

Transcript

Episode 6.8

Book 6, Chapter 8: Snape Victorious

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 Six, Chapter Eight: Snape Victorious.

Lorrie: Snape Victorious. Tonks rescues Harry from the Hogwarts Express. Snape walks him from the school gates to the start-of-term feast. Dumbledore introduces Slughorn and announces Snape as the new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher. So when we last saw Harry, he was immobilized underneath his Invisibility Cloak on the Hogwarts Express, which was about to head back to London; Harry had a painfully broken nose and was lying there "like an absurd turtle on its back, blood dripping sickeningly into his open mouth," hating Draco Malfoy as never before.

JC: Yes.

Lorrie: That's where we open this chapter.

JC: Yeah. Having broken my nose before, the idea of lying on my back with that blood going back into my sinuses and down my throat... I'm like, 'This is not good.'

Lorrie: This is so awful.

JC: It's really awful. Yeah, yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah, and then a bunch of things keep accruing to make this almost slapstick-y. How bad can Harry's life get in this chapter? Oh, we'll just pile it on.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: It's so bad, it's funny.

JC: Oh, my gosh. I think it's interesting, a couple things here: one is that there's this entire train that is only used twice a year. It's going back to London; where do they keep it? I always just assumed -- I don't know what I assumed -- that maybe it was just the Hogwarts Express this time of year. It goes to Hogsmeade Station, so other trains come to Hogsmeade Station. Maybe it's just a regular train; they just slap the Hogwarts Express sign on it once a year.

Lorrie: That's what I figured.

JC: Yeah. But yeah, the fact that it's going back empty... It didn't get boarded by people from Hogsmeade who want to go to London. Oh, my gosh... Yeah, so it's interesting. It made me think of what's the world of that train in particular. The other thing that stands out to me about this scene is how helpless he has been made here.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: That *Petrificus Totalus* spell is really terrifying. We've seen it from book one, right?

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: We saw it cast on Neville Longbottom, but the fact that Harry could be made so vulnerable so quickly by this one spell that first-years can cast... Hermione could cast it.

Lorrie: Hermione can, anyway.

JC: Maybe not every first-year can. Wow, that's pretty powerful and pretty scary.

Lorrie: Yeah. Then we get the introduction of this volume's theme of nonverbal magic, and why that would be a good thing to master. Harry is lying there in pain,

desperately trying to summon his wand without speaking, and absolutely nothing is happening.

JC: Oh, my gosh, like Luke Skywalker trying to summon his lightsaber for the first time. It feels very much like that. 'I'm trapped, I'm immobilized. If I could just reach my lightsaber...' Yeah.

Lorrie: It's the same spell that he couldn't cast at the beginning of Book Four; by the end of it, he's doing it effortlessly, so we know that he will eventually master this. But at this moment, it would be really nice if he could do it.

JC: Yep. And then Tonks finds him.

Lorrie: Well, oh, there's my absolute favorite, terrible, funny line of this chapter. Of course, Harry's trying to stay modest and keep a steady head about being the 'Chosen One', but he's lying there and "he despised himself slightly for hoping it." He's wondering why there aren't "panicked voices wondering where Harry Potter had gone." That way that "he despised himself"... Oh, my God, that is so funny. Of course, the underlying point of this whole chapter is Harry has no idea, but there is one person who is thinking that -- who's panicked wondering where Harry Potter has gone -- and it's the last person he would think. While Harry is lying there (the way that you can't stop your brain from doing this), he totally makes himself suffer by imagining how Draco was making fun of him. He's undoubtedly entirely correct.

JC: Yeah. Well, the fact that he's lying there... He can't move. All he can do is be trapped inside his head here, which is terrifying.

Lorrie: Yes, and it just gets worse and worse and there's no one. How could he do better than that? He can't. Fortunately for us, yes, you were telling us who arrives.

JC: Yeah, so he doesn't spend too much time trapped here. Just as he feels the train starting to gear up to move, Tonks finds him. It's interesting that Tonks later says that she thought maybe he was trying to sneak off or something. Yeah, she wasn't thinking, 'Oh, something terrible has happened to Harry.' She was like, 'Hmm, Harry's going to go do something stupid.'

Lorrie: 'Something's going to happen,' yes, and boy, he is not having a good start of year. They barely make it off the train, which has already started moving. That's how he got on the train this year, too; it was already moving.

JC: Oh, gosh.

Lorrie: Tonks is very well written in this scene as somebody who has gone to work to do their job while very, very depressed. Oh, my God... She just answers all his questions, she does everything she's supposed to do.

JC: She fixes his nose. I find this is interesting: Harry is, at first, a little bit like, "Eehhhh..."

Lorrie: "You? Umm..."

JC: No one other than Madam Pomfrey has successfully really healed something like this before.

Lorrie: And Tonks? Who knows...

JC: But Tonks is an Auror, so she's clearly really good...

Lorrie: Despite being the clumsiest. Yeah.

JC: Yeah. She fixes his nose. Does not remove the blood from his face, as we find out, but fixes his nose. Actually, I think it's good that she doesn't remove the blood from his face.

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: But yeah.

Lorrie: So yeah, I can imagine Tonks in a better mood, looking at Harry like, "Well, I know a bit of blood makes you look badass, but let's get rid of that," but right now, she's not even thinking. She is so depressed.

JC: And interesting, too, that we do see her send her Patronus off, which is described as an "immense, four-legged creature."

Lorrie: Vaguely, yes.

JC: Yeah. At this point on a first read, that's just her Patronus. What is it? We don't know.

Lorrie: Right, and why can't we identify it? This is the first official acknowledgement of the series that yes, this is the messaging system that the Order of the Phoenix uses. They've seen people do it, and Harry thinks, 'Oh, yeah, I've seen Dumbledore send messages like this,' but this is now part of their tactics, and it's a requirement of the job that you have to know how to do this.

JC: And knowing that her Patronus has just changed... UGH.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: That's awful.

Lorrie: Is there any way to keep this secret from your co-workers? No, there isn't. Can you have any dignity? Do you have any boundaries? Can you have work-life balance about this? No. No, you cannot. But on the other hand, this is the guarantee of your sincerity.

JC: Yeah, it's definitely a guarantee. It's a way of IDing people, for sure.

Lorrie: 'Are you fake? Are you just pretending to be somebody who's pure of heart who can do this?' No. This is something that you have to do if you're going to be in covert operations like this. You have to break down the normal barriers there are between teammates and trust each other with your lives this way. You might not even like each other, but you become closer than people normally are, and certainly closer than co-workers are supposed to be because the stakes are that much higher. Tonks explains to Harry, "I'm sending word to the castle that I've got you, or they'll worry." The whole time that Harry's thinking, 'Oh, is there anybody caring?' Actually, there is a lot of security -- way, way more than he is used to -- especially after the previous year when there were no grown-ups on the job anywhere. Now it turns out, actually, there are grown-ups on the job everywhere, much more than he realizes and much more than there ever have been before, even if they're very, very depressed and their Patronuses are immense and four-legged and hard to ID.

JC: It just brings up interesting questions for me. Okay, at what point does one's Patronus change? Is it a surprise to you? The other person is going to notice. The fact that it opens up the door for it to be clear that you've fallen in love with someone that others might think is an inappropriate person for you to fall in love with... It opens that door up, but it also makes me wonder (because we're going to

see Snape very shortly) is that a way that people really trust Snape, is that they've seen his Patronus? We haven't seen it and Harry won't see it for a while, but others in the Order of the Phoenix must have seen it by now. Is that how they know that they can really trust him?

Lorrie: It turns out, at this point, that nobody has seen Snape's except Sirius. Sirius saw it --

JC: Except Sirius?

Lorrie: Yeah. Sirius saw it right before Sirius died. When Snape has to send a message to Grimmauld Place to check if Sirius is really being tortured in the Ministry and he can't use the Floo, then he sends his Patronus to check in on Sirius, and that's how Sirius knows what Snape really is on the inside. That's the moment that Sirius and Snape get with each other before Sirius, hours later, goes off to get killed.

JC: Okay. Is that in a later book? I don't remember that at all.

Lorrie: No. The way we know, we have to work it out backwards (as we're going to have to deal with most clues in this series from this point on): Dumbledore explains to Harry that Snape sent a message to Sirius, and he doesn't say how. We know from later on in *The Prince's Tale*, in the memory, that Dumbledore at this point has not seen Snape's Patronus either, because when Dumbledore sees Snape's Patronus, it's a big emotional surprise for Dumbledore. The only person that has seen it so far is Sirius, who took the secret to the grave.

JC: Okay, interesting.

Lorrie: Or would have if he'd had a grave. So no, Snape has managed to not have to do this yet, which is good for Snape because he, of course, needs to keep as much of his information private as possible.

JC: Okay.

Lorrie: But he knows all about how vulnerable it is to know -- It does make you think he did have to have that moment where sending a doe to Sirius Black would expose a whole lot of things that he never thought he would have to say to Sirius Black, but it mattered enough that he did it. As Tonks leads Harry to the gates of Hogwarts (and Harry is completely clueless about how much security has been

ramped up), then Tonks says, "Someone's coming to get you to walk you in." I love this image; this is one of my favorite, favorite images and we'll see it again in the next book. "A lantern was bobbing at the distant foot of the castle." When things are dark, you don't know if anybody's going to be there to welcome you, and then this light... You see it in the distance, and it's bobbing inelegantly because it's being held by a human (a warm, solid, flesh-and-blood human) that's coming closer and closer. Just the hopefulness of that... I love that image so much. Harry is thinking, 'Wow, I'm having such a bad time right now that even Filch coming to get me is going to make me... I'll take it. I'll be glad to see Filch.'

JC: Okay, yeah. I think it's interesting there that he is imagining what Filch will say, but fondly.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: 'Oh, yeah...'

Lorrie: 'Filch is going to be such a terrible person as usual.'

JC: 'And he'll whine about how much he wishes he could torture us.' Yeah. He's just like, 'Yeah. Ah, back at Hogwarts...' is that feeling.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Before Snape gets there, though, one thing that I thought was interesting is that Tonks mentions the other Aurors who are there who are stationed in Hogsmeade to provide extra protection; one of them is Dawlish, and Harry says, "Oh, didn't Dumbledore attack Dawlish last year?" and Tonks just goes, "Yeah."

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: 'Okay, there's some stuff going on with the adults here that no one's going to explain.'

Lorrie: Well, it was all part of his job.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Well, Dawlish goes where they assign him. Harry is all set for it to be Filch and it's not. He's so set that he takes off his Invisibility Cloak.

JC: Oh, right. Yeah.

Lorrie: 'Okay, I've come to be fetched,' and "he recognized, with a rush of pure loathing, the uplit hooked nose and long, black, greasy hair of Severus Snape." The most canonically hideous... Well, that's not very welcoming, is it?

JC: 'Oh, great.' Yeah.

Lorrie: This is such a great example of Snape showing up where you don't want him to be, and yet Harry's in such a bad position that yes, even this... 'Great, great. I'll go.' Of course, Snape says, "Nice of you to turn up, Potter."

JC: Yeah. Harry already told Tonks that it was Draco Malfoy, and she takes that information in. "Uh-huh." Didn't say anything, doesn't say, "Oh, you should really tell Dumbledore." Nothing.

Lorrie: No.

JC: Just takes it in, and is like, 'Okay.'

Lorrie: 'That's the world.' Yep.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah, and we know enough about Snape's personality now to know that the meaner he is, the more it reveals how incredibly worried he had been. So yeah, "Nice of you to turn up, Potter" basically means yes, he had been wondering (in a panic) where Harry Potter had gone. Oh, just the tension, right?

JC: And Harry's also covered with blood at this point, which no one is mentioning.

Lorrie: Yeah. Snape probably feels a little bit better that at least he's covered in blood.

JC: Oh...

Lorrie: Oh, and that also reinforces his opinion of Tonks, right? 'Oh, somebody's not fully conscious right now.' He says to Tonks, "Potter is quite -- ah -- safe in my hands," which is so wicked of him. That is so not reassuring, and it is the maximum of protectiveness without affection. Is he? Well, I guess... safe. Okay. Do you want to talk about the mean thing he says to Tonks?

JC: Oh, yeah, right. As Harry walks through the gates, Snape says to Tonks, "I was interested to see your new Patronus," and then he shuts the gates in her face.

Lorrie: Oh...

JC: Ugh, yeah, and then says, "I think you were better off with the old one," said Snape, the malice in his voice unmistakable. 'The new one looks weak.'" Then he turns to go away, and Harry can see how shocked and angry Tonks is before she disappears into the darkness.

Lorrie: Oh, my God.

JC: That was... Okay, I don't know, but have we seen Snape and Tonks interact before? I'm not sure if we have...

Lorrie: Oh, I'm not sure, either.

JC: I'm sure he knew her as a student because they would have overlapped in that way.

Lorrie: Yeah, yeah.

JC: She would have been in his Potions class seventh year, right?

Lorrie: Right, and they have been at Order meetings together. So yeah, that was really exceptionally, extraordinarily mean.

JC: I thought, 'What happened there? Why is he so mad? Is it just because of Harry's presence?' It just felt like there was more going on there.

Lorrie: Well...

JC: Or is he just passing judgment on the fact that she's interested in Remus? Is that it?

Lorrie: Well, if you have to rely on each other's Patronuses as revolutionaries -- if your unrequited, miserable love life is affecting the quality of your work to this extent... Well, do your co-workers know that something's going on? Yeah. Anyone who sees her Patronus is going to have to know, 'Yeah, that's going on. Okay.' Of course, Snape's respect for Remus is as rock bottom as ever, but it's also establishing the rudiments of what Snape is dealing with this year: the uncontrollability and misery of how love (especially unrequited love) can form your entire reason for being, can shape your soul, can reshape your soul. 'Reshape' is the point. Her true self -- her true soul -- had looked one way; now, completely

against her will in a humiliating and public way, her soul has been reshaped by this emotion that she can't control, that is bigger than her. She has no choice but to change because of it, even with the extraordinary pain of her feelings being unrequited. Can she help it? How humiliating is this? How public is this? Would she like to have a little more dignity? Yeah, probably. This is partly laying out how raw and ugly the raw materials are that Snape is dealing with as he tries to cope with being himself this year, how miserable he's feeling, and how relentlessly he takes it out on the people around him. As this chapter is going to show us in more than one way, this is the beginning of Snape's Time-Turner year. This is when he gets to see if he got a second chance to go back and do things differently, if he got a reset. What would he be able to do? Part of it is 'well, we're going to get you right back in your feelings,' the mistakes, the regrettable things all stemmed from this thoroughly miserable, uncontrollable, unrequited love and many regrets that followed there. He's particularly in a very mean, miserable mindframe right now because we know that he has just taken an Unbreakable Vow to protect Draco, and we know that, for one reason or another, he's been protecting Harry Potter all this time. We know that he has just vowed that at some point this year, he's going to have to kill Dumbledore, or something terrible is about to happen and he doesn't know when. That's one of the delightful conditions of having a Time-Turner situation: you know that you're going to have to do something big, but you don't know when and you don't know what you're looking for to identify the moment. Great! You can never sleep for the rest of your life. Harry Potter not showing up? Snape has probably had to wonder, 'Is this it?' Draco wandering around looking thoroughly delighted about something... 'Oh, great.' For poor Tonks to send her miserable new Patronus out to him... He didn't hold back. When the world is going to hell so badly, yeah, your mood can be pretty bleak and you know that it's going to be a long year. Maybe, hopefully, unless the year's over already, which he probably wondered in the past hour if it was. Wow, mean.

JC: He definitely does not endear himself to the readers at all with any of this, yeah. It's the first time we've seen him kid-facing in this volume, and he's worse than ever. Yeah.

Lorrie: Well, and coworker-facing. Coworker-facing first (which is shocking how he treats Tonks), and then once Tonks runs away, then (WOO!) the hate fest. The tie between Snape and Harry for who hates the other more... Harry is a tower of

strength in being able to contain his hatred for Snape, which might have killed a lesser man than Harry Potter.

JC: That's really interesting, because this is a big sign for me that Harry has matured a lot.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: The experiences he has had in the last few months... Immediately, he starts cooking up a reason to blame Snape for Sirius's death, but he knows that he's doing it to make himself feel better. He's very aware that he's inventing this. He also knows, as they're walking up to the castle, that Snape is going off on him for his own enjoyment, and Harry says, 'Yeah, I'm not even going to give him the pleasure of reacting to it.' Harry is able to keep it contained. He knows, 'He'll do this, and then he'll feel better, and then there's nothing I could say or do that would change anything here.' It's very mature. It's a very mature way of dealing with it.

Lorrie: Their hatred is so well-matched. They hate each other so very much.

JC: Yeah. He's aware of the power dynamics, but he's also aware of Snape as a human being here.

Lorrie: 'Oh, you...'

JC: It's so interesting, yeah. I just find that really mature and really interesting, and also very badass just to be able to be like, 'This isn't going to affect me.' To be able to say that or to give the impression...

Lorrie: Just to survive this moment while his insides are on fire with hatred.

JC: Yeah, but then knowing that it's also going to make Snape crazy.

Lorrie: Yeah. Well, what I love is Harry is doing that thing: "It enabled him to blame Snape, which felt satisfying, and also because he knew that if anyone was not sorry that Sirius was dead, it was the man now striding next to him in the darkness," which is exactly how Snape is about Harry. He knows that it's unfair to be blaming Harry, but he also knows that if there's anybody that really annoys him, it is Harry. Harry is thinking about this, and then Snape opens his mouth and does exactly what Harry has been doing in his head, where he totally lets himself blame

Harry and assign motives to Harry that don't exist and says, "Fifty points for lateness, because I'm sure you wanted to show off." That is not it.

JC: He's literally covered in blood as Snape's saying this.

Lorrie: Right, so Snape is ascribing the usual wrong motives to Harry, letting himself. "We haven't even started pudding. You might have set a record, Potter," which is our way, as readers, of knowing that Snape has spent the past hour thinking, 'Has all this bad stuff started already? Is this the moment that I have to kill Dumbledore? We haven't even started pudding.' It's really funny to think, 'Someday, when the legend of how Harry Potter and Severus Snape brought down the Dark Lord --' But they hated each other. 'What would it have been like? What was it actually like? Did they really hate each other? How much did they hate each other?' Oh, no, they really hated each other. Also, Harry is wrong: "He knew that Snape had come to fetch him for this, for the few minutes when he could needle and torment Harry without anyone else listening." No, he didn't. Snape came because Snape is their best guy. Harry Potter is missing... something really terrible might have happened. You don't send Hagrid; you send Snape. That's why he's there. But he did manage to at least comfort himself by opening his mouth and spewing bile all over Harry. This is the lesson, right? If you are going to bring down fascism, the only way you can do it is if you make yourself be allies with people that you thoroughly hate. You can't do it without doing that, but boy, do they hate each other.

JC: It's interesting too, though, that Snape is the one who can't keep it inside.

Lorrie: He doesn't have to. That's the power dynamic.

JC: Yeah, but he could have, right? He could. Yeah, it's a power dynamic...

Lorrie: Oh, he could have.

JC: But the fact that he doesn't... The contrast here is interesting. There's a power dynamic, which means that Harry can't (even if he would like to and Snape can), but also Snape does and he makes a choice not to.

Lorrie: He could have, but he didn't.

JC: But he didn't, and Harry makes a choice to keep himself contained. Their choices are opposite. I just find that really interesting.

Lorrie: Well, they each do what they have to do because of the power dynamic. Harry does, in fact, need somebody to walk him into the castle. It is the last person he would have chosen.

JC: I just think it's very interesting here. I'm comparing the Snape that we see here... You and I, just a couple of weeks ago, went to see *Cursed Child* in New York, and one of the things that struck me about the Snape that we see briefly on stage in that version is that he is completely not this Snape.

Lorrie: No.

JC: He's an imagined "What would Snape have been like?" but from the other side of it, and that idea that that's all happening in Scorpius's head is just given more weight by this idea. Seeing this Snape who's very nice --

Lorrie: This is the real Snape.

JC: And then comparing him to this as Snape, I'm just going, 'Wow.'

Lorrie: Well, yes. If you were the son of the person whom Snape swore to save -- if Snape swore that he would save the soul of your father by killing in his stead by offering to split his own soul or accept death if he failed -- then who you imagine that person to be is really not this very 'dregs of the earth' mean guy.

JC: For sure.

Lorrie: Really abusing his power as a teacher over a teenager to let loose all of his meanness.

JC: Over a teenager who's covered in blood. That's the thing I keep coming back to. I'm like, 'Oh, my God.'

Lorrie: Yeah, which I'm sure he deserved, according to Snape. Well, the blood is a gift that Snape can accept as consolation for the horrible hour he's spent wondering if now is the moment that he has to go find Dumbledore and kill him. But just because Snape wants a second chance to go back and undo some damage (or repair some damage that he did before in his life) does not mean that any of it's going to feel good at all. All right, here he is... In keeping with the theme that everything for Harry has to be as humiliating as possible in this chapter, Snape says, "Oh, no, you're not putting on your cloak. You're walking that way in front of everybody."

The humiliation is as public as it can be; even Trelawney, who's never at these feasts, is there. Nearly Headless Nick reports that all the ghosts have been talking about Harry. Ron and Hermione say that everybody on the train was talking about "the Chosen One." So yeah, it's not like Harry can sneak in... Then he reaches for the chicken legs, and they disappear! Oh, my God, he must be so hungry!

JC: Oh, yeah. The fact that he walks in... I'm imagining the door swinging open and then there's Snape with blood-covered Harry, and Snape's got this, "Hmmp!" while leaving Harry there to be like, "Ugh..." and he has to walk all the way across the Great Hall.

Lorrie: Yeah. Why is the Great Hall so big?

JC: Everyone's staring at him and whispering as he goes by. Just the whole scenario of it... He has to steel himself and ignore it all, and he doesn't want to talk about it at the table. He's like, "Later, later... I'll tell you later," because he doesn't want to add to any of the gossip that he knows is swirling around. Even Nearly Headless Nick comes over and he's like, "Well, I told the other ghosts that I'm not going to bother Harry. I know Harry will confide in me." Everybody is aching to hear the story, and Harry's just like, 'Here we go.'

Lorrie: "No, something very mysterious and dignified happened to me." Not.

JC: And I'm sure Draco is disappointed to see Harry actually show up.

Lorrie: Well, he's not thoroughly disappointed, because Harry sees Draco miming how he broke Harry's nose, so Harry showing up with all that blood is Draco saying, "Ah, yes, my cue. This is my cue. This is the fanfare!"

JC: Yeah, he does get some mileage out of it. He gets mileage out of it, for sure.

Lorrie: It feels so good.

JC: But I think that his goal was for Harry to have to get all the way back to London and then be very late to school. Yeah.

Lorrie: But also if you're Draco, you have to be disappointed that if that didn't happen, at least it was Snape bringing him in. If Draco had any fantasies about Snape making Harry's entrance as unpleasant as possible, they were all fulfilled.

JC: Oh, for sure. For sure.

Lorrie: 'Yes! I hope Snape gave it to him.' Well, he did, and now, "Oh, look. That blood really does look terrible, doesn't it?"

JC: Yeah. Draco knew that Harry was going to turn up eventually.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: The fact that it didn't take that long is probably like, 'Ah, it could have been even worse. Oh, well...'

Lorrie: Well, at least he looks the worst he's ever looked.

JC: And also interesting that no one... Tonks doesn't encourage Harry to do anything about Draco. There's no sense that there will be any retribution or justice for this within school bounds. They were technically at school. Draco could have been punished for this, but it's very clear that that's not going to happen at this point.

Lorrie: There's so much going on. For all of this new security to have been added, for Aurors to have been posted permanently at Hogsmeade... Any kind of fistfight between Draco and Harry is exactly the kind of daily reality that they know is going to happen.

JC: It's not that it didn't happen before.

Lorrie: Well, the year that they just came off of with a Slytherin almost being killed because he was ICE...

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: This is the setting of Snape's Time-Turner year. There is a sixteen-year-old Slytherin Death Eater gloating because of what he's just done to the Gryffindor Quidditch Captain, Potter, who we have noted has the crush on the cool red-haired girl. Dumbledore then stands up to talk and lets us all -- both the people in the scene and us, the reader -- know that this year is going to present all sorts of mysterious, scary, meaningful things, and no one's going to explain a damn thing. But if you think that something's not happening, you are seriously deluded and there's no denying that there's all sorts of stuff happening, and it's up to you to try to figure it out. Here's Dumbledore, showing them all his dead hand, hearing everybody go *gasps* and just ignoring it. What are you supposed to do with that?

Are you supposed to pretend you didn't see that? You can't. Hermione helpfully shows up with her usual footnote self and says, "There are injuries you can't cure, there are old curses, there are poisons without antidotes..." Okay. This is not going to heal over time.

JC: But also interesting that there's a lot of little things like this throughout this chapter that are like, 'Oh, here's some little things that are going to become important later,' like Hermione saying that there are poisons and old curses that can't just be easily cured. 'Okay, yeah.'

Lorrie: 'Okay, noted.'

JC: 'We're going to come back to that later.'

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Harry really wishes he could fight Draco one-on-one. He's going to get that wish.

Lorrie: Oh, he's going to be so sorry.

JC: Yeah, yeah. Harry asks specifically about the Hat -- "Did the Sorting Hat say anything interesting?" -- and Ron's like, "Oh, yeah, the usual stuff about how we need to unite against our enemies." The Hat is ramping up its game here.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Yeah, yeah. We reconnect with the ghosts and talk about how the ghosts are all aware of what's happening. It's just very interesting that all these little things are going to become important. Oh, Weasley products are blanket banned. Just little things like this that are like, 'Okay. Okay, these are all things that are going to come up again later.'

Lorrie: Stakes are higher and higher.

JC: Even Harry entering the Great Hall covered in blood... Even that is going to eventually happen again, so yeah.

Lorrie: So not boring. Thank goodness he has friends who will take the blood off his face finally.

JC: That is true.

Lorrie: But yeah, if he didn't have friends, he would be so screwed. Then Dumbledore gets to introduce the new guy, who's not new. The old guy, Slughorn, teaching Potions, oh...

JC: Ooh... To everyone's surprise. Then they find out that Snape is going to be taking on the Defense Against the Dark Arts position, which is really interesting because on the one hand, we've had this story for years that Snape's always wanted this job, but we also know -- well, Harry seems aware -- that people only last one year in this job. It's like, 'Okay, Snape is only going to have one year in this job.'

Lorrie: This is so very much Snape's Time-Turner year, because not only do we have Potter as the Quidditch Captain; not only is there a sixteen-year-old Death Eater; Slughorn is back teaching Potions, something that Snape surely thought he was never going to have to relive. Bizarrely enough, the sixteen-year-old Death Eater is not even an insider in the Slug Club. Any feelings he might have had about this time in his own high school career, it's all back and how incredibly miserable it is -- how uncontrollable it is -- to have unrequited feelings that are shaping your soul. This guy again... Oh, boy... yay, Slughorn. But if you got a second chance to go back to do things over again... Well, you only made the mistake the first time because things were unbearable, so if you're going to go back to redo them, you're accepting the unbearable feelings all over again, which are awful. But in this case, what would he do differently? He would do Defense Against the Dark Arts instead of going to the Dark Arts. Okay. We know that the terms of a Time-Turner situation are that you do get a second chance, but you have to change nothing, you must not be seen, and you have to be prepared. The moment you do your thing, you have to recognize that you don't know when it's coming, you don't know what you're looking for, you are not quite sure what you're supposed to be doing either -- although in this case, we do know that it's going to involve killing Dumbledore. If you do it wrong, disaster; if you manage it well, then you get to understand your own past from a different perspective, and you have a trusted guide anchoring you (like Harry had Hermione) and more than one innocent life may be saved. We will find out later that Snape has earned this Time-Turner moment because he repaid his life debt to Dumbledore by giving Dumbledore that one extra year by stopping the curse on the hand long enough for Dumbledore to have time to put his affairs in order, but his debt to Dumbledore has been paid; now, he gets the chance. What would you do if you could get a second chance? Oh, boy, it's not going to be fun,

huh? The whole six-book set-up of this rumor (that it's Snape's heart's desire to teach Defense Against the Dark Arts), which has for five and a half books been carefully unattributed... Vaguely, everybody knows; nobody has ever confirmed. Dumbledore and Snape are collecting the rewards of having seeded that rumor well, and whatever is happening this year, Dumbledore is right there to show (if not tell) that he's authorized it. He knows perfectly well that this is going to create talk, and he is not addressing it at all.

JC: Also, I have to admire Dumbledore as the kind of teacher who doesn't even need to say anything to silence a room. Just his presence... All the chatter dies down. He doesn't have to ask for anyone's attention. I admire that so much. From a teacher perspective, he's just got that kind of presence, but yeah, yeah. He knows exactly what they're saying, he knows what the reaction's going to be... Let it play out.

Lorrie: He knows that this is beyond comprehension, and he's not even going to help anyone with this. He knows that if they ask him and he turns them away, no one can do a darn thing about it. The Slytherin table is applauding; I guess they also bought into it that Snape wanted to teach DADA, and Harry detects "a look of triumph on the features he loathed so much." The one consolation -- the thing that's been burning Snape this whole time about this false story (that he somehow is not good enough to teach this one class) and now that judgment has been lifted -- is Snape really hates being thought incorrectly evil. It's not human nature to enjoy people blaming you for stuff that's not even your fault. "I'm a bad person, but not in that particular way. Ugh! Ugh..." There's enough for Snape to blame himself for without that. "You really think that they would hire me less than Lockhart and Umbridge? Ugh, how galling!" This one thing is, at least, temporarily lifted from him, which he better enjoy, because the end game is that they're hurtling toward him proving that he was even worse than anybody thought he was. This is just a few months that he gets to walk around like somebody who can be trusted with teaching a basic class. Geez... It's going to be exponentially worse for him later, but for now, he will not have to be covert about his genuine, frantic urge to teach these students how to defend themselves against the Dark Arts, which will be more urgent than ever before. He really, really, really needs them to learn these things, and at least this year, he doesn't have to pretend; he doesn't have to do it puppeteering from the sidelines. Ugh!

JC: It's also interesting to me that, as Dumbledore was talking about all of this increased security and everything, there is actually a Death Eater in the school.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Snape knows it, and I'm sure Dumbledore knows it.

Lorrie: Yeah, yep.

JC: I wonder who else -- and Harry knows.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: There's a small number of people who know as they're talking about "Make sure that if you see something, say something."

Lorrie: I know! Yes!

JC: But they all also know.

Lorrie: "Keep your eye on that kid."

JC: Yeah. "There's something going on with Draco." The call is coming from inside the house, and we all know it.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: If there's no explicit "no Nazis" policy in your school, and then the kid signs up and enrolls in class, what are you going to do? You have to teach the kid. Can you do anything about it? Well, there are people at the school who remember other times that the students were doing this. "Remember all those times? Remember all the bad stuff that happened? Let's see if we can do it better this time." Oof. Oh, Harry does not hold back when he talks about how Snape is only going to last a year at most: he goes, "Personally, I'm going to keep my fingers crossed for another death..." and of course, Hermione's like, "Harry!" which is a moral debate that we see playing out on a daily basis in late 2025 U.S.

JC: For sure, for sure.

Lorrie: 'Is it okay to be happy or to hope for somebody to die?' Well, does it really matter? Is this a debate that can be resolved? I don't think so. I think it's just human

nature either way. Of course, when Dumbledore talks about security -- and how, if you see something, say something -- of course all year, Harry is going to try and no one's going to give him any satisfaction.

JC: "Look, I'm seeing something. I'm saying something." Everyone's, "Oh, but he's..." Yeah, no. "What do you think Draco Malfoy's going to be able to do?" Well, actually, quite a lot.

Lorrie: Yeah. "Just turn around and give that to yourself, Harry. It's not very important."

JC: It is so interesting that that's such a switch in this book. I think we've talked about this before, but in the past, Harry would have some idea about what was happening and he'd be completely wrong, and this is the first time that he's completely right.

Lorrie: Yeah. No satisfaction anywhere. Ron doesn't think it's important, but I do love that what Dumbledore says is first he makes everybody aware of just how much danger they're genuinely in. He acknowledges all that, and then he says, "But now, your beds await, as warm and comfortable as you could possibly wish, and I know that your top priority is to be well-rested for your lessons tomorrow." That is so real to me. When things are this bad, then make sure to treasure every precious bit of security and safety that you and your loved ones are able to create. Some of it may be an illusion, some of it is like, 'No, this is why we do this: because we need this for each other and for ourselves and education in particular. Not only just learning things, but learning things together in an institution from people who volunteered their lives to teach. That is such a privilege. That's the point of all of this. This is why we fight. When things are endangered like this, know to appreciate,' and they do. When he talks about the beds being "as warm and comfortable as you could possibly wish," I feel that, and I think the students do, too. He's not saying everything is fine. He's saying, "This is why we do this," and then Ron stays back. Hermione, having proven her friendship by cleaning off the blood; now Ron proves his friendship by staying back to say, "All right."

JC: And Hermione... Someone has to show the first years to the dorm.

Lorrie: Ron's like, "Okay, what happened with the nose?" I find this so touching, I reread this more than once every time: "It was a mark of the strength of their

friendship that Ron did not laugh." That's gold, because yes, it's incredibly funny; it's also incredibly awful, even if Ron does follow up by not thinking that Draco's up to anything important.

JC: "Oh, he was just trying to show off for Pansy Parkinson."

Lorrie: "As usual."

JC: Both things could be true.

Lorrie: Just because Draco is an inept moron does not mean he's not a Death Eater, just like all those other sixteen-year-old Death Eaters that we know of. Then, in another sign of growing up, Harry and Ron realize that they're going to have to stop protecting Hagrid and explain to him that they're not going to keep taking his class; that's going to go badly, just like they know.

JC: Oh, that's sad, too, because Hagrid's so excited to see them and he can't wait for Care of Magical Creatures, and they're like, 'Oh, no.'

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: 'Oh, no...' Yeah.

Lorrie: Nope.

JC: Nope. "None of us are taking your class." Yeah. Oh...

Lorrie: Well, that's going to be bad.

JC: Oh, my gosh, yeah. It's also interesting to me that every time Hagrid talks about the hippogriff, he uses the wrong name and he has to --

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: And I'm like, 'Okay, this is not good. Okay, Hagrid, you're going to slip up.'

Lorrie: Well, fortunately, everyone else has other stuff on their minds. Draco was only trying to get Buckbeak killed because he couldn't physically attack the Chosen One and couldn't get the Dark Lord back into power and all that. Now he's able to fulfill all of his horrible little fantasies, so who cares?

JC: Yeah. He's moved on to bigger and better things. But wow. Hagrid has another hippogriff!

Lorrie: 'Who can tell? All hippogriffs look alike.'

JC: Oh, my gosh.

Lorrie: So yeah, Snape Victorious is the name of this chapter, and what a painful, hollow victory that really is. Snape, through years and years and years of atonement, you have won yourself a second chance to make decisions about sixteen-year-old Death Eaters and about whether you give in to the Dark Arts or defend against them. Your reward is going to be plunging back in time to a lot of very high-stakes misery. Oh, Slughorn, that guy back... Ugh, and every second with Dumbledore could be the last. If you mess up... Oh, you'll have yourself to blame. You get one second chance. This is it. Meanwhile, oh, there's Harry Potter. You have to go get him from the station. Oh, God... Well, you could be mature and not yell at him on the walk back to Hogwarts. You could. Life (when saving people's lives is at stake) is really stressful, but the beds are warm and comfortable.

JC: It's also very interesting to me that this chapter is called Snape Victorious, and the next chapter is called The Half-Blood Prince.

Lorrie: Yeah, so we're going to march straight into the unanswered mysteries.

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.