



## Transcript

### Episode 4.8

#### Book 4, Chapter 8: The Quidditch World Cup

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 Eight: The Quidditch World Cup.

Lorrie: The Quidditch World Cup. We get to see Quidditch played at the highest level with international teams and rules and mascots. You ready for this?

JC: Yes. Yes, yes. Yeah, this is so interesting. First of all, it made me think about the way that sports tournaments are played, where usually you have one city or a few cities where it's all happening regionally. It's so interesting to me that they built this one stadium just for the final. At least, that's my impression.

Lorrie: A hundred thousand people. Yeah.

JC: That seats a hundred thousand people, and it's completely hidden from Muggles; they built it for this one day. The description of it having immense gold walls stood out to me, too.

Lorrie: And rich purple carpet.

JC: Yeah. How much did this cost?

Lorrie: Yeah!

JC: Oh, my God! We were talking about the Olympics in the last few episodes because we've recently come out of the Olympics, and it costs a lot for a city to host them and to build all these facilities. They build them with an eye toward reusing them in the future, but you get the sense that when this game is over -- when this match is over -- this is just going to get torn down because the Muggles can't find it. All this expense for this one match, which is over pretty quickly. Wow.

Lorrie: We don't know that it gets torn down. It might get stored.

JC: Oh, that's interesting. Yeah, in one of these alternate, little dimension-pocket things.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: True.

Lorrie: Because this actually reminded me of one of my stories from when I used to be in figure skating fandom. This cracked me up so much. In I think it was 2000, the world championships were supposed to be in Brisbane, Australia. All the contracts were signed and everybody was set to go to Australia to do this, and then very shortly before, they got taken away from Australia and this was a scandal. They shouldn't have; they broke contracts to do this, and they were relocated to Nice in France instead. The true reason -- and I'm not sure how public this was, because it was so Muggle and embarrassing. The true reason is that there's a particular scoreboard, a giant electronic scoreboard, that had to be used for the world championships, and it's too big to just conveniently fly places. It has to be moved by ship, and it couldn't get to Australia in time from wherever they kept it, which I don't know. Maybe they keep it in Lausanne, where a lot of international sports keep their things, but they couldn't get it to Australia -- physically on the ship -- in time for the world championships, so they had to do it in Europe.

JC: That must have made the people in Brisbane, who had spent all that time working on that project, so angry. Wow.

Lorrie: I'm really not sure, because as just a fan, all we knew was that this bizarre thing was happening and it was against all the bylaws. There was only so public the international organization wanted to go about all the details of this very embarrassing and expensive decision, but when I heard what it was, oh, my God... That's just the kind of thing that really would happen.

JC: Oh, my gosh. Wow. Someone didn't plan ahead enough to get the scoreboard there, and then when they went to do it, it was too late. Then they had to...

Lorrie: Well, the people who do things -- like site visits and contracts, and working with local organizing committees -- they are not the same people as the ones who set up billboards and displays and scoreboards and ice machines and whatever.

JC: Right.

Lorrie: It's such a huge undertaking.

JC: Oh, my God, it is. And that brings me back to thinking about what it took to set this up.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: It's very interesting that all this is happening, and at the same time Voldemort is slowly coming back to power.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And he's able to hide in all this international travel, with the exception of that one dream that Harry had. No one knows except for Wormtail... Yeah, there's a lot going on.

Lorrie: Yeah. Voldy's following this, too. He's saying, "We can't do this until after the Quidditch World Cup."

JC: Exactly.

Lorrie: He's actually following along.

JC: Which is amazing. It's also interesting to me that this stadium is so huge and how long it takes to get a hundred thousand people in and out of a building.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Oh, my God. Then, it's also funny that they have these really great seats, except they have to climb all the way to the top of the stairs to get to them.

Lorrie: But they're incredible seats.

JC: Yeah, they are really great.

Lorrie: Harry... He's in a box at the highest point of this hundred thousand-person stadium and he's halfway between the goal posts. Amazing.

JC: Right, yeah, with the commentators and the Minister for Magic.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Wow.

Lorrie: Yeah, yeah.

JC: Wow. Yeah, they walk in and it's like, 'Oh, this is really good. Okay. That's pretty cool.'

Lorrie: It does actually give you some sense of how high up and influential Mr. Weasley is, or could be if he agreed to play the game and take bribes.

JC: Right, yeah.

Lorrie: He knows a lot of really important people. If he just winked at the rules like the rest of them, he and his family could be living much better.

JC: That's an interesting point.

Lorrie: And he's just too honest. When we see Ludo Bagman being corrupt right in front of his face, then you can see why Arthur Weasley would say, "Yuck. No, I'm not going to be like Lucius Malfoy, making giant donations. No."

JC: For sure. I guess we get into this box... I'd forgotten -- completely forgotten about this -- that we get to meet another house-elf.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And we get an update on Dobby, but we also learn more about house-elves. I remember reading this for the first time and being completely shocked by it, because when we first met Dobby, Dobby was the only house-elf that we had met -- that Harry had met -- and so we thought this is what house-elves are like. It's a bit of a shock to learn that Dobby is not a normal house-elf.

Lorrie: No. He's an outlier.

JC: He's an outlier, exactly. And that... yeah. This was weird to read, because the other thing that was sticking out to me was the last time we talked about Dobby, I think. This has been a

while back now that you had pointed out the use of the word 'brown' in a sentence about an enslaved creature. Winky's eyes were mentioned as 'big and brown' several times, which is not quite the same thing, but it just reminded me of that earlier conversation that we'd had. Yeah.

Lorrie: Winky is one of the most painful characters for me in the series. She's a genuinely tragic figure. Ouch. Actually, I get more of a sense of her as a serving class Brit that's white. That's the feeling I'm getting from her. She and the house-elves that she's typical of... It seems like they're very conservative and very proud. They are a subservient class, so they've developed for their own pride very strong mores and traditions which might not work in their favor, but what they're based on is bonds of affection. That turns out to be really, really important. We also know that Dobby is in an unusually abusive situation, and that doesn't seem to be Winky's working conditions at all. I don't think she's being threatened and beaten like that, but she knows Dobby, so we get this glimpse into house-elf networks. After we've been looking at all this international trade and different schools, the house-elf network is just as convoluted. Then when she is mortified because Dobby wants to be paid for his work, okay, more cross-cultural nuances that are just almost impossible to understand. Whatever that is, it means something really powerful for house-elves. Oh, and the in-group/out-group feeling when she says, "You goes racketing around like this, Dobby, I says, and the next thing I hear you's up in front of the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures, like some common goblin." Wait, what?

JC: "Common goblin."

Lorrie: Okay. These creatures have some sort of really strong culture and pride that we don't know.

JC: It's also interesting that we don't know whose family she's part of at this point, and I remembered that the Malfoys were going to show up. At first, I thought, 'Oh, is this another of the Malfoys' house-elves, or does the family only have one, even a family as wealthy as the Malfoys? I don't know.' But she turns out not to be the Malfoys' house-elf, which is very interesting, because then it applies a lot more like you're saying about the way that house-elves know each other and the kind of networks they have and the kind of information they might pass along to each other. It opens up some really interesting ideas. When do they get together and communicate to each other?

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: How does that work? When would they run into each other?

Lorrie: Yeah. What kind of gossip do they trade?

JC: Is information a currency in their world? Uh, let's see what else is happening. Oh, I have a note about the Omnioculars, which is a fun bit of magical technology. Harry paid ten Galleons apiece for these, which is a lot of money.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: But they are a pretty awesome bit of technology. Wow! They're like a little recording device; you can slow things down and watch replays. It's like watching the game on your phone while you're sitting in the stadium, is the sense I'm getting, even though that wasn't a thing when this book was written.

Lorrie: And I like that there's a technical glitch. Harry is mad at himself because he forgot how to use this technology, and he's behind on the game. Yeah.

JC: He's behind on the game, which is a thing that happens to him. It's like pausing the DVR or whatever while you're watching a game to go back, and you have your phone in your hand on Twitter. It's like, 'Oh, wait. What? They scored? No! Wait, I missed it!' Yeah. Spoiler alert! Spoilers. I also love the fact that when they're first fooling around with these, Ron's first use of them is to zoom in on somebody picking their nose and replay it over and over, which is a very middle-school boy thing to do. Then they have other guests arriving in this box: the Bulgarian Minister for Magic, who is hilarious...

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And knows who Harry is. Oh, my God. We knew that everybody in Britain knew who Harry was. Turns out Harry is internationally famous. What? Wow.

Lorrie: I can see how the Malfoys would be really offended. They'd gotten to the top box, and then look at the riff-raff that are here.

JC: Look at who else is here.

Lorrie: Makes me wonder: do they not want these seats anymore, now that Hermione is polluting them?

JC: Oh. Oh, I love the moment when Hermione does not back down from Lucius Malfoy's stare. She's affected, but she doesn't look away.

Lorrie: 'What are you going to do about it?'

JC: 'Nope. I deserve to be here.' Exactly, in front of all these people.

Lorrie: Ouch.

JC: Yeah, because she knows. She knows exactly what Lucius Malfoy thinks of her. Yeah. We don't hear much from Draco in this scene. He mostly just looks down his nose at everyone and then goes and sits in between his parents, and that's all we hear. But we get our first introduction to Narcissa here, too, and she's described as someone who might be beautiful except that she looks like she smelled something very bad. That's how Petunia was described to us, right?

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: She's like a glammed-up version of Petunia in some ways, is what Harry's looking at her as, which is giving us a lot of messages about how she might be operating in the world.

Lorrie: I really felt it when Percy had jealousy of Harry being greeted by Fudge. Oh, yeah.

JC: Right.

Lorrie: Nope.

JC: Again, yeah. Harry did not ask for any of this. But we have... ugh. Another thing that we have here: in the lead-up to the game, we're getting lots of little world building. I love all the advertisements that they're seeing on the screen, and the way that it looks like someone is

writing on it and then erasing it and then writing on it again, which is probably exactly what's happening; there's probably a spell. Then we see the *Sonorus* charm that Ludo Bagman uses to commentate on the game.

Lorrie: Oh, my gosh.

JC: They don't have electricity. I had to remember it. Everything is through magic. If they have light shining down on the pitch... I don't remember what time of day it is. It's at night, right?

Lorrie: It's got to be at night, because the lanterns blaze on to tell people that it's starting.

JC: Right. Everything is happening through magic. There's no electricity, but yet somehow the magic is doing things that are exactly what you would see in the Muggle world. Did they evolve separately in the same direction because this is how these events would work? What's the interplay? We have so many wizards in the series who just know very little about the Muggle world. 'What is football like?' Stuff like that. 'How does a car go?' But yet, they have all these things in their world that are very, very, very similar.

Lorrie: But specialized. Yeah.

JC: From a world-building perspective, I'm like, 'How did that happen? How did this develop? Oh.'

Lorrie: It does make me respect our Muggle electric arenas more. 'Wait, how did we do that?'

JC: Yeah, for sure.

Lorrie: I don't personally know. Personally, I had nothing to do with it. I'm just sitting here acting like I get some credit for it.

JC: Right, exactly. Arenas go back a really long way in human history, of course. It's not like they were invented in the 20th century. You have to think, 'Oh, okay, then how did all this work thousands of years ago, when people were still going to sporting events and buying snacks and cheering for their favorites?' Yeah, it's not that uncommon. Anyway, I love the advertisements; they're all very funny. My favorite one is "Bertie Bott's Every Flavor Beans - A Risk With Every Mouthful," which is just... What a great... Wow! How interesting, right? Yeah. Then we have the introduction of the *Sonorus* charm, which again, how do you commentate on a game if you don't have electricity? Somehow, this charm amplifies your voice to an entire stadium of a hundred thousand people, depending on how you cast it. You'd have to be careful, because if you are commentating normally, you can turn the mic on and off, and there have been incidents where people didn't turn the mic off.

Lorrie: Hot mics. Oh!

JC: Your hot mic incident. In this one, though, you have to uncast and cast a spell. I was like, 'Wow.' You couldn't just turn and whisper to somebody. No. You're on.

Lorrie: Oh, this is bringing me back so much to figure skating, because I do know people who do the announcing at the events. There is training and they actually have headsets, where what you hear from them is just the tip of the iceberg, and then there's people talking about different cues and directions. For example (this is a common complaint): when you're watching skating or some other sport on TV, and there's some suspenseful moment and the commentator won't shut

up about something totally trivial. That is because there's a producer in their ear saying, "We can't have silence." You have to make something -- not make something up -- but from the fact sheet that you have, you have to say something, so it's not the commentator's decision, although they're the ones that get blamed for it.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: There's quite a lot of coordination going on behind the scenes, so when Ludo Bagman does *Sonorus* and *Quietus* on his voice, it seems to me like, 'Oh, no, he's well trained. He knows exactly what he's doing.'

JC: For sure, in the way that a lot of former professional athletes will go into this kind of work. They'll go into sports journalism.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: It's very common, particularly for the good-looking ones.

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: We're getting back down to the pretty privilege that's happening here, but really good-looking athletes are going to get the advertising deals while they're competing, and then they are the ones who have the best chance of becoming commentators later and continue to make big bucks. Ludo Bagman's in that category, for sure.

Lorrie: Popular.

JC: Not that it doesn't require skills, because he absolutely has to have skills, but not everybody gets to do it.

Lorrie: He does like show business.

JC: Yeah, clearly.

Lorrie: Speaking of show business...

JC: Speaking of show business.

Lorrie: Mascots. Oh, my God! What did you think?

JC: When it said mascots, and it said, "Oh, they'll parade out like creatures from blah blah blah blah," I don't know what I expected. I remember the first time I read this, going, 'What?!' The whole concept of veela is wild, because it seems like that shouldn't be allowed. You literally have these women who... what is it? Except for the reference to sirens, I'm not sure why you're putting your fingers in your ears when all they're doing is dancing; it seems like you would have to look away. I don't know. However it works, putting your fingers in your ears doesn't have to ward it off. You have a sports event where a majority of the players on both teams are male; it seems you have to be attracted to women for this to work on you. It's just odd that you would manipulate people's sexual attraction in this way. However, as someone who, when I was in undergrad... I have a degree in anthropology in addition to the degree in math, because I couldn't decide and I took too many classes.

Lorrie: I keep forgetting that.

JC: Yeah. I took too many classes, and at the end I was like, 'I can just get two degrees,' so I did the paperwork for both. This is back when college was cheaper and you could just go for extra years. But I did an independent study project on the depiction of women in advertising throughout the years, and it was the whole 20th century. I went back and I looked at how women were depicted in advertising early on like all the way up through, and the ways that women were depicted violently, the way that sex was used. One of the conclusions of my paper -- which I should have gotten published and I never did; oh, because my life got busy. However, the conclusion was that images of women in advertising were more violent in magazines marketed to women than they were to men.

Lorrie: Ooh! Ouch.

JC: Which is very interesting. It was by a significant margin, so then my premise was women are being given this message on purpose. Putting the Veela out there is within the realm of using sex to sell things or to influence things. It shouldn't be a surprise, and it's not that different from putting cheerleaders in little tiny costumes and having them dance provocatively on the sidelines, like the Dallas Cowboys cheerleaders -- I live in Texas, it's a big thing -- or even going to high school football games and having a drill team come out and do their little dances, and they all have the same uniform. Yeah.

Lorrie: To me, that's the exact parallel. What shocked me once: many years ago, I went to a car convention.

JC: Car shows.

Lorrie: It was just for people who like cars, and there was a wet t-shirt contest. Why? What does that have to do with cars? I don't know. What do cheerleaders.... It's this hyped-up, competitive public arena, and you add this bit of libido and sexualization of women into it. The uneasiness of it is that it's that particular half-breed image of the mythological monster (half-woman, half-animal harpy) that is supernaturally, sexually attractive and also supernaturally horrifying and can kill you. It's about this sexual anxiety. I also liked the description of the veela. Their skin shines "moon-bright" and their hair fans out, with or without a breeze. I thought, 'Oh, it's like K-pop girl groups.'

JC: Yeah. Or like Beyonce. Yeah.

Lorrie: That's exactly what they're... Yeah, that's what they're going for, is this hyper-real fantasy. It's kind of queasy, but it's part of this whole sporting atmosphere, which is part of why I'm not a sports person, because the whole thing makes me just go, "Ugh." You see Hermione having that response.

JC: Right, that response to it, too. The only time in my life I've been a sports fan for real was I was really into hockey for a while. What is interesting is that there's not -- at least like most hockey games I went to -- there's not that same thing. There's not girls that go out on the ice. Well, there are girls who... Okay, there are ice girls. I take it back. There are the girls who've got to shovel up all the shavings and, depending on the league and the team, sometimes they're in booty shorts when they do it.

Lorrie: Oh, geez.



JC: But not always. In the minor leagues, they're just out there in their sweats or whatever and they're just cleaning up the ice. Anyway... But there's not that. Everyone in the place is wearing jerseys and stuff, but it still feels very... As a woman, I still always felt a little uncomfortable in those arenas. Always. I stopped going after an incident, where there was a guy a few rows behind me who kept heckling a player in a very sexist and homophobic way. It was so awful, and I was sitting next to my kid who was ten at the time. I finally turned around and told the guy to shut up. I was like, "You can't do that." I looked around and I was getting dirty looks from the women around me, who were looking at me like, 'Who are you to say that that's sexist and not appropriate?'

Lorrie: Wow.

JC: And I thought, 'Wow. This is shitty.' I feel for Hermione here. She's looking around and she's seeing her friends drooling and about to climb over the barrier, and she's just like, 'Oh, my God, look at this. This is crazy.' Even Mr. Weasley is like, 'I know what's going on here.' Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah. But the same thing happened to Hermione two years earlier with Gilderoy Lockhart.

JC: True.

Lorrie: Part of this is that she's having that thing where girls mature faster than boys -- plus she's actually older than Ron and Harry -- where the same foolishness that she had then, they're going through now. But this brings up so many uneasy things, because it's this assumed universal response from men. It's assumed heterosexuality, where if you were one of these boys and you might not know exactly what your sexual orientation is but you know that you're not responding in this way, but all the other boys and men are and they're sharing this... Also, it's so weirdly shameful and uncontrollable; even though they're all enjoying it, they're also laughing at each other.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah. It's really like playing with something dangerous, so I could imagine a boy sitting there, thinking, 'I have to act like the same thing is happening to me, even though it's not.'

JC: Or on the other end of it, what if you're a girl and they're affecting you in that way, and all the other girls are laughing and pointing at the boys, but you're --

Lorrie: And you're like, 'Uh, what does this mean?' Yes.

JC: Yeah. Right.

Lorrie: I think for me, Hermione being unimpressed is a lot more advanced than I would have been. I would have been so painfully, sadly jealous and threatened. 'Oh, is that what people are finding attractive? I know I can't ever be that.' That would have hurt, especially at that age.

JC: Yeah. But then it turns out that it's an act, which beauty always is.

Lorrie: They're harpies. Yeah.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: And yet people will respond to them knowing that, every time.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: And the flip side of it is so dull and virtuous and disappointing. 'Well, you'll never be as beautiful as a veela, but at least you're not going to turn into a monster that will tear people apart and kill them. All right, we'll settle for you.'

JC: True. True.

Lorrie: Oh, the sexual politics there... It's competitive in a way that was painful and depressing to me. If I hadn't been so very much on the losing end of that, would it have been as painful? Well, it doesn't sound like any woman -- real woman -- can come out on the winning end of that.

JC: Right.

Lorrie: So here's a related question. Do you relate to this urge that the author writes into Harry and Ron and into a lot of the guys here, where when they are dazzled by veela, the first thing they want to do is to do something impressive to get their attention?

JC: I have no idea. That's weird. I don't know.

Lorrie: That falls flat to me.

JC: Completely.

Lorrie: And I don't know if it's because I don't share that response or because the author is reaching. I don't know.

JC: Yeah, that's a good question. It doesn't feel right to me, but I don't know.

Lorrie: That always puzzled me.

JC: I don't know. I've always been freaked out by that. There's that stereotype of boys who do stupid things to get girls' attention. Girls have their own ways of doing that, but I was never part of that at that age, so it's alienating to me to read it because I did not have that feeling about the world. It's a little different from your reaction because I didn't want it. I did not want people to look at me. I don't know. I didn't want to participate in that, putting yourself on display and getting that kind of attention. I didn't want that, so it was just more like 'Eh. What's happening here?'

Lorrie: I didn't necessarily want it, but it was really painful to know that if I did, I would lose that badly.

JC: Oh, I see what you mean.

Lorrie: I didn't know that I was in this competition, and here I was already losing it. I didn't sign up for this.

JC: Already losing it, right. Yeah. I do wonder how much of that is accurate. I don't even know. Obviously, it's an over-the-top exaggeration of an adolescent boy. It's depicted as an adolescent reaction.

Lorrie: Except that the Quidditch referee does it, too.

JC: Yeah, the referee does it, too, which is interesting. But with Arthur Weasley, there's this feeling of oh, if you're really in control of yourself, then this isn't going to... you can shake this off or whatever. There's a bit of that feeling in there, too, which then makes that happening to the referee take on some other connotations, which are uncomfortable, certainly.

Lorrie: It does make me wonder why humans -- why uncontrollable and unrequited desire -- why that's such a shameful thing for whatever age.

JC: Yeah, that's interesting.

Lorrie: Yeah, just how uncontrollable it is and that this has been characterized into a team mascot that they bring because this is an ungovernable energy that's affiliated with this kind of large, mass exciting event. It reminds me of the explanation that the author gave years ago for why Snape joined the Death Eaters, an explanation that makes no sense (but I can see where she's going with it): he wanted to do something impressive to look good to Lily. He wanted to make himself impressive. Okay, by joining a cult that's trying to wipe her out?

JC: Yeah, that doesn't seem to make sense, but okay.

Lorrie: But yeah, trying to act important. When we're seeing it in this context of who's in the Top Box, who gets to talk to Ministry officials -- who makes Arthur Weasley make faces, who makes Lucius Malfoy make faces -- it's all jockeying for position in the same way.

JC: True. Another thing that I find uncomfortable about the veela is that it's weaponizing sexuality, but in a way that makes it the women's fault. It's like they're the monsters who are trying to lure these innocent young men in. It's like female sexuality is something to be guarded against and suppressed, so it's feeding into that.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Which is interesting.

Lorrie: Yeah. Harpies are a sexist phenomenon; it's a no-win if you're a woman.

JC: Yeah. Yeah.

Lorrie: I was very relieved and happy when the *Fantastic Beasts* movies came out. The first one showed us Queenie Goldstein, who is beautiful like a veela but it's entirely positive; she does have this power to make people hopelessly attracted to her, but it's shown as a human thing. It's not used to marginalize her or dehumanize her.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: And I thought that was something that's actually lacking in this children's series: women who are that beautiful from that perspective.

JC: Yeah, that's true.

Lorrie: Yeah. There's a little bit of beauty-shaming here.

JC: Yeah, for sure. Okay, while we're on the topic of things that are sexist in all this... This game quickly turns violent, as professional contact sports do. But it's interesting to me that there are women professional players on these teams, and they are in there getting the crap kicked out of them just like all the men are. I cannot not go back to thinking about what just happened in the

Olympics, where the author of this series criticized, bullied, shamed, and did awful things to a woman who was also doing violent things in the context of a sport that requires violence.

Lorrie: Winning.

JC: And winning at it. Again, I couldn't not get angry at the author reading that. You wrote this.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: But it was her transphobia. Yeah. Anyway...

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: I can't... As of the point that we're recording this, the author has stopped tweeting and stopped communicating about this. There's a lawsuit in the works and we don't know how it's going to be resolved, but I brought it up again.

Lorrie: More than twenty years separate the author who is transphobic now from the author who wrote this scene. A lot of things in a person's mind can change in 20 years, not always for the better.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: The Irish mascots are leprechauns with shamrocks and rainbows and gold falling from the sky.

JC: Oh, right. We never even got past the --

Lorrie: Yeah. Irish luck and money.

JC: We haven't started the game yet.

Lorrie: But that's how it reads to me: veela are so compelling and problematic, and the leprechauns raining fake gold just doesn't compel me the same way.

JC: Yeah, that's true.

Lorrie: Although it does make that point that money and luck and greed are ungovernable impulses, like sexual attraction and like a bunch of emotions that get unleashed and played out on the field during high-level competition. But it doesn't seem to me as powerful.

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

Lorrie: I do like, though, that with the leprechauns and the veela, the author is showing us this is how wizarding cultures are interlaid over the cultures that we know as readers. You can find the equivalent magical cultures in each area by following their folklore.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: This is a good way for us to extrapolate what World War II meant in Potterverse in other countries, because we know that 1945 is a big, significant moment in wizarding history as well as human history, and the international nature of this event is like, 'Okay, they are all in Britain, but even these international wizards will have heard of Harry Potter.'

JC: Yeah. Going back to leprechauns for a second: at some point during the match, the leprechauns commentating on the match on top of Ludo Bagman is funny. There's especially this moment where they form a giant (I'm assuming) middle finger...

Lorrie: 'I'm assuming...'

JC: To the veela, and that's just really funny. This is the volume -- I think we're going to see it coming up in the next few chapters, too -- where the author starts playing with the fact that the kids are swearing and doing and saying things that don't necessarily fit into a children's book, but she writes it in a way that hints at what they're doing without making it explicit, which is really fun. I remember reading that for the first time and going, 'Oh, yeah, that's how you would do it,' and finding it really cleverly done.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: I hadn't really read a lot of YA before I read this.

Lorrie: This series actually made a much bigger category of YA than there used to be before, and directly responsible for publishers accepting manuscripts and giving contracts for YA novels because it was proving that there's money in it.

JC: Yeah. That makes sense.

Lorrie: But yeah, that's something that we come up against with this series all the time: the reminders that it was extraordinarily influential.

JC: That's true.

Lorrie: This series alone forced the *New York Times* to make whole new categories for its bestseller lists.

JC: Wow.

Lorrie: It made new and expanded hardware decisions in bookstores.

JC: Wow.

Lorrie: Yeah. The Quidditch... I love how much more advanced this Quidditch is. It says: "The speed of the players was incredible -- the Chasers were throwing the Quaffle to one another so fast that Bagman only had time to say their names." Okay, this puts Harry's skill level into perspective.

JC: Yeah. It's also interesting that Harry did not grow up watching or following Quidditch the way that Ron did, for example. He's never seen a professional Quidditch match or read anything about it, really. Probably.

Lorrie: And even if they had, watching the Chudley Cannons... The Chudley Cannons don't play this well.

JC: Right. Right, right. Yeah. This is the national team. Right. To go from his experience of Quidditch at school to suddenly the highest level you can be at... Yeah, that's pretty wild.

Lorrie: And yet he's legitimately on the same track, though. I love that Harry watches Viktor Krum doing the Wronski Feint, and you see Harry learning as he watches.

JC: Yeah! For sure.

Lorrie: We know that in future volumes, Harry totally uses everything that he's learning. He just picks it up from watching, and not everybody who watches it would have been able to do that. Harry does have a gift, but he's got a lot of training left before he can be at this level.

JC: Yeah, definitely.

Lorrie: Oh, yeah. Back to veela being a test of sexual orientation. I forgot about this. This gets addressed off-book in *Cursed Child*. It's not in the script, but in every performance I've seen of *Cursed Child*, Moaning Myrtle talks about how girls *and* boys would be in the bathroom crushing out over Cedric Diggory. "*And boys*" is not in the script, but it gets put in there, and that's part of the tension that constantly plays out between the author and her take on queerness and not only the fandom, but the co-creators. The actors and directors of *Cursed Child* are co-creating the series with her, and officially on the record, her word stays. She's not even the playwright, but she does have control over the wording of the play. I'm not sure how productions... what the agreement is -- what the actors are allowed to say, even when it's off script -- but that's something that's in every production that I know of.

JC: That's interesting. Yeah. We get to the game itself and it seems like there's a lot happening in there, but then it ends pretty quickly because the Irish score and score and score. The Bulgarians seem like they're slightly outmatched, and then we have this moment at the end where Viktor Krum, even with his face bashed in from a Bludger, catches the Snitch. He catches the Snitch at such a point where a hundred and fifty points doesn't matter; Ireland still wins and it's over. It's interesting because everyone's really excited that Ireland won, but then someone in the room says, "Why did he catch it then when he knew they were going to lose?" Harry knows. Harry instantly can say, "Well, this is why he did it." His team was going to lose anyway -- it was only going to keep getting worse -- and that gave him some dignity at the end. He was like, 'You know what? I get to decide to end this, and I'm going to do it on my own terms,' and Harry understood that. Yeah. Actually, Harry understood that not only on the level of being a Seeker, but a level of being a human being, because Harry's life is often like that. He's gotten a Bludger to the face and he's got to go and end the thing and it's not going to go well, but --

Lorrie: Yeah. This is going to teach him how to face down Voldemort at the end.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah. Will you survive, Harry? Will you win? I don't know. That's not the only goal.

JC: Yeah. Right.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: 'But I'll catch the Snitch! We may not win, but I'll catch the Snitch.' This was the time, too, that I found myself a little bored by the Quidditch. I don't know why this was, but even though it was more intense and everything, I got bored by it very quickly. I was like, 'Yeah, yeah, yeah, but what happens next, though?' I don't know why. I could feel myself being impatient for the game to be over.

Lorrie: What happens next is that we find out that the Bulgarian Minister speaks English.

JC: Oh, that's so funny. He was just pretending not to because he thought it was funny to watch Fudge try to gesture at him. Yeah, that's great. I love that.

Lorrie: And say stuff, assuming that he can't understand it. This is a joke about English speakers assuming that everyone should speak English. I love that extra canonically... Stanislav Yanevski is the actor who plays Viktor Krum, and he's one of the actors that will do fan conventions; he does the circuit. I've watched him take the main stage and give talks, and he's very good-natured about it and enjoys playing this heroic character. He's really, really funny about how Bulgarians are written in this book, where he says, "We don't talk like that." "Vell, ve fought bravely." Yeah.

JC: Oh, right, with the accent? Yeah, yeah.

Lorrie: He's very good-natured. I had a good time watching him.

JC: Aww.

Lorrie: But then I love Viktor Krum. I love how grumpy he is...

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: I love how he is graceful in some contexts and inept in others, and as we will see later in this volume, I love understanding him in context as an athlete who is from a minority, and because of his high skill is vulnerable to government exploitation, another thing that I became really familiar with as a figure skating fan.

JC: This is another thing that actually I was thinking about when you were talking about skating before: we find out later that Viktor is just a kid.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: They say, "Oh, he's eighteen."

Lorrie: Just turned eighteen.

JC: I can't remember if he's seventeen or eighteen.

Lorrie: Yep.

JC: Just turned eighteen, so he's really just a kid. He's been thrust into this incredible world of professional sports. I'm thinking about young star figure skaters who are ripped out of their ordinary lives and everything is about being the athlete, and this is true for a lot of young people who are really good at a sport. We just came out of the Olympics, obviously, so we're seeing a lot of that. It is really interesting that we're going to get to know Viktor a lot more as a human being as we go forward, but at this point he just seems like a celebrity. 'Oh, he's a star athlete.' It's interesting to look at it again, knowing more about him and realizing that this is a kid, a kid who just got his face smashed in and still has to...

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Yeah. They haul him up to the Box. They haven't wiped the blood off of him yet. The medic should be taking a look at it; they didn't even use a spell to fix his nose yet. He's just --

Lorrie: He's bleeding out all over the place.

JC: Yeah. Oh, my God, yeah. It's like with hockey. It felt a little bit like hockey in that way, where it's like no, the injuries are part of it.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: You wear those injuries with pride. Yeah. You get teeth knocked out, and you smile and show the gaps. Yeah, that kind of thing. But he's a kid. Yeah.

Lorrie: I love Viktor Krum.

JC: Okay, I'm going back to the hockey thing. It reminds me of the super young hockey star kids who come up through the system and then they're the number one draft pick; they're literally eighteen and they're on an NHL team, getting subjected to everything that that means. Then they're also the star of the team, because they're this new cute face. Yeah.

Lorrie: Right.

JC: Interesting. I had not thought about Viktor Krum as a hockey player before, but suddenly I'm like, 'Wait a minute, okay. Hmm. All right.'

Lorrie: And if you're that good at something -- if you let yourself shine fully according to your gift -- that puts you into more and more of a position to be exploited by gross people. Yeah.

JC: Yes. Speaking of hockey...

Lorrie: But on the one hand, do you want to not shine just to avoid notice? On another hand, if you are a minority -- which does make you much more vulnerable to exploitation -- this might be your and your family's ticket out.

JC: Right. Yeah. This is like... I keep saying hockey, but honestly, when the college football season started in the United States and because the NCAA rules were changed, we have kids who are getting recruited to go to major universities to get paid a lot of money. The university I teach at is a large state university in Texas. Our quarterback gets paid a million dollars a year.

Lorrie: I can't.

JC: And that's a student.

Lorrie: No. That's so awful.

JC: Right? And that money doesn't come from the university. It comes from the boosters. The boosters have decided to --

Lorrie: That's so awful.

JC: Kids are getting paid. These are 18-year-old kids, they just got out of high school, and they're getting paid professional money to basically be a professional athlete at the collegiate level. It just raises a lot of interesting stuff here. Viktor Krum is representing all of this to me now.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: But then he has to go to Hogwarts and take classes, just like the college students who are making a million bucks playing football, but they also have to get a college degree because that's ostensibly why they're there. Anyway, yeah. Viktor is more interesting to me now than he



was in the past, so yeah. Also, Fred and George just won a lot of money. What are they going to do with it?

Lorrie: They end the chapter, and they are just so clever. One amazing victory for them! Yeah. 'Put it here.'

JC: I love the image of them holding their hands out to Ludo Bagman at the end.

Lorrie: "We saw you..."

JC: "Pay up. Pay up." Yeah.

Lorrie: So this is the last gasp before things get super dark...

JC: That is true.

Lorrie: Because the next chapter is called The Dark Mark, and apparently it's the one where writing it really put the author through everything. She went through fourteen drafts of it.

JC: Wow. Okay.

Lorrie: She really sweated over this chapter, and I'm going to be prepared.

JC: Okay. I'm looking at it now. The chapters are getting a little thicker now as we're getting into the book. All right.

Lorrie: If you remember: when we started this volume and I said we'll be able to see the volume we hold in our hands... To me, I would consider it a very good, nearly final draft, but I don't think it's finished.

JC: Interesting, okay.

Lorrie: I said we would see signs of it, and I think one of the signs is the extreme unevenness of the chapter lengths and weights that we've had so far, because I think we've had a couple chapters recently where I think two of them could be blended into one, both for content and for length. Then we have The Dark Mark, where so much is about to happen, and it feels to me like an author could profitably have used another pass to balance things out, because there's just so much to juggle. So much world-building.

JC: Interesting. All right.

Lorrie: Anyway... To be fair, this is not a criticism of the author. This is an artifact of the author having a deadline and not yet shocking the industry by saying that from now on, she was going to just deliver books when they were done and never mind the deadlines.

JC: And not on your timeline. Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah. So yeah, a total mold-breaking series. Dark Mark next.

JC: The Dark Mark. Will this be our first... We've heard of Dark Marks before, right, or is this the first time? I don't remember.

Lorrie: I don't think we have.

JC: Oh, okay. All right, then. Okay. Here we go.

Lorrie: Because Harry doesn't know what it is.

JC: Wow, okay.

Lorrie: All right.

JC: Okay, looking forward to that. All right.

Lorrie: Yep.

JC: Okay.

Lorrie: Talk to you then!

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](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 at 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.