

HARRY POTTER AFTER 2020

with LORRIE KIM and JC

Transcript

Episode 4.7

Book 4, Chapter 7: Bagman and Crouch

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 Seven: Bagman and Crouch.

Lorrie: Bagman and Crouch. Harry, Hermione, and the Weasleys set up their tent on the Quidditch World Cup campgrounds alongside wizards from all over the world. They meet Ludo Bagman and Barty Crouch, two Ministry officials running the event. Hey, JC!

JC: We are at the Quidditch World Cup. Finally!

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: There's a lot of world-building in this chapter. Everywhere you turn... You're like Harry in this chapter. Everywhere Harry looks, there's something new and exciting to see, and as the reader, you're feeling that, too; when I was writing my notes for this chapter, I didn't even know where to look. There was so much to see and I really like that feeling in this chapter. It really captured this wide-eyed... taking in so much new stuff. It was done in a way that made it feel... It wasn't an info dump at all. It was done really well.

Lorrie: Right. Excitement came through really strongly. It reminded me of being at the Olympics or at Comic-Con: so much stimulation everywhere and people at a height of excitement...

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: And everybody bringing their most glamorous, energized selves, like they've been preparing for this for years. Also, because of the scale of it; it's almost more trouble than it's worth. It's so much trouble...

JC: So much.

Lorrie: But the glorious aspect of having something this multifaceted -- this many people so excited -- you can't really reproduce that.

JC: The whole thing sounds exhausting. I see why Molly stayed home.

Lorrie: Yes!

JC: I can see why it's super exciting for the kids, but the idea that you have to go and camp as long as two weeks to wait for this one Quidditch match -- which seems like it lasts ten minutes in the end -- oh, my gosh. All of it is just so... There's so much happening. It's amazing.

Lorrie: There's no other way to have it. All the culture-clash in this chapter... I just spent a couple of months in Korea -- that's a country that I'm supposed to know and a culture I'm supposed to know, but I kind of don't and I make tons of mistakes. This really resonated with me that Mr. Weasley is talking to the Muggle, and he looks like he speaks English (Mr. Weasley); he looks like he ought to know what he's doing, but something's clearly not right, and the consequences if you get it wrong, it's not okay. I found it very relatable.

JC: Yeah. I was thinking about that, too, as I was reading, especially the moment when Mr. Weasley is having difficulty with the money.

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: And there's a sense in which it's funny, because oh, look: again, the wizards don't know what's happening. But anyone who's ever traveled to another country and had to pull out cash and pay for something knows that it's a slow process, especially with the coins. The bills you can... "There's numbers on them. I can figure that out."

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: But the coins, I have to stare at every single one and it's hard to find the number on it. I'm thinking, because wizards don't use paper money, it's the opposite for Mr. Weasley. I was like, 'Wow, that's really real, that feeling of, 'What? I don't... This is a medium I don't understand. Where do I look for the numbers on this? Someone help me!'

Lorrie: Coins.... The biggest ones aren't even always the most valuable. It's so misleading.

JC: Yeah, for sure. I thought that's interesting, and Harry is the Muggle interpreter for a lot of people. I'm imagining the immigrant kid.

Lorrie: Yeah. Yes.

JC: He's like, "You're the one who understands this more than anyone else. Come over here and translate for me." There's a lot of that happening through here, too.

Lorrie: I like the detail where Harry says, "I don't know anything about camping. It's not like the Dursleys ever took me."

JC: Yeah, right. And the person who seems to know the most about it is Hermione.

Lorrie: Who probably hated it all.

JC: Which I love, that little bit of flipping the gender thing there. Before we go into the camping, though, I want to talk a little bit about something that struck me very differently this time around, which was the whole thing with the Muggle guy whose property they're camping on: how he's being Obliviated ten times a day and how really freaking disturbing that is.

Lorrie: That gets me all the time. This cannot be good for him.

JC: Yeah. That can't be good for your brain. I literally wrote that in my notes: "What kind of damage?" Because we've seen that memory spells can damage people. We've seen that.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Too many of them.

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: Yeah, he's going to have a lot of money when he's done, but this is happening without his consent. He doesn't know what he signed up for.

Lorrie: Very much so.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: And he's suspicious and he's quite sharp, but this is something that comes up in this volume a lot: we're not all equally resistant to mind control. Some people are naturally more resistant and inconveniently sharp; this guy, because he's so quick-witted, is going to suffer a lot of damage from this.

JC: Yeah. They're walking out and they see all these campsites set up. The thing that really struck me was that it's like going to an RV park.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Yeah, right? I don't know if you have any experience with this. My experience is limited to having family members who have RVs and do the RV thing where they go to campgrounds, but my dad and my stepmom will go to these particular campgrounds and it's exactly what this is describing. Everybody sets up their camper and then they set up the craziest... they decorate everything. It's like "We're here on vacation" is the theme, but all the things are describing how the wizards are decking out their tents and their little front areas and they're trying to show off to each other. I was like, 'That's exactly like going to an RV park in the summer. That's exactly what people do.' It just struck me as yes, this is human. It's a human thing. Mr. Weasley makes, "Oh, we can't help showing off for each other," and I'm like, have you been to an RV park?! Yes. There's something about it where people just...

Lorrie: Yeah. I have not. I have not experienced this culture firsthand, but it sounds hilarious.

JC: Yeah. So there's this thing in this one RV park that my dad goes to where at night... Everyone rents a golf cart while they're at this place, because it's huge, and then they'll do this thing in the evening -- they call it the parade or something -- where everyone decorates their golf carts, and there's a circle around the campground that they drive. It's like cruising, except they're not trying to pick people up, and they're just showing off their crazy golf cart. They will strap giant inflatable dolphins to the top of it; it's decorated with lights. Reading this chapter at the beginning, especially, just reminded me: that's exactly what these people are doing. They're on vacation.

Lorrie: Wow.

JC: This is what people do. I love it. This is so human. You mentioned Comic-Con and stuff before... It's like people planning their cosplay. When humans get together, we do this, so I love that wizards do it, too.

Lorrie: Yes. All year. I like that in the middle of this all, there's this tiny drop of foreshadowing. Everything's so wild right now that we easily miss it, but the author name-drops Mrs. Figg, an old neighbor...

JC: Oh, yeah.

Lorrie: With no further reference to what we know of her, that Harry used to stay with. Doesn't even remind us of what kind of person Mrs. Figg is; it's just there to touch on memories a little bit so when there's a tiny mention of her later at the very end of this volume, it rings a bell distantly. That was great to shove that in exactly in a scene where it would be most missed, because there's so much else going on.

JC: Right. When they first go to the tent, it reminds Harry of Mrs. Figg. Okay, we have the whole tent thing and I have so many thoughts about this.

Lorrie: Yeah. Yeah.

JC: They did this well visually in the movie, and also it's interesting that we see this tent again later.

Lorrie: Oh, my God, yes!

JC: Right? We don't know we're going to see it later. We spend a lot of time in this tent later, but when he walks in and it's this TARDIS-like experience of walking in and it's bigger on the inside - it's actually like a full house on the inside, basically.

Lorrie: So much.

JC: And the other one's like, eh, it's not much, so you're like, 'What do the other tents look like than this one?' What about that three-story tent that they walk past?

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: 'What does that look like inside if this one looks like this?' There's all that, and I love that idea that exists, and I've seen in a lot of magical worlds: this idea of having a place or a device or a container or something where there's a lot of space inside. That idea is so common, and I thought, 'That's really a human constant.' This idea of, 'I have a lot of shit and I don't know where to put it, but what if I have a little pocket dimension I could just shove it all into and then I can carry that pocket dimension around conveniently?' There's something really human about that desire to have more space, so I find that interesting.

Lorrie: And how universally exciting it would be to be entering that space. "It's true! We can do this!"

JC: And that brought up a whole other series of thoughts for me. First of all, how does that magic work, and is it difficult? We get the sense that these tents are expensive -- the Weasleys don't have their own; they're borrowing from other people -- but could wizards use this kind of magic at home? Could you rent a studio apartment and then cast some magic on it and then suddenly you've got 500,000 square feet or whatever? Could you do that? That's really appealing, right? That idea of making more space for myself.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: So there's that.

Lorrie: Well, we know that the Burrow has been expanded with additions here and there that have been not very well thought out -- just a million additions -- so it does seem like they're hacking on magic here and there.

JC: Yeah. There's definitely magic holding that building together. Then I had this thought of, 'Here's a fanfiction that probably someone out there has written: if you were a wizard and an interior designer, this could be your thing, right? I'm imagining the HGTV show where you're walking in and you're like, "I really want the kitchen to be bigger." "Okay. I'm going to have to do the magic for that. I can add on this, okay. You want it to be this big, it's going to cost you this much." I was imagining the HGTV show in my head. I thought there's so much potential there for fun. Anyway, that's where my brain went on that one, but I love the tent and I love the fact that there's these bunk beds and it's got a whole kitchen in it, but Mr. Weasley's like, "No, we have to cook on a fire outside because that's what Muggles do. I've seen it," wherever he saw it in pictures or something. Yeah. Then we move on to the funniness of him not even being able to start a fire, which is also fun, considering that it's...

Lorrie: Right.

JC: It reminds me of the line, "Are you a witch or not?"

Lorrie: The sweetness of Mr. Weasley being so inept at this makes me feel special. 'Oh, look at that. My existence is fascinating to somebody. Aww!' He does make me look around at the stuff that I take for granted, thinking, 'Is this interesting? It is! Huh. Look at that.' One thing, though, that shows up in this volume -- and it started in the last volume but much, much more in this one: you get the sense that the author is aware of how the world is reacting to the success of this series. She is writing as somebody who is creating a world that fans play in. She has encountered cosplay and all the fandom activity, and we start to see references to things in this volume like tabloid journalism and international fandoms because the author is a more international person than she was when she started writing this best-selling series. Her encounters, also, with fame and the different odd behaviors that people direct toward famous or important people: she'll have encountered that a lot more by now, and the social climbing. It's just intolerable, but I'm sure she had experienced a lot of it by this point as a writer, and she didn't have that experience to put into the first or second volumes. Not that she would have wanted to.

JC: Yeah, it is interesting. It is interesting, though, that Harry's world expands a lot in this book for a lot of reasons, but it feels age-appropriate, too. There's something about... He's 14 now, so he's becoming more aware of the world that he lives in and his place in it and his place in the larger world. It feels like growth, too, in a lot of ways. The walk across the campground to get water is another fun bit of world-building. Again, we're seeing through Harry's eyes where he just can't even keep up. What he's really focusing on in that walk is wizards from all over the world and this quick tour of a lot of stereotypes. It's also not that different from the way a 14-year-old kid would probably look at it when he's in the middle of all these people who are very different. I think my favorite bit of that is always the middle-aged American witches from the Salem Institute.

Lorrie: Yes, that's us. It's us!

JC: Because it felt like... I remember reading it at the time I read it and still it feels like a shout-out to people like me.

Lorrie: Right. It's the time we went to the Quidditch World Cup.

JC: Yeah. Exactly. We joke a lot about the fact that there's so many librarians who are in this particular fandom, but it does feel a lot like that. 'Oh, there we are.' I'm not a librarian, but that feeling of, 'Oh, look at all the middle-aged women who are really interested in these books,' and here we are. Yeah.

Lorrie: Yes, in the middle of some very engaged conversation.

JC: It felt like a nod at the time.

Lorrie: Yeah, the author has encountered a lot of fans like that by now.

JC: Yeah, but there's just so much happening. There's a lot of these little moments of poignancy in there and then silliness and fans going crazy, too. The entire Irish section of the campground has grown shamrocks over their tents, and the Ministry wizards are running around constantly trying to get people to calm down, as if any Muggles are going to wander through here, honestly. Amazing. Oh, and they've run into people they know.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Which is fun to see them there with their families. There's that sense of -- I remember this as a kid, too, but also as a parent I had this experience a lot -- going out into the world and then running into kids that my kid knows from school and their families. There's this weird thing about, 'Oh, look, there's a whole other family.' I've heard about this kid or maybe this kid's been over to my house, but seeing that kid in their natural family environment is a little different, so a little bit of that feeling here, too.

Lorrie: Right. New context, and how you know each other better. You might not know each other that well when you see each other every day at school or at work, but when you meet them in an outside context, suddenly you know each other a lot better.

JC: Yeah, that's true with a lot of these kids getting to see them with their families.

Lorrie: I liked hearing that Oliver Wood got signed to a reserve team. That's exciting. Ah, my favorite world-building detail: we find out that there are Unspeakables.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: So romantic and exciting and intriguing. And in my headcanon, the AU where Snape survived Nagini's bite, that's what he's doing.

JC: Ah, that's interesting. He becomes an Unspeakable.

Lorrie: It's super high-clearance. Yeah.

JC: One of the things that is interesting about this chapter -- and this happens throughout the book, honestly -- is that we're learning so much more about what the wizarding world can look like. We've learned about jobs that people can have and some of them are kind of scary-sounding like that, and we also learned that there's wizards who work from the Ministry and literally their job is to stand there and check people in as they come in. There's all kinds of walks of life, which is really fun, and these poor Ministry people who are running around trying to keep everybody in line are haggard. I can understand it. It reminds me of.... Imagine the people at Comic-Con who have to go around and rein everybody in, rein in the fans. "Look, I know you're

having fun. You can't do that here." Okay, there's a couple of things that happened here. One, let's go back a few pages. When we go by the Bulgarian tents, we get introduced to Viktor Krum with all these posters of him and he's all scowling in the posters and all. There's this little interesting moment where Hermione looks at him and basically says he looks really grumpy, and Ron's immediate response is, "Why are you looking... What?! Who cares what he looks like? What matters is that he plays Quidditch really well," and I was like, "Oh, wow." The reaction of a non-sports fan... This is me all the time as a non-sports fan. I'm like, "I don't know how to judge this person. I don't know what they do well. What else can I look at? I can look at their face." Also, when there's a little bit of... We know what happens with Hermione and Krum later, but it's very interesting that he's introduced as this celebrity, this world-famous Quidditch player; then, later on, he ends up being basically a student at Hogwarts for a year and they all get a chance to know him, especially Hermione. That's wild to me. It's such an interesting introduction for this character.

Lorrie: Actually, I find both of those approaches super useful for how to engage as fans. When you get a sports star, their looks and their personality do come into play with how people look at them and think of them and identify with them. You can get lots of different athletes who have very, very good records, but why are some beloved and some not? Hermione's reaction does figure into it.

JC: And then we have this moment (that reads totally different to me now) of old Archie standing there, getting water in his flowery housedress. There's a lot of things you could say here. There's the obvious one about how he's wearing a woman's dress and this wizard is trying to convince him that he can't do that, and he's like, "Why can't I do that? I bought it. It's mine. This is comfortable. It's what I want to wear." I don't even know where to start with that and this author.

Lorrie: Right. Archie's totally making sense here.

JC: Yeah. Yeah, of course. And the funny bit where he's like, "I like a nice breeze around my privates." It's comfortable! Anyway, there's all that happening, but then there's another layer of it that always made me wonder: what do wizards actually wear? This is a question that I think fandom actually talked about a lot, too. It's like the kilt question: what do they wear under their robes? There's been a lot of answers to that, so that's my question about this scene: is it normal for wizards of whatever genders to go around wearing pants? Is that just not normal, or is this just Archie? Archie's like, "No, I don't like wearing them. I'm not going to wear them." Yeah. It raises some questions, because we don't hear it a lot.

Lorrie: Or has there been a shift in generations?

JC: Right, yeah. A generational shift where people above a certain age still wear traditional clothing in traditional ways. Yeah.

Lorrie: Bloomers.

JC: But I do love the detail that when he says that, Hermione loses her shit and has to actually get out of the line for a while because that's very funny. I think that's very funny. This little girl, whose closest friends are boys... I'm sure it's not the first time she's heard this kind of thing, but to hear it from an adult is different and it's so funny.

Lorrie: Yeah, and an old guy who cannot be reasoned with.

JC: Yeah, that's amazing. There's a lot of that.

Lorrie: Yeah. It's nice, the takeaway. Some people think that fitting in is the most important overriding concern and other people just know. "According to my values and boundaries, no."

JC: Archie walks away with no pants. Archie's like, "No, I'm not wearing the pants. Make me." Yeah, yeah. On the way back, we see a few more folks from school; we see Cho again and we get a first hint of Harry's crush on her. He reacts to her in a way that Ron notices.

Lorrie: Yes. Puberty starting here.

JC: Exactly. In an even bigger way in the next chapter, but we'll get there. Let's see. Oh, and then we have a bit where Ron confirms that there are other wizarding schools around the world; Harry looks around and he's like, 'I'm the only one who didn't know,' and then he feels dumb that he never even thought about this before. But also, I think it's fun because probably the readers... There are many readers -- not all but some readers -- who that's probably the first time they realize, 'Oh, it's not just Hogwarts.' I like that detail, too.

Lorrie: Ludo Bagman.

JC: Now, after all of this excitement, we go back to the tent where Mr. Weasley is trying and failing to start a fire because he strikes the matches and he just stares at them and finds them fascinating, which is really funny honestly. Light a match. "Oooh... ow, ow!" Then light a match. "Oooh... ow, ow!"

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Hermione's like, "Let me do this for you. Come here." Yeah.

Lorrie: So this is not urban legend; Muggles really do this all the time. Ludo Bagman, who's kind of a despicable clown and unbearable... Should he be gambling on an event he's organizing? Just saying.

JC: Oh, my God, Ludo Bagman. He's really well drawn as a character. It's the aging sports guy who still thinks of himself as... He's wearing his old Quidditch robes, even though they don't fit. Oh, my God. The kind of guy who would have a lot of plastic surgery done and it would look bad, if you like that...

Lorrie: Oh, yuck.

JC: But he's got this job as the Head of Magical Sports, and he's got this job not on his ability to do anything, but just on charisma alone and his fame.

Lorrie: Also, he likes it, though. He enjoys it, and that's the one thing that makes him good at his job, unlike the Ministry wizards who have this expression, "I can't believe I'm stamping people in. I really want to go back to the office." He just wants to keep doing this forever, and that's good. That's a good fit.

JC: However, you get the sense that he doesn't actually do much. He's like a figurehead, especially when the other wizards come in and it looks like they're exhausted from doing all this stuff. He's like, "No, this is easy. All I have to do is hang out here," and they're like, 'Oh, my God.' He's just laying back and enjoying it, and everybody else is like working their asses off to make sure that nothing bad happens. I find that very familiar. He's going around and placing bets with everyone, which is highly not okay, but what's fascinating here is that Fred and George

make this very specific bet that they end up actually getting, which is that Ireland will win but Krum will get the Snitch. Wow. That's really specific, and... Huh. And they bet all their savings.

Lorrie: I love it.

JC: It's amazing. Yeah.

Lorrie: Yes. I love it because that's iconic now, when you say so-and-so will win but an individual will get the Snitch. In figure skating, people say that: when there's some event where it's obvious who's going to win, but there's some rising star who's pushing the envelope technically in some area or who can't possibly win but racks up the highest score in something or another and is going to make all the highlight reels, is the thing that everyone's there for, the thing that people will remember.

JC: And that's another example of how this series is part of our culture.

Lorrie: That specific setup -- Ireland wins but Krum gets the Snitch -- it's useful and it's original. There are, in fact, situations where that's the perfect metaphor.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: I like it.

JC: Yeah, that's so interesting. We also learn that Mr. Crouch can speak over two hundred languages. Wow! Talk about being a polyglot. That's incredible. Percy has been going on and on about how amazing Mr. Crouch is, and it's like, okay, is Percy just blowing smoke up our asses here? No, Mr. Crouch is probably actually that incredible.

Lorrie: He is that incredible. He's actually a genius.

JC: Yeah. And the fact that he comes in and he looks so much like a Muggle that Harry's like, 'Yeah, even Mr. Dursley would not suspect anything of this guy.'

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: 'He knows what he's doing.' Very interesting.

Lorrie: And that makes so much sense, that somebody who knows that many languages knows how to dress for different cultures.

JC: For sure.

Lorrie: Oh, but then there was this bizarre anachronism.

JC: I know what you're talking about. Yes, I have a note about it.

Lorrie: Yes! Harry thinks it looks like he trims his mustache with a slide rule. Oh, really?

JC: And I had this moment of okay, Harry is a kid. Okay, Harry is technically ten years younger than me, which is wild to think about. As a fictional character, he was born in 1981. He is ten years younger than me. Okay, I did not know what a slide rule was growing up because they were already obsolete. No one uses them anymore.

Lorrie: Yeah. They were vintage.

JC: How does Harry know what a slide rule is? I taught high school around the time that this book is set. The kids didn't know what a slide rule was, so I'm like, 'Where is that coming from?' It felt like a little bleed-out of the author.

Lorrie: But I love it.

JC: But also, how would you even use a slide rule to trim a mustache? It makes no sense.

Lorrie: No, exactly. Exactly.

JC: But yeah, it felt like it was the author showing her age or something. I don't know.

Lorrie: I did know, as a child, what a slide rule was because it was taught as this neat thing that people used to use. And look, you can make one! It's not that you would use it to trim your mustache; honestly, if you're going to use a ruler to trim your mustache, just get a regular one. You don't need a slide rule.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: But it does call up a certain kind of old-fashioned fussiness.

JC: For sure. Yeah, and a certain 1950s, 1960s style of nerd with the pocket protector and the horn-rimmed glasses.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And the buttoned-up shirt and working for NASA. It calls up that image, too. It does actually do some work to create an image.

Lorrie: Yeah. It does, and that's what makes it such a standout for me: it's so very wrong, and yet it gives you the exact era that Crouch came from and how he got to be so intimidating and the degree of precision in his life. 'Well, why was he using a slide rule?' 'I don't know. It was the first thing that came to hand.'

JC: He just had one lying around.

Lorrie: Of course he's got a bunch of slide rules.

JC: Hey, maybe magical ones work a little differently.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: I don't really know how a slide rule works, which makes no sense because I have a PhD in math, and you would think at some point I would have figured out how to use a slide rule and it just never happened.

Lorrie: I will tell you that I learned how one works in third grade, and it's totally something that a third grader can grasp instantly. It's charming and fun, and you can make them yourself with little bits of paper and a pencil. You should totally do it, and they're adorable.

JC: Oh, my gosh. I'm sure that there are YouTube videos and perhaps even TikToks out there that would explain this to me very quickly. I would just need to go look. I know it has something to do with logarithms. That's all I remember.

Lorrie: It's super fun. It's charming. In my husband's office next door to where I'm recording right now, he has tenderly displayed a slide rule on his wall.

JC: Wow!

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Wow.

Lorrie: I'll take a picture of it, all right.

JC: Slide rule! All right.

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: And then the payoff of this moment is incredible: where Mr. Crouch calls Percy 'Weatherby'. It's perfect! "Thank you, Weatherby."

Lorrie: In front of his whole family. Yep.

JC: In front of his whole family; he spent the whole summer talking about Mr. Crouch, and Mr. Crouch doesn't know his name. It's amazing.

Lorrie: Oh, my God, so awful.

JC: Oh, my God, Fred and George have been given a gift here.

Lorrie: Oh, this is the best thing that's ever happened to them. I love that Barty Crouch's characterization is so on point, because he's so impatient with everybody. He's not enjoying this. Every time Ludo Bagman is being an idiot, he feels so stressed about it. And the way that he doesn't drink the tea... Ouch. The title of this chapter... Yep. We get these amazing minor characters.

JC: Who are the opposite of each other. That's amazing.

Lorrie: Yeah, and they have to work together. Ugh.

JC: Right. Exactly. That's so interesting. This is a question I had for you: would Snape like Mr. Crouch? Would Snape and Crouch get along? Would Snape look at Barty Crouch and Ludo Bagman and go, 'That one's an idiot. This guy, though...'. Would there be a measure of respect there or something is my thought.

Lorrie: Well, I think there might be. Hmm. We'll find out later that Barty Crouch has a rigid aspect to his moral code that is really at odds with people like Snape and anybody who's gray. We know that this series is about people who are half-bloods or morally gray, or people who have compromised their souls and then have to integrate them later with remorse. That is the emotional path that this very, very long saga takes, and Barty Crouch's rigidity actually contributes to some of the problem. Far from helping. He's extremely rules-oriented, and we see that with the flying carpet conversation here. The detail that flying carpets can be classified as a family vehicle is completely funny.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: That gets me every time.

JC: Oh, man. Yeah, I have feelings about the flying carpets being banned. I have feelings about it.

Lorrie: An Axminster.

JC: It feels very racist in a very British way.

Lorrie: Yeah. Right.

JC: Right? You're thinking you could put your whole family on one of these.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Otherwise, people have to...

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: How do you travel with small children? It'd be really hard to put them on brooms. Teaching small kids how to use Floo powder? Harry had trouble the first time and he was twelve. How are you supposed to travel with small children? The idea of a flying carpet that's not an option anymore but it used to be... Oh, my God. It sounds like it used to be a station wagon kind of deal.

Lorrie: Yeah. But then he hastily says that, of course, this was before they were outlawed. He really wants to make sure that nobody thinks his family would ever break the law.

JC: Would've had an illegal flying carpet.

Lorrie: Yeah. He's rigid to a fault.

JC: Not like the Weasleys, who had an illegal flying car.

Lorrie: Oh, shoot! Yes. Of course, the Axminster would have cost ten Weasley cars. Yeah, Ron being sensitive about not having enough money... That becomes much more acute in this volume; we see it when he has saved up a lot for his Quidditch merch and then runs out of money.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: And does not feel okay about it. He feels pretty crappy.

JC: The merch buying is fun, though. Okay, I recently went to my first K-pop concert and I have this... Right? This is making me think of it, too, with all the things that people wear and the... oh, my God, all the merch that's available. I know this is a sporting event and it has its own kind of culture, but it made me think a little bit about the kinds of merch both available and fan-made that one can find at a K-pop concert, so yeah. I also love this little detail that the Ministry at the end has basically given up on trying to hide all the magic. They're like, "Oh, God." Yeah, that's great, too.

Lorrie: I love that.

JC: Because that also feels very real.

Lorrie: Yeah. As things go on. That is so real. At some point, you just give up and momentum... Momentum's a thing.

JC: Yeah, for sure.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Yeah. And then, of course, before we get to that part, Ludo Bagman also is hinting that something big is going to happen at Hogwarts this year, and everyone else is trying to... or at least Crouch and Percy later are trying to shut it down. "Oh, we can't..."

Lorrie: "No."

JC: "You can't disclose that. It's still top secret." But Ludo Bagman is like, "Eh, the kids are going to know. It's going to be great. Hint hint."

Lorrie: Ugh, the weak link. The weak link in every connection.

JC: Yeah. Another theme to this chapter is people recognizing Harry and people using Harry to show off. The kids are like, "Oh, parents, meet Harry Potter." In the next chapter, too, Harry, as he often is, being used as a prop by important people.

Lorrie: Yeah. That's something that, by this point, the author would have experienced.

JC: Yeah. Yeah, definitely. And they're on their way to finally see the Quidditch World Cup.

Lorrie: Yeah. The chapter ends, and there's the sound of a gong and the lights blaze on in colors. That's exciting.

JC: Yeah. It feels exciting reading it. Everyone's like, "Here we go!" and everyone's funneling down the path. "Let's go. It's time!" Yeah.

Lorrie: "Okay, okay!" Yeah. "Oh, my God!"

JC: That's cool.

Lorrie: "It's happening, it's happening!"

JC: The Quidditch World Cup.

Lorrie: That'll be the next chapter, the Quidditch World Cup.

JC: Let's do it.

Lorrie: Let's head on over! I'll talk to you there.

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.