



Transcript

Episode 4.6

Book 4, Chapter 6: The Portkey

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 Six: The Portkey.

Lorrie: The Portkey. More world building! Harry and the Weasleys travel to the Quidditch World Cup site by prescheduled Portkey, an object charmed to transport whoever touches it. Hey!

JC: Hello!

Lorrie: It's happening. We're starting, JC!

JC: Yeah. I'm excited about all the world building that's going to happen. It started happening in this chapter, and it's going to happen in the next couple of chapters. I love this stuff. This is great.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Okay. My 16-year-old kid writes fanfiction for a webcomic right now, and we often have conversations about world building and how much fun it is. This is the kind of stuff... I'm excited to talk about this. This is so great.

Lorrie: The originating situation is that there are logistics involved with getting a hundred thousand wizards from all over the world to attend the World Cup; they have to avoid the attention of Muggles by going incognito and they have to stagger their travel. All right, that's the situation, so go! What do you have to do?

JC: It's really interesting that we're being presented with the wizarding world as this subculture that lives alongside of and parallel to Muggles, but they have to hide in plain sight a lot and some of them are better at it than others.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: There's so much energy that is put into hiding.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: I find that really fascinating. You could think about what the parallels are with human groups in other situations, but it's very interesting that also we see that we have kids like Harry and Hermione, who have a foot in each world and for whom they see the difference between the two in a way that kids who are solely living in one or the other don't. It feels like... You talked a lot about the experience of being an immigrant -- of your parents being immigrants and growing up in that family -- and having this sort of cross-cultural experience where you're having to balance these two groups of people who don't really understand each other, and you're the person in the middle who has to connect them. I filter Harry's and Hermione's experience of learning about the wizarding world through that lens in a lot of ways after listening to you talk about it, and I find that really interesting here. Harry noticing people trying to dress like Muggles and not doing a great job and all these little details that feel like navigating two different worlds is a very interesting thing.

Lorrie: Yeah, and that young teenagers are authorities here, having already had childhoods where they had to go back and forth and know more about this intercultural life than the grown-ups in either place.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: We learn about Apparition.

JC: Yes.

Lorrie: This universal magical ability across fictional franchises where magical people can just appear and disappear. Here, it's for licensed adult wizards only; for those who can't Apparate or are in groups where you can't do it together, there are Portkeys, which is what we have here.

JC: It's interesting to me that this isn't our first mention of Apparition in the series, but I feel like it's the first explanation that we've gotten. It's also the first time we've gotten some details about how this is challenging magic; if you don't do it correctly, you will hurt yourself.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: That's why it's a licensed thing, so it feels like it's the wizarding world equivalent of driving and getting your driver's license. You have to be a certain age, you have to be trained; not everyone wants to do it or can do it. I think this is a thing that I really enjoy about this series: the magic is treated as something that you have to work really hard at and you have to learn about, and it's not like, "I'm born with the skill." Yes, you're born with some ability, but then you have to nurture it and you have to work hard at it and you have to practice it. I like the way that that makes it an intellectual practice.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: As a person who always enjoyed school -- I have spent my whole life working in schools, being a teacher, being around students -- I really appreciate academic endeavors, and I really appreciate that magic is treated as an academic endeavor. It's something you can get really, really good at through a lot of learning and practice, and then you can also get by on mediocre magic. There's kinds of magic that you don't learn in school, but that are also really valuable in

your life; all of those dimensions of it I find really appealing, so it's interesting that, again, that comes up in this chapter. There are people who need to travel by Portkey for whatever reason. Yeah, I love it.

Lorrie: Yeah, because we've seen Floos. We've seen the Knight Bus. Obviously, Madam Marsh, who's always stuck on the Knight Bus (despite motion sickness), is terrible at Apparition and doesn't even bother, knows better. Probably doesn't have a license. The Weasley family... They're getting ready to go to the Portkey stop, and Molly has a showdown with the twins regarding the Ton-Tongue Toffees.

JC: Oh, my gosh. The fact that Mrs. Weasley can just say *Accio* and empty her kid's pockets like that...

Lorrie: Yes! She doesn't have to be specific. She just has to have intention.

JC: Yeah. Wow, that's a parent power I bet a lot of parents would like to have. "What are you hiding from me? Reveal it!"

Lorrie: Right, and every object of guilt comes zooming out helplessly. The fact that they've hidden them in their jeans cuffs even... All of their sneaky little tricks are helpless in front of Molly.

JC: Right. At this point, she's got seven kids, so she's probably seen it all. But with Fred and George, you get the sense that the three older boys were really good.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: They did all the things they were supposed to do, and then you get these two.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: These two have put her through the wringer, and she knows not to trust.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Their faces look innocent? Something's wrong.

Lorrie: Uh-oh.

JC: Which is really interesting to see, because I've met parents who have many children and the way that they look at their children and the way that they suspect their children... That is not the relationship I have with my single kid who's not a problem, who is not like that.

Lorrie: Guileless.

JC: He's more like Bill and Charlie than he is like Fred and George.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: But I've met parents like this, and it's so wild to see it portrayed here. Even in the wizarding world, she's got other tools to keep them in line, but that's... Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah. It's a pretty even match-up. But this particular round, Molly totally wins.

JC: Yeah, for sure.

Lorrie: And they are remorseless. They aren't abashed about it; they're just grouching. "Oh, there goes a whole summer's work!" Her retort that they should have spent the summer doing something better is kind of irrefutable. "Oh, so that's where you're putting your energy, is it? It's not that you don't have what it takes." No, they do. They do.

JC: Yeah. They're just putting it in a different direction, and they will continue to do so...

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: As we all know. Also, I thought it was a nice bit of foreshadowing, because that is a spell that Harry is going to find really handy in this book, if I recall correctly. It was nice to see, "Oh, here's how it's done expertly, even in ordinary situations. Harry, pay attention!"

Lorrie: Yes. "You'll need this."

JC: Also, they've been woken up very early... We don't find out until the end of the chapter exactly how early they had to get up. They get up in the middle of the night, and it wasn't so they could Apparate; they [Bill, Charlie, and Percy] get to sleep in, they don't have to show up until midday. They have this long hike down to the village in the middle of the night, up this long hill, and they're dying at the end. Then when they get there, Mr. Weasley says, "Oh, we made good time. We've got 10 minutes to spare." I had this moment of, "Ten minutes?!"

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: They haven't even found the Portkey yet. They had ten minutes. My anxiety spiked. I was like, 'Are you kidding me?! 10 minutes is the only...? Oh, my God.'

Lorrie: I had a real moment of identification, because the last one to struggle up the hill is Hermione and she's got a stitch in her side. That was always me. The way that Hermione is so academic and can't do the most basic physical things... Oh, yeah... oh, yeah. I'm still like that.

JC: Oh, my gosh. Yeah. Hogwarts doesn't seem to have P.E., which sounds great.

Lorrie: They have Quidditch.

JC: There's Quidditch, but that's --

Lorrie: They have flying lessons.

JC: You have to try out for the team.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Yeah. We never hear about the flying lessons again after first year; maybe they continue to have it in the background for the kids who need it. I don't know, but wow. There was another moment in the travel bit where Harry's thinking about the fact that his hands and feet are freezing. I'm like, 'It's August or something, isn't it?' I had this moment of being an American who has lived their entire life in the South thinking, 'In August?!'

Lorrie: Right. 'In the triple digits?' Yeah.

JC: Oh, my God. Where I live, this time of year, it'd be 79 degrees in the dark and eighty percent humidity and you'd be dying. Oh, my God. Anyway, yeah.

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: Anyway, yes, yes. This is happening in a different place than the one I live, and this is a good reminder.

Lorrie: *Exotic*.

JC: Yeah. First, we meet Cedric and his dad, so this is a whole other little bit of 'welcome to the Wizarding World' and a character who is obviously going to become really important. The other thing is that there are mentions of, "Is there anyone else coming?" and the Lovegoods get a mention.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Do we meet Luna? We don't meet Luna until the next volume, right?

Lorrie: Right.

JC: I don't think we meet Luna in this one.

Lorrie: No, no. We just know that they live nearby, but they don't have as much money.

JC: Yeah, so that's really interesting that the Lovegoods are mentioned here. That stood out to me.

Lorrie: Oh, meeting Amos Diggory... Oh, that's so emotional.

JC: Oh.

Lorrie: First of all, the characterization is incredible. This is one of the times that Rowling really flexes; her minor characters, how expertly she draws them, is phenomenal. We know so much about his personality -- how he's huffy and self-important and a little embarrassing, but he doesn't feel it -- and how you can forgive the way he talks about Cedric, because it's obviously full of so much love and pride. Obviously, Amos is also a Hufflepuff, and how incredibly sad it is... There's only one time (the first time reading this) that you're innocent about what is to become of Amos Diggory, and then every subsequent reading is sad.

JC: This is a point when he's happy and he's proud of his son and life is going well. Yeah.

Lorrie: And he's annoying.

JC: Yeah. He's kind of a dick to Harry, to be honest.

Lorrie: And Cedric is mortified, but is hiding it because he's used to it, and he knows his dad doesn't mean any harm.

JC: Right. It's in that way that a teenager... "Oh, my God, stop!"

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: It's like that.

Lorrie: "Dad, it wasn't like that. Stop gloating!"

JC: He's looking around, and how many of these kids were on the opposite Quidditch team? They all know what happened. Cedric knows what happened. He's like, "Ugh." Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah, and they're tiny compared to him. "Dad, just shush." But yeah, no, he's obviously learned a long, long time ago that there's no stopping his dad. To be fair, Cedric is somebody to boast about; it's really touching and it hurts. Now, post-2016 because of *Cursed Child*, we know that Amos Diggory returns as an even bigger figure. We didn't know for a long time until *Cursed Child* came out that he would come in this post-canonical eighth story to stand in for grieving fathers, and that makes it all the more painful when we meet this officious, basically harmless, sweet man who's saying, "Hey, Harry, you've got to agree: Cedric's better than you!" [Harry's] like, 'I'm just going to let this moment pass.'

JC: Yeah. Yeah, the line about, "Hey, well, when one person falls off their broom and the other doesn't, it doesn't take a genius to figure out..." Oh, God.' Don't know why Harry fell off his broom, but it's fine.' Harry's like, 'Yeah, whatever.'

Lorrie: 'We're not going to get into it.' This makes sense that Amos Diggory is a big figure in this scene, because the play of *Cursed Child* and the volume of *Goblet of Fire* are about the father/son relationships and we have this really beautiful one. Beautiful. Slightly embarrassing.

JC: I always had that feeling that there wasn't a mother in the picture, that it was just --

Lorrie: No, there is.

JC: There is? Okay.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Okay.

Lorrie: But that's not the story here for this volume.

JC: That's not the story. Okay. Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah. And Molly's not going to the World Cup, so I guess Mrs. Diggory isn't either.

JC: Well, it sounds like the tickets are really expensive.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: A lot of people couldn't afford them, and then there was the bit about how they're staggering all the entries: the more pricey your ticket is, the later you can come.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: If you're in the cheap seats, you had to go and camp for two weeks to wait. Now, from our American perspective, you can just take two weeks to camp and wait for a game? What?!

Lorrie: You'll get fired!

JC: This is vacation time. Okay, we're not in the United States.

Lorrie: No. This is summer vacation in Europe.

JC: Yeah, but the idea of camping out for two weeks to wait for this sporting event... Yeah, I'm with Molly. I'm like, 'Nah.'

Lorrie: 'Nah.'

JC: 'Go ahead.'

Lorrie: I know, because I'm thinking, 'Well, no wonder she volunteered to do everybody's shopping. Can you imagine? She has the house to herself.' Oh!

JC: For sure.

Lorrie: She probably couldn't wait to rush them all out. It's just her and the chickens.

JC: Ah. They walk around the top of the hill to look for the Portkey, and there's this bit about how it will be an ordinary object that looks like trash but not important enough for Muggles to pick up so they'll ignore it, it won't catch their attention. It made me think about the fact that in this series, so much of wizard/Muggle relations relies on wizards hiding in plain sight, but also on the ignorance and the non-observantness of Muggles.

Lorrie: Obliviousness.

JC: Obliviousness, that's a good word.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: The idea that Muggles don't notice things that they're not expecting to see.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And I thought this is actually really true about people in general: you don't notice things you're not expecting to see. Probably the first example that comes to my mind is the whole concept of privilege: if you don't expect to see a thing, you don't see it, it doesn't register. It doesn't even register for you that it's an issue or that something is sticking out, whereas for another group of people, it's very, very clear.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: That made me think about that in a way that I don't think, pre-2016, I would've thought about it so much: how much the wizarding world is a metaphor for any group of people that has to live outside of the power structure or parallel to it, or with an eye on it at all times to make sure that they're not catching the attention of the wrong people.

Lorrie: Yeah. That's a skill that people can have: how to just walk down the street and suddenly blend in, suddenly be invisible. And if you're a good actor or if you're trained in this, then you can change your gait, change how you exist in the world and instantly be visible again. It makes me think of the word 'interstices' all the time. The wizards are on the lookout for where they can exist in between all the artifacts of Muggle life, like Grimmauld Place existing in between these houses or the Knight Bus squeezing in between spaces. It's also a fantasy -- a *reverse* fantasy, where if you're an imaginative child and you're reading this, you think, 'There could be worlds upon worlds that we don't see, and I'm going to start looking for them. Where could they exist? Oh, that thing. I've never noticed that thing. What does it do? Is it a portal into another dimension? Well, I'm going to imagine that it is. Oh, what is that -- geocaching?' I know nothing about that.

JC: I don't either.

Lorrie: But I guess there's a whole network of people saying, "Go to this public place that's right in plain sight, and we're going to use it to communicate with each other."

JC: That and the other thing to build on what you're saying: the idea that if you see people who look like they don't quite belong, that they might have access to or might be part of something special.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Right?

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: There's something magical about that, too, this idea of looking at people, going, "Wow, they're dressed a little different. Oh, they've got a story."

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: "There's something special about that person," rather than freak and keep going.

Lorrie: Right.

JC: I like that feeling about it, too, that when we meet -- and I guess we're about to meet -- even more of these wizards who think they're dressed as Muggles and who are dressed very strangely, we're going to get even more of that. The Dursleys would be like, "Oh, what are these freaks doing, walking about town?" But to Harry's eye, it's like, 'Oh, yeah, that's a wizard who doesn't quite know how to dress like a Muggle.' But yeah, they recognize each other in the same way that teenagers dress in particular ways to recognize each other.

Lorrie: Yeah, tribally.

JC: 'I'm a goth. I'm a K-pop fan. I'm a sports bro.' There's codes in the way people dress at that age, especially.

Lorrie: There are codes, yeah, and how funny it can be if you unwittingly wear the wrong code for something.

JC: Yeah, yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Particularly as an adult, I think. What's the meme of the guy who's like, "Hello, fellow kids"?

Lorrie: Oh, yeah, Steve Buscemi.

JC: Yeah, yeah. That's what it's reminding me of, too, with the "Hello, fellow Muggles -- I mean, humans."

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: I'm just imagining an Arthur Weasley meme of that.

Lorrie: Oh, there's also the issue of maturity of teenagers being on either the immature or the mature side of adolescence, because Fred and George... They're really threatened by Cedric.

JC: How old are they? They're fifteen here?

Lorrie: I think they're sixteen, because they're only a little bit too young to compete.

JC: Oh, and they took their O.W.L.s last year, so yeah, they're sixteen. Okay. Yeah.

Lorrie: Cedric is on the other side of that divide, but he's imposing and hot. Fred and George, who usually are not insecure about anything, are sniping and griping about this guy, hoping that he's stupid or something or hoping that he has some negative qualities, which he totally doesn't. But yeah, that's another one of these themes of adolescents being insecure about schoolmates who are more attractive and more mature and have that confidence. Yeah, Cedric shows up and he's so obviously beyond all this stage of awkwardness.

JC: The first mention of Cedric is that he's very handsome.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: The author does this a lot through Harry's eyes -- tell us how attractive a lot of male figures are in particular -- and I often think, 'Okay, the fandom can take that in many different ways.'

Lorrie: I do appreciate that the really attractive characters are shown as making people edgy and nervous because of competitiveness and insecurity, because we're going to see people react to Fleur Delacour and veelas in general.

JC: Oh, that's coming. Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah. Later on, Harry's going to have a crush on Cho. What do we do with beauty? You can do a lot in adulthood to compensate for that weird competitiveness and insecurity around physical beauty, but at this age -- when six months or one year can make such a huge difference in whether a teenager is seen as awkward and childish or sexually viable -- oh, there's no excusing yourself from this competition. You are entered in this competition as a teenager whether or not you signed up to compete; if you wish desperately that you could be competitive but you simply aren't, there's not that much you can do but suffer.

JC: Yeah, true.

Lorrie: It sucks. A few people come out of it ahead and okay, but they're statistically quite rare.

JC: True. Yeah.

Lorrie: Mostly everyone suffers.

JC: It is interesting. I remember reading somewhere once that... I can't remember what the number was now, but the vast majority of people come out of their childhood and teen years -- and come out of high school or secondary school -- and feel like they didn't fit in and they were not normal and they were blah blah blah. It's the vast majority.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: The majority of people feel that way? Really? If you look back on your experience of being a teenager at that point in adolescent development, the brain is very much geared toward peers and being accepted by peers -- or having all these reactions around looking bad in front of peers or looking good in front of peers -- and then perceiving what you're missing. It's very different, even a few years later, of how your brain is, and it can be difficult to look back on that time and to remember what all that insecurity felt like.

Lorrie: Hell.

JC: Yeah. It sounds like -- from what I just stated anyway -- that most of us have memories of being left out or feeling like we didn't belong or something like that. To know that that's just a normal feeling at this age is really interesting.

Lorrie: Yeah. Well, it's not all at the same age, though. Supposing that you pretty much were okay -- except for a memorable, miserable six months or one year in your life -- you're going to remember that one year. Maybe people who grew up with you will look at you and say, "What do you mean? All the other years, you were fine." It's an imprinting period.

JC: Right.

Lorrie: And the misery is so acute.

JC: And that's what our brains... We form big memories around things like that, things that were awful or dramatic. Something I dislike about the way human brains work, but alas, here we are. Yeah. We imprint on things like that.

Lorrie: I dislike having to go through it again, retrospectively, as a parent. If I had chosen to not have children, then I could have put this era of my life behind me forever. I so dreaded (correctly) when I had kids, thinking, "Oh, no, I'm going to have to relive all that," and it was just as nasty to remember as I feared it would be.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Oh, vile! I thought, 'Well, why is it that the terrible memories of being really non-competitive in the adolescent social economy -- being really ugly and dorky -- why are those so difficult to counter with memories of other times as an adolescent that you did better or times that you compensated in adulthood, when things kind of evened out a little?' I can only conclude that those feelings are launched in different parts of the brain. No matter how much logic you apply, like some sort of soothing balm, to those memories, they're not going to work because it's not coming from the same place. I think part of it is that adolescent awkwardness and fear is about survival. If you do this poorly enough -- if you fail too badly in the adolescent economy -- it could get you killed or close to. It's a survival fear, or that's how I remember it when I think about it. Succeeding in it is a whole different, much more logical part of your feelings. Here we have Cedric as a perfect, perfect example because they travel by Portkey. Even Fred and George, who are extremely talented, land from the Portkey on the ground just like the little kids, Harry and Ron and Hermione; Cedric arrives completely unruffled like the grown-ups. There's a huge gulf here. Cedric looks so adult and so competent, and you just don't even know when he made that transition. Perhaps he was never awkward; that's actually possible.

JC: He's a year older than Fred and George. I'm going to call him a 'senior'. It's his seventh year, right?

Lorrie: I think he's a sixth year, actually.

JC: Oh, then he'd be the same age as... Well, wait. Fred and George have to be two years older than Harry, right?

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: In Harry's first year, they had already been on the Quidditch team the previous year.

Lorrie: They were third years, yes.

JC: They were third years.

Lorrie: Yeah. Cedric in the third book... He's introduced as a fifth year.

JC: Okay.

Lorrie: "Diggory was a fifth year and a lot bigger than Harry."

JC: Okay, so he's also, then, two years older. He is the same age as Fred and George.

Lorrie: He's the same year.

JC: Okay.

Lorrie: But his birthday is earlier, so he qualifies. He qualifies for the age line and the twins don't.

JC: Okay, so they're in the same year.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Cedric is actually in the same year -- we just worked this out -- as Fred and George, but he's older. There's a little bit of interesting tension there, too, with Fred and George being like, 'Oh, this guy... He's been in our year.' All the time, they had Potions with him or whatever, he was always...

Lorrie: Yeah, yeah.

JC: It's not that they dislike him -- he's a Hufflepuff, he's probably hard to dislike -- but he's perfect or whatever.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: The other thing that I was thinking about: as you were talking about when they land from the Portkey and the way that everybody falls on their asses except for the two adults and Cedric, that Cedric is an only child, I believe.

Lorrie: Yep.

JC: How many opportunities has Cedric had to Portkey to places during his life that the Weasleys have not just because of the expense of taking all the kids somewhere? I think about this a lot with my own kid. My own kid has done a ton of traveling.

Lorrie: True!

JC: My kid knows how to fly on an airplane. My kid knows how all this works. My kid knows how to be.

Lorrie: It's so much cheaper than bundling a whole family into... yeah.

JC: Yeah, right. Exactly. There are plenty of kids that he knows (who have many siblings who have barely been out of the state that we live in) and he's been all over the world, so there's this experience gap, perhaps, with Cedric as well. If you've done this Portkey ten times and you

know how to land, whereas if you've never done it because your family can't afford to take you somewhere, then of course you're going to fall flat on your ass the first few times. Yeah. I was thinking about that, too. Cedric's got a level of privilege that the Weasley kids don't.

Lorrie: Although that brings me back to Molly knowing how to get the candies out of all of the hiding places. There's one child that Molly does not have an advantage over, and that's Ginny. We will find out later that when Ginny wants to hide stuff from her mom, her mom has no clue.

JC: Oh, that's interesting.

Lorrie: I don't know if that's partly because by the time of your seventh child you're just tired, but it's probably no, just that Ginny is that much better at getting away with things.

JC: There's the stereotype of the baby of the family being the one who gets away with everything because they watch all the older siblings and they learn.

Lorrie: They learn.

JC: Yeah. And then because they're so little, everyone just thinks that they're so innocent.

Lorrie: Yeah, and she's the girl.

JC: Yeah, so she's got all this pointing towards, "Oh, but Ginny would never."

Lorrie: She's like, 'Yeah.'

JC: No, Ginny's taking advantage of that. Yeah. One of the big things that I really think is interesting about this chapter is that we're introduced to this idea of a Portkey as a way of travel, and I find the process of that interesting. All you have to do is touch the Portkey. You'd think, 'Would you need to grab onto it?' No, you just need to touch it.

Lorrie: It takes you along.

JC: Harry describes the sensation of... that's it, and he couldn't have pulled his finger off. It was just being stuck to it.

Lorrie: Yeah. You can be taken by accident.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: It feels like a wormhole, right? This idea that the Portkeys, or the way they're working, is that they're pulling you through a wormhole or something. That's what it feels like. The description that happens multiple times in the book, being pulled along by a Portkey, feels like you have this hook behind your navel. That sounds incredibly uncomfortable!

Lorrie: Yes, it does.

JC: And that made me think about the fact that every method of magical travel in this series is very uncomfortable.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Traveling by Floo is uncomfortable, riding a broomstick is uncomfortable, Apparition, taking the Knight Bus, taking a Portkey. Every method of transportation is uncomfortable.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: But then I was thinking about that and I thought, until pretty recently in human history, all methods of transportation were uncomfortable. You had to ride a horse or sit in a wagon, you name it... Rode on a ship. Travel was not fun.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And not comfortable. I guess that's in line probably with human experience, but it is very interesting that whenever in the series someone has to travel a long distance, they have to take a deep breath and go, 'Oh, God, here we go.'

Lorrie: You've got to really gear up. Yeah.

JC: It's not going to be pleasant.

Lorrie: It's got to be worth it.

JC: Yeah. It's got to be worth it to go to this place. It's just never physically relaxing. At this point in my life, if I'm taking a flight somewhere, for the most part "I've got two hours to read" is my feeling about it. Maybe someone will bring me a soda in the middle of it and maybe they won't, but hey. I got two hours to sit here in this cramped little seat, but I can read or something like that. It feels a little bit relaxing, but not in a way that traveling by Portkey does. Traveling is uncomfortable in this universe.

Lorrie: Yeah, and you have to be trained. I know what I wanted to ask you, because you are a Hufflepuff.

JC: Yes.

Lorrie: I love that the two Hufflepuffs in this chapter (I'm assuming that's what Amos is) -- Amos is boasting, and Cedric is modest and a little embarrassed. Both of these qualities seemed so Hufflepuff to me, the way that they act around it (both the boasting and the modesty). I thought... This is, right? Maybe not. Is this the first time that we really get an exploration of what it means to be a Hufflepuff?

JC: It might be.

Lorrie: We get some of that in *Chamber of Secrets*, when the Hufflepuffs are afraid of Harry because they think he's the heir of Slytherin, and that's played for laughs. They're really scared and they're gutsy and brave about it anyway, but this shows it as a more complex series of traits.

JC: Yeah, probably so. I'm going to have to pay attention to when Hufflepuffs are mentioned, but I don't think... Yeah, we haven't seen very much of Hufflepuffs so far. We get the initial 'God, if I wasn't Hufflepuff, I'd just go home.' We get that from Draco Malfoy, we get a few mentions of people who are sorted into Hufflepuff. We get the Quidditch game where they lose to Hufflepuff and they're so embarrassed. But yeah.

Lorrie: As a Hufflepuff, do you feel like this is Hufflepuff representation?

JC: I guess a little bit. We learn more about Cedric later. They seem very relatable to me, so that's a yes. They seem very relatable. Still, Amos bragging about Cedric, that feels very relatable. Of course, if you have the chance to brag about your kid, you're going to do it. Yeah. His dad is utterly devoted to his kid and that kind of thing. Very proud of his son, so there's that and then Cedric's not basking in that.

Lorrie: No.

JC: 'Why is the spotlight on me when Harry Potter's...' There's a little bit of that, but it's like, 'Oh, my God, dad, stop. Don't do... That's not how it happened. Oh, I'm going to have to apologize to these people later.' That feels very Hufflepuff to me, too.

Lorrie: Well, about that, if you put yourself in Cedric's position... Because you're somebody where I know I like to brag about you. You have some accomplishments that just blow me away, and I love telling people the kind of work you're doing in state-level education or some of the things you've produced in your life that I just think are so amazing. But sometimes when people brag about you, they can get things wrong. "I did *not* win a Pulitzer Prize. No, I didn't. You're telling a Pulitzer Prize winner that I won a Pulitzer." What is that decision that Cedric's making to not correct his dad? "It's fine, it's fine. I know what really happened, Harry knows what really happened. Just let my dad have his moment and we'll just get past it." How does it feel to you when there's stuff like this happening and people are bragging about you in a way that you just think, 'Okay, get past this moment now'?

JC: Yeah. You don't want to look unappreciative, but you also are like, 'Let's not call any more attention to me in this way that's not really true.' As an adult, what I do is change the subject, and Arthur does that before Cedric has a chance to. But yeah, it's like, "Okay, moving on."

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: "Yeah, let's stop talking about me. Let's move on."

Lorrie: Because I know that as a Ravenclaw, I could imagine if somebody were inaccurately boasting about me, I would just call out my parent or whoever on the spot. "That's not true, that's not what happened. You're not giving Harry his due credit. This is what happened." It wouldn't be very nice of me, but I would be like, "No, the record has to be set straight." I don't think that there's a right or wrong about this. It's priorities in a different place, because of course Cedric knows that Harry was there and he knows exactly what happened.

JC: And he tries a little bit, but then his dad just keeps going and he's just like... **groans**

Lorrie: There's no point!

JC: Right, yeah.

Lorrie: In order to get Amos Diggory to stop, you would have to actually hurt his feelings.

JC: Yeah. Right. And he's not going to do that.

Lorrie: No.

JC: Yeah, that felt very real.

Lorrie: It's sweet and it's so painful.

JC: Yeah. I hear that happen in my family. I hear members of my family bragging about my own kid and getting the details wrong.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And my kid is there and he looks at me like, 'They're getting the details wrong,' and we just smile, and then, 'Moving right along...'

Lorrie: Right.

JC: 'Just let it go.' I guess I've been in that situation.

Lorrie: Right, because it's when those details are used to position your kid as better than someone else's kid. That's when it's uncomfortable. Who cares if the details are wrong, except no, you have to give the other kids their due also. Yeah. Anyway, it seems like a very real and essentially, incredibly sweet father/son moment here.

JC: Yeah, and it's nice that we get this in the beginning.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Maybe we'll see them again, I don't know, in early chapters because it's very different by the time we get to the end. That's for sure.

Lorrie: Ouch, yeah.

JC: I guess another thing that I found interesting here (and I had to read ahead a little bit into the next chapter, because I was like I can't not) was that they hear this voice that says, "Seven past five from Stoatshead Hill," and I was like, 'What?! Wait, who is saying it?' I had to read a little bit ahead to see.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: There's two guys standing there who are managing the Portkey arrivals.

Lorrie: With a checklist.

JC: Yeah, with a checklist. I guess when we get to the next chapter, we'll be able to get into those logistics a little bit, but the idea that we're really funneling a hundred thousand people into this place...

Lorrie: Oh, I know.

JC: Holy mackerel, right? That is a huge operation, and for a Ministry of Magic that seems to be bumbling a lot from our perspective -- they keep fumbling all these different things -- you're like, 'How is this government even working?' Okay, wait, no. There are people who can do this -- who can make this happen -- and the Muggles never know that this is going on, that a hundred thousand people from around the world have converged on this site. That is a huge accomplishment.

Lorrie: And as we're recording this, we're a few weeks out from the 2024 Paris Olympics.

JC: Oh, yeah.

Lorrie: We do see that when the logistics are this huge and global, that it is very disruptive.

JC: Right, yeah.

Lorrie: And no, of course it cannot go off completely smoothly with this many moving parts.

JC: And how much work it would take to put on an event like that.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Yeah. I didn't watch it that closely, but it looked like the Paris Olympics went off fairly smoothly, and they had all these sites all around the city and all these people were moving around -- all these moving parts -- and it seems like things went pretty smoothly.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: So the work that it takes to make that happen behind the scenes is just stunning.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: There are people in the Ministry of Magic who are totally capable of doing that.

Lorrie: The thing that happens every Olympiad is that I see people who are involved in it saying how terrible and awful and corrupt and costly they are, and yet they're magical. "The Olympics are terrible and they're wasteful and they're unfair, and they're also my favorite sporting event in the entire world!" You can criticize it a lot, but if for some reason they can't be held because of COVID or wars or something, oh, it's devastating. The events themselves don't generally live up. For example, the cheating is unfair or something, and yet there's this unshakable loyalty to the Olympic ideal that may or may not ever be realized. But no, this is supposed to be the best in the world. The excitement that everyone has, the romance around the Quidditch World Cup, is something that I felt a few weeks ago watching the Olympics.

JC: Yeah, that's true. That's true.

Lorrie: When you get that moment of unified greatness -- the whole world watching something that's transcendent -- yeah. Yeah. Is it worth it? It kind of is, yeah. Yeah, it is.

JC: Yeah, and I guess in the next few chapters, we're going to see such an event in the wizarding world, which is fun.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: But also "Seven past five..." Oh, that's really...

Lorrie: Oh! What time is that?

JC: It's like, okay, now they really did get up at two in the morning or whatever to walk to...

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Oh, wow, that's really... So they really are staggering all these entries. Oh, my gosh.

Lorrie: But it's kind of fun, it's kind of adventurous.

JC: Absolutely. That feeling of, 'Okay, we're sneaking in. We have to all play our part to quietly sneak into this venue so we can all see this thing.'

Lorrie: I am so happy for Harry that he gets this experience. It's such a bonding experience. Yeah, a lot of kids will never get to have it, and the FOMO is real.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah. Harry could never have gotten this on his own.

JC: Right, and I guess they have the radio. They have a radio, a wireless kind of thing, but they don't really have... You can't watch the TV broadcast of it, so you have to be there for it.

Lorrie: Yeah. Well, lucky for Harry that the Weasleys like him so much.

JC: Very lucky for Harry and for the Weasleys.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Yes.

Lorrie: Ugh, Amos Diggory, that's true love. Rereading regardless of what year it is -- any *not* the first time that you're reading this book encountering Amos Diggory with heart eyes for his adorable son -- ouch. That's real love. Well, I can't wait to just keep going with more and more of this discovery of all this world building detail, because the next chapter is called Bagman and Crouch. We just keep meeting more and more, newer and newer, bigger things about this world.

JC: Yeah. For someone who is not a sports fan, I'm looking forward to the Quidditch World Cup.

Lorrie: Yeah, exactly. There's a lot more going on than just the sportsball stuff that makes me glaze over. All right, well, let's talk again as soon as we can!

JC: All right!

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.