‘Chapter Six: Gilderoy Lockhart. The next day, however, Harry barely grinned once. Things started to go downhill from breakfast in the Great Hall. The four long house tables were laden with terrines of porridge, plates of kippers, mountains of toast….’

(Quote continues, fades into intro music)

Vanessa: I’m Vanessa Zoltan.

Casper: And I’m Casper ter Kuile.

Vanessa: And this is Harry Potter and the Sacred Text.

Casper: In all the years that I knew him, my grandfather was obsessed with the story of Parzival. Parzival is one of King Arthur’s knights, and like the rest of the knights is sent out to find the holy grail. And he rides around the countryside and one day comes across this amazing castle on the misty moors of England. And somehow he makes his way into the castle and is welcomed as a great guest. And he’s invited to dinner. So he gets dressed and goes to the banqueting hall and sits and enjoys a sumptuous feast. And halfway through dinner, suddenly everything goes quiet. The music stops, and in is paraded a lance, a bleeding lance. And Parzival is sitting there saying like, “What is going on?” And behind the lance, in is carried his host - a man called the Fisher King, who is crippled, and is clearly in pain. And Parzival, again, is kind of stunned by this silence, and the strangeness of his surroundings, and doesn’t do anything. He just sits there and watches the lance go past, and watches this man who is in great pain being carried in front of him, also go past. When they leave, the music returns, dinner resumes, and Parzival enjoys himself, ends up going to bed, wakes up in the morning and the entire castle is empty. All the people are gone, the horses are gone, and all he can do is just walk out of the castle and back on his adventure. Now, many years later, he learns that the king that he saw, the crippled king, was the defender of the holy grail, and if he had only asked, “Why do you suffer?”, the king would have shared with him the secret of the holy grail. And so Parzival spends his entire life regretting this mistake that he made. And I think back now, and I think just like Parzival, who never asked the question of the Fisher King, I feel like I have a question that I never asked my grandfather, which is, “Why do you love this story so much?” And I was thinking about this as I was reading this chapter of Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets because, why are we attracted to the things that we’re attracted to? What explains how our heart is pulled to certain things and not others? And I think we see that with some of the characters in this chapter, that they’re really attracted to different things. So, I’m excited to explore that with you today, Vanessa.

Vanessa: That is one of the exciting things about attraction, I think, Casper, is the mystery of it. And the fact that we can’t even understand why we are attracted to the things that we’re attracted to, and yet it is this incredibly powerful and defining force in our lives. I think that, yeah, this chapter will really help us explore that question. I don’t think we’ll come up with any answers, but I do think it’ll help us through the question.
Casper: I’m gonna be looking for answers, Vanessa. I’m not satisfied by just questions.

Vanessa: I’m attracted to mystery.

Casper: I’m attracted to the 30 second recap crown, which will be mine.

Vanessa: I’m glad you’re attracted to it, too bad that it will be an attraction that’s never satisfied for you, Casper.

Casper: Ooo, burn!

Vanessa: Burn! Are you ready to time me?

Casper: Yes, I’m so ready.

Vanessa: Okay.

Casper: Here we go. 3...2...1...go!

*(Tick*ng sound*)

Vanessa: Ron gets sent a screaming telegram from Mrs. Weasley, and she’s like yelling at him and it’s really terrible and he’s really embarrassed and he gets mad about it, but that means that Hermione is like, “Fine, you guys got into enough trouble,” and so she forgives them. Then they all go down to Herbology and Gilderoy Lockhart is like, “Oh Harry, I love you. Take pictures with me,” and Colin Creevey is like, “Oh Harry, I love you. Can I take pictures of you?” And Gilderoy Lockhart is like, “Oh Harry, I want to be with you all the time.” And then Draco is mocking them a lot, and Ron at one point says, “Hey Draco, eat slugs!” But nothing happens, and then Lockhart...

*(Timer BUZZES)*

...has his first Defense Against the Dark Arts class….and…

Casper: Penalty! Penalty! Over, like that was three and a half seconds over.

*(Vanessa laughs)*

Vanessa: It’s fine.

Casper: I like that you were so focused on Lockhart, because to me it says maybe you’re attracted to him.

Vanessa: You know I am attracted to Kenneth Branagh, not gonna lie. Henry the V?
(Vanessa purrs)

Casper: I don’t think he’s that attractive. I think that was really mis-cast in the movies.

Vanessa: I actually think it was mis-cast in the movies, too, because it should be like, a Brad Pitt, or to your point, Jake…

Casper: Jake Gyllenhaal?

(Vanessa laughs)

Vanessa: …Gyllenhaal.

(Vanessa laughs)

Vanessa: But I do think he’s very handsome. Are you ready?


Vanessa: Okay. On your marks, get set, go!

Casper: This chapter is really in three parts. We start with Professor Sprout’s lesson, then we have McGonagall’s transfiguration, then Defense Against the Dark Arts. And in that we really see a development of the characters, like I really think that Ron is screamed out by the howler, Hermione is obsessed with Professor Gilderoy Lockhart, Lockhart thinks Harry wants attention and is like, “Listen up, my boy, don’t go giving people signed autographs and your photos too early, just wait a little bit.” And we meet Creevey and we meet Sprout who is just amazing. And that’s the end.

(Timer BUZZES)

Vanessa: Our listeners aren’t idiots. You can’t pretend to be composed about doing a bad job.

Casper: I thought that was structured, I thought it was insightful.

Vanessa: It was neither of those things. But, I am attracted to your confidence. Casper there are lots of bits of attraction in this chapter, but I’m wondering where you would like to start today. Where is somewhere that you see attraction coming through?

Casper: Well, if a characterization of being attracted is feeling breathless, I feel like we have to start with Colin Creevey.

Vanessa: Colin!
Casper: He’s so cute. He goes up to Harry, and he says, “All right, Harry? I’m - I’m Colin Creevey,” he said breathlessly, taking a tentative step forward. “I’m in Gryffindor, too. Do you think it would be all right if -- can I have a picture?” He said, raising the camera hopefully.

*(Casper laughs)*

I just think it’s so cute!

Vanessa: It’s also so brave. It’s so…

Vanessa and Casper, together: It’s so Gryffindor!

Casper: That’s what I wrote on my book as well. Yeah, like you really understand why Colin is excited. He’s the son of a milkman and he’s trying to explain to his parents and everyone back home what it’s like in the wizarding world, and Harry is famous, Harry is this kind of symbol of the magical world for Colin, that he’s attracted to. And he knows that Harry was brought up in a muggle environment, so you can imagine that Colin might be attracted to Harry’s story as well. But, yeah, it’s this brave moment where Colin is just, so attracted to this kind of celebrity on campus, which I can absolutely identify with when I see you around Harvard campus, Vanessa.

*(Vanessa laughs)*

Vanessa: Casper I think that example shows how, even an innocent and sort of pure attraction is complicated, because part of Colin’s attraction to Harry is that Harry is famous. Part is that they have a shared background. Part is that he wants to use Harry as a symbol in order to explain to his parents what the magical world is. And part of it also has to be is that Harry approachable. If all of that was true about Draco, I don’t think that Colin would feel as comfortable going up Harry. So there is something about Harry the person that’s also attractive to Colin. So I just think that that’s always true about attraction. That you don’t really know why it is, and it probably has something to do with your past, and it probably has something to do with who you are, and where you are in your life, and also about the other person. I feel like those four things are almost always at play in a true attraction.

Casper: I really like that, Vanessa, I hadn’t thought about how this moment actually reveals something about Harry. How he’s approachable, how he’s warm, how he’s open to people talking to him. I think there’s something about people like that, who you are just attracted to them because you’ll feel welcomed when you open a conversation. There’s a moment when the students are entering Greenhouse Three, which is this exciting moment for them because they’re going to work with mandrakes, and Justin Finch-Fletchley, who is a classmate of Hermione, Ron, and Harry, starts just some conversation, he starts chatting. And no one actually responds to him, but he’s just very open and you can just tell that this is someone you’d like to be in an elevator with. He’s not invasive, he’s not asking too many questions, but he’s just a very attractive character just in the way he starts chatting about his life story. There’s just something about people who are open and welcoming to chit chat that is a very attractive thing.
Vanessa: That’s interesting ‘cause I also see that moment as being about Harry. As, you know, Justin is excited to be assigned to the same class as Harry. And again, it feels like excitement around having a little bit of fame, and especially there’s this extra bit of fame right now that Harry’s experiencing because the car crash. So there’s like an energy around Harry right now that everybody is finding attractive. And I think that there are days like that. Where like, everyone is attracted to you because you’re a bride that day, or because, for whatever reason, you’re the center of attention, and everybody just wants to be around you. And what’s interesting to me about that, is that Justin and Colin are the ones who feel comfortable going up to Harry because of their attraction, but someone like Ginny is intimidated by Harry because of that attraction. So you can get pulled to someone because you’re attracted to them for their fame because you like them, whatever it is, it can make you also want to shy away. There are also all these people who aren’t going up to Harry. What are their feelings about him?

Casper: Oh yeah, absolutely. I remember when I was in middle school, I would hide from like, the attractive boys. Because you don’t want them to see you. You just want to see them. So like you hide in the library and just peek at them from the other side of the staircase.

Vanessa: Or I even used to do one better, which is get mad at them for being so handsome. Right? It would like annoy me how unattainable they were, and I would like, hate them first. So if there’s too strong an attraction, there’s also some rejection in that. I feel like there’s just a lot of work with attraction. Either you have to be incredibly brave to act on it, or you have to be incredibly lucky to have it be mutual and have both of you realize it, or you are being defensive and rejecting someone. Like, so much happens around attraction.

Casper: It’s like a complicated potion that Snape has been sweating over.

Vanessa: Yes, I would say it’s more of a complicated ecosystem.

Casper: That Professor Sprout is an expert in!

Vanessa: Exactly. Speaking of Professor Sprout, I think that there’s a funny or interesting potential metaphor about attraction going on in the greenhouse. So, all of the kids are in the greenhouse and Professor Sprout has this new assignment for them. And she talks to them about this plant they’re going to work with called mandrakes. Sprout is gonna have everybody repot the mandrakes because these mandrakes are growing, and they need bigger pots in order to fully flourish in. And the text says, “Instead of roots, a small, muddy, and extremely ugly baby popped out of the earth. The leaves were growing right out of its head. He had pale, green, molded skin, and was clearly bawling at the top of his lungs.” So then, Harry, Ron, and Hermione start trying to repot the mandrakes, and Harry notices that the mandrakes do not want to get out of the pot when they’re trying to pull them, and then they don’t want to get back in the pot when it’s time to repot them. And I’m wondering if that is also true about attraction, that so much of the language we have around attraction is, “Oh, play hard to get,” “Oh, of course you want him now, ‘cause you can’t have him.” Right? There’s this feeling of wanting what you can’t have, and there being some sort of attraction around things that are elusive, and I’m wondering if you see that here.
Casper: I love this analogy! But it suddenly dawned on me that maybe the mandrakes are exactly the opposite. They’re super happy when they’re in the ground, they’re like, “Yeah I want to stay with you forever...soil,” and then when they’re out of the soil, they’re like, “Mm I’m attracted to this daylight, like don’t put me back in the ground.” And so, maybe they’re like attracted to what they have.

Vanessa: I like that. Here’s my question, though: which form of attraction do we respect more? What do you think?

Casper: The interesting thing about the mandrakes, though is even though they’re happy and attracted to the place where they’re settled, the only way they’re gonna grow into their maturity as plants is by suffering that period of transition, and even though they’re not attracted to change, it’s ultimately going to be the best for them ‘cause that’s how they’ll grow into an adult. So to answer your question of whether attraction that’s yearning for something or attraction that’s happy where it is is better, the limit if we look at the mandrakes, of just staying where you are, you know being happy/settling/etc., is that they can’t grow to be bigger if they stay where they are. So, they’re being repotted so they can grow into their full maturity, which means some suffering. So sometimes we have to do things that we’re not attracted to in order to grow.

Vanessa: I agree with that. The metaphor is made complicated I think in a productive way by the fact that the mandrakes are being repotted against their own will, but I think that we see that all the time. Couples break up because somebody gets a job, and you have to move across the country, and that’s a growth both that people need because this person needs to move and the other one needs to stay, and so you grow instead of sort of settle and give things up for each other. I think it’s easy for the mandrakes in some sense because they have this greater purpose. They have to grow in order to be able to create the potion that they need to create in order to serve their life purpose. But I think when we’re unsure of who we are, and unsure of what we want, attraction just becomes a much more complicated thing. And I think that’s where most of us are most of the time when we’re dealing with attraction. It’s about so many series of compromises, that it’s like, “Well I’m attracted to this quality, but I want this other thing, right?” There’s such a pros and cons list.

Casper: Well and sometimes what we’re attracted to we don’t actually want to have. I think we see that most with Molly Weasley where she’s kind of infatuated with Lockhart, right? But from a distance, and there’s no evidence in the text, or I think from our perception of Molly, that she would want to leave Arthur and run off with Gilderoy Lockhart. But it’s fun for her to have this kind of, infatuation, or a little bit of attraction for this celebrity. There’s no harm in it. So I think there’s something about attraction which isn’t always about wanting to achieve it. It’s just sometimes nice to have the dream of something else.

Vanessa: I think it’s even more than just nice to have a dream of something else. You know, having a crush on a celebrity if you’re in a committed relationship is a way of sort of winking to your partner of like, “But of course I would stay with you.” And of your partner winking back, like, “I understand there are other attractive people out there, but gosh I’m sure glad we’re
together.” Right? It’s acknowledging that you’re in a committed relationship by virtue of choice. It’s like, “See I could leave you for Gilderoy Lockhart, but I choose you, Arthur, over Gilderoy Lockhart.” Which is even sweeter. So, yeah, that seems like more than fun, it seems like just a component of being alive, and of Molly being a middle-aged woman with a million children who still gets to have a crush. I think attraction can definitely just be a positive force in those ways.

Casper: Vanessa, we talked about how Molly is attracted to Lockhart, but I think there’s a difference between how she’s attracted to him and how Hermione’s attracted to him. Molly’s obviously in a stable relationship, is a little bit older, but Hermione, we know, is not only studious, right? She’s read all the books. But she’s definitely attracted to Lockhart. She’s got these little hearts around her schedule, she knows his favorite color, she knows what his secret ambition is. All of the things Gilderoy puts in his little test at the beginning of his lesson about his own life. He’s got like, 50 something question which he asks the students. Hermione gets them all right. So there seems to be something here which is more on the kind of, obsessive end. I feel like there’s a difference between Molly and Hermione’s attraction to Lockhart, and I’m hoping you can help me understand what that difference is.

Vanessa: My first gut answer is just the age. I think that as you get older you can be sort of shameless about your crushes because you know they’re not serious. I have a huge crush on Hugh Jackman, and I just like, literally have his face on my refrigerator, right? And I’m in on the joke. But I feel like when you’re younger and you have less experience, these things they just feel higher stakes. Like anything when you’re younger. It’s 100% of her crushes have been on Gilderoy Lockhart. At this point Molly’s probably had dozens of passing crushes. So I feel like there’s just less shame involved, there’s less at risk, there’s more experience at play. But I will say that I really resent when people say, like, “Oh it’s just a schoolboy crush,” or, “Just a schoolgirl crush.” I think Hermione has real feelings for Lockhart. They aren’t within the context of a full adult life, but they are profound feelings. She’s not a silly girl. And she’s not even really behaving out of the norm. If this had been any class, she would have gotten 100% on the opening quiz. She got all of the questions right about mandrakes on the first day. So she isn’t sacrificing who she is in any way. She’s not giving up anything of herself. Which, I feel like that’s when crushes become unhealthy; when they’re unreciprocal, nonrelational crushes, and the subject of the crush really starts making sacrifices or changes or whatever it is just in the hopes the object will respond. That’s when things become problematic to me, and I think Molly and Hermione have that in common in that they’re not doing that, they’re not showing any signs of an unhealthy crush here.

Casper: I take your point there, Vanessa, I think that maybe she is just being a little trusting of teachers in the way that she always is. But let’s keep track of how she feels about Lockhart and especially towards the end of the book when we learn that Lockhart is not all that he seems. How will she respond?

Vanessa: Or is he exactly as he seems? A twit! He’s the worst! Can we just talk for a minute for Lockhart’s attraction to Harry? He just wants to be anywhere near Harry at all times, in order to have a little bit of the fame light that is falling on Harry. And he does destructive things to be near Harry. He is like willing to lie in order to get near Harry, he’s willing to use other people in
order to get near Harry. He sacrifices his sense of who he is as a teacher and a writer and an adventurer in order to be near Harry Potter.

Casper: I think different. The way I read the text is that Lockhart is so within his own little bubble of how he wants attention, how he wants the media, how he wants other people to be attracted to him. You know, again he wears some fabulous outfits in this chapter which I think we should mention. There’s a gorgeous turquoise number with a gold hat. But I think that he assumes that Harry wants the same thing and cannot imagine that someone would not want the kind of attention and attraction that Lockhart wants.

Vanessa: Are we reading the same book?

Casper: Because I think what’s happening here is Gilderoy is seeing himself as a mentor, he’s saying to Harry, “Well don’t do this just yet,” or, “Wait a couple of years before you give people your autograph.” I think he’s thinking he’s helpful right now.

Vanessa: You cannot possibly say that Lockhart has goodwill. He moves in on this portrait. Colin is asking Harry for a photo and Lockhart, in order to “save” Harry is like, “No here it will be of the two of us, Colin, you’re welcome.” And he pulls Harry aside and says, “Let me just say that handing out signed pictures at this stage of your career isn’t sensible. Looks a tad big-headed, Harry.” If he was trying to mentor Harry, then he would actually take advantage of what’s happening to Harry here, which is, “People are going to put all sorts of things on to you, and people are going to ask you to do things, and you want to handle your fans like this or that.” Lockhart is not mentoring him, he is projecting his own aspirations on to Harry. And wherever Harry is, there’s like a little light around him as far as Lockhart is concerned. He has eyes fixed on Harry at all times. He just wants that attraction to be on him!

Casper: Ok, so then I think we’re both right, because I think that’s totally fair, but I think that he thinks he’s mentoring. He’s trying to do that. He’s doing it badly, no doubt.

(Vanessa laughs)

No doubt. But I think you’re on to something with the fact that attraction isn’t always pure. And I’m thinking particularly in this chapter of when Professor Sprout tells the students that they’re going to be working in Greenhouse # 3, which is different from the Greenhouse # 1 which they’ve worked in before. That there’s this sudden kind of, excitement about that. There’s something dangerous maybe. Or that the plants in Greenhouse 3 are bigger and scarier. And the students are attracted to that. Like, it’s exciting. And the same thing happens when the howler is sent by Molly Weasley, and it’s shouting throughout the Great Hall. Students from across the tables are looking over at Ron to see what’s going on, they’re attracted to the situation. And it just reminded me of when you drive by a car crash, everyone slows down. Because they want to see. They’re attracted to this really horrific scene often. And, yeah, it just raises the question of, “How do we know when attraction is a good thing and when it’s not?”
Vanessa: And I think so much of all of the attractions that you just listed are tied up very much in relief. You’re so relieved that you’re not the one who’s getting the howler, you’re so relieved that you’re not the one in the car accident, that you want to stare in order to distance yourself from the possibility that it could have been you. And I think fear is always a part of attraction. Any sort of attraction is a risk.

Casper: And I think, maybe that’s why sometimes we feel most alive when we’re really attracted to something. Because there’s a risk to it. Like life is in its fullest when we don’t know what’s going to happen. And there’s a limit, of course, to how much risk we can handle, and how much risk is attractive. Because, ironically, in the greenhouse, we learn that these mandrakes are very dangerous when they’re adult and you hear them scream, you can die.

Vanessa: And even at this stage you can be knocked out for several hours.

Casper: Right, and yet the students feel completely safe. You know, Harry’s a little worried, but as soon as he puts on his earmuffs, all the sound is drowned out, and they can do this very dangerous thing safely. And so it’s still kind of attractive. When you compare that with the Defense of the Dark Arts class, where there’s this big buildup to this exciting thing Lockhart is going to reveal under this cover and Seamus is kind of laughing, and then he takes of the cover and inside are these harmless pixies, everyone thinks. When they’re released they cause total havoc. And no one's attracted to that anymore. Everyone runs out of the classroom as soon as they can. So there’s a limit to how much risk we’re attracted to. How much of that we can handle, or how much of that we want.

Vanessa: And how much having somebody else who you trust nearby impacts your ability for attraction to flourish. So, everybody trusts Professor Sprout, that she wouldn’t have them re-pot mandrakes if it wasn’t safe, and so there’s this exciting attraction to this project. Nobody trusts Professor Lockhart, so as soon as the pixies get out of hand, it’s not this attractive form of danger, it’s just scary. And so I think that, yeah, in order for attraction to sort of be in its best form, there has to be a trust component to it.

(Transition music)

Vanessa: Casper, because we’re in Chapter Six, we’re going to transition to our next spiritual practice. We’re going to move on from lectio divina, and go back to the practice of sacred imagination. How do you feel about that?

Casper: I’m very excited.

Vanessa: Oh, I’m so glad. So, as a reminder to us and to our listeners, sacred imagination is the practice of really trying to put yourself in the text. And, letting your imagination really go. Try to imagine what the characters are thinking, what they’re smelling, and really just immerse yourself in the text. And then see what blessings come to you because of that. So I’ve picked a scene in Professor McGonagall's classroom, and I’m going to read this paragraph and I’m going to ask that everybody try to imagine what it feels like to be Ron in this moment.
Casper: Ok I’m going to close my eyes and imagine - and if you’re not driving or cycling, I encourage you to also close your eyes.

Vanessa: Or walking, walking can be dangerous.

(Reading from the text): ‘Ron was having far worse problems. He had patched up his wand with some borrowed Spellotape, but it seemed to be damaged beyond repair. It kept crackling and sparking at odd moments, and every time Ron tried to transfigure his beetle, it engulfed him in thick, gray smoke, which smelled of rotten eggs. Unable to see what he was doing, Ron accidentally squashed his beetle with his elbow and had to ask for a new one. Professor McGonagall wasn’t pleased.’

So Casper, tell me, what did it feel like to be Ron while imagining yourself in this scene?

Casper: The thing that struck me immediately was just how horrible this situation is for Ron. The egg-smelling smoke and the fact that it feels like the wand felt dangerous in my hand while I was holding it. I was imagining what it would feel like to be Ron, and just holding that wand in my hand, like it’s crackling, it’s sparking. I don't know is it working at all? Is it going to explode? I’m scared to try out this spell that I’m supposed to be doing in the classroom. And we know that he is so eager not to write home and talk about his broken wand because he knows he’ll be shouted at again. On top of any financial worries that he has, that I think it’s quite brave to continue using this malfunctioning equipment. You know, a wand is also a weapon and it could really hurt him. Yeah, I felt very at risk just using it. What about you?

Vanessa: What I was really struck by is how humiliating it must be for Ron, and this is the third time in like 20 hours that Ron has been humiliated on Hogwarts’ campus. They got back the night before and the car crashed, and then he got the howler in the morning, and now this. You know, I think I forget it is sort of hard to be Ron. This is not an ideal way to be 12-13 years old, where you’re just constantly being publicly humiliated. Creating a smell of rotten eggs and gray smoke when you’re just trying to do your work in a middle school classroom? That’s like death.

Casper: Everyone is turning and pointing to him, you know, giggling. You can just tell how awful that feels.

Vanessa: I think again we see the poverty of the Weasley really entering the classroom. At Hogwarts everyone’s eating the same food, everybody’s sleeping in the same dormitories, but your poverty is not something you can shake even once you get into this glorious classroom. It’s not equal, even here.

Casper: Yeah, he’s already feeling the inferiority of his material objects. And this whole situation is just drawing all the more attention to that. So, Vanessa, as we imagined ourselves into Ron in this moment in McGonagall's classroom, does this reveal anything new about attraction?
Vanessa: Yeah, the attraction that occurred to me in this moment is how attractive Harry’s life must look to Ron in this moment. Today, Ron has gotten a howler because of the car situation, and now he has this broken wand that can’t be fixed because his family doesn't have money. Harry had no family who yelled at him, and Harry would’ve had enough money to replace the wand. And so I can just imagine Ron looking at Harry as Colin wants his autograph and as Lockhart is giving him special attention, and as he didn’t get yelled at in front of the whole school, and as he would have money to replace his wand. And that attraction can also be resentment. And also, you know I’m sure if Ron thought it through, he wouldn’t actually trade lives with Harry, but just how attractive your friends can get, and how quickly attraction can become envy, and just how complicated being in an intimate close friendship with somebody can be. So I can just imagine that his attraction towards Harry is really hard right now.

Casper: And now a word from our second sponsor.

Vanessa: Now it’s time for this week’s voicemail. This week’s voicemail is from Cindy Phippen. (Voicemail beep)

Cindy: Hi Vanessa and Casper, my name is Cindy, and I’m a huge fan of the podcast. And I even wrote my master's thesis on the Harry Potter fandom, so I love getting more academic perspectives you guys are giving on our beloved series. And I was just listening to Chapter 3 of Book 2, when Harry is at the Burrow. And how curious he was about the gnomes and everything else at the Burrow. And I think it is because, through the acceptance of the Weasleys, he had enough self-confidence to explore unknown territory. And I know that in my own life, the more I feel accepted by the people around me, that I feel more confident to be adventurous and curious because I know that I have that strong home base to return to. And so I was just wondering what your thoughts were on that, what kind of experiences you had where acceptance gave you confidence to be who you really want to be. Love the podcast, keep up the good work. Bye!

Casper: Cindy, thank you so much for that voicemail. I think you’re so right. I’m immediately thinking of whenever I’m with my colleague and we’re brainstorming new ideas. We’re trying to come up with an exciting thing. Sometimes you have to say a thousand really bad ideas before you get to the good one. And only when you feel really safe and accepted for who you are in exactly the way you were describing can the good idea emerge. And that strikes me as really, really familiar. So thanks for sending in that voicemail and I’m glad that the Burrow is one of those spaces that makes us feel safe in this text, so we can all emerge in the way that we want to. Vanessa it’s time for us to bless someone in the pages of this chapter. And I’m curious to find who you want to bless this week.

Vanessa: I would like to bless Professor Sprout.

Casper: Me, too!

Vanessa: Really? Ok, cool!
Casper: Is it allowed for us both to bless the same person?

Vanessa: Of course! Absolutely. We all need as many blessings as we can get. And she hasn’t gotten one from us yet.

Casper: That’s very true. Ok, you go first.

Vanessa: So I am blessing her for this just snapshot moment, where we see that she’s a little bit scratched up, and that she’s coming up from having doctored the Whomping Willow that’s been injured. And, you know, she put herself at risk and she got herself a little hurt in order to take care of this tree. And it makes me want to thank all of the climate activists out there, and people who are just fighting to make this earth safe, and putting themselves in danger with the clarity of purpose of protecting our earth. I think it’s a really noble calling, and she does it without complaint, and just goes about her day.

Casper: Vanessa, the blessing I want to give Professor Sprout is not only dealing with the mansplaining she has to endure while she’s fixing the Whomping Willow, but the fact that she’s happy to pick up the pink, fluffy earmuffs that no one else wants to wear. So my blessing is for Professor Sprout and anyone else who doesn’t really care what they look like while they get on with the job that needs to be done. Who isn’t fussing over what people think about them, and is just doing what needs to be done with grace and a good attitude and a sense of total confidence in who she is no matter what people think of her fluffy earmuffs. So blessing for you, Professor Sprout.

Vanessa: And I bet she looks amazing in the fluffy earmuffs.

Casper: She definitely does.

Vanessa: Right?? I feel like it’s a good look.

Casper: You’ve been listening to Harry Potter and the Sacred Text. Next week we’ll be reading Chapter 7, Mudbloods and Murmurs, through the theme of Confusion.

Vanessa: Don’t forget to book your ticket for our live show. There are still some tickets available, which you can find on our website at harrypottersacredtext.com. Please also subscribe and review on iTunes or wherever you find your podcast. You can follow us on Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, and Facebook.

Casper: This episode of Harry and the Sacred Text is produced by Ariana Nedelman, Vanessa Zoltan, and me, Casper ter Kuile. Our social media coordinator is Jenn Stark, our music is by Ivan Pyzow and Nick Bohl. And Harry Potter and the Sacred Text is part of the Panoply network. You’ll find ours and many other great shows at panoply.fm. Thank you for this week’s voicemail to Cindy Phippen, Rebecca and Charlie Lesley, and Stephanie Paulsell. We’ll see you next week.
(Theme music fades)

Vanessa: Can we talk about what’s going on as far as attraction with Profeshu- with Profeshure Sprout?

(Vanessa laughing)

Casper: You just said, Profeshure Sprout. Like, ja! Ok!

Vanessa: I just can’t do my “s”s and my “sh”.

Casper: Frau Shprout will see you know. (Casper laughing, then continues in accent). Hallo, Vanessa!

(Vanessa laughing)

I’m sorry.