

Transcript

Episode 6.9

Book 6, Chapter 9: The Half-Blood Prince

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 Nine: The Half-Blood Prince.

Lorrie: The Half-Blood Prince. The sixth years consult with McGonagall about their schedules. Snape gives a first-day-of-class speech in Defense Against the Dark Arts that's just as epic and creepy as the one he gave in Potions. Harry and Ron qualify for sixth year Potions after all (since Slughorn's standards are lower than Snape's), but they don't have textbooks, so Slughorn finds used ones for them; Harry's is covered with notes from the previous owner. Haha! This chapter is layered with so many echoes and callbacks to previous volumes, as well as eras that the kids have not personally known. It's a dense, layered and delightful chapter to me.

JC: And I love that it's also the title of the book.

Lorrie: Right, and it really holds back until the very end on that. We are no more elucidated at the end than we were before. I like that it starts off by foreshadowing that they're going to need *Muffliato*; Harry's trying to talk to Hermione and, but "so many people were trying to listen into his conversation, not to mention staring at

him and whispering behind their hands," and there was just nothing he could do about it. Now that they're old enough to have real secrets... Okay, the need is there.

JC: I had a moment because it had been a week since I had read the previous chapter. At the beginning, when Harry is telling Hermione about what Draco was telling the other Slytherins on the train, Ron says, "He was probably just showing off for Parkinson," and I was like, "Was that in the... Wait. Am I reading the correct chapter?" I did have a little bit of a moment. I had to go back and flip back to the previous chapter. I go, 'Okay, he also said that to Hagrid,' so the fact that he said it twice stood out to me. This author doesn't usually do that.

Lorrie: Yeah. He really wants to believe this.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Right, but Harry cannot convince them. We get a really good portrait of where Ron is in his adolescence in this chapter.

JC: Ah.

Lorrie: He's having some growing pains. He's nervous about Quidditch, he's abusing his prefect privileges, Lavender's giggling at things that he didn't even intend as jokes...

JC: Which makes him stand up a little straighter, yes. He's a little jealous of Harry and Hermione.

Lorrie: Yeah. All right, he's got some dealing to do.

JC: Okay. Actually, one thing I want to say before we jump into some other things here is that Ron has never been super serious about school. He's like, "We're sixth years, and we've got free periods this year. We're going to get to have so much relaxing time and fun time," which made me laugh because kids go from taking six to eight classes in high school to taking four or five in college, and they look at how they're spaced out and think, "I'm going to have so much time."

Lorrie: Right.

JC: And it's like, 'Oh, honey...'

Lorrie: 'Oh... No, no, no.'

JC: 'You don't understand.' Ron's making the same mistake, which I just find as funny.

Lorrie: 'We've just moved executive function from your schedule to you.'

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: That's all that's happened.

JC: That idea that the N.E.W.T. coursework is going to hit him like a train... Oh, boy, here we go.

Lorrie: The narrative doesn't let him wallow in delusion for very long.

JC: That's true. Not for very long, but it is funny.

Lorrie: We the reader don't have to be anxious about it for that long before reality sets in. Do you want to talk about McGonagall and Neville?

JC: Yeah. Well, let's see. There's a few other things that happen before we get to that that stood out to me. One is their description of their breakfast, which is so comforting. The porridge and bacon and eggs... There was something about that that I was just like, 'Oh...!' We've talked about this before, but I love the fact that there's always good food and plenty of it at Hogwarts.

Lorrie: Yeah, yeah.

JC: That's just really comforting. That first day of school, and they have a really solid breakfast. Yes, that's so great.

Lorrie: And McGonagall can depend on doing the schedules at breakfast because everyone's going to come to breakfast.

JC: True, yeah.

Lorrie: There's no reason to skip it. It's great.

JC: But I do like the idea that they're at breakfast, and she has to talk one-on-one to each of them to finalize their schedules. That's a lot of sixth years to go through.

Lorrie: That's a lot. Yeah.

JC: I can't remember exactly how many kids are in that year, but it's quite a few, so it's just like, 'Okay.' Yeah, so that's good, but there's also this moment where they

all realize that none of them -- Well, Harry and Ron tell Hermione about running into Hagrid the day before, and they all kind of feel bad about not continuing in Care of Magical Creatures, but Hermione raises a really good question: will anyone pursue a N.E.W.T. in Care of Magical Creatures? Is Hagrid going to have any students past the fifth year level? Uuuuuhhh....

Lorrie: Well, it depends on if there are especially Hufflepuffs who might have some career with animals in their future. They might.

JC: Yeah, but this year? The question is... Because Hermione says, "Is he going to have any?"

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: That made me think, 'Oh, I wonder,' because this is the kind of situation where there's three to five years, depending on the class of the core curriculum. I'm now speaking as someone who teaches in programs. There's classes that everyone takes, but then you hit a point where it becomes very specialized and you almost have to... Some teachers are able to say, "No, you have to get this baseline score to get into my class because it's very competitive," and then there's things like Care of Magical Creatures where you kind of recruit people into that by them enjoying your classes and then deciding, 'No, I think I want to stick with this.' That's very much what happens at the upper division level in college. Honestly, it happens at the high school level, too, when you get into specialist... If you're going to take the AP version of a science class or something, you pick the science you had the most fun in; those teachers are conscious of that, because if they don't have enough students coming into that from the lower level classes, then they don't get to teach those classes, right?

Lorrie: No.

JC: It made me think about how Hogwarts runs like that, too, where there is a little bit of a competition for the best students among the professors.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: You're competing for who's going to take your N.E.W.T.-level classes. It's like getting them into your APs.

Lorrie: Well, when Hermione was saying that, all I was thinking was it depends on which careers have that as a prerequisite, because that whole prerequisite theme is part of the chapter. I can imagine that if somebody like Charlie was thinking, 'Yes, I'm definitely going to be a dragon tamer,' yeah, he would definitely have signed up.

JC: But Grubbly-Plank was teaching it back then, I think, or whoever was teaching it. I don't know.

Lorrie: No. Kettleburn.

JC: Okay, the one that was before.

Lorrie: The one that got too injured to continue.

JC: That wanted to retire to enjoy his remaining limbs, yeah. That's hilarious. All of that made me think, 'Okay, there's all this going on in the background at Hogwarts.' It's a school.

Lorrie: There's so much school business happening. Yeah.

JC: Yeah. There's a lot of school business happening here. Okay, so then McGonagall is calling the students up to talk about their futures and their schedules for this year, and we learn a little bit about Neville. We learned that he got an Outstanding in Herbology, which is very nice.

Lorrie: "Of course," she says proudly. Yes. Ah, this conversation between McGonagall and Neville is so formative to me. She's so realistic with him where she says, "No, your Acceptable is not good enough for Transfiguration." It's not like, "You bad boy"; it's just, "Let's take a look at you. Let's look at you, the person," which is not always Neville's experience. McGonagall herself has, in the past, undermined Neville unfairly, so this is quite refreshing.

JC: That's a level of honesty that I don't see a lot. I see students throwing themselves at courses that are beyond their level and then just suffering through and not getting a great grade. I see that a lot, and there's this time pressure of, 'I have to take this class and it's offered this semester.' They'll take it for a year. 'No, I just got to suffer.' Instead of valuing it ('This is part of my learning path, and I'll be ready for it. I'm not ready for it now')... I know that that's complicated and people

are trying to graduate in four years and all this stuff, but it's interesting to see, in this situation, McGonagall saying, "No, you're not ready for that."

Lorrie: "That's not your strength." Yeah.

JC: Yeah. "It's going to be too much, but here are your strengths and let's look at what your strengths are."

Lorrie: "Nor is it your interest. You, the person -- Neville -- you count." Then she says the line that's so dear to my heart: "It's high time your grandmother learned to be proud of the grandson she's got, rather than the one she thinks she ought to have -- particularly after what happened at the Ministry." Okay, McGonagall was also impressed by Neville, and what she has articulated is her version of my one bottom line about parenting: parent the child you have. That's been the essence of why Neville's upbringing by his grandmother and other relatives has been so wretched this whole time: they didn't pause to look at the actual human being that they had on their hands.

JC: There's also that stuff there of living up to the expectations of his grandmother, and there's the path that she had set out for him -- and she had her own reasons, it turns out, for wanting to set him on this path -- and it didn't match up to what he's good at and what he's interested in, but that didn't matter. He had to do it because that's what his family expected of him. There's that layer of it, too. Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah. The reset here is so beautiful. Then there's the prize line where McGonagall looks at Neville and she makes a decision: she says, "I shall drop Augusta a line reminding her that just because she failed *her* Charms O.W.L., the subject is not necessarily worthless."

JC: Oh, my God. That's amazing.

Lorrie: That's what she's done for the day.

JC: That's amazing, and I love the idea that Neville's grandmother has been saying that "Charms is a soft option." For me, coming from a math background, this is like people saying, "Oh, taking statistics or data science is a soft option. You should really take calculus." Right?

Lorrie: Right. "A real person would..." Yeah.

JC: Yeah. "If he were really good at this..." It's that kind of feeling. No, these are both valuable things, but one of them is probably better for your path than the other, depending on what direction you're going. Also... I don't know. My first thought here was, 'Charms feels like it would be a lot more useful than Transfiguration in everyday life.' This is me talking about data science versus calculus.

Lorrie: Charms is not a soft option in any way.

JC: Oh, my God, yes!

Lorrie: The only reason anyone would be saying that would be for their own projection. Here's Neville getting some acknowledgment in his efforts to differentiate from his overbearing grandmother.

JC: Yeah. That's great, though. I love it.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Yes.

Lorrie: Yay, Neville plotline.

JC: Neville's growth through the series is really, really nice.

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: I think one of the things that I love that the movie did (that the books didn't do) is that they actually even gave him a little romance subplot. The books didn't, and that's beloved to my heart. I love that.

Lorrie: Yeah. The plot twist that the author has been building up so far in this volume continues to pay off dividends. Harry can take Potions and become an Auror after all.

JC: Yeah. It's interesting to me that he doesn't seem to have any particular emotional response to that.

Lorrie: He just hadn't thought about it.

JC: Yeah, but he doesn't seem to think about it. I know he's going to his classes, he's starting the first day, but there's never a moment of... I guess I was waiting for a moment of, 'Oh, wow, I have to reevaluate now.'

Lorrie: 'So it's not closed off to me...' This is how we find out that Ron also got an Exceeds Expectations on his Potions O.W.L.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Okay, good for Ron!

JC: We also learn that Trelawney is teaching again, which is interesting. I love that Firenze hasn't gone (because Firenze still also needs protection) and that they're splitting the classes.

Lorrie: Oh, gosh, yes.

JC: And it brings up in my mind they're two different teachers teaching the advanced classes. I know that they're going to emphasize different things and have different perspectives, which is great for the students, but there will also be some competition there and some snide remarks and some drama.

Lorrie: The department meetings about the curriculum... Ugh.

JC: And we'll never see any of that, because none of our folks are taking that class.

Lorrie: Well, I can easily imagine that Firenze and Trelawney would both refuse to attend any cooperative meetings in their own way. Who's supervising them, really?

JC: True, true.

Lorrie: We get the little plot reminder from McGonagall that Harry has to start planning Quidditch tryouts. Okay.

JC: He apparently wears a badge that says "Quidditch Captain." Okay, the prefects wear their badges, and the Quidditch Captain... That's wild to me, but I guess it's the equivalent of if you're on a sports team at your school (one of the big sports teams in this country, certainly). You wear a jersey on game day, I guess. I don't know. It's not like the captain of the football team goes around wearing a little badge that says "Captain of the football team" on it, but okay.

Lorrie: Oh, gosh.

JC: It's kind of funny. "All right, okay."

Lorrie: "Yeah, he's earned it."

JC: I love this bit between Katie Bell and Harry. Harry's going to be asked about Quidditch tryouts throughout this chapter, but Katie asks him about it, and he's like, "You don't have to try out." It's really interesting because she says, "No, I do," and reminds him that you actually need to go through the process and have the tryouts, and make it clear to everyone that people earn their way on the team if that's important. She's very humble.

Lorrie: It's really good advice.

Hosts: Yeah.

JC: She's really humble about it and says, "There might be someone who shows up who's better than me, and you don't just put people on the team." Then there's a little bit of a dig at Ron: "Just because they're your friends..." Oh, God.

Lorrie: Ron starts looking miserable again, yes.

JC: Oh, yeah.

Lorrie: No, it's excellent advice.

JC: Yeah. I just thought, 'Wow, that's really mature and really great.' It's just nice to know that there are kids out there at Hogwarts who really still have a good head on their shoulders. I like that. Then it's time to go to the lessons.

Lorrie: Are you ready? Yes.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: What's it going to be like?

JC: I love the fact that they have their first lesson with the Half-Blood Prince himself, Snape. I just thought that was nice.

Lorrie: Well, not that any of us know that...

JC: No.

Lorrie: But is it really necessary for him to transform the Defense classroom to this degree of gloom? Is this a little bit of drama? The drawn curtains, the gruesome pictures of people; they're screaming in pain...

JC: It's the complete opposite of Lockhart.

Lorrie: Yeah, and the opposite of Lupin, where Lupin was focusing on the fantastical and the fun and the imaginative. But yes, actually, it turns out that what Snape is showing them is going to be highly, highly relevant.

JC: Absolutely. When he's describing the things that can happen to people who are victims of the Dark Arts, I'm like, 'Check.' Harry experienced that. 'Check.' 'Check.' Harry's going to experience that. 'Okay, yeah, this is really on point for what we're going to do this year.'

Lorrie: Yeah. The right teacher for the right times, and we get him saying to them in a very unfun voice, "I have not asked you to take out your books." Who knew that the opposite of the Umbridge approach could be so joyless?

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Uh, okay. Well, if nothing else, this will be a practical lesson. Hermione complies immediately, so we can tell that in tone this is going to be a variation of the first day in Potions from first year. There's Hermione, all ready to learn...

JC: Having already read the book, I'm sure.

Lorrie: And shoved it back in. Then he gives his speech: "The Dark Arts are many, varied, ever-changing, and eternal. Fighting them is like fighting a many-headed monster, which, each time a neck is severed, sprouts a head even fiercer and cleverer than before. You are fighting that which is unfixed, mutating, indestructible... Your defenses must therefore be as flexible and inventive as the arts you seek to undo." This time reading this, I think about the perennial left inner dialogue of thinking, 'Well, Trump can only serve two terms.' 'Yeah, but Vance...' (which was updated from the 2016 version 'Yeah, but Pence'), and it's quite a self-defeating internal check. 'Well, if we hope for this, then our problems will be solved.' No, they won't, and also, don't have any hope. It always frustrates me. No, no, no. It's true that the problem won't be solved, but that's not supposed to reduce your energy to fight. Know that, be realistic, and gain in strength also, and know

that that's the nature of things. You can't wait for something to save you. There's no turn of fate that's going to make everything much, much safer. It's always going to be something that you have to work out, and it's worth it and you can't underestimate. As soon as you adjust to some of the evil and figure out how to counter it, you don't know what's coming next. Okay, he's right.

JC: It's interesting reading this this time through, and this wasn't even actually thinking about it from a post-2020 perspective. Again, I've read this book exactly once before now and knowing Snape's story, Harry immediately in his mind criticizes this and he's disgusted by it. He says, "It was surely one thing to respect the Dark Arts as a dangerous enemy, another to speak of them, as Snape was doing, with a loving caress in his voice?" That quote was interesting because that didn't sound like a loving caress in my head when I read it. What it sounded like was a guy who has been there and who has spent his entire life dealing with this and knows.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Hermione later points out, very accurately, that that's basically what Harry told the D.A. That's exactly the same thing. She's like, "No. Actually, he reminded me of you," and Harry's kind of --

Lorrie: "EWWW! EWWW!"

JC: Stunned into silence by that. "Wait a minute. What?!"

Lorrie: "Don't you dare!!!"

JC: But it's true, and even when Hermione said that, I was like, 'Yeah, yeah,' because that's the reaction I had to Snape saying those things. 'Yeah, Snape... he knows what he's talking about. This is real.' It's such a contrast to Umbridge's the year before: "Who's possibly going to attack children like you?" Right? The contrast is just amazing.

Lorrie: Yeah. Umbridge was definitely trying to kill any curiosity, any thinking; Snape is trying to evoke it, but there's a showboating element to Snape's words, which I think Harry is quite correctly alarmed by. 'Geez, could we be any fancier about this?' But this is also just the way Snape talks when he's thinking about magic.

JC: Oh, absolutely. It's parallel to the way he talked about potion-making back in first year. "I could teach you to start time and stopper death." Wow, okay. That's intense.

Lorrie: It's always seductive, and it's his version of vanity also. However they achieve it, the teachers at Hogwarts who manage to capture students' attention completely... That's an achievement. We've seen Dumbledore do it, we've seen McGonagall do it, and this is how Snape does it, which does have that creepiness and also not a lack of interest. The same way that Harry is creeped out by Ollivander going, "Ooh, there's so much evil potential..." What Snape is getting at is if you're fighting adversaries, you have to understand them and how they cast their magic. If you're too much above it -- if this kind of evil is so beneath you that you don't understand -- that may not protect you. The clue in this is the last word, the word 'undo.' "Your defenses must therefore be as flexible and inventive as the arts you seek to undo." That is a pointer to people who want to undo the effects of Dark Magic: you have to understand how it's done first, and then have the desire to undo it. Even if you've never personally been that evil, you have to understand it, but the people who can really get in there and really fight it and reverse it are the ones who've done both, which we will see in the next two volumes. Harry becomes just like Snape, Dumbledore and Draco. So yeah, at any rate, Snape has left plenty of room for people to think that yeah, he is in love with the seductiveness of the Dark Arts. I don't know if I like him any better now.

JC: We're going to get into some really good stuff here. Before we get into that, I'm wondering how many people actually made it into the N.E.W.T.-level Defense Against the Dark Arts and how many of them were in Dumbledore's Army the year before. I don't know if the book answers that question.

Lorrie: Well, it says half the class have been in the D.A...

JC: Oh, okay. Okay.

Lorrie: So perhaps more than usual. On the other hand, who can say what's usual with such a lack of continuity?

JC: Yeah, it's hard to know. I'm just curious. I'm really curious of how effective Harry was as a teacher, and how many students got a really good grade in Defense (good enough to go forward) because of that grade.

Lorrie: Because of that practice, yeah.

JC: That's what I want to know, yeah, and if the rest of them were Slytherins whose parents taught them shit at home or something or purebloods whose parents were like, "Okay, you're not learning that. I'm going to teach you."

Lorrie: Ernie Macmillan does say that the practice that they got in the D.A. really helped.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: He brings up foreshadowing about the Inferi, which is terrifying. Okay, that's going to happen.

JC: Yeah. They've been mentioned several times now. It's like, 'Okay.' Yeah, not Chekhov's Gun or something like that. I don't know.

Lorrie: Then to continue the callback to first-year Potions class, he asks a question and Hermione's got her hand in the air. He asks, "What is the advantage of a nonverbal spell?" Sadly for Snape, nobody but Hermione has their hand up in the air. "Yes?" She says, "Your adversary has no warning about what kind of magic you're about to perform, which gives you a split-second advantage," and that's such a resoundingly terrible answer.

JC: I love the fact, though... Okay, there's two things here that I love. One is that Snape looks around the room and waits, and it's like, 'Anybody else...'

Lorrie: 'Please, please.'

JC: But also, this is good teaching practice. This is what I teach people to do. I don't tell them to do it because that's how Snape does it, but it's the idea to give everyone time to think. Snape would never do this, but as a teacher, if only one person's raising their hand, then what you do is you say, "Okay, turn and talk to a partner, and then I'm going to pick somebody at random, so talk to somebody." That's the next thing that you would do as a teacher; he doesn't do that, but it's a start. I see him doing things in here that are terrible teaching, and I see him doing things that are actually, genuinely good teaching, so I love that.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: But yeah, this is something I love about Hermione that is also irking about Hermione: despite all of her experiences, her first idea is to go to the book and then take the words verbatim. She doesn't stop to process them herself or to think, 'What does this mean for me personally, or how might I interpret this?' It's just a reminder that this is what Hermione does. She's very much like this.

Lorrie: And it's a good principle to have in mind. 'Okay, that is what's going to happen when you use it. Right.' Snape says, in despair, "An answer copied almost word for word from the textbook, but correct in essentials." Oh, God...

JC: Yeah. He's expecting them not just to have read the book, but to have internalized it and have thought through what it means. He hasn't told them any of this, but this is his expectation at this level. There's little signs throughout here that he's taken this up a notch from anything that they've experienced before, except maybe with Lupin, but yeah. He's got very high expectations, and he's making that very clear here.

Lorrie: I thought that he was also hoping and expecting that they might have noticed in their real lives what the advantage might be.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: I think that was part of his despair. "Oh, come on. What is wrong with you people that you've never thought, 'Wow, I wish I could do this spell nonverbally.'"

JC: Right.

Lorrie: "Have you never made that mental connection?"

JC: But on the other hand, Snape does not create the kind of classroom environment in which people would be very willing to share things like that. The odds are 50/50 on whether he's going to just sigh and go, "Ugh," or actually berate you for your answer. The odds of you actually getting a compliment or something positive happening from any utterance in his class are pretty low.

Lorrie: Well, if you're a Slytherin and you have an answer, it might help. Anyway, in resignation, he says, "Yes, they give you the element of surprise... if you can manage without shouting incantations," which is his usual insult, right? You can't teach without an insult, but she is, of course, missing the point entirely. If you get past Snape's insult, you can see how much he values quiet, nonverbal magic, and

he, as usual, looks down on people who are too showy because that's his whole way of life. Don't broadcast your intentions. Do not give yourself away. Then he does what you suggested, where he has them break up into partners and try jinxing and repelling in silence.

JC: Yeah. This is what Harry did last year, right? It's exactly what Harry did. Okay, he doesn't give them, "Here's the basic idea or a demonstration." He's like, "Just try it. Just try hard," which is very Snape.

Lorrie: The way they do it is start with a baseline. Try it first, and then they find... Of course, it's the first day, so they don't know how to do it silently., but the D.A. members do find that having cast Shield Charms so much in practice means that they're in a decent position to learn this. Then after ten minutes, Hermione casts a nonverbal Shield Charm, and Harry is bitter and thinks, 'Oh, any other teacher would give Gryffindor twenty points for this, but Snape ignores her.' That's a beautiful, beautiful moment in this chapter where, 'Okay, Harry, you're wrong. Snape is right.' You have to think of all of the build-up that this volume and the previous one have given to this moment. Harry has just lived through what Snape was expecting, which is he's just had a moment where he wished he could cast a nonverbal spell. He's lying on the floor of the Hogwarts Express and he's trying to get his wand and it's not moving, but also the previous summer Hermione had silenced Dolohov during the Ministry battle, but he was still able to use this Dark curse on her that required ten potions to cure, which at least some of those must have been brewed by Snape. Then we saw Kingsley modifying Marietta Edgecombe's memory in front of Umbridge, and we've also seen house-elves casting magic without wizard methods. All of these things have been pointing to things that the kids have already had to think about: you may have to be in hiding, you may have to try to protect somebody else, you may need to cast magic without being overheard, and the big one (which the house-elves are an example of this) [is] nonverbal magic is literally how you can protect yourself if you don't have a voice. Harry Potter has one competent friend; she's going to have to know this. I think Snape's in a bad mood at her right now. He's like, 'No, I can't give you House points. You have to know this, kid.'

JC: Again, Snape's standards are extremely high here.

Lorrie: And he's anxious.

JC: Yeah. He has very little patience for people who aren't thinking on the level he expects them to be. I think the biggest issue that I have with Snape as a teacher is his disdain for students in general.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: "If you're not keeping up with me, why are you even here?" This is coming from me as a teacher educator: if your room feels like that, very few people are going to learn. The people who are going to learn are the ones who are so far above that they don't even need you.

Lorrie: Right. Yeah.

JC: This is the number one thing. All the things that Snape is frustrated about, he is causing this.

Lorrie: Well, some of it he is.

JC: He's the one who's making the space feel like a place where the students are not walking in ready to think because they're terrified. They're terrified of him.

Lorrie: I could definitely see five or six different ways he could have coaxed some of this thinking out of them on the spot. Yes.

JC: Yeah. It's just a general thing about teaching. If people are terrified to be in the space, they are not going to learn from you. Some will, but the vast majority of them just are not because that's not how human brains work. We don't learn very well when we're terrified and stressed. We just don't; our brains don't function. A lot of this... I see how he's frustrated at them, and I see this in teachers a lot. This is why I'm bringing this up. I see this in teachers.

Lorrie: Oh, my God. No, it's very realistic. Yes.

JC: It's very realistic, right? You're constantly berating your kids for what they don't know, and when they do get something right, you're sarcastic at them?

Lorrie: Oh, my God, that. Yes.

JC: What do you think is going on in their brains right now? Yeah. Anyway, Snape... That's my biggest complaint about him as a teacher: he does a lot of

things that are great, and then he does this one thing that just makes it all almost impossible to function.

Lorrie: Well, I'm making a connection now. There are two things that are true about Snape's character, and I'm realizing that they're the same thing. One of them is that he's emotionally immature in general; we see that in so many different behaviors from him. The other is he teaches the kids like they are all equal classmates. They're just his dumb classmates who are being infuriatingly slow and he can't believe how dumb they are, which is not a fun attitude in a classmate, but is all sorts of wrong from a teacher. That is probably the most consequential effect of his immaturity: he brings it into the very core of his classroom attitude. You shouldn't even be talking this way to your classmate, but as a teacher, this is embarrassing. Just in case we thought that he wouldn't be doing that, he then gives a textbook example of how he does it by talking to Ron with the best of intentions way, way, way deep underneath. Deep underneath, he sees that Ron doesn't have any of the basics and needs some correction, and the way he says it is, "Pathetic, Weasley. Here -- let me show you --" which is so horrible it's funny. Okay, I don't want to hear that from anybody, not even a random stranger, let alone my teacher. At that point, Snape's lack of self-awareness has gotten to the point that he's so focused on how Harry and everybody is going to all need the skill he forgets; he forgets how humans -- kids, students -- are likely to take this, and he gets what he deserves. He has built up a history of being a jerk as a teacher. He turns his wand on Harry and he tries to demonstrate, and he is not even thinking of anything except how he's going to show the kids. Of course, Harry reacts instinctively. Forget the lesson; he yells *Protego*, and then we get this incredible moment. "His Shield Charm was so strong Snape was knocked off-balance and hit a desk."

JC: Yeah. The kid who taught almost everyone in the room how to cast these last year... Yeah, exactly.

Lorrie: That's not what Shield Charms usually do, but Snape has earned himself this unusual display of power. This actually made me go back to *Goblet of Fire*. I had to look up, "When does Harry learn how to cast a Shield Charm?" It's when Ron and Hermione are looking up defenses for him to prepare for the third task, and they say, "We'd never have found out about all these hexes in class." That's what Hermione says, and Ron says, "Good training for when we're all Aurors."

Shield Charms... They found this on their own, and then in *Goblet of Fire* the definition of Shield Charm given there is this was supposed to cast a temporary, invisible wall around himself that deflected minor curses. "Deflected minor curses" is quite different from shoving Snape into a desk. That's a really potent demonstration of how Harry has made this spell his own and really what a powerful magician Harry is.

JC: At this point, is this something that they should have learned during fifth year? Harry did teach everyone this during fifth year. Was it in the curriculum for fourth year, or should it have been in the curriculum for fifth year?

Lorrie: I don't think we see it being taught officially.

JC: Okay, so it's like a Patronus, where you either... Snape is assuming they all know how to do this.

Lorrie: Well, we know that Fred and George are selling hats to Ministry employees who aren't good at this.

JC: Right.

Lorrie: A Shield Charm is straight down the middle core Defense Against the Dark Arts, so it is exactly the kind of thing where having a different adjunct every year means that they're all looking at each other going, "You were supposed to cover that." "No, you were!" There's no oversight, so at what point were they supposed to have picked this up? I don't know.

JC: And then my other question: how much does Snape know about the D.A.?

Lorrie: Well, he knows that they existed, but the chapter says that Snape doesn't know that Harry had taught half the class the Shield Charm in the D.A. lessons. He doesn't know any details about what they did.

JC: It's just interesting to me that he just assumes that they all know it, which is very Snape of him. "Of course, you all know this. This is basic stuff."

Lorrie: Yeah, and he doesn't tell them what spell to use. He just says "deflect the jinx." Then he sees that these kids may be not nonverbal yet, but that they are pretty strong in this, and then he gets taught a lesson: he gets put in his place by Harry's Shield Charm. He would not have had that moment in class if he hadn't

built up a long history of people being jumpy around him for being an unpredictable and hostile teacher.

JC: Oh, for sure, and especially, whatever he was going to do to Harry was not going to be nice.

Lorrie: Harry -- yeah.

JC: This is the guy who threatened Neville's toad, right?

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Harry was quite correct to say, 'Why doesn't he pick out someone else for a change?' Harry is completely correct, and for him to not have responded that way... It's good that he did. It's good to show that his healthy defensive instincts are where they should be, considering who he is and what he's about to face.

JC: For sure.

Lorrie: Yeah. Snape can't really punish Harry for that, considering that he was the one who should've thought through how to teach this point better.

JC: Snape does seem to be knocked off-kilter by this. He's surprised.

Lorrie: Really, that's really not what you should have done, Snape, but yeah. Anyway... Now, in case people were thinking about not respecting Harry's defense abilities, they've just had another reiteration that no, this guy is the real deal. Just the thought of any of them doing that to Snape... Oh, that's scary. Then the author gives the fandom one of the most popular moments where he sasses Snape.

JC: I remember reading this for the first time and going, 'Oh, my God!'

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Wow!

Lorrie: "Do you remember me telling you we are practicing *nonverbal* spells, Potter?" and Harry says, "Yes." He [Snape] goes, "Yes, *sir*." "There's no need to call me 'sir', professor." The readers are all cheering... Wow, they really hate each other.

JC: I just love the fact that the whole class goes...

Lorrie: *gasps*

JC: I can imagine this happening in a classroom, and the class going, "Ooooh!" Yeah.

Lorrie: I can imagine people turning to high-five each other at this.

JC: Yeah. This would become the thing of legend.

Lorrie: It is a legend.

JC: Yeah. "You're not going to believe what Harry Potter said to Professor Snape!" Yeah.

Lorrie: "Oh, and Snape was really asking for it." Okay, for that, Harry gets detention, which... Yeah, all right. That's another callback to the first Potions class, where Snape here says, "I do not take cheek from anyone, Potter... not even *'the Chosen One,'*" which echoes the first year where he says, "A point will be taken from Gryffindor house for your cheek, Potter." But this time around, it's contrasted against Slughorn remembering how much he adored Lily because she was sassy, and Slughorn is projecting that hope onto Harry. Slughorn keeps looking expectantly at Harry, waiting for Harry to be sassy. All right, we're bringing in more of the unspoken layers here, and that little reminder of Lily (because 'cheek' and the ability to be cheeky has now been connected to Lily) is also reminding us Lily's Shield Charm (or her protectiveness) is what deflected *Avada Kedavra*. This is not a minor curse, so yeah, there's a strong bloodline here.

JC: Another thing that I really find interesting about this Defense Against the Dark Arts lesson is that it's contrasted very clearly to Umbridge, but it's also such a clear similarity between the way Harry taught the D.A. and the way that Snape was teaching this. Take out Snape's attitude and snarkiness to the students, he's doing the same thing.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: "Okay, we're going to talk about why this is important and then we're going to try it, and we're going to pair up and we're going to do it." It's exactly the way Harry would have taught this lesson.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: If Harry was still running the D.A., this is what he would do without being mean to people. I think that's one of the big themes of this book: to put Harry and Snape to see how they're similar as people.

Lorrie: They do both care about defense, yeah, and there is a good reason to start with this basic stuff first. Some of that Harry got from Snape; not the Shield Charm, but *Expelliarmus*. Start basic. I do also think it's funny that he says, "Pathetic, Weasley," because I'm pretty sure whatever Ron was doing was pretty hopeless at the moment, but it very much was like, "Ugh, you guys are going to need to know this." Oh, boy... You know, some people just aren't cut out to be teachers.

JC: True. True. Snape reminds me very much of a professor when I was in graduate school, a professor that I actually avoided taking a class with because I heard how awful he was and he was very much like Snape. It was like, "I can't believe that none of you know this. My daughter's in elementary school and she could do this graduate level math," which is stupid. No, she couldn't, but it was like that. People would come to his office hours and he would mock them when they asked questions, and it was very Snape-like. Oh, yeah, it's very realistic. Yeah.

Lorrie: Whatever bitterness is in your life, could you take it somewhere else?

JC: Yes, please.

Lorrie: Yeah. Well, I'm sure that Snape thinks twenty times a day how much he's not cut out for this. It also, very, very sadly, reminds me of parents who don't understand their children's developmental levels and can't believe that a two-year-old is acting like a two-year-old.

JC: Ugh... Yes. Yeah.

Lorrie: That's very hard to witness.

JC: Yes. That is a tangent that I know we can spend a lot of time on. Yes, yes, it's very similar.

Lorrie: It's very painful.

JC: It's very similar.

Lorrie: So yeah, here Snape is on the first day of class, teaching them a subject, aghast that they don't already know it.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: Okay. Well, fine. We know that at this age, you already knew it, Snape. Great. Okay. Fortunately for Harry, as he's thinking about his attention that he's just gotten from Snape, he gets a summons for a lesson from Dumbledore that's going to override that because it's at the same time.

JC: Which Snape is... I don't remember how this plays out. I guess Dumbledore's...

Lorrie: Oh, Dumbledore totally...

JC: Yeah, okay.

Lorrie: Snape has nothing to say about this, but it's very much that the rivalry between Snape and Harry for Dumbledore's attention is on.

JC: 'Daddy likes me best.'

Lorrie: Yeah, he very much does. Of course he overrides Snape, and of course every time it's a choice between being nice to Harry or being nice to Snape, of course Dumbledore is going to be nice to Harry. Yeah. So that's super exciting, right? We get the invitation. Whoo!

JC: And Harry understands the code. I love that. Harry's like, "Yeah, that's what the..." He knows. He didn't have to even think about it. It's great.

Lorrie: And Hermione and Ron can't wait to hear what this is going to be like. Ooh, fascinating!

JC: And none of them have any clue. Well, none of us had any clue at the point that we were...

Lorrie: I had no clue.

JC: Had no clue where this was going to go, but it is interesting that they're reinforcing it could be anything. We just had Christmas here, and one of my favorite Christmas movies is *A Christmas Story*, which I know is not everyone's

cup of tea. When the dad gets the box that says "FRA-GEE-LAY" on it, he's like, "It could be anything in there!"

Lorrie: Oh!

JC: It's like, 'We can't even imagine what's in this box. What could it be?'

Hosts: Yeah.

Lorrie: It's another move of great confidence from this writer, who has the nerve to rebuild up the suspense. Will these lessons live up to it? Well, the author seems to think so. Okay.

JC: Or will it just be a leg lamp that we all look askance at? Yeah.

Lorrie: Sometimes, that's all it is. So the kids then walk on to the Potions class.

JC: The Potions class, which is very small. I love the description that there's twelve people. It's the trio, it's Ernie Macmillan, four Slytherins, and four Ravenclaws.

Lorrie: Ha ha!

JC: I've wanted to know how many people were in Defense Against the Dark Arts versus, because this is small. These are the people who got... I don't know. Did anyone get an Outstanding? Who knows... Outstandings and Exceeds Expectations, right? Those are the two. That's it?

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: How many students does Snape normally have in these N.E.W.T.-level classes? Oh, my God.

Lorrie: I would think five, maybe...

JC: Wow.

Lorrie: Because I continue to imagine that the N.E.W.T.-level class in Potions is Snape's sad, alternate universe version of 'if he had to teach, this is what he would prefer,' the one area where he has any control over. But yeah, no, this is a bigger class than Snape would have had, and Slughorn has set the stage.

JC: Oh, before we go into the classroom, I found it really interesting that Ernie Macmillan is up to his usual sort of pompous bullshit, but he openly (in front of the Slytherins) talks about what they did in the D.A. last year. I thought that shows how different it feels at Hogwarts this year.

Lorrie: So totally, yeah.

JC: It was so secret the year before, but they had to work out a code system to tell people when the meetings would be, and there was the whole thing that happened with Marietta Edgecombe; now it's just something you can talk about. That's how different Hogwarts feels. I liked that.

Lorrie: That's very hopeful. I love Ernie. Okay, Slughorn, being dramatic as he is, has set the stage with these mystery cauldrons that are bubbling away as they walk in.

JC: I love this class. Can I just say this is the best first day of school I've ever seen at Hogwarts? This guy is good. Oh, my God, wow.

Lorrie: He's so confident. He knows this is fun. He's having way too much fun.

JC: And he's very good at this. He's an expert, clearly.

Lorrie: It's such a fresh start. It's like the first day of class all over again. Yes, you've been doing this year after year after year, but this is your post-pubescent edition of that visit to Ollivander's shop, where you all have to think about how your magic is individual. The magic here is keyed to your unique inner self, and that gets re-emphasized here. It's very much like at this new stage of life, you're starting over. It's great. It's so accepting and full of potential. So yeah, you walk in and you're like, 'Okay, he's got something. He's got some plan, bubble, bubble, bubble...' We get the moment where Harry and Ron have no textbooks, and Slughorn digs and digs and digs until he finds these two extremely battered copies of old, old *Advanced Potion-Making* by Libatius Borage volumes.

JC: It's interesting, too, that the movie did this scene so differently. Here, he rummages in the cabinet and he comes up with his two battered textbooks and just hands them to them here, and there's a 50% chance of who's going to get which book, right? There's a whole other timeline where Ron got the book, right? But in the movie, they actually had the boys fight over it.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: They could see the shelf, and there was one decent looking book and one crappy looking book; they actually fought over it, and Harry lost the fight.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: I didn't realize that it was that different until I reread this, and I was like, 'Oh, yeah, that didn't happen in the book.'

Lorrie: I love that divergence. I love that film version of it. It felt very authentic to me. It let the actors put some more character [on]. So yeah, in the book here, they get whatever Slughorn found at the very bottom of the cabinet.

JC: Ooh, the other thing that says to me is that Snape has gone in and transformed that Defense Against the Dark Arts classroom, but Snape's stuff is still in the Potions classroom, right? That book was at the back of that cabinet because it was Snape's.

Lorrie: Yep.

JC: He just left his classroom, maybe, the way it was and just moved over to this other space. It's like, 'Whoa.' Very interesting.

Lorrie: It reminds me of when Harry looks at his trunk. He has the top layer, and then there's also just stuff at the bottom layer that's all crumbs.

JC: Yeah. Isn't that what closets are like?

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: 'Oh, wow, here's some pants that I could fit into fifteen years ago, and they're still in my closet.' Yes.

Lorrie: And the thought of having to go through every single thing is like, 'Ugh...'

JC: Oh, yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah. And of course, Snape is also always doing the job of two or three people.

JC: Yeah, true. But I think, too... I don't know. Snape... Did he forget the book was there? Did he just assume that no one would go to the back of the cabinet? Yeah.

Lorrie: Well, I had to think about that a lot analyzing this book, everything ranging from 'Did Snape somehow put a charm on it on purpose to get it to Harry?' versus 'Did he just forget it was there?' How did this happen? The closest I can come to a conclusion is that this book is about how if there's stuff in your past you're uncomfortable with about yourself, you push it away in your mind. Then Hermione says that at the very end about this, where she says, "I don't think he was proud of it. I don't think he wanted to associate himself with it." There are definitely memories I have of embarrassing things I did when I was fifteen or sixteen where I just want to go, 'Eh... Well, I'm different now.'

JC: Oh, God, yes. Yes, yes, yes. Oh, yeah.

Lorrie: That's the normal everyday version of the extreme that Voldemort goes to, where he commits murders to enable himself to fracture enough to pack away parts of his history completely outside of himself. He really, really cannot integrate whatever he's ashamed of or dislikes, but everybody has some mild version of that. What we see here, especially as the Slughorn storyline is going to play out, is what happens when people are ashamed of things in their past. We're going to see hints of that playing out in Dumbledore also, although we don't really see that until the next volume, so it is universal. Anyway, that's the conclusion I've reached: not only did Snape have a whole lot to do...

JC: Yeah. The book represents the Myspace account that you want to forget you ever had.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: 'Let's hope that was deleted from the internet.' That book is in the back of a cabinet.

Lorrie: Right. 'Shouldn't you have deleted it?' 'Well, I don't know that anyone's going to look for it, and I would have to hunt up the password. No one's going to look, right? I don't even remember what I have on there.' So yeah, Harry has this very old book. Meanwhile, Slughorn unveils his show with the three bubbling cauldrons. I guess it also shows us how advanced Harry, Hermione, and Ron are that Veritaserum and Polyjuice are things that they just completely know already, even though they're obviously special enough to be part of the big reveal on the first day. Okay. I guess this is sort of what Snape was hoping for when asking

"Why would you need a nonverbal spell?" In this case, the kids are in fact able to tell you why a person might want Polyjuice.

JC: It's also interesting to me that all the potions they're brewing today... They're complex, but also he's just brewed a cauldron of Polyjuice Potion. What's going to happen to that after this class?

Lorrie: Right, right.

JC: We have a cauldron of Veritaserum. Where is that going to go? There's a little bit of that, too.

Hosts: Hmmm....

Lorrie: And then we are introduced to Amortentia! Harry's smells like treacle tart, broomstick handles, and something flowery, which made me wonder: all right, JC. What would yours smell like?

JC: When I first read this book, I didn't get that this was about romantic love. I thought, 'What makes you feel comfortable and safe and at home?'

Lorrie: It might be that, too. Yeah.

JC: Maybe it's the same thing. I wasn't thinking that this would remind me of a person, but more that it would remind me of an environment in which I feel safe and comfortable. That's kind of the direction that I went with it, so I had to spend some time thinking about it. I think that it would have smelled very differently to me at different times in my life.

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: If you ask me this question across my life, it would completely change (which is probably fine), but I think that right now, it would smell like something very deliciously yeasty and buttery and sweet baking like cinnamon rolls, or something that would feel warm and homey and cozy and evokes this feeling of 'I'm doing a good job of taking care of the people around me and showing them love and making my home feel like a really wonderful place to be.'

Lorrie: This is so similar to your enthusiasm over the breakfast at the beginning of this chapter.

JC: Oh, yeah!

Lorrie: If you want to make people feel like this is a good place where you can know that you're welcome, and things are good and there's joy in the world and somebody who cares about you...

JC: And you feed them. Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah, because I tried to think 'What would mine smell like?' and I thought, not exactly about romance, but smells that just made me go... *exhales* Blissful. I thought it would definitely have grapefruit in it, like grapefruit zest, and then I thought there are things like the way a number two pencil... The way the wood smells and tastes when you chew on it. I also have a block of beeswax, which I'm now going to show you over Zoom. Not like anyone can hear it, but anyway... A beeswax block that I use for waxing thread, and also cotton batik when you iron it; it has a really beautiful smell, so there's craft there. Also, when you're boiling strawberries for jam... Heavenly. But yeah, how personal that is and how it brings joy when you think about what are the smells that would do that. It's very magical, isn't it?

JC: Yeah. I was thinking at different points in my life, what would it have been? There was a time when it would have been baby, and there was a time when it would have been something more connected to my partner, which feels weird to say. But yeah, there was a time when that would have been the most important thing, and there was a time when it would've been something associated to school and to the things I was learning. It's interesting to me to think about how it would have changed over my life and what it is now, and that also could be the effect of it being the holidays and it being winter.

Lorrie: Winter, definitely.

JC: And some things like that. It could be, if you ask me again in the summer, I might say something completely different. I might say 'coconut and the ocean air.' Yeah, exactly.

Lorrie: A Mai Tai. Yes.

JC: A Mai Tai. Yeah, really.

Lorrie: In fact, that makes me look forward to doing that. This is part of the function of the joy of this kind of literature. It is nice to think about what makes things magical for you and to find out about your friends, because if I ask you this and then you ask me back and we sit there happily thinking about these things, we're creating enjoyment together. We're playing. That's the point of this all, right?

JC: This is the thing: I miss being able to do this in my class. I used to do things like this with my students because Harry Potter was such a common reference. We call it a warm welcome, and you open a classroom with something that has nothing to do with your subject but gives your students a chance to let you know a little bit of their personality and talk to each other and warm up, and then they'll feel comfortable and they're ready to learn. The warm welcome idea is something that I love a lot, and I used to do a lot of Harry Potter ones, and I just can't bring myself to do them anymore.

Lorrie: No. Right, you can't.

JC: I haven't done them for years, not since 2020. I can't do it. 'What's your Hogwarts House?' was always one that we did.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: This is another example of 'What would it smell like to you?' and there were other things, but yeah, no longer. I'm sad about that.

Lorrie: Not that we can't create it again in other ways, but the sense of history and what was lost there is pretty strong. Then of course with these intensely personal questions, like 'What would your Amortentia smell like?' there's always that element of privacy. Hermione goes pink and she won't say.

JC: I love that she... Halfway through saying it, she understands what it means. Harry has no clue...

Lorrie: Right.

JC: But Hermione goes, "Oh, I know what this is." Yeah.

Lorrie: It recalls how we just saw Tonks being so vulnerable sending Snape her Patronus and what would happen if Snape's Patronus got revealed, so yeah. Fortunately, nobody is forcing anyone to say what their Amortentia would smell

like, and Hermione gets her twenty points, the twenty points she didn't get from Snape in the previous class.

JC: I love the way that that works out, too. She identifies all three potions, and it's not until Slughorn realizes who she is that he awards the twenty points to Gryffindor. He's like, 'Oh, wow, this kid sure...' He's like, "Oh, you're the one that Harry told me about." He says... I can't remember exactly the wording about it. "Basically, you're the brightest. You're one of the best of this class." I love the fact that across the room, Draco Malfoy is seething with jealousy.

Lorrie: Oh, poor Draco... UGH!

JC: Not used to Hermione getting praise in Potions and him not.

Lorrie: Right. Yes, all the times that Hermione has beaten him at Potions in the past have been noted with silence before. Of course, Slughorn does that disgusting thing where he says, "Oh, are you related to this famous potioneer?" No.

JC: And another thing: she says, "No, I'm Muggle-born," and that's the thing that she can say this year with comfort.

Lorrie: Right.

JC: Yeah, and she's confident that she's in a space where she can just say that and she's probably not going to get shit for it.

Lorrie: Well... Even darker knowing that the teacher didn't come in with a list already.

JC: Oh, yeah.

Lorrie: This is the kind of thing that I love that the series does: the allegorical stuff where Slughorn explains that Amortentia doesn't create love. You can't do that; that's impossible. It causes a temporary, powerful infatuation or obsession, so it would be recreating the conditions for study. Then he gets all far off and says, "When you have seen this much of life as I have, you will not underestimate the power of obsessive love."

JC: I like that he does that in response to Malfoy rolling his eyes or something. Yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah.

Hosts: Hmmmm....

Lorrie: Yeah. You would be foolish. That also reminds me of a very good fandom debate. Is there such a thing as obsessive love? If it's obsessive, is it love? Are obsession and love different? I think a very strong argument can be made that obsession and love are not the same thing. But on the other hand, when you talk about obsessive love, I definitely know what flavor of human uncomfortable emotion that is. The final mystery, Felix Felicis... Everyone's so stunned and excited. It's addictive. It's very toxic; it's bad for you.

JC: It's like a drug, basically.

Lorrie: It is a drug, yes.

JC: He's like, "I have brewed crack, and one of you will win it today."

Lorrie: Right.

JC: What the hell?! It's heroin!

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: "Here you go, kids. Compete for it." Wow.

Lorrie: It's not completely illegal. [It's] only illegal in sports competitions, examinations, elections...

JC: And he's just going to give it to one of them, assuming that they're going to use it for good.

Lorrie: "Well, just remember that you can't use it in..." Yeah. Everybody wants this. It sounds like it's pretty impossible to brew.

JC: Which, again, he's really good.

Lorrie: He's very good.

JC: The potions that he has on display are all very hard to brew and take a long time. How did he brew Polyjuice that fast? Whoa, okay.

Lorrie: Well, we know he's had all summer to think about it.

JC: I guess so. Yeah. Okay, yeah, I guess the book started in a different place. Yeah, that's true.

Lorrie: The book started on that one very long night...

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: And every single person there has secret wishes for what they would do if they could have luck. I don't know about you... I wondered what I would use it for, and when I noticed that I had gotten lost in that daydream, I don't know how much time I lost track of. I lost track of some time.

JC: I love that when he says he's taken it twice in his life and he knows how old he was. He says, "I had two perfect days," and he just loses himself for a moment. Hmm, that's interesting. I wonder what happened on those perfect days.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: That seems like a... yeah.

Lorrie: Did it make you think what you might want to do or about amazing days that you've had?

JC: Yeah. I think I have, my entire life, believed, somehow, that I am incredibly lucky, and I feel like I am just as my life. You could analyze this and think, 'Okay, it's my outlook on life that's making me think that I'm lucky,' but I feel like I'm the kind of person [for] who a bad thing will almost happen and then not happen, and I'll say, "Oh, my God, I'm so lucky," and the person sitting next week will be like, "Oh, this is the shittiest day. I can't believe that just almost happened." It could just be my personality, but when I think about the best days in my life, I think about all of the things that occurred for me to get to that point (and there have been many of them), and I just feel like I am pretty lucky. That Felix Felicis feeling... I have experienced that quite a bit, and it wasn't because I deserved it or because I earned it in any way. It was just coincidence and I was in the right place at the right time, and I was able to take advantage of my opportunity or appreciate something. Yeah, I don't know. I feel like I have had a lot of days like that in my life.

Lorrie: That is such a good, helpful way to brew it in your own head.

JC: Oh, okay. That's interesting.

Lorrie: One thing I noticed: I have issues with time and being on time for things. Sometimes I would be running to a bus stop, and I would see a bus pulling away and just berate myself. 'If I had just left the house ten seconds earlier...' Then I consciously decided that whenever that happens, I'm going to think, 'I left the house so early that I saw the previous bus pulling away. Wow! Good me!' I just got so tired of feeling like I was always failing. 'Okay, did anything change?' No, I just have to change how I think about it, because really, why am I suffering like this? I think that was a good key for what you just said: noticing when something bad doesn't happen, even though you saw the potential for it. Actually, that is a really health-making mindset because moments of gratitude or relief or appreciation build up your inner strength.

JC: Yeah, that's true.

Lorrie: They give you a little moment to exhale and to reset. Purely cold survival mode to have more of those.

JC: Yeah, yeah. I think that you can train yourself to think that way, but yeah. That is interesting. I like that way of thinking about it, that I'm brewing my own Felix Felicis when I am making the conscious choice to view a situation as... This is probably the number one criticism that my partner would have of me: I am always looking on the bright side of things to an extent that he despises sometimes. He's like, "Will you just not? I really don't want to know what the bright side of this situation is, okay? I just want to be miserable. Let me be miserable."

Lorrie: "Hold on to it. Could you say that in your own head?"

JC: Yeah. Sometimes I have to hold it in, but yeah. Yeah.

Lorrie: But yeah, that is an autoimmune kind of response to ups and downs in life. I'm really approaching this from the cold-eyed view of strategies for surviving under fascism. What can we take from this book series (or from anything anywhere) that's going to keep us strong? Yeah. If you are somebody who can naturally appreciate the good fortune in your life and you can show us how you do it, that is something that is teachable. That is something I really appreciate having gained from just listening to you today. Thank you.

JC: Oh, that's great! Good, because normally I feel a little bit foolish about it.

Lorrie: Well, there are a lot of different ways to be a human, but we could all do with expanding our toolbox a bit, huh?

JC: For sure. For sure.

Lorrie: Here we have a Hufflepuff and a Ravenclaw.

JC: Yeah, right?

Lorrie: You explain the thing that sometimes has gotten you criticism, and me going, "Yes, but you know what, actually..."

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: "I'm going to use that. Okay?"

JC: Hey, I use stuff from you all the time, totally, so yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah. I have a shiny little asterisk that's got your name next to that one. Thank you!

JC: Yay!

Lorrie: There's this tiny little Felix Felicis temptation goal.

JC: I love the fact that this lesson... that there's a prize at the end.

Lorrie: Yes!

JC: And what's hilarious about it is that this is something you do sparingly as a teacher. You cannot do this every day. I love the fact that he's launching the year this way because that's when you would do it; you would do it at the beginning or you would do it at the end.

Lorrie: Right.

JC: But at the beginning, really, it's also an assessment. What he's doing here is he says, "Okay, you're going to brew this really difficult potion that is impossible to actually brew in an hour," and he is watching to see how good are they at doing all the things. This is a pre-assessment, is what he's doing.

Lorrie: He's getting so much information from this.

JC: He's getting so much information, and he's going to use that going forward in this class.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: He's going to know these kids and what their strategies are and what their strengths are and what their weaknesses are. It's just such good teaching! It made me so happy.

Lorrie: Yeah, and who responds in what way to a prize as a motivation, to time pressure, and who can handle the fact that they're being given an assignment that cannot be successfully completed. God, it's so much rich data, and he can just hum and look around. There's only twelve of them, so he can --

JC: Yeah, so he can get a good look.

Hosts: Yeah.

JC: This made me very happy.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: As a teacher, I was very happy.

Lorrie: It's fun to read, and it's another callback to the first book because it's Draught of Living Death that they have to brew.

JC: Again, a danger -- He doesn't think that anyone's actually going to make it. It's like, 'Okay, it's a dangerous potion. It can actually kill people.'

Lorrie: Yeah. "Be careful with this one."

JC: What? He's having them brew this, but he has no expectation that anyone's actually going to do it.

Lorrie: Well, it's also the first year of N.E.W.T. classes, so all of those things (like the Restricted Section in the library)... They have now crossed that barrier where they're allowed to do these things that had been off-limits before. "Yeah, you guys passed the test. Here you are. We're going to deal with the dangerous stuff." He's looking around... Harry then opens his grungy little book. Literary Geek Joy here: the previous owner is established as having been literally Libatius Borage's equal because the margins were as black as the printed portions. That's an equation,

right? The previous owner is a competitor and co-author; he's marginalized and he's not the central authority, but he's got just as much to say. Who is this person? When was this? You get all these layers of time. It's very intriguing, right? Meanwhile, to increase Harry's joy, Draco makes a pathetic attempt to curry favor.

JC: Oh... Draco is a character that's close to my heart for reasons we talked about a couple years ago now, and he just seems so human here.

Lorrie: It's so mortifying.

JC: He's like, 'Surely, he'll be impressed with me if I just let him know who I am.' No.

Lorrie: 'Nobody can possibly tell what I'm trying for here.' Right. "I think you knew my grandfather." Hmm...

JC: Slughorn's like, "Yeah. He died, didn't he? Anyway, moving on..."

Lorrie: Yes. "Such a shame."

JC: "So sad. Anyway..."

Lorrie: Yeah. Draco, you are being a loser today. So here's Harry obviously having a day that's turning out pretty well, and then he sees this instruction: "Crush sopophorous bean with flat side of silver dagger rather than cutting," something that I think about really frequently. 'Oh, this is so beautiful and real. Okay, use this other technique and all this juice comes out and it's this beautiful color.' Love it, love it. The potion immediately turned exactly the shade of lilac described by the textbook. What?! The moment... This is the moment Harry's convinced. It is convincing.

JC: Yeah, because I love that he's like, 'Eh, okay. This person wrote this note on the side,' and he's having trouble cutting up the beans.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: That's when he finally goes, 'Fuck it. Let me do this.'

Lorrie: 'What could it hurt?'

JC: Yeah. 'What could it hurt?' I don't know. At this point, Harry is not as intent on winning the potion as he is... He noticed that Draco Malfoy really wants it.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: At this point, it feels like Harry wants to do well and wants Draco not to win it because he knows Draco is up to no good.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: That's the last thing he needs, but I don't really see him as being competitive for it until...

Lorrie: Until it accidentally happens.

JC: I don't know. Maybe until he starts to realize, 'I could win this.'

Lorrie: But yeah, he has no reason to think (based on years and years and years of history) that he could ever win a Potions prize.

JC: Yeah, yeah. And then it's like, 'Holy shit!'

Lorrie: Yeah, and it's a little bit, too, like the whole Sorcerer's Stone setup where you win it if you want to prevent something dangerous from falling into other people's hands (Felix Felicis), but it's not as pure as that.

JC: True, true. But yeah, it is a bit of a reminder of that. That's true. In the meantime, Hermione's hair is poofing up from the steam.

Lorrie: Oh, my God, it's so terrible.

JC: Everyone's potions don't look like they're supposed to, and it's clearly very difficult, this whole process.

Lorrie: All the nerdery, the joyful nerdery... Okay, you have to add a clockwise stir after every seventh (counter)clockwise, which when I first read it, I thought that just sounds made up. But then when I was converting simple recipes into Potions (doing workshops with school kids), no; actually, that's practical advice that you can turn into making it sound like a potions instruction, but sure. If what you're supposed to do is mix and then halt it for a while and let it settle, and then start again and do that regularly, then you could make it sound like it's some Potions mystery.

JC: But also, that's real.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Cooking is actually like that.

Lorrie: Yeah, yeah.

JC: Anyone who's ever tried to make a hollandaise sauce has probably had the experience of you have to stir that shit just right. Or with a risotto, adding the right amount of liquid and then you have to stir it in a certain way. Even the other day, I had some extra egg whites after I made some cookies and I thought, 'I'm going to make meringues.' Getting the egg whites... I got the egg whites the perfect consistency, and then I thought, 'I'm going to add some flavor extract,' and that collapsed the whole thing. I was like, 'Damn it, damn it!'

Lorrie: 'You fool! You dare.' Yeah.

JC: 'NOOOOOOOO!'

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: So yeah, just this little thing poofed my potion. It's done. Nothing I can do.

Lorrie: I think the most recent experience I had like that was trying to make aquafaba whipped cream.

JC: Oh, my gosh. I've never even tried that.

Lorrie: *heavy exhale*

JC: I've heard it's challenging, though.

Lorrie: Ugh... Well, after a very long, unrewarding time when I achieved something that was presentable, it did not taste very good. It doesn't last.

JC: Oh, okay.

Lorrie: And I think there are ways to make it last, but that would affect the taste. Anyway, there are people out there who know how to do this, but my first attempt... If Snape had come by and said something sarcastic to me, I would have accepted it as my due.

JC: One of the things that's interesting here: thinking about potions-making as being similar to cooking something really intricate and delicate, this idea that you

have to read the instructions, you have to understand the instructions... You have to understand why you're doing the things you're doing so that you do them even more correctly. I do this all the time anyway: there's a recipe that I want to try and I always read all the comments on the recipe, and then I make note of the margins (writing in the margins) what are things that people who have done this before said. "I did this instead, and it worked so much better."

Lorrie: Yes.

JC: I'm writing down notes in the margin, and that's exactly what Harry is doing here. Hermione's criticism of him later ("Well, that wasn't your own work")... None of this was our own work. Potions is about your ability to, at least at this level, follow really precise instructions in a particular way. It's not about making up new shit yet. You're not researchers. Anyway, I thought that was... He read the comments.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Right? That's all he did, and it did turn out better.

Lorrie: Yeah, and what he's doing (that Snape always wants the kids to do) is if you have an instinct for Potions, it's to understand what's going on enough so that you can adjust for small differences in an environment. If it's a humid day, you're going to have to whip those egg whites a little longer.

JC: I think bread making is, for me, my Draught of Living Death. I've never been able to do it correctly. Something always goes wrong. Yeah.

Lorrie: You follow the directions entirely, and how come the person next to you is doing it so much better?

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: 'Well, it was a dry day today, so I added more moisture.' 'What?! That's not what it said to do!'

JC: Yeah, exactly.

Lorrie: 'Well, you can tell because it feels this way.' 'Okay, you're right.' So yes, Harry doesn't understand what he's doing, but it's turning out really well. Fandom has pointed out -- I did not make this connection, but I think they're absolutely

right -- that Snape has never taught Potions out of the textbook. He always writes his instructions on the board.

JC: Oh, that's interesting.

Lorrie: You always hear about Harry looking at the board, and then his heart sinking because he left out a line or something.

JC: Okay, that's interesting. I never noticed that. That is a very interesting point.

Lorrie: But yeah, when fans pointed that out, though, I thought, 'Actually, being who he is, Snape would have put the instructions up, and if there were some small improvements to incorporate, he would have included them.'

Slughorn doesn't do that; he just says, "Read from the book." Harry is following the kind of instructions that they've all been following until now and getting good results, and Hermione is following newly standard, not-improved instructions and getting not very far. Then the moment of judgment comes -- the thing that has never before happened in Potions class -- where Harry has the best potion.

JC: Wow, yeah, and everyone else is just as surprised as Harry is. "You?!"

Lorrie: Yeah. This wasn't actually supposed to be possible, and Slughorn is thrilled. He says, "Good lord, it's clear you've inherited your mother's talent. She was a dab hand at Potions, Lily was!" What a moment. Oh, my God.

JC: That's almost a bigger prize than the Felix Felicis: a little bit of information from someone who knew his mother and who cared about his mother.

Lorrie: Wow. Oh, my God. All of this information about Lily that Harry has been starved of before... People have been really stingy with details about her, and now he gets this. This is the first moment in this volume that the book puts together that Slughorn taught Lily Potions. We've just realized we didn't know what he taught before and he had praised Lily to Harry before, but he didn't say anything about the classroom. Now we have a class where Slytherins and Gryffindors are studying Potions side by side. This is the loudest silence about this other timeline -- there are people who remember it; Harry's not one of them -- where Snape and Lily must have known each other. The way that grading at Hogwarts goes... One of them was better than the other at Potions, and we know that Snape as a teen was super

invested in what grades he got, like Hermione. Which one of them was better? They had to have known each other. Okay, I love how loud that silence is.

JC: Okay, here's a question for you. At what point in this book did you know who the Half-Blood Prince was?

Lorrie: I didn't.

JC: Yeah. I don't think I knew until he said it, til he said, "I'm the Half-Blood Prince," and I would gasp. I had no idea.

Lorrie: I had no idea.

JC: Because we're also learning about other people. We're hearing a lot about people from the past throughout this book, so it could've have been any...

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: I harbored a... Yeah..there was a little hope. Could it be Lily? Wouldn't that have been nice? Probably not, based on some of the other stuff that's in the book that was written in the margins, but yeah, I had no idea.

Lorrie: I had none.

JC: Spoiler alert!

Lorrie: Yeah. Also, by that point, I was just like, 'Oh, him again? Wow, this series really, really-- Anytime there's any mystery at all, they really push Snape at you, huh? Okay, all right.' Poor Hermione is completely stony-faced. Her whole year is going to go like this (everything is going to be off) and she genuinely cannot tolerate not being number one, and she knows that everyone laughs at her for this. If she could, she would be more flexible about it; she obviously can't. Everything sucks for poor Hermione...

JC: And I identify with that. I had moments as a teenager. We talked about looking back on awful things that you did as a teenager; I have, one hundred percent, had awful moments as a teenager where I was mean to other people just because they had bested me at something.

Lorrie: Oh, gosh...

JC: I didn't think that that's how it should have gone, or I know that in my heart, I was still bad. I was awful, I was terrible. I want to go back and slap that person.

Lorrie: It's embarrassing.

JC: Yes, it's so embarrassing.

Lorrie: But see, that's something that the characters in this book have to deal with repeatedly. How do you deal with your shame at your former selves? What is your responsibility regarding that shame? If you think, 'Well, surely, it is harmless if I just sort of avoid it...' That may be true sometimes. Sometimes, no, you have to go right back into it. If you're in a position of teaching or otherwise influencing other people, you really do have to, and it's just as terrible as you thought it would be.

JC: Ugh, yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah, it's not fun. Is it universal? I imagine so. So yes, Hermione is in discomfort. Ginny has a completely different reason to be very angry at Harry about this -- completely different and very legitimate reason -- and she says, "You've been taking orders for something someone wrote in a book?"

JC: And it's funny because I remember reading this for the first time (and it honestly happened to me again this time because I had forgot), and I was, like, 'Oh, shit, yeah. That's a good point.'

Lorrie: 'Actually, Ginny!' This happens every time Ginny talks, right? *gasps* Yeah, Book Six, of all the callbacks to other volumes, is most of all a callback to the second volume with the Half-Blood Prince's textbook revisiting the issues that Tom Riddle's diary raised. When we read a book from some time ago, in what ways are we interacting or not interacting with the author? Do we know the author? How much power does that book and its author have over us? What makes a book safe or dangerous? What does the reader bring to it? How much do we have to know the author in order to know if it's safe? What can we do? There are things we can't know. How can we make the book safe for ourselves? This is a really strong example of what people call ring theory, where Rowling put in parallels symmetrically so that the second book and the second to last book have some symmetry.

JC: You said 'ring theory,' and because my family recently rewatched *The Lord of the Rings*, my mind went to a very different place.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: I was like, 'Ooh, yeah, it is kind of like -- Oh, wait, that's not what you're talking about.'

Lorrie: No, no, no. Yeah, this is chiasitic theory, yeah. So Hermione, determined to do something with her discomfort and to master it somehow: "*Specialis Revelio!*" she said, rapping it smartly on the front cover," which totally brings me back to the third book where Snape does that to the Marauder's Map.

JC: Oh, right. Yeah.

Lorrie: "Professor Severus Snape, master of this school, commands you to yield the information you conceal!" Snape said, hitting the map with his wand." Yeah, that doesn't get you anywhere, does it? Yeah, Hermione has no more success than Snape did. Deflated, she says, "It really does seem to be just a textbook."

JC: She gives up very quickly. I'm thinking about the broom that Harry got from Sirius...

Lorrie: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

JC: And how that broom was kept from him for a long time. "We're going to really check it out," and there's no infinite -- Hermione's like, "Oh, okay. I guess it's not magical."

Lorrie: There's no magic. Whatever it is, yeah.

JC: Yeah, it's interesting. It's a very quick 'Okay.'

Lorrie: So I don't know about you, but to me, this all miserably reminded me of how it feels uneasy to read *Harry Potter* post-TERFpocalypse. Is there something in this series that's going to poison people's minds? When we read it, uncritically and with enjoyment before the author revealed what a TERF she is, were we being poisoned without our own awareness? Was that being seeded in us? Is it okay to become invested in what a book advises without thoroughly first vetting the author? How can we do that anyway? Should we just never read any books just in case?

JC: Well, there are certainly people who would like to make that argument.

Lorrie: All of this is such a risk.

JC: The other thing, too, is do problematic people... Even when they say things or produce things that are good and worth our attention, does that negate the fact that they are problematic people? Does that negate that? One thing that comes to my mind is, again, having just done the *Lord of the Rings* marathon and seeing Harvey Weinstein's name in the credits. We were watching the credits because we are a family that always watches the credits because we want to look at all the names of all the people who made this movie happen. We're the annoying people who stay until the very end in the movie theater, and when that name came on the screen, my entire family went, "Ugh..."

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Ugh... yeah. Did it make us feel differently about the film? No. No, but it was just a, 'Oh, yeah, that guy.'

Lorrie: Yeah. So yeah, do we feel uneasy enjoying reading these books post-TERFpocalypse? Should Harry have not crushed the sopophorous bean with the flat of the blade? No, he was fine doing that. Was it a better way to do it? Oh, yeah, yeah. Clearly it was better. Did he cheat to win the thing? Well, no. Everybody should do it the way Harry did it. Is there anything morally superior to doing it the not-so-good way? No, actually, there really, really isn't. Oh, my God, it's a lot of work. It's a big responsibility being a reader, isn't it?

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: The handwriting of whoever was making these amendments is small and cramped. I had very, very small cramped writing as a child on purpose because I didn't have enough privacy and I wanted to be covert, and if I wrote small enough, then the young people who were receiving my letters who had good eyesight could read it, or you could get a magnifying glass. It did actually deter some spying.

JC: Oh, that's interesting. That's interesting, because I don't know... The only thing I have to compare that to is now, if I'm by myself, I will increase the font size of things I'm reading. If I'm not by myself or if I'm on an airplane, I will decrease the font size just because the idea of people reading over my shoulder...

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: I'm reading a romance novel. I don't want anybody looking over my shoulder where the sex scene is happening. I get like that piece of it, but it's interesting because your point being about not having privacy and being worried about what people are going to do with things that you're writing down is something that I never thought about with respect to the size of your handwriting. That's interesting.

Lorrie: Well, there's also just the space issue, which is that marginalized people may have just as much or more to say as the authority and he has to cram it all in there. He's got a lot to say. The author does not have to be in dialogue with student Snape; Libatius Borage doesn't care what this fifteen-year-old has to say about the potions, but the kid certainly has a lot to say. It reminded me of when I was living in Korea as a student, and at the time we would write on aerogrammes. It was cheaper than putting paper in an envelope and stamping it, it was lighter, and you would get these little letters of thin blue prepaid paper that you had to fold and adhere a certain way. It was just really limited space, so if you had a lot to say, you don't want to waste an aerogramme; the postage is already paid. If you ruin it and throw it away, then you've just wasted all that postage, so I would get as much as I could into those tiny little aerogrammes and my handwriting was really, really small. Here we have marginalized Teen Potions Genius, obviously, having opinions that he doesn't expect anyone to be reading.

JC: It also makes me wonder: when you mentioned before that he and Lily were in the same class, was he working this hard at Potions because he just loved it and was fascinated by it? Was he working this hard at Potions because he needed to be better than everybody else to be taken seriously or whatever? Did the teachers treat him the way that the kids did? What was his motivation for all the work that goes into improving every single potion in this book? I'm curious.

Lorrie: Or did they work together?

JC: Yeah. That's another possibility that's very intriguing, which in that case is even better...

Lorrie: Right.

JC: Because Harry has even more of a right to these ideas.

Lorrie: Did one of them teach the other? What if everything he knew in Potions he learned from her?

JC: That's an interesting idea.

Lorrie: What if she seemed to be a dab hand at Potions because he taught her? Yeah. Anyway, the silence is...

JC: Yeah, that's interesting.

Lorrie: It's so fruitful and maddening because we do not ever find out.

JC: Yeah, that's interesting. You've talked about how Ginny is basically Lily here, so it's also interesting to me that Ginny plays this really important role at the end of the chapter to pop up. The presence of Ginny in that scene (criticizing Harry for his believing about what's in the book) is also bringing up Lily here in this situation in that way.

Lorrie: Yeah. Yes, it is.

JC: I love the fact that she walks over. Harry realizes he smells the same thing that he smelt from the Amortentia in the dungeon.

Lorrie: Yeah. He didn't stay clueless for very long, did he?

JC: Yeah, which is interesting. I really liked that, but also it felt a little bit heavy-handed from the author. 'Oh, wow, okay.'

Lorrie: It's that trope of the protagonist who has romantic feelings that they don't recognize, and they have to be brought to recognize what they're thinking. Yeah.

JC: Their 'italicized *Oh*' moment.

Lorrie: Yeah, yeah. The book falls open to the back cover in that way that magical books do, where you have to wonder, 'Did that just fall, or does it want me to notice?' Harry looks, and it says, "*This Book is the Property of the Half-Blood Prince*," which is so funny. It's got so much attitude, right? It's a teen who's self-important and grandiose and narrative-focused. Whoever the Half-Blood Prince is thinks that he is the hero of his own story and very introverted. It's geeky, it's ridiculous. It is ridiculous and also dear. Yeah, it's potentially embarrassing.

JC: It's very much sixteen-year-old boy to me. It reads very much like the sixteen-year-old boys that I've known.

Lorrie: Yeah. When I wrote my Snape book and I thought, 'Oh, I have to figure out a way to sign' -- it has always amazed me. I know I'd like authors to sign books for me, but then why does anyone want me to sign? Okay, wow, I better think of a way to sign it, and I thought, 'Okay, this is what I'll do. I'll write "This Book is the Property of..." and then whoever it is.' I got a little stamp made.

JC: Oh, wow.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: That's cool.

Lorrie: Because what is it about? Snape and writing. This half-defiant, half-grandiose... This is mine.

JC: We also end the chapter with the knowledge that Harry has this little vial of Felix Felicis tucked away, hidden...

Lorrie: Tucked away.

JC: Just waiting to be used.

Lorrie: This book is so good! Having acquired these very valuable tools for all of the tough, tough things he's going to have to do this year, he's going to face the next chapter called The House of Gaunt.

JC: We're going to get some history and...

Lorrie: Whatever Dumbledore's got planned. Oof!

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.