyard.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** And the next person who needs to know is Dumbledore.

**Lorrie:** Definitely.

**JC:** Dumbledore, at this point, doesn't know if Voldemort's on his way to the castle...

**Lorrie:** Right, exactly.

**JC:** Doesn't know there's a lot of things that could be happening, so to get a sense of what happened and how it happened so he can gauge how safe they are and what they need to do next...

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** I think that that does supersede how Harry's feeling about it.

**Lorrie:** And that's such a parenting thing. There are times when you absolutely know that the executive decision you're making is going to be harmful to your kid, but I'm sorry, we're going to have to do it.

**JC:** Yeah.

**Lorrie:** The most trivial example of that -- that happened to me all the time when my younger kid was three -- was when she was screaming and upset and crying in the middle of the parking lot and I had to physically grab her, pick her up bodily, and force her out of the path of oncoming cars...

**JC:** Right, yeah.

**Lorrie:** And she hated me. I'm sure she would have killed me if she could, and yeah, it made her feel worse at the time. 'Sorry, kid. It's not that I don't care. It's not that I don't hear you.'

**JC:** Yeah. It makes me also think about if you break a bone, they've got to set it.

**Lorrie:** Ouch.

**JC:** Maybe they will be nice to you and give you morphine before they do or maybe they won't, but sometimes it has to get worse in order to move forward. That's kind of what this felt like to me, too, so I was surprised that I came out of it feeling like, 'No, I think Dumbledore did what he needed to do here.'

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: 'We need to set that break so we can move forward.'

Lorrie: Ouch. So yeah, Harry tells the riveting story to these two people whose opinions matter to him more than anyone else in the world, and the terrifying thing he's just been through with Voldemort trapping him and stealing his blood... He sees reflected in Sirius' and Dumbledore's expressions that it really was every bit as huge and terrifying as how Harry lived it. Whatever happened when Voldemort took his blood... We knew reading it, as it was happening to Harry, that it was something huge and momentous, but what? And then Sirius and Dumbledore are both gasping and making noise. Oh, it's huge and momentous and it means something to them, but what?

**JC:** And we get that beautiful quote from the book that "for a fleeting instant, Harry thought he saw a gleam of something like triumph in Dumbledore's eyes," which makes sense many years down the line.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** But it was beautiful to read it here and go, 'Oh, okay. We're planting a seed.'

**Lorrie:** That's where the gleam of triumph comes from because that quote was a source of mystery for many volumes. After Book Four, after Book Five, after Book Six... during all those hiatuses, whenever the author was asked about this, she would just smile mysteriously and say, "Oh, yes, that becomes very significant," and then how it's followed instantly by Dumbledore "looking as old and weary as Harry has ever seen." Those two feelings together really pack that punch. This conflict that we've seen set up in this chapter between mercy for the child that you love and want to protect and knowledge of the way things are going to have to go... That conflict is happening in such a huge way here.

**JC:** Right. Okay, so what I'm taking from that is that the triumph is Voldemort now has a weakness. We can bring him down; he's no longer immortal in the way that he thinks he is, and then the instant Harry is going to have to die for that to happen. Right? Is that what is happening in Dumbledore's head?

**Lorrie:** I think so. I think one thing that Voldemort has just done is that he's cornered himself. Voldemort now has no way to win.

**JC:** Thinking like a chess game, I'm imagining here.

**Lorrie:** Because yeah, he now has inside himself the kind of love and empathy and remorse that will work against the unnatural effort he's making to compartmentalize himself. Either he can be fought on that -- he's at an extra disadvantage because he doesn't know that's what he's just done, and he doesn't understand the nature of this kind of feeling anyway, but it's irreversible; whether he understands it or not, it's irreversible, it's happened -- or the other thing is that he could understand it and reform as a human and become a better person. Okay, either way... but yeah. One of the things that Dumbledore figures probably just happened is now that Voldemort can't kill Harry, he can't bring himself to because now Voldemort is partially made up of something that wants to save Harry instead of kill him. It's not going to stop him from trying; in fact, nothing is going to stop Voldemort from trying, and Harry is going to be hunted the same as ever.

**JC:** With that juxtaposition of triumph and then weariness, those two things together... It's such a fascinating way to see the whole future flashes before Dumbledore's eyes in a moment, in a second, and you can read that in his eyes and his face and his body language.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** It's a nice bit of writing to plant it here like this.

**Lorrie:** It's, I think, a beautiful bit of characterization of the burden of being a grown-up. It's definitely better than the powerlessness of being a child and having to live in the same world but without any agency in it, but it hurts. So yeah, that was the super important moment when Dumbledore realizes, 'Oh, he's done that thing.' Voldemort thinks that he's just made himself stronger because he can touch Harry Potter, and he doesn't realize it's because he has just taken into himself that he's become more human, which is the opposite of what he wants.

**JC:** Yup.

**Lorrie:** Okay, well... The benefit of this change that Voldemort has just brought into himself is that the next times he attacks Harry, he'll discover that this isn't as great as he thought.

**JC:** Yeah.

**Lorrie:** But that's not going to stop those next times, and those next times are still going to be painful, possibly fatal. Yay.

**JC:** I think one of the things -- another thing I had forgotten about, the many things I had forgotten about but this one: this is the first time that Harry learns that his wand core, the feather in his core, came from Fawkes.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** That's such a delighted surprise from Harry.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** 'Oh, that! This... Oh, I know the phoenix! My wand core...' That's incredible. Also that Ollivander immediately wrote to Dumbledore...

**Lorrie:** I love that!

**JC:** I'm just imagining that note of, 'Bestie, you ain't going to believe who got the other wand!'

**Lorrie:** 'In case we weren't sure that this was a child of destiny...'

**JC:** Yeah.

**Lorrie:** 'We just got another giant clue.'

**JC:** Oh, my God, yeah.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** I'm just imagining Ollivander delightedly dashing off and tying it to an owl and saying, "Fly! Fly!"

**Lorrie:** Well --

**JC:** And Dumbledore getting that and going, 'Okay, we're in for it.' Yeah.

**Lorrie:** Can you imagine there aren't that many people whose magical knowledge is so deep as Dumbledore and Ollivander...

**JC:** Ooh, yeah.

**Lorrie:** And they're going to know. 'Okay, James and Lily's baby is going to walk into the shop and we're going to learn a lot about that child. This is going to be a really important visit. What did we learn?'

**JC:** Yeah. Ollivander's like, "I've been waiting for you." It's like, "Yeah..."

**Lorrie:** Ooohhh...

**JC:** "Yes, you have."

**Lorrie:** 'Dear Albus...' Yeah.

**JC:** Yeah. You can imagine that even beforehand, they talked about it or wondered about it -- theorized about it -- and now in walks this child, and here's the big moment Ollivander's going to learn something. Oh, man.

**Lorrie:** Yeah, and he's so very, very small.

**JC:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Lorrie:** I always feel reassured and warmed and comforted the times that it's affirmed to Harry -- or to anybody, actually -- the grown-ups were in communication more than you thought.

**JC:** Yeah.

**Lorrie:** Harry -- at age eleven, tiptoeing into Ollivander's shop -- doesn't know that all of these wizards all know each other and they're all in touch.

**JC:** Oh, yeah, in that same way that you have a teacher, and you might run into that teacher out in the real world as a small child and you're like, 'They go to the grocery store?' You see them outside of school and you're like, 'Oh...' It's a little bit like that. 'Ollivander and Dumbledore know each other?' Well, of course they do, but when you're a brand new wizard at the age of eleven, what would you know?

**Lorrie:** Yeah, or when you find out that they've been talking. "You knew? How did you know?!" "Uh, we talked to each other."

**JC:** "You do that?" Yeah, that's great.

**Lorrie:** Yeah. So I do love, also, the detail that Fawkes never gave any other feathers. He gave exactly two, and these were the two; that recasts this chapter for me as a second chance for Dumbledore, because he has tried to reach Tom Riddle (the person, the student) and he has never been able to, even though from their first meeting the two of them recognized in each other, "Oh, you're more than you appear to be on surface and it's not good." He tried and failed to reach Voldemort, and we know that Dumbledore cares about people's souls (possibly more than he cares about their mortal lives or their bodies); he definitely has reached Harry. He and Harry have a connection. He can't reach Tom Riddle, but Harry can. Tom Riddle has gone from zero people to one person in this world that he connects with, which is infinite and huge, and if Dumbledore manages that right -- if he gives Harry the nurturing that Harry needs and deserves -- he could possibly, through Harry, finally reach Tom Riddle also. Why does he want to? Just because that's better in life.

**JC:** Yeah.

**Lorrie:** I know that there's a definite school of thought within fandom that Dumbledore just coldly wants to beat Voldemort in a war and coldly manipulates Harry as a soldier to

achieve his goal of winning the war over Voldemort, and I don't actually think that's it. Obviously, when you have somebody as destructive as Voldemort, who's causing immense pain and destruction, you do have to stop that. That's important, but does he want to stop Voldemort because he hates Voldemort? I think it's more just... No, everybody should be brought to rest. Everybody can be brought to rest, or maybe Voldemort put himself out of reach of that, but now he's just taken in Harry's blood; that's changed things. Maybe he does have hope after all that he can also be brought to rest at the end of his life.

**JC:** Which is interesting, because at the very end, if I'm recalling correctly, it seems like Harry... like Dumbledore's given up on that at the very end in the train station.

**Lorrie:** I don't agree.

**JC:** You don't agree? Oh!

**Lorrie:** No, I don't agree.

**JC:** Well, in the three, four years when we get there, we'll talk about it.

**Lorrie:** Yes.

**JC:** Interesting. Okay.

**Lorrie:** Talk of souls is important here, because that's what the dementors do to you if things go very badly: remove your possibility of having a rested soul at the end, having a soul that can be rested, having a soul that's not fractured. Oh, *Priori Incantatem*... You were completely correct. In our discussion of the last chapter -- not the last chapter, but the one before that -- you were wondering if the golden beads traveling in the connection of light between the two wands were spells, and yes, you were completely correct. They were, in fact, spells.

**JC:** Okay.

**Lorrie:** And when we saw the murders coming out of Voldemort's wand, that's because Harry had pushed responsibility and accountability for those spells back right onto Voldemort.

**JC:** Yeah. It is cool how Dumbledore explains how that happened.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** How the wands perform the reversal. I thought the choice of the word that was used there was fascinating, that Voldemort's wand was forged to "regurgitate", in order, the previous spells, so the idea that it's vomiting back all the things it's done is so interesting. It takes me back to Ron barfing up slugs in the second book, and the idea of regurgitating implies you've eaten something that's bad.

**Lorrie:** It's like poison, yeah.

**JC:** You're trying to expel something poisonous from your body, so I just thought, 'Ooh, regurgitate. That's a fun choice of word there.'

**Lorrie:** Yeah, and that it doesn't just go away. You take in the poison and it stays. Can you just get everyone to forget about it because it was so long ago? No, not really.

**JC:** Another thing I wanted to ask your opinion about... I knew in the Priori Incantatem chapter, when the golden cage forms around them, that it was because they both had feathers from Fawkes, but I was thinking about it some more. What was the purpose of the cage? Was the fact that their wands were matched and against each other... Was the cage to protect them? I guess I'm trying to wonder what was the purpose of that cage of golden light there.

**Lorrie:** I guess I always felt like it was showing the many intricacies of the bond that they had so that the outsiders -- the Death Eaters who were watching -- knew not to just rush in and disturb it. Here is a child who has been formed by the intentional trauma inflicted on him by this criminal who chose the child on purpose and inflicted that trauma on the child in order to make the child understand how Voldemort feels, to be more like him. Okay, here he is. He is now well on his way to being an adult and he does now understand Voldemort, and he's looking right back at Voldemort. This is what Voldemort was after, right? To cause the kind of pain that would make them more like equals, would make them powerful wizards who didn't get parenting. Now they're looking at each other, and they do understand each other a lot more than anyone else understands this aspect of them. Now, especially that Voldemort has Harry's blood in him, he can understand how he had made Harry feel, too. When you've hurt each other -- or when one person has hurt another, and then you're eye-to-eye and you're having a showdown about it -- there's all sorts of stuff happening in your mind and between the two of you. It's intense. No one else can understand it the same way, and you can't make yourself forget it. Once these connections happen for Voldemort, he can't go back to not knowing them. That's just how I experience the reading of it. If there's more clarity than that, then I don't have it. I just experienced it as what happens when you confront somebody that has hurt you and they're not escaping. They know what they did.

**JC:** I guess I was thinking about it, too, just thinking about the fact that it was Fawkes' feathers in their cores and that they connected and all the stuff, so when Dumbledore's describing the kind of connection, it made me think about... Okay. One of the things that was happening in that scene was that they heard the phoenix song, so I went back to look up the phoenix song because I couldn't remember. The Wiki says, "Phoenix song had a deep emotional impact on those who heard it. Magical in nature, it touched a listener's very soul and was able to provide support and comfort. Furthermore, the phoenix song would increase the courage of those who were good and struck fear into

the hearts of those who served evil." Okay, that idea that the song, in that case... My first thought was, 'Oh, the song is trying to pull them together and reminding them of the connection between them,' but looking at what it says here in the Wiki, it's more like it was there to comfort Harry and to make Voldemort afraid. This idea that Fawkes became part of this battle between Harry and Voldemort there, and that Fawkes -- through the feather thing, or Fawkes' presence in their wands -- made a choice in that situation to support Harry and not Voldemort. I thought that was interesting, too. Anyway, that was what I was thinking.

**Lorrie:** Yeah. I don't think it was that it treats them differently. I think you as the person make the choice of what phoenix song will do to you, based on how much you have or have not harmed others or yourself, because it'll make you feel truth. Harry has an intact soul. He misses his parents, he feels grief, but remembering people that he loves will strengthen him. Voldemort has been able to get by all this time without feeling remorse or empathy for his victims. Now that he has a lot more empathy (because he has just taken in Harry's blood), he's got a lot of guilt that he hasn't processed. That's a backlog of emotion that he has to work through before he can ever feel anything like comfort, and considering the amount of crime he's committed, he's never actually going to pay off that backlog. This is why it's bad to split your soul several times instead of just once. Every time you do it again, there's no loan forgiveness about feeling peace. If you've hurt this many people, you're going to have to process that many crimes before you can get any comfort, and yeah, Voldemort is currently way in debt. You can't get the comfort without knowing the truth, and if the truth is that you've hurt all of these people -- and they are people, and you can't deny that to yourself -- well, you're kind of screwed. Harry just hasn't hurt as many people, in fact.

**JC:** Yeah.

**Lorrie:** He's killed, in fact, nobody.

**JC:** Okay, yeah. Yeah, I like that. The phoenix song is open to interpretation to an extent. Not an interpretation, but you hear it based on... They both heard the same song, but they both heard very different things because of who they are on the inside and what experiences they've had and what choices they made.

**Lorrie:** Well, before Voldemort had Harry's blood in him, he couldn't really feel.

**JC:** Oh.

**Lorrie:** Until he attacked baby Harry and then felt incredible pain from the rebounding curse and then became this spectral thing that he didn't understand... Before then, he kind of felt nothing. He would feel contempt and laughter and triumph if he managed to kill people, but he didn't really feel. Then he attacked this little baby and he felt something, and now that he has that baby's blood in him, he feels a lot more.

**JC:** Ooooooh... Okay, that makes sense.

**Lorrie:** He doesn't have very much experience with this, and that's the problem with being a baby and a toddler when you're an adult who's taking care of a very small toddler or preschooler and the kid has big feelings.

**JC:** Sorry. I just had this image of Voldemort...

**Lorrie:** Voldemort is having big feelings.

**JC:** And who is going to feel every one of those big feelings? All those Death Eaters are suddenly in the toddler tantrum, where Voldemort is figuratively throwing himself down in the street, screaming, and the Death Eaters have to deal with that every single time. That is actually hilarious to me.

**Lorrie:** Well, once in a while, he deals with those feelings by picking one of them out for a *Crucio* session.

**JC:** So who's the sacrificial...?

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** Who's going to take it for the team this time?

**Lorrie:** Yeah, absolutely.

**JC:** "It's my turn. All right, let's go."

**Lorrie:** And whose fault is this? Who volunteered for this? Who read the fine print and signed anyway?

**JC:** Amazing.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** Okay. Back to where we are in this point in the chapter, Harry is telling what happened -- he's talking about how the shades of these people came out of the wand -- and here, I could not help but put myself in the position of an adult in the room listening, because that's what I am. I'm an adult in the room. Sirius is clenching his shoulder to the point of pain, and then ending up with his face in his hands. That felt so real to me.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** This child... you're understanding what he saw and what he experienced. Oh, my God. As an adult watching... Oh, man, that's hard.

**Lorrie:** It's just too much, yeah, and Sirius is sad about the same deaths himself. When you look at a kid and you know, 'Oh, wow, they've been through a lot, they must feel horrible,' and then you see it right in front of you... Yup, they feel every bit as awful as

you knew they would. Oof. Meanwhile, I'm thinking about the Death Eaters that had to be the outlets for Voldemort's tantrums. Who knows what the political landscape will be like when this episode airs, but currently I'm in the unforeseen position of feeling sorry for John Bolton and Mike Pompeo...

**JC:** Oh, my God.

**Lorrie:** Who are loser, racist, evil people who accepted working with Trump in his first administration, and now on purpose to punish them, he has taken away their protection because he knows that they're being targeted for assassination by outside forces and he's just doing it to punish them. Why am I even giving a shit about John Bolton's personal safety? But I am. This guy... He is one of those people where I didn't even know there were people that evil running around until the Trump administration got them out of the woodwork. Now I know, and now I feel bad for him. Oh, my God, save his life!

**JC:** Isn't that weird? Yeah.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** I want to feel Schadenfreude, but it's just --

**Lorrie:** But it's not. It's just horrifying.

**JC:** It's too cruel. It's horrifyingly cruel, it's terrifying...

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** It's evil. It is fucking evil, is what it is.

**Lorrie:** It is evil.

**JC:** And yeah.

**Lorrie:** The whole argument about whether Harry should have let Lupin and Sirius in *Prisoner of Azkaban* kill Wormtail... If Wormtail had been killed, then he wouldn't have gotten Voldemort back and all this other stuff, right? But no. In the moment, it's like, 'You can't just kill him!'

**JC:** I firmly believe that if it wasn't Wormtail, it would have been somebody else. It would have been Barty Crouch Jr. You cut off one head, another one's going to rise up to take its place.

**Lorrie:** Yeah. Right.

**JC:** The fact it was Wormtail is honestly irrelevant. Someone was going to do it.

**Lorrie:** You can't predict what's going to happen.

**JC:** Yeah.

**Lorrie:** So yeah. Anyway, I am sitting here... I only have so many tears to spare, and yet I'm shedding a couple for Mike Pompeo and John Bolton.

**JC:** Jesus. Yeah.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** Yeah. When we started this podcast series, we didn't know what was going to happen in the future, and I think that we are inadvertently going to be really documenting what's happening during this time along with our readings. I think we didn't know that that's what was going to happen, but the fact that we read the chapter we did on Inauguration Day... That just blows my mind that that just worked out that way.

**Lorrie:** Haha! I know.

**JC:** But I think that going forward -- when we get into Book Five and we get into all the things that we're going to get into -- I think that this podcast is going to take an interesting turn.

**Lorrie:** Meanwhile, I'm having a lit-nerd moment, because you said "we", but no. I knew, because that's what literature always is, but seeing you say this is giving me that same moment that you have... I'm sure you have this all the time as a teacher when you see somebody discover the gold for the first time -- some 'beautiful thing' realization that happens in education that's true every time, it's just as good every time -- and then you watch people experience it and go, \*gasps\*. Now they'll always know it and they'll always have that benefit, so I'm having this, 'Yes! This is why we reread!'

**JC:** Oh, man... And reread at times when we want to unpack, maybe, the things that are happening in the real world around us. That's one function of art: it helps you interpret what's happening in the world and get a perspective on it.

**Lorrie:** Yeah, and different parts of the story come into relief depending on what you're thinking about, because as we know in every chapter we read, there are things that were super important to us at some previous reading that we're not even talking about, and then other things where we're just catching our breaths because it's so much what we have in our minds right now.

**JC:** Right. Oh, it's going to get interesting.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** Okay, so what's fascinating to me is that they get ready to leave... Sirius turns back into a dog, they open the door, and then Hermione and Ron and Mrs. Weasley are there. I had forgot Hermione and Ron existed. For three chapters, I did not think of them.

**Lorrie:** Right!

**JC:** Forgot they existed.

**Lorrie:** Yes.

**JC:** And it was such a shock to see them outside the door. I was just like, 'Oh, they exist!'

**Lorrie:** Right.

**JC:** What in the hell! That's how intensely I was into what was happening to Harry. I forgot that Ron and Hermione were a thing.

**Lorrie:** Right, and they've been frantic this whole time.

**JC:** Right. I didn't even think about it. What was going on with them? What are they thinking? Didn't even occur to me until that moment when the door opened. I was like, 'Oh, that's right. There are other people in Harry's life that are probably worried sick right now.'

**Lorrie:** Their nerves have been on fire this whole time, and Dumbledore has to hold them back, say, "All right, he's here. You're together. That's it."

**JC:** Yeah. "We're not going to ask him any more questions tonight. We're just going to comfort him. We're going to take him to the hospital wing, along with this really well-behaved dog."

**Lorrie:** Yeah. I love it.

**JC:** "He's very well-trained..."

**Lorrie:** Yes.

**JC:** Which is funny.

**Lorrie:** I like the two-part dose of dreamless sleep that Harry gets, that he gets just a little bit for mercy and then, for good plot reasons, he wakes up a bit and then he gets the full dose. That's a merciful gift from the author to this poor child.

**JC:** Oh, my God, the concept of dreamless sleep potion...

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** When you were in the situation that Harry is in -- you just had a traumatic experience -- and what you really need is to rest and for your brain to not process what's been happening. For anyone who's been traumatized or in that situation, oh, my God...

**Lorrie:** 'Here, heal.'

**JC:** Maybe there does exist such a thing. Maybe that's why people get knocked out with IV meds. I don't know; maybe such a thing does exist. I'm not aware of it, but oh, wow.

**Lorrie:** I don't know any details, but I do know that a few years ago, when my daughter's then boyfriend was in a truly traumatic, near-fatal car accident, they gave him something so he would forget his memories of the actual moments.

**JC:** All right, so I guess we're up to Harry being awakened the first time.

**Lorrie:** Right, because they're shouting!

**JC:** I like that one of the first things that Harry is aware of is Molly being rude to the Minister for Magic, returning his rudeness...

**Lorrie:** Yes.

**JC:** Yeah, I love that.

**Lorrie:** And yeah, apparently Minerva McGonagall is shouting at somebody. Oh, shit!

**JC:** Yeah. The fact that she is described as losing it -- losing her shit -- and everyone's terrified, because McGonagall is not a person who shows that level of extreme anger.

**Lorrie:** Right. She's screaming at Fudge, who is being defensive. I'm putting off the moment where we have to actually say what Fudge did, because it's so incredibly awful.

**JC:** But considering what we just talked about that Trump is doing, it's not that different, is it?

**Lorrie:** Oh, my God.

**JC:** Yeah. This is where it gets really sinister. I came out of this thinking Fudge did this on purpose, that he took the dementor up there on purpose knowing what he was going to find to get rid of... I don't know. Maybe that's giving Fudge a little bit too much information about the situation, but it's hard for me not to think that was intentional. He brought a dementor on purpose to get rid of the evidence of Voldemort's return, because without that testimony, it's just the hearsay of the other people.

**Lorrie:** I'm thinking... I'm thirty-five percent on that. I can see that that might have happened. Based on the characterization of Fudge, I think it's more likely that he doesn't have that kind of foresight, that he doesn't have any idea that Voldemort's supposed to be back, that he just thinks he's so important and he's so confident and secure that dementors will just do what he says because he's the Minister of Magic. Of course they'll do what he says and there's nothing bad about dementors to worry about. "I don't know why Dumbledore always is complaining that dementors can't be

controlled." I think he just didn't believe that they wouldn't listen to him, and I'm thinking all that Fudge cares about is that he, Fudge, is so precious and needs to be protected. Of course, nothing's more important to anyone than the safety of the Minister of Magic, because later on he says to Dumbledore, "Well, so what if the dementor sucked out Barty Crouch Jr.'s soul? From what I can make out, he was no loss anyway," and Dumbledore is like, "Never mind that. He could have given testimony." To me, the obscenity of the realization there is that Dumbledore was assuming the whole time that Fudge would know how important it was to get the testimony because justice and truth actually matter.

**JC:** Oh, my God, right. Yeah.

**Lorrie:** And in the moment where Fudge says, "Well, so what? Who cares? The thing you should be happy about is that I, your Minister of Magic, am safe."

**JC:** Oh, my God. That sounds like...

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** Why did I get Muppets in my head? Oh, man...

**Lorrie:** And Dumbledore's staring at him, like, "Wait, you didn't think about him needing to testify at all? You don't think that way at all?!"

**JC:** Yeah. This is part of why it feels sinister on Fudge's part, because he's already made it clear that he cares more about public opinion and his job and what he looks like. That's been clear for several books now, but I know that Dumbledore's been through a lot. It felt like Dumbledore should have been a little more suspicious here, I don't know. Oh, God...

**Lorrie:** Who brings dementors into the castle? You're not supposed to! Dumbledore said!

**JC:** Yeah. It's expressly forbidden. Is Fudge not affected by dementors?

**Lorrie:** I guess not.

**JC:** If he has a dementor following him around as a guard...

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** Do they not make him feel the way they do other people?

**Lorrie:** I guess he's so protected by his sense of self-importance.

**JC:** That's... Yeah.

**Lorrie:** Or maybe the dementors are creatures that he brings along, saying, "Hey, the thing that you like to do... If you come with me, I'll let you do it."

**JC:** Yeah. That's why I feel like it's sinister. Why would you bring a dementor innocently? "Oh, I need protection."

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** I don't know about that. Bring an Auror with a wand. Anyway, sorry. Go ahead.

**Lorrie:** Yeah. It's also not respecting the power, the destructive power, that other creatures have. Maybe Fudge thinks that he's invulnerable, like, "Nothing bad will happen, I'm so powerful."

**JC:** I guess I'm wondering, too, what he was told. Snape went down to tell him, "Go to the office. We've captured the person who's behind all this." They're clearly incapacitated -- someone is guarding them -- and the fact that Fudge chose to bring a dementor along instead of going, "Oh, wow, this is clearly under control," I don't know. There's something about that doesn't sit right with me, but...

**Lorrie:** Although it's not clearly under control at that time. Nothing's clear at that time. I don't know, something really scary's happening. The dementors... you think that they're law and order, but they're really just like any destructive force that you unleash, thinking that they can't possibly turn on you, but no. Actually, they don't have any loyalties.

**JC:** Yeah, this is true.

**Lorrie:** So yeah, Fudge brings a dementor into the castle; when it sees Barty Crouch Jr., nothing and no one can stop the dementor from swooping down and sucking out the soul. Barty Crouch Jr. is not dead; he's "worse than dead". Testimony is now lost to all of us -- all that data gone -- and that reminds me of many times and examples in history when people have deliberately destroyed a lot of data because there's some evil agenda that they want to further, and they don't care that 99-point-something of that data is precious and valuable. They're just so convinced that the thing they're protecting is more important than anything that's being lost. Anyway... So yeah, Fudge is being shocking and McGonagall is losing it, and Dumbledore is staring at Fudge, recalibrating everything he knows about how dangerous this man is. That's when Harry starts to shout and say, "Oh, no, I was there. I saw. Yes, Voldemort came back," and he starts listing names of Death Eaters who were there that he witnessed; he starts with Lucius Malfoy, and that's when Snape makes "a sudden movement, but as Harry looked at him, Snape's eyes flew back to Fudge." That's the one thing that Snape has been a grown-up about: in this year, when he has really shown himself to not good advantage and he's been so childish, he does know that he's responsible for his students. His kids' fathers are going to be in trouble; they're going to need him so much. He needs to protect the

students that have vulnerable family backgrounds. He had a vulnerable family background because of his troubles with his father -- Barty Crouch Jr. did, and so did Dumbledore, we'll learn -- so that's one good instinct that has remained in Snape, even while he's just been a disaster this year. This instinct in him to realize, "Oh, I'm a grown-up; there's somebody I need to protect now."

**JC:** Yeah. The idea that the number of kids that are under his protection at school who are now going to be exposed to this... That realization has to be terrifying for him...

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** Because he knows what it's like to be a young person who gets sucked into that, and he could probably look and go, 'Oh, that one and that one and that one are now all in danger of making the same mistakes I did, and what can I do to...' Oh, my God.

**Lorrie:** Right, and Barty Crouch did. Barty Crouch had it the worst. What happens when there's conflict at home, and your father is the cause of all this pain? Oh, these boys are going to need so much help, so this moment and this chapter are the beginning of Snape's second chance.

**JC:** Ooh, interesting.

**Lorrie:** This is his Time-Turner journey starting. You know how in *Prisoner of Azkaban*, Dumbledore says to the kids, "Okay, take three turns back and then just go back into the past, and I'm not going to tell you what you need to do and I'm not going to tell you when you need to do it, but you'll know," and the kids are like, "We will not know; what are you talking about?" It's terrifying, but they do their best. All this time, Snape has been waiting to have to help save Harry Potter, this kid he doesn't like, and he's been not covering himself in glory and needing to make up for the damage he did in the first part of his life. Now his Time-Turner journey has reached that point. The clock starts now for him; he's starting his second chance.

**JC:** Interesting.

**Lorrie:** Because he knows what happens to these boys. He knows all the risks of the kinds of dangers that they'll be in.

**JC:** Fudge's creepy little smiles about this are so horrible.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** The idea that you are spilling out horrific truths to someone and they just smile at you and deny it to your face... That's infuriating.

**Lorrie:** They're making the choice. Yeah.

**JC:** Yeah. Oh, it's evil.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** It is evil, and it makes me think about a lot of the Republican politicians in the state that I live in (and in the country I live in, for that matter) who will just smile and say, "No, no." Just gaslight you to your face about the effects of their policies, right?

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** Ooh, it's evil.

**Lorrie:** Mitch McConnell... I got a picture of Mitch McConnell.

**JC:** Oh, God... I was picturing the governor of my state, Greg Abbott.

**Lorrie:** But yeah, the moment when you're saying, "But don't you see how much this is going to hurt people that you're allegedly supposed to care for?" and they just smile, and they've made the decision and they're not hurting about it.

**JC:** Yeah.

**Lorrie:** If it's costing them at all, it's so far deep down that it's not for us to see.

**JC:** Yeah.

**Lorrie:** And it may not be costing them; I don't know. They don't look upset to be lying to themselves like this.

**JC:** Yeah. It's such a classic picture of a politician at work... an evil politician at work, or the kind of politician who is very self-centered. "No, I don't want that to be true, therefore it is not. Nothing that you say -- I will have an excuse for every fact you throw at me. I will spin it away."

**Lorrie:** Nothing's more important than getting re-elected. Yeah.

**JC:** Yeah, and to watch every person in this room push back against that...

**Lorrie:** Know what's happening right in front of their face...

**JC:** They know what's happening, and he stands there and just goes, "Nope, nope. Nope. I don't believe it. Nope, nope."

**Lorrie:** What really hurts -- I find it really painful... It hurts to see Dumbledore outlining the steps that Fudge could take if he were going to be a grown-up about this.

**JC:** And you know what that reminds me of?

**Lorrie:** Yes?

**JC:** You know what I'm going to say?

**Lorrie:** No, I don't, because it could be so many things.

**JC:** It could be so many things. Okay, what it reminds me of is at the very beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were people laying out, "Okay, Trump, here is your chance to be a leader. All you have to do is... and we can list off the things, and you turn everything around, people are going to love you, you're going to get re-elected..."

**Lorrie:** "You can be remembered as..."

**JC:** "You will be remembered as the president who got us through this."

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** And he refused to do every single one.

**Lorrie:** I know. He just did the stupidest, most chickenshit version of every -- Yeah.

**JC:** Yeah.

**Lorrie:** Yeah. I actually did think about COVID also, and the way Dumbledore is saying, "If you accept that fact straightaway, Fudge, and take the necessary measures, we may still be able to save the situation." Mitigation can really help, and in fact a lot of things that we accomplished in lockdown did save a lot more lives than if we hadn't got into lockdown. But yeah, Dumbledore says, "Remove the dementors from Azkaban, send envoys to the giants," and that's when Fudge says, "Half the people feel safe at night knowing the dementors are standing guard, and people hate giants!"

**JC:** "We've taken polls! 51 percent!"

**Lorrie:** Oh...

**JC:** Yeah, that's what it feels like.

**Lorrie:** And he says, as though it's a self-evident virtue, that he can't recognize the giants because it would be the end of his career. Yeah. So what?

**JC:** Yeah, and that's what I think is one of the things that's so infuriating here. It really is all about him and his career and how he will be perceived. It's not about the truth and the reality.

**Lorrie:** Or the well-being of the people that he's supposed to be serving.

**JC:** He's got to know deep down that this is true. He just is going to refuse to acknowledge it or admit it publicly because it would make him look bad. Oh, my -- I just don't even... I don't even understand that.

**Lorrie:** Yeah. There's definitely a "How did you think this was going to end?" At present, I don't know how the story is going to end, but as I've been watching what's happening

with the impeached South Korean president... As soon as he made the incredibly foolish decision to declare martial law for absolutely no reason, then I looked at him, thinking, 'There's only two ways this can end for you,' the two ways being he's going to have to live the rest of his life in jail or somehow he's going to die. I don't know what third option you think there is that you're holding out for, but it's not going to happen. What did you think was going to happen? Why are you holding out? Why did you do this? I don't know why people do this.

**JC:** But having lived through the last eight years, it's just as infuriating but it is so much more real.

**Lorrie:** It's so commonplace, yeah.

**JC:** It's just like, 'Yeah, of course that's how he is.' I remember the first time reading this just being horrified.

**Lorrie:** Right.

**JC:** 'I cannot -- Oh, my God...'

**Lorrie:** 'How short-sighted!' Yes.

**JC:** Yeah. And now, it's like, Oh, God... I can name ten politicians off the top of my head who are exactly like it, yeah. It's just as infuriating, but it's so much more commonplace now than I feel like I was aware that it was eight years ago. I'm sure it was like that around the world and there were plenty of examples of that; I just had not seen them in my daily life to that extent.

**Lorrie:** Right, and the words on the page are exactly the same now as they were then. It's us.

**JC:** Isn't that interesting?

**Lorrie:** We're the ones that changed.

**JC:** Yeah. Yeah, which is kind of the point of our podcast here.

**Lorrie:** Yup.

**JC:** That's one of our big themes.

**Lorrie:** And then there's the moment when a little bit of truth comes through and Fudge whimpers, and he says, "He can't be back, Dumbledore, he just can't be..." at which point, I think, 'Yeah, I feel you, Fudge. Yeah, I know. I know.'

**JC:** There's kind of a funny moment when Harry realizes that Fudge has been reading Rita Skeeter. It's nice that we're reminded of Rita Skeeter in that moment because of something that happens later, but he's like, "Wait a minute, you've been reading the

tabloids, haven't you? You've been believing all the bullshit they're saying about me," and then the other adults in the room, like Molly, are like, "Oh... okay." Yeah. It's a nice reminder about the existence of Rita Skeeter, but even the Minister for Magic was believing the disinformation that was being put out.

**Lorrie:** Yeah, and that Harry, who was considered to be hysterical because he had a certain worldview, "Oh, yeah, is the world catching up to me, huh, huh? Is that what's happening?" So then we have the Snape moment...

**JC:** Oh my... This had a big impact on me this read, and it's because I know you. I've read your books. I think that the first time I read this, it was like, 'Whoa,' but this time, it was like, 'Rip my heart out.' Oh, my God, he doesn't hesitate to lay himself on the line in front of -- He did this in front of Harry...

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** In front of the kids.

**Lorrie:** In front of everybody.

**JC:** In front of Fudge. "This is how I know. We're telling the truth. Why would I lie to you?" Ugh...

**Lorrie:** The same guy a year ago was having a meltdown because Fudge had promised him an Order of Merlin and then he wasn't going to get it; now he just doesn't care. "Snape strode forward, past Dumbledore, pulling up the left sleeve of his robes as he went. He stuck out his forearm and showed it to Fudge, who recoiled." This is one of the moments in the series when Snape shows his true self. There aren't that many. This is his Time-Turner moment. It's starting now. This is what he's been preparing for. We have seen throughout this entire volume how immature and unprepared he really is for this, but it's his time. Whatever it takes, he's going to have to do, obviously. This is also the moment... There's a lot of people who hate the character of Snape who say, "I just can't forgive him because what he did..." and then they name something that happens chronologically in the series before this moment.

**JC:** Oh...

**Lorrie:** Yeah, that's deliberate. We see exactly how unappealing this person is because that's what he had to start with. That's where he has to drag himself back from if he's going to redeem anything, whether he redeems himself or not, if he's going to try to do any good in the world before he dies. Some of us have an easier time than others being good. He has a much harder time than your average human being being a good person. He really was starting from a pretty low point.

**JC:** It is really fascinating that, I guess... Is he an anti-hero? Is that the right term for him here?

**Lorrie:** It's not inaccurate.

**JC:** Okay, but that idea that he's the person in the first few books that you would least expect to become so important in the way that the story works out and to become someone that you end up rooting for. Even on a first read, I think there are many places coming up where you end up rooting for him. Certainly in the next book, there are more places where I was like, 'Oh, we really need Snape to come in and do his thing here against not the children, but against some of the adults in the room.' I'm fascinated that this moment just felt so big to me...

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** And it would be really interesting going forward to see how different his behavior can be -- how it's depicted, or how the moments of ugliness that he shows toward the kids have a different spin. I'm really curious now. What you just said about how when people say, "I can never forgive Snape for...", and it's always something prior to this moment... I'm going to be looking for that now. That's interesting.

**Lorrie:** Right, because he's not a different person after he continues to be petty, unpleasant, immature, hateful. The point of Snape needing to do good and to help people is that it's difficult for him. Some people were born good; some people, it's uphill all the time. It's not the same thing as Voldemort having committed a whole bunch of crimes that he can never make up for. Snape has, too, but it's also just temperament. Snape is just a miserable bastard. He's not happy by nature. He's not a nice person by nature. It costs him a lot, and that's just too darn bad because the things he makes himself do are things that have to be done. He could choose not to, but if he's going to make something reasonable out of his one life, these are things you should be doing. It's tough for him? Yeah, well... What's new? As we know from the lives of Voldemort and Barty Crouch Jr., yeah, you can come from some really tough circumstances; you're still supposed to not commit those crimes.

**JC:** Right. Mass murder and genocide still should not be occurring on your watch, yeah.

**Lorrie:** You should still be like all the other people who also came from just as crappy a background as you who managed somehow not to... Right.

**JC:** Right.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** For sure.

**Lorrie:** Snape is starting. He's doing the thing, and he's committing. He's doing it in front of everybody.

**JC:** Yeah. It feels like a declaration of what side you're on.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** What side he's on. He says it. He declares it very clearly, and then not long after that, Dumbledore says that he trusts him in front of everybody. Yeah.

**Lorrie:** Yeah. When Snape walks forward and shows the thing that he's been trying to hide this whole time -- shows the thing that Karkaroff has been trying to hide -- all of this, "Ooh, left arm? What is that? I don't know..." When Snape does that, to me, he looks really young. This is the youngest I picture Snape being in the series. Usually, he's this bitter old guy, and then you think, 'Wait, how can he still be in his 30s? He's eight-hundred years old, at least.' But in this one, he's... God, he's so young. He's 35. I know 35-year-olds.

**JC:** I've been a 35-year-old... once upon a time.

**Lorrie:** What he is about to have to do... I don't want any of the 35-year-olds I know to have to go do that now.

**JC:** Yeah.

**Lorrie:** No! Oh, God, no. Yeah, he seems quite young, and it's not like anyone can help him.

**JC:** We have this interesting little moment here between Fudge and Dumbledore, right after Snape reveals this, where Dumbledore has to remind Fudge that they're on the same side.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** And yeah, it doesn't go over well.

**Lorrie:** Yeah. Well, there's a lot of that going around in this chapter.

**JC:** True, true. It's like, 'Wait a minute, we're fighting for the same thing.'

**Lorrie:** Oh, you know who's 35? Our adorable Social Media Manager, Geoff Hutton, is 35.

**JC:** Oh, wow...

**Lorrie:** I don't want Geoff to have to go do that.

**JC:** Yeah, for sure.

**Lorrie:** Yeah, so Harry gets his winnings. Fudge says, "Oh, yeah, your money," and then dumps this sack of gold, and Harry's just like, 'Oh, I don't even want to look at it.' That's sad and bitter, right? All the times earlier in this volume where Harry fantasizes, 'Oh, what if I won the Triwizard Tournament and I got all this gold? Oh, it'd be the best thing ever!' Yeah, no.

**JC:** Not like this, yeah.

**Lorrie:** Nope. Worst.

**JC:** And Fudge, on his way out, really heavily implies that Dumbledore is going to be out of a job. He's like, "Yeah, we'll be talking about how you run this school very soon."

**Lorrie:** Yes, we will. So yeah, Dumbledore realizes, 'Okay, I see how this is going. We're going to... ' and he starts strategizing instantly. Then, probably my favorite thing about Molly Weasley ever: "She was white to the lips, but she looked resolute." She absolutely declares, 'Yes, I'm going to be an activist and organizer.' She's the most anxious person ever and she has so much to lose (or so many people to lose), and still she's going to make herself do it, no doubt. Not a second thought. Bill goes off to the Ministry -- he's going to recruit. And then I love this: where Dumbledore sends McGonagall to Hagrid and Maxime. I love that we have had this very nearly buried storyline about how Hagrid and Madame Maxime had that falling out over the issue of persecution and how it affects you and how out you are, and then there's been this buried storyline where we see Fudge gearing up to scapegoat giants; Hagrid, of course -- who served in Azkaban for that reason (for Fudge's scapegoating) -- sees what's happening with Madame Maxime... We've seen her with the red eyes and it happens off the page, but okay, they're allies now. I thought that was really well-handled. And then oh, thank goodness! Dumbledore sends Madame Pomfrey to take care of a house-elf "in considerable distress". That poor thing!

**JC:** And the thing is that... Did Winky see Barty Crouch Jr.'s soul get sucked out?

**Lorrie:** She was there, yes.

**JC:** Winky has trauma.

**Lorrie:** Yep. She has been through everything.

**JC:** I... yeah. Poor Winky, oh, my God.

**Lorrie:** Oh, my God, that poor thing. So yeah, she needs to be taken care of. And then, speaking of people being on the same side, Sirius and Snape...

**JC:** That wonderfully awkward handshake...

**Lorrie:** Oooh...

**JC:** The handshake of hatred. Oh, it's like school boys; they reverted to children. "You have to apologize to him, apologize to him." "Sorry." "Sorry," through gritted teeth is what it makes me think of.

**Lorrie:** It reminds me of when you try to force two magnets together that are the same end. 'Can you do it? Can you do it?'

**JC:** You get that little field, yeah. Oh, my God.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** It's so amazing, but... oh. The beautiful thing is when Dumbledore says, "He is here at my invitation" -- talking about Sirius -- and then he looks at Snape and says, "As are you, Severus. I trust --"

**Lorrie:** "As are you," yeah.

**JC:** "I trust you both."

**Lorrie:** Seriously, Dumbledore, you should not, but I like that he says, "It is time for two of our number to recognize each other for what they are," because as a Snape fan, I like how that equates Snape being in hiding (hiding his true self and his true loyalties and agendas). That's being equated to Sirius being in dog form. No, there is a true self, there's a real self. All right, show it. Really, Dumbledore, you might have gone forward in your mind to like, 'Okay, this is no time for shenanigans. We have to be serious here.' Not all of us can catch up quite that quickly. These guys honestly really hate each other. This is a tall order.

**JC:** But I do actually really like that he makes them face it.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** They're not going to get over it...

**Lorrie:** No.

**JC:** But he's like, "Know that you're on the same side and that I trust you both. You're going to have to learn to deal with it." Yeah.

**Lorrie:** "Do whatever you have to do, and I don't want to hear about it."

**JC:** "Get over it." Yeah, exactly.

**Lorrie:** "Do it where I don't see you."

**JC:** Yeah, for sure.

**Lorrie:** "'I will settle, in the short term,' said Dumbledore, with a bite of impatience in his voice, 'for a lack of open hostility.'" Meanwhile, Harry's eating popcorn watching this.

**JC:** Yeah, really.

**Lorrie:** The thing that's incredibly touching to me is that in the next year, these two asshole losers honestly do try and it's not that obvious. You have to kind of look for it, but they try for real. They try really, really, really hard. It's very dear.

**JC:** I look forward to seeing that in the next book.

**Lorrie:** I'm sure there are people in my real life where, if I had to shake hands with them, I would be not my best self.

**JC:** Oh, God, yeah. Not that I've been in this position, but I know people who have, of winning some really high-level award like the state teacher of the year or something like that, and you have to have a photo taken with the governor or something.

**Lorrie:** Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**JC:** Oh, to be gracious in that situation... Oh, wow. That'd be really hard. Yeah.

**Lorrie:** Yeah. The look on your face, yeah.

**JC:** Ugh... And then we get some really interesting little... We get some names dropped. This is our first hint that Mrs. Figg is part of the magical community, which I think is really cool.

**Lorrie:** Yeah. That was fun.

**JC:** Yeah.

**Lorrie:** I remember the first time reading that, going, 'Oh...'

**JC:** Which is interesting. I did not make that connection until later on in the books when she comes up again. Then we get the wonderful line that I know sailed a thousand ships: "Lie low at Lupin's for a while..."

**Lorrie:** "I know," she says in resignation.

**JC:** Yeah. The fandom had three years to think about what that line meant, so yeah.

**Lorrie:** And oh, it just seems so rotten to me Harry has to lose Sirius. He hasn't even had a whole evening to have the cuddly dog next to him.

**JC:** Yeah. He could at least sleep with the dog cuddled up on the foot of his bed or something. Aww...

**Lorrie:** It's kind of awesome that Sirius is like, "Harry, I know you understand I have to go do this..." It's kind of like... well, when you take care of a kid, it is reassuring to them to know that you have your own life and that you're doing important things. But I do wish Harry had one night to just cuddle the dog.

**JC:** Aww. Then we get another big line from Dumbledore.

**Lorrie:** Well, I don't know which one you mean, but for me, there's the line that's pretty important. "'Severus, you know what I must ask you to do. If you are ready... if you are prepared...' 'I am,' said Snape. He looked slightly paler than usual, and his cold, black eyes glittered strangely." Oh, my God, he's scared.

**JC:** Yeah.

**Lorrie:** And I didn't know for a while. 'Glittered'? Why are his eyes glittering? Then as the series goes on, we see that that's one of the ways to indicate when someone's Occluding really hard.

**JC:** Ooh, uh-huh.

**Lorrie:** He's preparing to Occlude. But yeah, can you... oh, what? My palms are sweating right now, thinking about if you have to go do this thing and there's no leeway. He can't fail.

**JC:** The first time you read this book... Maybe you didn't really stop to think about it then, because you plowed on to the next one, but the first time you read this, what did you think that meant Dumbledore was asking Snape to do? I can tell you that I had no clue.

**Lorrie:** I thought that the obvious thing would be that Snape has to go be a spy, but that would surely be so dangerous and would be taking the story to such places that can't possibly be it. Also, later on in this volume, that comes up as a possibility. Harry is wondering that, and I thought, 'Well, if that's really what's happening, would that clue be given out so much on the surface?' Then on subsequent reads, I thought, 'Well, it's such a big deal that yeah, it's good to prepare the reader.' If you think about what he's gone off to start doing, it is so huge. There's no turning back...

**JC:** Right.

**Lorrie:** And then "it was several minutes before Dumbledore spoke again." That's a long time.

**JC:** Yeah. What was going on in his head during those several minutes?

**Lorrie:** He is scared, yeah, and he has a lot to think about.

**JC:** He must be grateful, though, to know who's on his side.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** I think that's the one thing about that scene there: he is one hundred percent certain that he trusts Snape and that Snape deserves it.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** It feels really authentic right there in that moment. He's like, "You know what I'm going to ask you to do?" and Snape's like, "Yep, and I'm going to go do it."

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** That feels -- There's no... nobody's lying.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** It's one hundred percent real.

**Lorrie:** It's Snape's real self, and it's reassuring to know from that conversation that the two of them have foreseen this. They've already talked about it. It's not going to be like Fudge, where you watch in horror as he makes decisions in front of your face. No, they knew this was coming.

**JC:** Yeah. Dumbledore... Yeah, he's taking some big deep breaths, but he's taking count, too, of who's on the side, who's on the team. Who can he trust?

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** Who can he reach out to? What's he going to ask people for? Start thinking, start planning.

**Lorrie:** Yeah, and he has thought about this. He didn't know that Fudge was going to be quite so much against them, but okay.

**JC:** Now that's okay. Now that's the reality.

**Lorrie:** We are seeing it happen. Yeah. And then, when Dumbledore leaves, Harry is able -- I'm so glad for him that he's able to get this out, although it's so awful. He's able to confess that thing that's been killing him: he told Cedric to take the Cup with him. Oh...

**JC:** Yeah.

**Lorrie:** And Mrs. Weasley holds him and... oh.

**JC:** The fact that he gets a hug from a mom is like, oh, God... Harry has needed this for years. The moment he really needs that kind of a hug the most, he gets it. Beautiful.

**Lorrie:** Followed by my absolute favorite instance of something wonderful this author does, where there's something that's so emotional that she stops the scene with a sudden loud noise that's completely out of nowhere. There's this loud slamming noise at this moment when Harry is sobbing into a mother's arms.

**JC:** Yeah.

**Lorrie:** "Hermione was standing by the window. She was holding something tight in her hand. 'Sorry,' she whispered." I love knowing that this is Hermione. She knew exactly that this was a terrible moment to do it, but oh, no, no, no, this is important. She's going to have to do it. Sorry, she's going to have to do it, and she is up for the moment. Everybody here in this chapter... When the moment arrives, they meet the moment.

**JC:** I'm so grateful that Hermione was standing by that window and knew what she might be looking for...

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** Because imagine if Rita Skeeter had been able to publish an article about what happened in this room.

**Lorrie:** Well, the first time I read this, I had no idea what Hermione was just doing.

**JC:** Yeah. Yeah, me either. Oh, my God. No clue, no clue.

**Lorrie:** Just like, 'Hermione, what? Is this really the time, Hermione?' Yeah, I greatly enjoyed how long this reveal gets dragged out, because I did not see it coming, just like you said that we forgot about... Yeah. Even this giant hint I'm still going to carry on forgetting until quite a bit later, so that was a really satisfying reveal.

**JC:** So much. Also, the fact that Hermione had enough self-control not to squash her. With the sound of the noise, it almost... Yeah. Well, if you're trying to... See, you make a lot of noise there, but the temptation just to squash... But no, that would be murder, and Hermione's not going to do that.

**Lorrie:** Well, worse than murder. It would be losing the power that you can then have over this person, and unlike Barty Crouch Jr. getting his soul sucked out by Fudge's stupid dementor trick, Hermione is better than Fudge, and that would be a terrible waste. That's not the point.

**JC:** Right.

**Lorrie:** I can just imagine... If she did accidentally squish Rita Skeeter, Hermione is not going to say, "Well, she was no loss."

**JC:** Yeah, this is true. This is true. Hermione's going to... yeah.

**Lorrie:** Aside from everything else, what do you mean, Fudge, that was no loss? Is that how you think of people and their souls?

**JC:** Yeah, exactly. He's like, "Well, from what I've heard..." Oh...

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** It's like, "Some say..." Yeah. Oh, my God, so awful!

**Lorrie:** The next chapter is called The Beginning.

**JC:** And it is the end of this book, which is amazing! I love that it's called The Beginning, and I think that's going to be fun to talk about.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** One more chapter. Oh, my gosh.

**Lorrie:** Yeah.

**JC:** I'm excited. Okay, we'll see you then.

**Caroline:** You've been listening to Harry Potter After 2020 with hosts Lorrie Kim and JC. You can find show notes for this and all other episodes at [HPAfter2020.com](http://HPAfter2020.com). There, you will also find ways to support the show, contact the hosts and more. If you like what you heard, consider giving us a review on Apple Podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts. Harry Potter After 2020 is produced and edited by Lorrie Kim and Caroline Rinaldy. Original music was composed by C.L. Smith. Thank you for listening.