HARRY POTTER AFTER 2020
with LORRIE KIM and JC

Transcript

Episode 8.6

***Expelliarmus* and the Billionaire Author**

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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. This is Season Eight, our open-ended, irregularly published bonus content season, and this is Episode Six with some familiar voices on fan-authored fiber arts, fighting back against fascism and self-defeat, and finally, fundraising.

JC: Hello, listeners! This is JC here with a very special episode of Harry Potter After 2020. My guest today is actually the host of this podcast, Lorrie Kim. She recently gave a presentation at the Harry Potter Academic Conference at Chestnut Hill College titled "*Expelliarmus* and the Billionaire Author." The focus of this talk was an analysis of an incredible piece of art Lorrie had created, described as "a textual but nonverbal argument delivered through the medium of a handmade patchwork quilt." Welcome, Lorrie!

Lorrie: Hey! Thank you. Thank you for suggesting that we do this as a podcast episode, which I hadn't thought of but was incredibly flattered by.

JC: Oh, yes. I'm so excited about talking about this project, and I guess we should also say that this talk got a really wonderful reception at the conference, right?

Lorrie: Yeah. I think having something in such a different medium to give a different perspective on a lot of the issues that we've been talking about over the past several years gave fresh perspective and, I think, some fresh encouragement.

JC: That's awesome. That's amazing. I guess another thing that we should say is that we're recording this on November 5th, 2026, two days after the midterm elections in the United States, after which there was a blue tsunami across the country. I live in a blue state now, to my great surprise and delight, I should say.

Lorrie: Texas…

JC: Texas, yes.

Lorrie: A blue state.

JC: Yes.

Lorrie: What?!

JC: Yes. As of right now, every statewide elected office, except for one, is held by a Democrat.

Lorrie: And who is that one?

JC: Ted Cruz. He's all by himself now! Amazing.

Lorrie: He's going to have to go to Cancun again!

JC: Again, right. It's just amazing. I'm… yeah. If we sound a little extra giddy, that's probably why. I think we're still excited about that. If you are one of our regular listeners, I'm sure you are probably sharing in the excitement that we're all feeling.

Lorrie: Yeah. I kept being amazed, especially that the Texas blue wave included the Texas Board of Education, because I know you've been working on statewide education for your whole career.

JC: Absolutely, and I can't even begin to fathom the changes that this might bring. I think that everybody today, who is in education in Texas, is thinking the possibilities are wide open and we just don't know what's going to happen, and what's possible to change and how quickly it can change just because state law is also a factor. We still have the Senate; the State Senate is still Republican-led and

they are the ones who have to approve a lot of these things, so they may put up a fight, but we do have the state legislature. The State House is Democratic-led, which I don't remember… I've lived here for twenty-four years and I don't remember the state being blue, so this is pretty exciting for me. Things may be taking a positive turn, so we will see.

Lorrie: For the past several months, I've been keeping my spirits up just by watching whatever social media [NYC Mayor Zohran] Mamdani puts out from New York, but then as this midterm election season heated up, we started getting social media feed from [Senator-Elect Dr. Abdul] El-Sayed in Michigan as well. I know people were saying, "Oh, El-Sayed is like the Dark Kermit version of Mamdani," and the other day I thought, 'If I sorted them into houses, El-Sayed is the Ravenclaw.' He's so cutting and mean, but completely correct and has no equivocation about showing negative emotion when it's warranted. Then I thought, 'What does that make Mamdani? Oh, he's a Slytherin.'

JC: Ooh!

Lorrie: He knows exactly what to do to have his message land.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: And it's not that Slytherins don't have love; they do. It's not that they don't have morals -- they have very strong morals -- but they know that if you're going to be a politician for the people, you want to get that sensation of being looked after in everybody. These two different approaches have made such a good, full harmony in my enjoyment of politics that makes sense.

JC: Which is not something we've seen a lot of in the last decade, is it?

Lorrie: Oh, I've been starved.

JC: I guess my head is spinning a bit. I don't really know what to expect because we live in a different world now, so a bit like maybe [what] the *Harry Potter* characters are going to feel at the end of Book Seven when the world is wide open and we have to rebuild it, and now what?

Hosts: Yeah.

Lorrie: So the presentation that we're going to discuss in today's podcast episode took place on October 24th, so shortly before the elections when there was a lot of trepidation. We didn't know what was going to happen with the midterm elections, but we knew things were going to come to a head.

JC: Oh, my gosh, all right. Well, that's the context in which we're talking about this today, just to give y'all a little bit of an understanding of some of the things that are going on around us in the world as we're talking about it, but let's start with… First of all, what is a quilt (for people who may not be familiar with exactly what a quilt is and how it might be different from other kinds of bed coverings or whenever we might think of)? Talk to us about what a quilt is.

Lorrie: At the most basic level, a quilt is two or three layers put together with a layer of stitching. It can be just the top and the backing or it can have batting in the middle as well and the stitching holds it together, and that's an integral part of being a quilt. Some quilts are whole cloth, so it's just one uncut piece of fabric; some quilts that people probably think of most readily are patchwork, where you make designs with different pieces of fabric (often from scraps or worn out clothing or anything left over), and you join them together to make a bed covering.

JC: All right, yes. How did you get started in quilting?

Lorrie: As soon as I graduated from college, and I was so tired of writing papers and being verbal and being theoretical. I had a housemate who knew how to make quilts and said, "I'll teach you. It's easy," and then I found that working with quilts was just color and textiles and it was physical. Unlike writing, if you just put in the work, you make progress -- oh, my God -- and it looks just as good on days that you're not inspired. Whoa! And then when it's done, unlike academic writing (which nobody will ever read, even though you have to put all of your effort into it or get mercilessly dinged by whoever's grading it), a quilt lasts and people appreciate it and it keeps them warm until it falls apart, at which point you take the scraps and you put them into another quilt.

JC: Oh, that's amazing.

Lorrie: So it was a completely different kind of antidote to what I had overdosed on as a student. Once I learned how to quilt, I couldn't stop.

JC: Wow. So what kinds of quilts have you made over the years? How many quilts do you think you've made, first of all, and what kinds of quilts are you drawn to?

Lorrie: I don't know exactly how many because I lost count once I had children. I also made almost no quilts once I had children, because quilting is humorously much more dangerous than you would expect. You can't do it around little children because there are so many sharps involved, from needles and pins to rotary blades. Sewing machines are dangerous, but mostly, it's the ironing. Irons are heavy, they're so hot… Anyway, I realized I can't actually really quilt. I guess if you have a room that you can close off to kids and you have somebody to watch your children, you can kind of make it work.

JC: Oh, yeah.

Lorrie: So I basically stopped for twenty-two years, and now that I'm an empty nester, I can pick it up again. Anyway, I don't know how many, but it's over four hundred.

JC: Oh, my gosh! That's a lot of quilts! Have they mostly been wall-hanging size or bed size? How big are these quilts that you've made?

Lorrie: Uh, I've done a lot of both.

JC: Yeah. Oh, my gosh. And then have you given them all away or sold them? Where have they gone? I guess is my question.

Lorrie: Yeah. Uh, I've sold some, and I have convinced friends to take some.

JC: That's incredible. It sounds like you don't have a family tradition of quilting. There's no one in your family who quilted, or this is a new thing that you took up as a young person, a tradition that you took up.

Lorrie: I guess… Yeah. I learned it from the American tradition, although there's a long history of needlework in my family. Quilting is something that was naturally included, but it wasn't a particular interest.

JC: That's so interesting. My grandmother quilted, and all the women in my family… I grew up in the Appalachian Mountains and quilting was just a thing that everybody did, and, uh, I was gifted a beautiful quilt as a wedding gift -- a wedding ring quilt -- so it's really, really beautiful. My grandmother hand-stitched every bit

of this; she didn't use a sewing machine, so it's beautiful. I get it out every now and then, and it's one of the things that I keep thinking, 'I should put this on a bed because a quilt should be used. It shouldn't just be put in the closet,' but it's just so beautiful, and it's wonderful to look out and see that every stitch was done by my grandmother's hand. I think that's one of the things that amazes me about the idea of a quilt as a fanwork. Any kind of fanwork, the artist is putting a tremendous amount of work in, but I'm looking at a photo of your quilt here on your website. I guess we should tell listeners we're going to link to this blog post so that you can see an image of this. It will probably be helpful for you to look at this image and some of the other images that are included in this blog post (like close-ups and things like that), but when I look at this image and I think about the amount of work that went into this -- the amount of intricate detail and the amount of time that you put into this -- it's just really stunning as a fanwork. Another question I wanted to ask you: why do you think quilting works? In this case, at least, why does it work as a medium for transformative work or for creating fan works? What can you do with a quilt that you couldn't do with writing or some other medium?

Lorrie: Yeah. That was the question that I set out to answer with this presentation, because the Harry Potter Academic Conference at Chestnut Hill College [has] been annual ever since 2012. I have gone and presented every year, and normally I give talks. Most people do; a lot of people give talks that are also slide presentations, and sometimes we have other media. My friend, Dr. Brent Satterly, who's been on our podcast, does drag shows. There are people who present on music and multimedia projects, so there are a lot of different media but mostly talks. I thought, 'Well…' Oh, this was, uh, two years ago: Dr. Patrick McCauley, who is one of the co-founders of the conference, gave a presentation; it was a verbal presentation, but he said it was in the structure of a quilt, meaning he was talking about his mother (who's a master quilter) who takes fabric, cuts it up, and then makes something new out of rearranging those pieces, so that made me think, 'I wonder if I could present an argument that was a quilt.'

JC: Ooh…

Lorrie: 'I wonder what that medium could bring us for perspectives that we can't get through my usual way of building an argument through textual quotes and words.' Yeah, that was the mission, and what I set out to do (and it did work) was

thinking, first of all, a quilt is a single graphic statement, not a verbal presentation where you make the argument one word at a time. The quilt… you see it first, and then you can start to explain it. The size of the quilt makes an impact, because unlike a presentation that is not a physical object, a quilt is human scale. This one is a queen-size quilt; it's meant to physically cover the body of at least one person, so that changes the associations you have when you look at it. It's comforting; it's meant to provide warmth and also affection, if somebody's made you a quilt. It's meant to convey family ties or ties of affection or esteem, so that's also part of the associations you feel when you look at it, and then large blocks of color. With color, you can make emotional impacts that reach you differently from any kind of emotional impact you can get through words, and by what you do with the shapes -- the placements and patterns -- you can direct the gaze of the viewer. You can tell the viewer where to look in the quilt so that it can make an argument; not all quilts do. There are quilts where it's the same block repeated several times, and that makes you think about how the maker of the quilt did it a bit at a time when they had a chance, or sometimes it's the same pattern but with different fabrics, so you think about how there was a little of this fabric and a little that fabric; then there are quilts where it's not the same block every time, and people use placement to show you, "Look here, this is the part of the quilt that makes the argument." I thought, 'All right, I'm going to do the kind that makes an argument,' and there's a long tradition of both kinds. Quilts have often been used as really big, graphic political campaign posters, kind of, or sometimes they are community-oriented like album quilts -- signature quilts -- where it'll be all the same block several times over, and then different people sign the blank space in each block. It's like any other artistic medium; you can use it any way you want, but specific to quilts is this association of warmth, often of community, because they're so large and they require scraps, so often, people pool their scraps or their labor.

JC: Yeah, that was one of the questions that I had for you, too, was this question of how common is it for quilts to convey stories. I know that, for example, from other work you've done around quilts, there are many kinds of quilt blocks like basic quilt blocks (and we're going to get into the ones that you used in this quilt in a bit) and that idea that they can represent things or they can convey certain messages, different blocks. I guess, is there some other history there that might give us some more context around how a quilter might go about choosing? If quilts are in the

second strand of quilt-making that you suggested where people are not just doing the same pattern over and over but are trying to create an argument or tell a story, what kind of thought goes into the choice of those quilt blocks and do they have particular visual meanings that are historically known?

Lorrie: They do, depending on cultural context. The same pattern in one country might mean something completely different in another country. For the U.S. (where I am), starting in the mid to late 19th century, publications that had quilting patterns (block patterns) for patchwork started giving them names, so if you were allegorically minded, you could really have fun choosing. For example, there were a lot of Christian quilts, and there were patterns called things like 'Crown of Thorns' or 'Cross,' so if you wanted to make some sort of allegorical Christian message, you could choose those. There were also quilts associated with specific meetings locally, like Lone Star quilts (where it's a big quilt where all the little tiny pieces create one really big, radiant star), [that] were associated with the Underground Railroad indicating safe houses. Yeah, different album quilts were really associated with fundraising or with community. Yeah, just like with any other artistic medium, things that you see around build up meaning in that community over time.

JC: It's interesting to me, too, that because this is a folk art, it's practiced by a lot of people for a lot of different reasons, so the idea that meanings would be passed along in small communities and they might be very different from one place to another… That's so interesting to me, thinking about the way that… Compare that to painting or some other kind of art where you have artists working in communities -- in specific, artists in Paris or artists in New York -- working in specific communities and all influencing each other. The scale of quilting is so much bigger, but you have these little small pockets where people are influencing each other prior to the modern era. That's so interesting.

Lorrie: Yeah, and it works the same way as painting. There will be some motif where, if you're in the know and you see that motif in a painting or in a quilty thing, ah, that's the tradition it's calling on, and someone who doesn't know it will look at it and not know what they're looking at.

JC: And go, "That's pretty," and then walk right on, yeah.

Lorrie: Yeah. "Why are there bleeding hearts stabbed with daggers? What? What does that mean?" This makes quilting, like so many other art media, a potential avenue for coded messages. Quilts do not always equal resistance, but they have been used as encoded messages for resistance…

JC: Ooh, that's interesting.

Lorrie: Where if you know, 'Oh, I see, that's a Jacob's Ladder pattern,' which is also known as Underground Railroad, then you would understand that whoever's displaying this quilt means to send a certain kind of message.

JC: Ooh, that's interesting. Oh, I love that. That's so cool. I also love that this is a folk art tradition. Like most fiber arts that are associated with women and came out of the kind of work that women historically had to do to keep a home going, this was just not considered high art.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Certainly for a long, long time, but it really is when you really look at the exquisite detail that you can put into a piece, the amount of work that goes into it, the color work… I'm not an artist, clearly, but all the analysis that you can bring to a painting hanging in a gallery, you can bring to a quilt like this.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: I've always been fascinated by folk art in that way and fiber arts.

Lorrie: Well, I found it addictive.

JC: Amazing.

Lorrie: I couldn't stop.

JC: Well, let's get into this quilt. If you're listening, make sure that you've got a picture of the quilt open, because that will help you a lot as you're listening to this. If you're listening in your car, I apologize; you can look at it later. The link will be in the show notes, but if you just want to type it into a browser, it is LorrieKim.com, and that's LorrieKim.com/quilt-art-expelliarmus-and-the-billionaire-author. That's where you're going to find a picture of this.

Lorrie: Thank you for that.

JC: Yes. All right, so tell us about the process of designing this one. Where did you start?

Lorrie: What I started with was thinking I have to choose an argument that I want to portray with this quilt. What point do I want to get across that I would otherwise get across just through a talk? One of my favorites is that I believe that you can trace the Elder Wand and how it passes through different ownerships in the *Harry Potter* series by tracing the *Expelliarmus* storyline. I think that Snape deliberately taught Harry and Draco in second year in Dueling Club to use *Expelliarmus* instead of attack because he was trying to get a non-aggressive philosophy into them without them knowing, and that each of those boys then eventually learned a lot of different magic (including Unforgivables, which they did both use), but that this early training in defensive disarmament became the signature magic of both boys, and that because of *Expelliarmus*, that was the only magic that these seventeen-year-old boys needed. Draco was seventeen; he had his hawthorn wand and he took down Dumbledore, the greatest living wizard, with nothing but *Expelliarmus*. Then the following year, when Harry was seventeen, he used Draco's hawthorn wand and Voldemort was holding the Elder Wand, and he took down Voldemort using nothing but *Expelliarmus*. That long-ago training culminated in kids taking down the two most powerful wizards of their time, with magic that their wands -- both Draco's hawthorn wand and the Elder Wand -- recognized as interchangeable and equivalent. They would answer to both of these boys because they were both using disarmament as a magic that was greater than attack.

JC: Ooh, okay. First of all, while you were saying that, I had this reaction of thinking about relating that to the moment we find ourselves in right now…

Lorrie: Precisely.

JC: The numbers of Gen Z voters who came out and disarmed the current administration and the Republicans in power… Disarmed them, and it was the young people. Oh, dang.

Lorrie: Yes. If you compare the amount of money that those voters had versus the political funding poured into these races by billionaires (who all lost, and now all that money of theirs is gone)...

JC: Just wasted. I love that for them.

Lorrie: Yeah. It just shows that there is some kinds of magic that's accessible to anyone. You don't have to be wealthy, and no amount of power or wealth can necessarily defend you against this simple thing that even a kid can do.

JC: And that this is about Harry and Draco, who were on opposite sides.

Lorrie: They hated each other, yeah.

JC: They were not on the same team, but they were able to use the same magic…

Lorrie: Because of Snape…

JC: Because of Snape.

Lorrie: Who got away with teaching this to them without being detected.

JC: Amazing. Yeah. Right there, I'm like, 'Mic drop. That's the book right there. That's the series.' That's great, but oh, my gosh! You created this quilt to really emphasize that.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: That was your goal: to create a quilt that makes that big theme of the books very clear.

Lorrie: Right, because if you're going to do it verbally through a presentation, then you have to pull quotes and you have to convince people who think that it was Lockhart and not Snape who came up with Dueling Club, with Snape haters who say you can't give Snape credit for that or he wasn't doing it on purpose, and also with people who are surprised to realize that it was Draco's wand versus the Elder Wand both times or who think that the boys are not equivalent. I can see all of that, but there was a way of teaching the boys, even during incredibly hostile times when they were literally trying to kill each other, there's still a way to get it done.

JC: And I love what this says about the power of education. As an educator, I'm just like, 'Yeeees, yes, yes, yes.'

Lorrie: The power of education, when teaching these things openly can get you fired or worse. I thought explaining this -- arguing this verbally -- is really

convoluted, but if I can show it visually, graphically, I can show that there's a straight line from Dueling Club in second year down to the final battle…

JC: Uh-huh.

Lorrie: And I can show you to look at that straight line through use of color and pattern, so I set out to do that and I set out to support the argument by including blocks that refer to other plot points in the series, most of which have something to do with *Expelliarmus*, but not all do. Just to give you context for where in the plot line the *Expelliarmus* plot fits in, I decided that to make it easier to read, I would go chronologically; I made roughly seven columns, one for each of the seven books, and then I dealt with the plot points chronologically from top to bottom and left to right. I thought, to make the quilt big (which was a big part of the impact that I wanted to have), I would make each column a foot wide, so the finished quilt is seven feet across and seven feet down, Queen size. Within that, I wanted to show that there was so much emotion -- so much plot -- happening over the course of these million words and seven books that all this emotion gathered together to make what was really a stirring point about disarmament.

JC: Absolutely. Okay, I want to take a step back and look at this as a whole piece, and there's a tremendous amount of symmetry. Your eye is drawn to some diagonal lines; there are some blocks that mirror each other across the quilt, there are blocks that contrast with each other across the quilt. There are blocks that seem to grow -- there's growth across the quilt; there's a lot to think about visually as a piece of art. If you're just thinking about 'If I had a piece of paper and I were going to sketch, what are the big features of this?' I think that my eye is first drawn to what looks like crossed swords in the bottom diagonal -- those two diagonals -- and then there are other blocks all around that are maybe not as symmetric; there are some that are symmetric, but other ones that also draw your eye because they stand out, right? There's so much going on here, so I want to encourage people to just pause the podcast, look at the whole work for a moment, and think about what are the emotions that you feel. What are the things that are standing out to you? How are the colors affecting your perception of this? Where is your eye drawn? So take a moment to think about that and then come back. If you're back now, I guess I want to ask you… Before we go through -- we'll go through some of the blocks in more detail, but I guess you have seven by seven. You specifically chose moments in the

book to create a block that would explain part of your argument, but you also, at the same time, had this visual piece of it where everything had to line up and build the argument visually. In the design of this, is that something that you knew exactly what you're going to do from the start, or did it evolve organically as you went? How did that vision evolve, I guess?

Lorrie: The main thing I started with was that there had to be a straight diagonal line from Dueling Club to the final battle. That was *Expelliarmus*. The second thing that I wanted was a parallel between Dueling Club in second year (where Snape taught the boys *Expelliarmus*) to Dumbledore's Army in fifth year (where *Expelliarmus* was the first spell that Harry transmitted to his peers). During Dumbledore's Army, Harry was mocked for starting with such a basic baby spell, and he said, "It saved my life against Voldemort last year," and that shut everybody up. Those were the architectural plot points that I wanted to establish, and then for color, I made a color code: I had to choose which characters I would represent in this quilt because, since it's a single argument, there are a lot of important characters that don't show up in this quilt at all. For example, Hermione and Ron are not in here, but I started with Dumbledore. There's this fabric since… Oh, I've had this fabric for decades, and I always thought of it as the Dumbledore fabric because it's this beautiful purple and it has golden celestial accents on it, so I've been saving it because it's so Dumbledore to me.

JC: Wow.

Lorrie: And I thought, 'Well, okay, I'll start with Dumbledore. He'll be any purple in this quilt, but that one the most of all.' Then Harry is reds; there was a range of red fabric that I used that's all Harry. Green is Slytherin-ish in this quilt, but there's a specific green and silver marbled fabric that is Draco. Voldemort… any gray fabric that looks unstable in this quilt is Voldemort. Snape is matte black, which I chose. Obviously, Snape is matte black always, but it looks like he's background, but he's not and he's in everything. The real, actual background is any fabric in this quilt that's blues or celestial prints; that is the ceiling of the Great Hall that magically reflects the night sky outside.

JC: I just want to pause and say that I think that the black background fabric representing Snape is absolutely brilliant. That's such an amazing and perfect choice. Wow!

Lorrie: And then the other two colors that I used in this series: silver is a color that's used to represent the individual soul (your memories are silver, the color of your Patronus is silver, so I used that here), and gold is the color used to show alchemical connection between people, so I put that in and there's quite a lot of gold in the quilt. I deliberately wanted to use only squares and triangles that are 90 degrees or 45 degrees, because with quilting, you can use any shape, and I thought if I stick to a grid, then that'll help me.

JC: Oh, yeah. Oh, my gosh… Mathematically, yeah, I'm right there with you. Yeah, grid.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: So did you design this on graph paper? Did you map it all out?

Lorrie: Yeah. First, I figured out where the *Expelliarmus* diagonal was going to go and where the Dueling Club and Dumbledore's Army blocks would go, and then I thought, 'It starts with Dumbledore, so I'll put Dumbledore in the upper left corner, and it ends with Harry, so I'll put him in the lower right corner, and then I'll just place major plot points relative to that.' The columns… It's not completely strict. They're not completely 1/7th each, but they're roughly so, so I just want people to get a sense of where in the story we are. I knew the golden dome that Harry and Voldemort raise when they connect in the graveyard at the end of *Goblet of Fire* would be a major moment, and that the moment in Malfoy Manor where Harry and Draco have an exchange of power when Harry disarms Draco… that's the moment that the Elder Wand responds to both of them and the moment that their magic becomes equal, so that had to be in there somewhere. Then I decided that I would alternate between blocks that show plot points and then just squares and triangles so that it wouldn't be too much didacticism, but just enough. Similar to any story about a school, there are big plot points, and then there are scenes where it just shows people going to class.

JC: So what I would love to hear about now are, I guess, more details about some of the blocks of the quilt. Which ones do you want to talk about in more detail? How you design them, how they play into the larger theme of this quilt…

Lorrie: All right, so I'm going to go year by year, column by column, top to bottom. Column one, the *Sorcerer's Stone* column: as I said, the upper left corner is

Dumbledore, who starts the whole story, and there's a big star block with his signature fabric, but there's this little red patch, which is Harry sleeping under the stairs. At the beginnings of columns one and two, there's this gray and green stretch, which is suburban Privet Drive, and then underneath that is your basic Harry block. I thought, 'I need a block that I'll just use allegorically to represent Harry,' and then, uh, I chose Birds in Flight, which is a simple, traditional block because flying is one of Harry's signature magics and I used a bunch of different reds. Then I did a signature block for Draco and I thought, 'What traditional block could represent Draco? Windblown Square.' This poor, confused child buffeted by different influences, so I did Windblown Square with his signature fabric of the green and silver marble. Then underneath that, I thought, 'I need a Voldemort block,' so I got a nine-patch called Wild Waves, which uses a bunch of different vague, unstable grays and some green because I was thinking about the Forbidden Forest in the first book, where there's something really uncanny in the Forbidden Forest that the centaurs won't even name or talk about, but at the very center of it, there's a dead unicorn; that's the silvery blood that Harry and Draco come across in the Forbidden Forest, and that image of something that frightening with a dead unicorn at the center is Voldemort's character, I think. Slain innocence of a child… And then underneath that, there's a reference to Snape, because there's this fabric I have that's blue and purple jars with gold accents and there's the black, so I got his Potions puzzle in there. Then at the bottom is your basic Harry block again (Birds in Flight), but now I've introduced this fabric that I thought of as the phoenix fabric because it has red, gold, and orange, because once he has gotten the Sorcerer's Stone, then you know that he's changed. He's come into his magic.

JC: So *Expelliarmus* has not been introduced in this first column, right?

Lorrie: Right.

JC: So these blocks are all intended just to establish which characters you're going to focus on in this quilt and what are some important moments, but mostly it's about the characters, right?

Lorrie: It's introduction.

JC: Yeah. Nice.

Lorrie: Yeah. So column two for *Chamber of Secrets*: I got in the Flying Ford Anglia; I put in some blue there for the boys flying across the sky. Then I did the Dueling Club block, which I made extra big, and it's a variation of a traditional block called Card Trick, where it shows Slytherin energy and Gryffindor energy against each other in the Great Hall.

JC: I love that one, and I love that that one has the symmetrical piece on the other side.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Yeah. It's just really stark in that it's showing that moment. That's great.

Lorrie: Yeah, and I wanted it to be a block that looks like a formal dance, that Dueling Club is set up as something… It's etiquette. "If you're a wizard, you should know how to duel. This is how we do it; there is etiquette around it." Underneath that, there's a diagonal that's in greens, which is the basilisk, and then parallel and underneath that is a diagonal of red squares that emanates from the bottom Birds in Flight block from the previous book. This is Harry being rescued out of the Chamber of Secrets by Fawkes the phoenix, and it's also the sword of Gryffindor, so that's one of the main diagonal arguments. Then in column three, I had only one block for *Prisoner of Azkaban* because in my construction of the *Expelliarmus* argument – there is quite a lot of *Expelliarmus* in *Prisoner of Azkaban*, but it wasn't what I was focusing on. Just at the bottom of column three, I have a pure Dumbledore block because I think of Dumbledore at the end of *Prisoner of Azkaban* as Peak Dumbledore; he's at his most omniscient. When he authorizes Time-Turner travel, that's when he's the most comforting as an adult figure in this children's story where you feel like, no matter how confusing and life-or-death something is, there is somebody older and powerful who can tell you what to do, and he's right and it's magic.

JC: Oh, that's really interesting. These two columns are kind of bookended by that in that we don't see that block in the same way again.

Hosts: Yeah.

JC: And the colors are more pure in this one than they were in the beginning.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: Yeah. I think that you did a really great job of conveying the height of Dumbledore's strength in that one. Ooh, that's nice.

Lorrie: So column four, *Goblet of Fire*, I started out with Birds in Flight again, a variation which is the Quidditch World Cup (just to show you where we are in the story), and then underneath that I did a star block that has a snowflake fabric in the center; that's the Yule Ball, again to situate us in the story. Then there's a center block that's a little bit below midpoint, which is a big black and gray square with a little tiny gold square in the center, and that is Voldemort in the graveyard at the end of *Goblet of Fire* after he has taken a drop of Harry's blood into himself. He thinks that it's to his advantage; he doesn't know it's his undoing, but he now has a drop of love, empathy, growth magic in him permanently. Underneath that block is the Golden Dome block; at the center, it has a four-patch that's gray and red, which is his magic and Harry's magic connecting because unbeknownst to Voldemort, now that he has Harry's love in his blood, he can now connect to other humans (or at least to Harry) and that means once connected, he can feel the damage he has done to other people and that raises this golden dome of emotion. This is a point when Voldemort's *Avada Kedavra* meets Harry's *Expelliarmus*, and that connection is what raises all these emotions. That's the first of three times in this series when Voldemort's magic connects with Harry's magic and produces gold. Underneath that is when (after Harry has escaped the graveyard) Snape, who is referred to here with the same blue and purple and gold jar fabric, enters his double agency; in the lower right corner of that block, we see Dumbledore reconvening the Order of the Phoenix, and that nine patch block of squares and triangles is Jacob's Ladder, Underground Railroad. Yeah.

JC: One thing that I love about this column is that it's the center column and there's the flow of it… There is this downward flow that I feel when I look at it, and the contrast between the black square with a little tiny gold square and then the golden dome beneath it… It's like an explosion or it's like a little seed and it's quiet and there's tension, and then when you move into the Golden Dome, there's just an emotional flow there that I find really fascinating, and then it's underneath these two diagonals that look like swords. It's really beautiful.

Lorrie: I have to say I feel really bad for Voldemort at the moment of the Golden Dome, because how frightening that must have been for him. He's never

experienced this before and it's so painful and he has caused so much harm to other people, and now he's feeling it for the first time. Terrifying.

JC: I'm going to contrast that to the fact that the current president of the United States yesterday gave tours of the construction of the ballroom, completely not feeling any of the damage that he had done or any of the blowback to it. Somehow, Voldemort is more human than… Yeah. Fascinating.

Lorrie: Although from what we've read of reporters who were there, it's not that the current president didn't feel the damage; it's that he didn't know how to gather himself afterward. He doesn't have what it takes to address it, so he just reverts to his fallback. 'What's the only safe thing left in life? Home renovation.'

JC: Okay, though I can kind of identify with that, to be honest.

Lorrie: Sigh. Yeah.

JC: Sigh.

Lorrie: Those of us who have been raised with what it feels like to feel the consequences of our actions are better equipped for this moment than people who never have had that and then very, very publicly experience it for the first time in front of everybody.

JC: Right, which is what Voldemort has just experienced in this column. Amazing!

Lorrie: It's relatable, even though it's completely deserved and something he brought only on himself. Top of column 5, *Order of the Phoenix*: this is a Log Cabin variation called Courthouse Steps. The center is Harry and the black square around it is the black door that he's been getting in visions in his dreams (which he actually sees during his Ministry trial), and the two bars of purple and gold are Dumbledore at the trial protecting Harry but not making any contact with him. Then underneath that is the parallel to Dueling Club; that's the Dumbledore's Army lesson where Harry teaches *Expelliarmus* to his fellow schoolmates. Underneath that, I did a Pensieve, a stone-gray receptacle that has Gryffindor versus Slytherin memories all over it, that black square in the middle where Snape puts his thoughts, and the purple Dumbledore fabric shows that Dumbledore has authorized these Occlumency lessons.

JC: That's such a complex design, and I love the visual of it. I think it's really amazing.

Lorrie: And it's the same pattern -- It's called Wedding Ring. It's the same pattern that I used for the Golden Dome block.

JC: Yes. Yeah, okay, so that's really interesting, then. Did you choose the same block for that just because in both cases you need something circular, or is there a deeper connection than that between those two blocks?

Lorrie: I started with needing something circular, and then since this series has such strong repeated themes and this author works in parallels much more so than average, I knew that any echoes or any parallels would increase the cohesion for whoever's looking at the quilt. Underneath the Occlumency block is the battle in the Ministry where the purple and gray fabrics are Voldemort and Dumbledore fighting, but then there's the moment when Voldemort possesses Harry, which blocks out Dumbledore. Dumbledore can't do a thing about it, and there's the same gray and red four-patch in the center of that as I used for the Golden Dome block when Harry's and Voldemort's magic met… But if you follow the diagonal down to the right, once Voldemort possesses Harry, he encounters the feeling of Harry's love and grief for Sirius, which he can feel now because he shares Harry's blood, and that is so intolerable to him that it blocks Voldemort out forever and he never again enters Harry's consciousness; that lower right corner of that block ends with Harry being fully himself, all red with no Voldemort. The top of column 6 for *Half-Blood Prince*: there is a vertical series of four Windblown Square blocks, which is the sad ballad of the Prince of Slytherin, Draco Malfoy. He starts out the book influenced by Voldemort, where the Windblown Square is blown around by the unstable gray that is his new master. Then underneath that is the gold, which is the Unbreakable Vow, where Narcissa in the gold and Snape in the black join forces to protect Draco with the power of a mother's love. Underneath that is a vaguer purple; it's still Dumbledore, but it's not as Dumbledore as the gold purple print because he is watching over Draco, but it's from a distance. And then the last Draco block is Windblown Square just with Snape, because Snape is the assigned teacher that is trying his best to watch over this kid this year. Then underneath that, there is a thick red diagonal in columns six and seven of a dark red, which is Harry learning how to hunt Horcruxes in his sixth and seventh years.

JC: I love the fact that it's just so stark.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: This is big, this is important.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: The red all the way through of Dumbledore and Harry working together… the color shifts as you go up and it gets a little darker at the end, which is very interesting. Up at the top as it goes up to the right… that positive slope there just feels really powerful to me, and then it goes behind this other block that you'll get to. Just the visual of that is so cool.

Lorrie: Thank you. Underneath that is the third and final Dumbledore block where you still have the purple motifs showing it's Dumbledore, but the center block is now Draco. This is Draco calling on his long-ago *Expelliarmus* training (which I show as gold squares) to disarm Dumbledore instead of attacking him, which is the point at which the Elder Wand recognizes Draco's power of disarmament and switches allegiance to him. If you look at the lower right corner, there's another little red square, which is where Dumbledore has immobilized poor Harry so he has to stand there and watch the whole thing. The diagonal of gold squares continues a diagonal of green squares that lead up to Dueling Club, so that is Draco's covert, hidden *Expelliarmus* storyline that has not been a big part of his life until it bursts into action here, surprising everybody.

JC: I have to say I don't think that I made that connection the first time I read the series, and I think this quilt really brings that point with such strength that that was Draco's go-to, *Expelliarmus*. Of all the hexes that he knows -- all of the things he's been trained to do as a Death Eater -- that's what he chose to do first in that moment when he was terrified and stressed out. That is really powerful, and I love the way that you've depicted that in this quilt. You can really see the line that goes back to that moment in Dueling Club. That's so cool.

Lorrie: That forms the crossed swords motif that is one of the primary visuals of this quilt, as you noted: Harry has the sword of Gryffindor going up diagonally from the bottom left, and here we have Draco with his *Expelliarmus* training going opposite. The bottom block of column 6 is another Birds in Flight variation; that's

the 'Flight of the Prince' where Snape in black is hustling Draco out of Hogwarts, but he's also stopping to teach Harry a final lesson in Defense Against the Dark Arts. The top of column 7, the upper rightmost corner of the quilt for *Deathly Hallows*, there's a motif called Fire on the Mountain, which we see on the left and upper edges of these unstable gray blocks; at the bottom right corner of that block is a little gold square, and then across the right and lower edges is this brown fabric that I chose to represent wand wood. That is the moment during 'The Flight of the Seven Harrys' when Voldemort casts *Avada Kedavra* at Harry and, without any interference from Harry, Harry's wand bursts out golden flames toward Voldemort. That's the second time in this series that Voldemort casts *Avada Kedavra* at Harry and produces gold. Then underneath that is the Twisted Knot block because I tried to think, 'What's a traditional block that I can choose that shows transfer of power and symmetry?' so I used wand wood brown fabric again and how both boys have this love and disarmament at their core, and whether it's Slytherin energy or Gryffindor energy, they are equivalent. Underneath that is another Pensieve block: this is 'The Prince's Tale' from the end of *Deathly Hallows* where we see all of Snape's memories, with the silver memories forming a diamond on the inside because he may not have had a lot of connection with other people in his life, but that was his soul. And then finally, the last block on the lower right: that pattern is called Memory, and this shows the third time Voldemort casts *Avada Kedavra* at Harry and produces gold meeting Harry's *Expelliarmus*. That is the culmination of the *Expelliarmus* storyline in a straight diagonal from Dueling Club: the moment when Harry uses Draco's wand to restore Voldemort to mortality; with that, he claims the Elder Wand and finally, he has become fully and only himself. Once I finished that, then I was done with the quilt as a graphic, and I was able to look at the quilt as a graphic to see what I could use this graphic to talk about with my audience in the presentation.

JC: Ooh, so let's get into that part. Having both listened to you think about this before as you were building that argument and also read what you wrote on this blog post, there's a lot of really amazing stuff that you then did. I want to actually start by saying that one of the things I've always loved about quilting is that it is very, very mathematical. There's a lot of ways -- obviously the precision, the geometry, the fact that you have to piece together shapes that will tile the plane in specific ways. There's just a lot.

Lorrie: Oh, I just… I love that you said "tile the plane," and either you know what JC means by this or you don't. It's a geometry thing.

JC: It's a geometry thing. Yeah, sorry, math person here. But yeah, I love all of those pieces of it and I have in the past used quilts as examples from geometry, and I think about what kind of patterns… If you were going to make your own quilt block, how would you piece things together? What kinds of shapes could you use? There's a lot of great math in there, but with that in mind, I know that there is another way that you brought math into this and your talk, and I can't wait to hear you talk about it.

Lorrie: Well, if only I knew a mathematician… Ever since the start of TERFpocalypse, people have been trying to fight back against J.K. Rowling's transphobia partially by boycotting, because it was clear that any money you give to official *Harry Potter* -- whether it's by buying a book or buying licensed merch -- goes into her personal fortune, which she has been using increasingly to fund transphobic initiatives designed to exclude trans people from public life. But an issue that I have with using boycotting official *Harry Potter* purchases in order to fight her transphobia is that it's a lot of effort on the part of the individual consumer to fight somebody whose wealth is almost beyond imagining. We have limited energy to fight transphobia and other forms of evil, and some of these ways will bring greater results and greater personal satisfaction than others and what I worried about when I saw some of the rhetoric on how effective it would be to stop purchasing *Harry Potter* stuff. What I worried about is that it didn't sound to me like a lot of people know exactly how much a billion dollars is (since she is a billionaire), and I wanted for the past six years to find a single, simple graphic that could show anyone at a glance just how much money one billion dollars is, and I tried. I hired graphic designers who then quit and said, "I can't do this." I said, "Could you make me one graphic?" No. I was linked to a great video that took quite a bit of time to show how much money a billion dollars is, but a single graphic… One example of how difficult this was: I thought, 'If I take a regular eight and a half by eleven sheet of paper the long way and I drew a number line that represented one billion dollars… If I tried to show on that number line one million dollars, it would not physically be possible, because the dot representing a million would not be visible.'

JC: Right.

Lorrie: Then I thought, 'What's the smallest unit that I could mark on an eleven-inch-long number line? If that's a billion dollars, the smallest mark I could reasonably make would be ten million and it would be a pencil point.' I contacted a mathematician I know, and I said, "JC, suppose this quilt" -- which is 85 inches by 85 inches approximately; that's seven feet by seven feet, plus a little border around -- "suppose I took one little square that was 0.85 inches on all four sides. How much would that be if the whole quilt represents one billion?" JC, you replied with a lovely, clear, logical reply, showing that it would be about a hundred thousand dollars ($100,000). Thank you.

JC: Oh, yeah. No, that was fun.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: I think, too (just to your point about how people don't really understand what a billion is, and this is a thing that we know in math education pretty well), that large numbers are just really difficult for people to process. There are a lot of math tasks that are designed to help kids understand how big a billion really is, and a lot of them have to do with things like imagining a stack of hundred dollar bills and how high would the stack be if it were a million dollars. How high would it be if it were a billion dollars? There's a lot of tasks like that, and I really love this very simple visual of this. This is great, yeah. As you were talking through it with me a while back before you went to the conference, I was thinking, 'Ooh, I wonder if I could use this as an example.' It's such a really beautiful, simple visual for that, so you definitely accomplished that goal.

Lorrie: Yeah. The whole purpose of using a quilt to show numbers is that I wanted to make these numbers feel human scale. A quilt is big enough to cover at least one person, and I wanted a unit that would be big enough to be visible but small enough to show how the human scale of having a billion dollars is not what most people ever experience, so that tiny 0.85 by 0.85 inch square representing a hundred thousand dollars… I thought, 'If I got a huge amount of money suddenly overnight -- suppose it was ten million dollars -- could I imagine the day-to-day difference that would make in how my life feels? No, I have no idea, but what if I suddenly overnight got a hundred thousand dollars? Could I imagine what kind of

difference that would make in my life?' I thought, 'Yeah. You know what? I could.' The simultaneous hugeness and tininess of a hundred thousand dollars was a good human-scale reference point that I wanted to depict in the field of what a billion dollars actually feels like. Also, for reference: if you take your basic Harry block from column one (if the entire quilt represents a billion dollars), that would be a little less than ten million dollars.

JC: That's amazing, isn't it?

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: That's such a strong visual. Yes.

Lorrie: Yeah, which is more money than… I cannot imagine the emotional difference that ten million dollars would make in my everyday life, but in terms of a billionaire's wealth, it's… not nothing, but just one little element. Then, yeah, there's that stack of four Draco blocks… That's a little less than forty million dollars. Forty million dollars… I don't understand how that would feel, but that's still not that much compared to a billion.

The thing is, J.K. Rowling has $1.2 billion, so if you look at this entire quilt, you have to imagine an extra fifth on top of this. According to Forbes Magazine in 2025, what she earned from *Harry Potter* stuff (books, theme parks, games, merch) was eighty million dollars-ish. I have a friend who is a trans non-binary academic who doesn't want their name to be this with anything HP, so I'm not going to cite them -- I'm not going to credit them here -- but they pointed out that if you take a Dumbledore block and the Golden Dome block and the final Harry block together, that area is roughly eighty million dollars. That's annual income that J.K. Rowling earns from *Harry Potter*. This is what I wanted to use to speak to the audience about the aims of a boycott: what aims are achievable and what aren't. There's personally feeling gross about giving money to a TERF. Sure… For that aim, boycott *Harry Potter*; that works. There is hoping to signal to allies where your feelings are by publicly withholding your money from *Harry Potter*. That works. Yes, definitely. However, a fantasy that I very commonly encounter: we can collectively make *Harry Potter* the franchise unprofitable and thereby defund transphobia. That aim… it's not unworkable, but it's a very long game and it's on an international scale, because this is a global franchise where it makes tons of

money in China and Russia and places around the world where Harry Potter is super important for reasons that I, sitting in the U.S., cannot understand, can't begin to understand. It means something to people in those countries that I don't know, and they have no idea (if they even think about who wrote this series) what this person's politics are. The attack on trans rights that she has spearheaded (but that a lot of people have been gung-ho about) is on a monthly or even weekly timeline, and the effort to defund transphobia by making *Harry Potter* unprofitable is on a timeline of years. That's something to keep in mind: if you're trying to defund transphobia, don't think that boycotting *Harry Potter* by, for example, not watching the HBO series is going to work on that years-long timeline. Another fantasy that I have often heard by people arguing for boycott ("Don't buy that wand") is a fantasy of sending a message to Rowling that she's hurt us, that she has made us feel betrayed and endangered. It's personal, and I've heard people say that they want to somehow hurt her back; they want her to feel it. No, we have to reframe that, in my opinion. I don't think that's effective, because there's a very simple principle that I would like people to understand: billionaires don't feel it. The fact of being that almost inhumanly wealthy means they cannot feel it. Billionaires do not hear us. Billionaires do not know us. If your fantasy is to make Rowling feel it, that is not going to be an effective use of your resistance energy. You're going to need to find some other way to find satisfaction. I also wanted people to look at the quilt and look at how big a billion dollars is while thinking about how, in July of this year, Rowling used her wealth to bully Amnesty International into retracting an entire study they did because it called out one of her organizations for deliberately excluding trans people. She can just do that because there are a lot of different ways to assess the global assets of Amnesty International, but in complete total (across all of their member nations and all of their organizations), it looks like their global assets are about $449,420,000, which is about thirty-seven percent of Rowling's personal wealth. One woman has almost three times as much money as this organization, so she can just do that. Then I try to figure out how much money the ACLU has, which is again, complicated; it's spread out across a bunch of different organizations and foundations, but the ACLU has been super effective in countering attacks on trans rights in the courts, this one organization in the U.S. It looks like their combined assets across everything is about $1.2 billion, so that is equivalent to about the same as this one

woman's personal assets, just to keep some perspective. That's something that I was able to think about and show because I was dealing with this human scale (tangible representation of wealth on that scale) and I wanted to use the quilt to show how unbelievably, deeply cynical it is when Rowling and other transphobes weaponize transphobia to manufacture political outrage, somehow implying that equal rights for trans people is responsible for all sorts of ills because the amount of public support for trans anything is so vanishingly small.

My friend, the academic, showed me, for example: in Scotland, where Rowling lives, National Services Scotland does spend public money funding gender reassignment surgeries; they spent about $1.2 million per year. If you think of this quilt as Rowling's entire wealth, that amount would be equivalent to the little silver diamond in Snape's Pensieve memories in column seven, which is in itself a small number, but it doesn't mean, therefore, that there are very few trans people in the world. It just shows how underfunded and underserved this population is, because here's something that I was so grateful to my friend for finding because it's so beautiful: the percentage of people in a population who identify as trans differs by what decade they were born. As there has been more education and more openness, there's been some increase in who feels able to identify as trans, so my friend pointed me to a study in the U.S. among people born between 1995 and 2004, which is almost exactly the same years that *Harry Potter* was published. Among people born during those years, 2.49% of the population identifies as transgender, and my friend pointed out that this is equivalent to the area represented by all of the little squares and triangles of gold fabric that are in this quilt. I just thought, 'Oh, that's so gorgeous,' and that is something you can do with a quilt.

JC: Yes.

Lorrie: However much public funding there is for trans people, as opposed to the mainstream population, there are a lot more trans people who exist who have always been there. And then, of course, there's all the, uh, money spent on political action committees to spread anti-trans messages during the just-ended U.S. midterms; my friend linked me to an article about Elon Musk, J.K. Rowling's ally, through America PAC spending $100 million on anti-trans ads on these U.S. midterms alone, which, if this quilt represents the entirety of Rowling's wealth, that's equivalent to a three and a half inch strip that goes across the entire quilt.

Wasted on something that didn't even work, but I wanted people to see that because I wanted all the effort -- all of the infighting among fans about pressuring each other to boycott, for example, the upcoming HBO show… that's not going to defund transphobia anytime soon, partly because this TV show does not even premiere until December 25th of this year. If you want, you can wait until December 25th and then not watch the HBO show with all of your might! Congratulations! There are going to be continued attacks on trans rights between now and then. What are we going to do about that? There's got to be other stuff we can do, because withholding your money and withholding your attention… That's not active.

JC: Correct. Yeah.

Lorrie: It's very difficult to get any comfort, any relief from our feelings of endangerment and urgency by simply withholding. There's got to be something we can do because you have to take care of yourself; you have to take care of your inner reserves. The whole point of the attacks on trans people (on any transphobia) is to defeat people psychologically and emotionally, and the way you win is by having your own sanity and having your own life and being the self that you are meant to be, despite that psychological attack. You have to take care of yourself; you have to find ways to fight back that will bring you some connection with other people -- some comfort, some rest -- more than simply waiting until December 25th to not watch a TV show. I gave a couple of examples of just giving money -- just donating -- that I found more effective than boycotting (in addition to boycotting). I'm not saying don't boycott; I'm just saying add in something that's going to take care of your emotions better and actually reach other people, and reinforce the feeling that we're in this together and fight the narrative that we're all just isolated and alone and victimized by prejudice. I thought, 'Okay.' Let's take, for example, Trans Lifeline, which is a U.S. organization that runs a crisis phone hotline. They have been around for twelve years, and during that time they have answered over 150,000 calls, mostly volunteer-run, and they are one of the trans organizations that I have donated to. I donate anyway, but also anytime that I have spent money on *Harry Potter*-related expenses, I have donated at least double that amount to Trans Lifeline and similar organizations. Trans Lifeline's net assets are $7.6 million, tiny compared to J.K. Rowling and yet effective and able to reach so many people, to do good, and counter the fear that TERFs are trying to spread for

people to internalize. If you take $7.6 million and think of it as this whole quilt, that little golden square would be $760, which is an achievable amount. It may not be much, but it's enough to be visible; it's enough to make a difference. A group of friends could get together and hold a fundraiser, raise $760 and make a visible difference. As I've been doing this year… Starting this year, I thought, 'I am so depressed. I am so depressed by current events, I have to do something. Doing something has got to be better than doing nothing,' and I have sold these little octopods, which are these little, ridiculous, hand-crocheted felted dolls shaped like octopuses; a local cafe put them up for me so that people could buy one for $12 each, and I have donated 100% of the proceeds to a variety of different organizations supporting trans rights and advocacy, including a super local organization called Trans Masculine Advocacy Network. I'm in Philadelphia, so this organization is a support group for Black and Brown trans men and transmasculine people in Philly and, as I said, one of a number of local organizations that I've donated to with proceeds from octopods. I felt ridiculous. These octopods are three inches big and they're $12 a piece, so I thought --

JC: They're very cute. I have one, so they're very cute.

Lorrie: What is it going to do for me to sell little octopus toys for $12 a piece? What I was surprised by was that the low amount of money is actually a huge strength, because that shows that every $12 is a total stranger who cared. In one month, I raised $1,500 with these octopus toys, which is not nothing.

JC: Wow. Yeah, not nothing at all. That's twice that little gold square.

Lorrie: And I sold them to people who were lining up to buy their morning coffee after reading the morning's headlines. With so much destruction happening in the world, they're waiting for their coffee and they see that there's this one little thing they can do that can get a little bit of encouragement into their morning, show a little bit that they could push back, that they don't agree with this. This is not the world that they want or believe in. It's not okay. When I sent the money to the group organizer, he wrote back, "This means more than a dollar amount. Black and Brown Trans men are often the last to receive funding, the last to be invested in, and the last to be seen when resources are distributed. This fundraiser is a reminder that our community can choose something different." This is a magic that is within reach -- even of a twelve-year-old -- to fight the feeling of isolation, to fight the

destructive TERF narrative that transphobia is mainstream and inevitable, because again with this quilt, I'm trying to show a sense of proportion. Actually, eighty-five percent of Americans believe in equal rights for trans people. This is so the opposite of mainstream; that is an overwhelming majority, and according to the Trevor Project, well over ninety percent of queer youth have felt negatively affected by all of this anti-trans, anti-queer rhetoric that's been on the rise in the past couple years. People thinking that you can support trans rights politely, quietly… No, it actually makes a difference to just matter-of-factly state it aloud, to say the truth: this is not mainstream in the least. It is not inevitable in the least; it is a grotesquely minority opinion. If you say that, people can hear it, and everybody who says it makes it easier for somebody else to say it and for it to become apparent that this is common sense, because I was trying to argue that when you have that feeling that you wish you could tell J.K. Rowling ("You, who wrote this series about supporting each other and about love, have caused so much betrayal"), you can't reach her. You're supposed to take that bottled-up energy and redirect it so that you can calmly, lovingly send messages to the people who do listen to you. The people around you, whether they are people who might disagree with you or whether there are people in the community who might feel uplifted at your matter-of-fact statement of common sense and support… That's what you do with the frustration of not being able to reach this one billionaire who doesn't hear us and doesn't care. I finished my presentation by recalling the moment in the final battle when Voldemort says one of his lies and says, "Give me Harry Potter and none shall be harmed," like he's really not going to hurt anyone else at Hogwarts if they just hand Harry Potter over. Pansy Parkinson screams, "Potter's *there*! Someone grab him!" which is disgustingly, point for point, every politician who thought that they could hang on to political power by scapegoating trans people. That's the way they're going to hold on to office, which is not only disgusting but completely wrong and delusional. Then in the story, there is this mass of students who just stand up and look at Pansy, and that shows how many people know better than she does. This is how to disprove the lie, how to show that the lie is just really far from reality. I was saying that that's my argument from this quilt: we don't need wealth. We can speak the truth together, and that will create the power of disarmament. That was what I was able to do by using a patchwork quilt as a graphic that I

would have had a harder time, I think, getting across just by giving a presentation through words.

JC: And the response to this was… What was the response in the room at the end of this?

Lorrie: People were crying because it is hard. This is the Harry Potter Academic Conference, where a majority of attendees have been revolted by who Rowling has become, but how free do people feel to speak on behalf of the whole conference? You don't know who feels differently, and you maybe don't want to know. How free are people to just say, "By the way, scapegoating an entire population is disgusting and wrong"? Well, there are actual human stakes, aren't there? It's not true! It's not true that equal rights for trans people harms anybody.

JC: Right.

Lorrie: It's just false.

JC: Yeah.

Lorrie: You can say that.

JC: Yeah, and you can talk about the fact that the Republican think tanks invented this out of whole cloth and did studies to see what would get white women, who would otherwise vote Democratic, to vote Republican. What would do it? This was the one issue that kept polling positively for that. They just invented it and they manipulated the population; they manipulated everything. It's such an example of how stupid we are as a society -- how easy we are to manipulate -- and I guess one of the things that I cling to the results of this last election is that, with all the money that Elon Musk spent in Texas, that was the message they were hammering.

Lorrie: Yeah.

JC: That was where that money went: exactly into this argument that if we elected Democrats, all these horrible things were going to happen. It was all very transphobic, and voters in Texas went, "Nah, we don't buy it."

Lorrie: No. There were limits.

JC: Holy shit, right? The *Expelliarmus* that was cast just by voting and the numbers in the black community, the numbers in the Latino community, the

numbers of people who went out of their way to make sure… People whose votes have been threatened went out of their way to go and line up for hours. Polling places have been closed; people had to line up for hours, and they did it. That's casting an *Expelliarmus* as well. I know that there's a lot of cynicism amongst many of the youth about really how valuable voting is, but I just feel like the last two days… If you don't look at the last two days and think, 'Wow, that says something about our society and what's possible,' yeah, then you just aren't paying attention, I guess. I don't know what to say, so I feel like that's one way of thinking about the power of the vote.

Lorrie: It's so precisely the conversation that Harry and Dumbledore always have, where Dumbledore says, "Harry, you have power that Voldemort doesn't know," and Harry's like, "Love, again? Big deal," and Dumbledore says, "Yes, love," or Zacharias Smith saying, "Expelliarmus?" and Harry saying, "Yeah, actually." It's not glamorous. It is hard to believe in when you're awed by how much power or money the other side has, but yeah. Yes, vote.

JC: Yeah. So what's next for this quilt?

Lorrie: A colleague from the Harry Potter Academic Conference named Maria Matsakis Eisenhardt has approached me and proposed that she run an auction, and we decided that Trans Lifeline (which I mentioned in my presentation) would be a great recipient for whatever proceeds we raise through this auction. Since it's an auction, most people who want to get involved will not own the quilt, but we want to encourage people: if you have any sort of feelings about wanting to counter the lie, you could donate to a supportive organization of your choice, but we'll also include information for Trans Masculine Advocacy Network and for Trans Lifeline or whatever is local to you that you believe in. Maria is working on stuff that she would like to send people if they want some artwork or other contact in response for their donations, but we just want to show people, 'Look, it's important for us to take care of our own feelings of resistance when we want to fight against this kind of destructiveness.'

JC: Oh, I hope that a lot of money is raised for Trans Lifeline through the auction of this quilt, and I guess when that auction happens, are we going to put a link to it on the blog or with the podcast?

Lorrie: Yes!

JC: So if people want to bid on it, they can.

Lorrie: Yeah. We're hoping for the auction to take place soon in November and December of this year, before the premiere of the HBO show on December 25th, 2026.

JC: Awesome. Well, I guess, stay tuned for more information about the auction. All right. Thank you so much! This is amazing. I was looking forward to having this chance to talk to you about this quilt in more detail. I've heard stories from the conference, but it's really cool to have a great conversation around the design of it, the creation of it, and all of the thought and meaning that you put into it, as well as the impact that I think it's going to have.

Lorrie: Thank you for providing the sweetly confident, factual proportion of a hundred thousand dollars as a tiny speck within this quilt.

JC: It's a beautiful visual there, so I love it. All right!

Lorrie: Thank you, JC.

JC: Yay! Thank you!

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.