Harry Potter and the Sacred Text 4.03 – The Invitation: Awareness

Vanessa: Chapter Three, The Invitation.

"By the time Harry arrived in the kitchen, the three Dursleys were already seated around the table. None of them looked up as he entered or sat down. Uncle Vernon's large red face was hidden behind the morning's daily mail and Aunt Petunia was cutting a grapefruit into quarters..."

(Reading fades out, music fades in)

Vanessa: I'm Vanessa Zoltan.

Casper: And I'm Casper ter Kuile.

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

Casper: Thanks so much to everyone who came out to our live show in Somerville. We loved meeting you all and are really excited about our Atlanta show coming up in November. Tickets still available - harrypottersacredtext.com.

Vanessa: And Casper, we have another really exciting announcement.

Casper: I hear we're looking for some talented designers.

Vanessa: We are indeed. So we are launching a t-shirt design contest. We love our t-shirts but we're thinking that maybe we should expand our merch store.

Casper: Yes!

Vanessa: And we know that we have so many talented listeners. In fact, our Harry Potter and the Sacred Text headquarters slash my dorm room is decorated in our listeners' art and it's so beautiful! So we thought we would share all of our listeners' talents - so it's not just in our office but out in the world - by asking you all to help us design our next t-shirt.

Casper: So if you're interested in submitting a design, check out all the details at harrypottersacredtext.com. Submissions are gonna be due November 15th and we're gonna ask you not to use more than three colors although you should feel free to use the logo and somewhere incorporate the words "Harry Potter and the Sacred Text". You can mail your submissions to harrypottersacredtext@gmail.com and if you put in "Design Contest" in the subject box that's going to help us a lot.

Vanessa: That thing that we're also really excited about, besides seeing all of your amazing designs, is that the prize for this is going to be two tickets to the amazing play The Puffs which
is in New York City. And the story of The Puffs is that for seven years a certain boy wizard - we won't name names - went to a certain magic school. But this play is not his story. This is the story of The Puffs who just happen to be there too. And as a Hufflepuff, I'm really excited about this play.

Casper: Puffs is a Potter-inspired comedy for anyone who has never been destined to save the world. And it's had amazing reviews, it's really taken off in New York and I think everyone will really enjoy it.

Vanessa: So the prize for this t-shirt contest is two tickets for The Puffs in New York City, one free tickets to a Harry Potter and the Sacred Text live show of ours - of your choice - and, of course, a free t-shirt. So we're really excited to be launching this and we can't wait to see your designs!

Casper: When I started dating the man who would become my husband, very quickly we knew that we wanted to be together for the rest of our lives. And so we pretty openly started talking about getting married at some point. But (Southern accent) being a country girl that I am, (back to normal voice) I said that well, it would be improper for us to get engaged before we'd been together for two years. And like, I want to live together for awhile, I really want to make sure that this is the right decision. And so when it came up to our second year anniversary, you know we'd planned a lovely day. We went out to Salem together and to the museum and had a lovely lunch and we came back that evening to have quite a fancy dinner to celebrate our love and it was quite fancy! We had one of those five course meals and I'm not a drinker, but Sean had five different wine pairings and so my intention for the dinner was purely just to have a lovely romantic evening. But as we'd been joking this wedding thing, I was like, well, let's just hypothetically plan it. Right? That's a good conversation topic, it's creative and fun and so we talked about where would we host it, and what would be the venue and who would come and who would officiate and what we wear and you know, we really went into quite some detail and so by the time we got to the final, kind of, dessert course, really the whole day was planned. We'd chosen the music for the service, really, everything was in place. And I kind of jokingly said to Sean, you know, well it doesn't have to be hypothetical. And I think because of perhaps partly of the wine pairings Sean just burst out into happy tears and said, "Okay, let's get married!!" And I was like, "Oh my god!" It was like I had zero awareness that that whole conversation, maybe even the whole day, was leading up inextricably to this moment where we would decide to get married. And looking back I'm like, it was so obvious that it was gonna happen. Especially as we were planning the whole thing. And I think that theme of awareness is really interesting especially in this chapter because the Dursleys are so much more aware of Harry's magical abilities and to his connection to the Weasleys, of Sirius as this protective role as an outsider pressure, that it really changes the dynamic in their relationship. And I think just generally how aware are we of the things that sit under the conversations that we're having or things that we're leading up to because of the conversation that we're having. And I kinda just want to dig into that theme of awareness today.
Vanessa: I can't believe how dumb you were!

Casper: (laughing) I know!

Vanessa: That's like, adorable! I would have thought you were proposing. What else could you have possibly meant by that?!

Casper: Well, that's the other thing. I think that maybe beneath my surface reasoning of like, haha what a joke to say it doesn't have to be hypothetical. Maybe there was this deeper intention, of you know, it's been two years, like, we can get engaged now!

Vanessa: According to my arbitrary rule of two years!

Casper: (laughing) Exactly.

Vanessa: Well, Casper, I hope this doesn't offend your timing to do a 30-second recap.

Casper: (laughs) Sure. Let's do it!

Vanessa: Okay. You go first today.

Casper: Okay.

Vanessa: On your mark, get set, go!

Casper: (stopwatch ticking sound starts) So this chapter is really all about an invitation that Harry receives from the Weasleys. Um, it's a envelope covered in stamps and Molly's like, I hope I put enough stamps on it! And it's like, please, um, hello, welcome, we'd like to invite Harry to come with us to the Quidditch World Cup, it's very exciting and Vernon's like, nooo! Aaah, but I want to get rid of him but aah, I don't want to give him his way, um, and Harry's like (super casual voice) "Yah, that's totally fine, I'll just write to my Uncle Sirius and Sirius will beat you up" and then Vernon's like "Oh my gahd, mass murderer, okay, you can go" and then everyone's really excited (buzzer sound) and Dudley's not eating.

Vanessa: 31 seconds.

Casper: Oh, I keep doing that.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Casper: And Percy's Head Boy.

Vanessa: (laughs) Ooh! No, he's not anymore!
Casper: Not anymore. Okay, your turn. Three, two, one, go!

Vanessa: (stopwatch ticking sound starts) So in this chapter we find out that Dudley has just gained so much weight that like literally clothes won't fit him anymore so he's home and they have to go on this diet but Harry secretly has received all this food so he's not really on the diet, he's sneaking out on the diet. And then um, they're all sitting at breakfast, the Dursley's, and they get an invitation from Molly being like, oh, we would love to have Harry over and Harry manipulates Vernon to saying yes he can go and then he goes upstairs and um - Per - uh - Ron (speeding up) has written him a letter and Harry writes back saying yes! (buzzer sound)

Casper: There's a lot of letter writing.

Vanessa: Yes, there is.

Casper: Because he also edits his letter to Sirius, he's like, um, by the way I'm going to go be at the Weasleys.

Vanessa: P.S.

Casper: P.S.

Vanessa: So, Casper, where did you see this theme of Awareness in this chapter?

Casper: I mean, so much time in this chapter is spent exploring Dudley's weight. It's kind of intense. You know, obviously, his parents care about him and this interesting phrase where the text tells us that Petunia refused to to see that Dudley had become the size of a small killer whale. And it's so much about awareness of a problem but maybe not wanting to acknowledge it or awareness of your reaction to something but being uncomfortable with what the reaction might be. I just feel like Petunia is really suppressing a lot here and finally they receive some medical advice that they need to change Dudley's diet and then things do drastically change. But this is something that has been building for some time. Petunia, I think, shows a lot of her love in how she spoils or delights Dudley and that involves presents but it also involves food and food is really a sign of love. But it's reached a place where it's clearly not healthy for Dudley and she's unwilling to adjust that until this kind of medical intervention. So there's something around what we want to do and our awareness that that might not be the right thing but struggling to change that, which I can definitely empathize with.

Vanessa: Oh, absolutely. I feel like food is this very fraught thing with love. We want to bake things for the people we love and that becomes very complicated. But, that other thing that this chapter made me think of as far as Dudley's weight and awareness is - who is saying things like, "Dudley reached the size and weight of a young killer whale" or "he had piggy eyes". And I'm wondering if that is from Harry's perspective and so we are being invited to see that this is a
place in which Harry can specifically feel superior to Dudley. It just feels so ugly to me to watch somebody who is struggling with extreme obesity throwing out these criticisms and judgements of Dudley in this moment. And if it's Harry who's fourteen and has been humiliated by Dudley all this time then I feel like I would understand it in one way. I would understand it in the way that you can understand someone's vulnerability and be empathetic to it. Or if somebody is really nasty to you, you can understand their vulnerability and be trying to exploit it and belittle them for it.

Casper: Right.

Vanessa: But I don't think it's clear as to who the narrator is and so this chapter is just so hard for me. I feel like we are beating up on a kid with a real health issue. And I understand that Dudley is a bully, but I just don't think that that justifies being so hard on him.

Casper: I'm really struck, Vanessa, by that connection between Harry and Dudley here. And I think that so much of awareness is often about comparison. Right? We might be taking in someone else's experience or looking at very much based on our own. And so often we're kind of taking the standards or the frameworks that we apply to ourselves and putting it onto someone else. And, you know, in this case, Harry doesn't seem to struggle in any way with food. Which is kind of miraculous in terms of the lack of it that he had as a kid. You know, he loves the feasts at Hogwarts, all the sweets. But we don't really get a sense from the text that there's a challenge there for him. So here's something that's very easy for Harry. And you know, he seems to stay pretty in shape throughout the books even though he likes to indulge on cake hidden beneath the floorboards and all of that kind of thing. And so I think for him there's very little empathy around Dudley's relationship with food. Because he just doesn't have a sense of what the challenge might be and I think that leads to that kind of nastiness around comparing Dudley to various different animals.

Vanessa: Yeah, and I think that to a point you made earlier, like, this is the way that he has been taught by the Dursleys to interact.

Casper: Right.

Vanessa: There's a moment to me that shows a total lack of awareness with Vernon. Vernon says to Harry at one moment when they're like having this power struggle over whether or not Harry can go to the Quidditch World Cup. Vernon says like, "You're standing there in the clothes that I put on your back." And Harry says, "Only clothes that Dudley has outgrown." And I think that that shows, one, a complete lack of awareness on Vernon's side of how bereft Harry feels as far as clothes. Vernon sees this as a moment of, like, generosity - I've kept you clothed - whereas Harry sees it as like a prolonged humiliation that all of the clothes that he's ever had access to haven't fit him at all and have been castaways of Dudley. And I think also that I would understand that there's some resentment on Dudley's size given that Harry is sitting in this moment swimming in Dudley's old clothes. We're told that he has to roll up the sleeves of
Dudley's old sweatshirt five times just to be able to have use of his hands. So I think that there is this physical embodiment of Dudley's size over Harry's body that maybe explains some of this language where the oppressive size of Dudley is enshrouding Harry in the moment that he's making these observations. But yeah, the fact that Harry would say that Dudley is cultivating his grapefruit slice with "piggy little eyes" while Harry secretly knows that he has a feast waiting for him upstairs just seems beyond ungenerous to me. And I know that we're gonna get a lot of feedback that Harry is abused and I understand - it just still feels so vicious to me. I think that we're seeing the cycles of abuse and the cycles of viciousness in this moment.

Casper: Yeah.

Vanessa: Where else did you see awareness in this chapter, Casper?

Casper: Well, I think that Harry shows incredible amount of awareness in how he handles Vernon. Like if we think about how Harry wanted to go to the zoo in the very first book, he's not particularly vocal about it but his desire is really clear. And this time Harry just as much wants to go to the Quidditch World Cup, right, he gets the invitation but he plays it so cool. Because he knows exactly the bind that Vernon will find himself in and so he just plays it very nonchalant and just pretends that, "Oh, I can't go? Okay, no worries. I'll just write to Sirius..." and then just throws that little, kind of, grenade into the conversation and so I think that Harry has learned, you know, and this is not uncommon if you're living in a kind of subservient relationship, even the most loving subservient relationships - like being a child with parents in the house. You learn how to navigate that and you learn when to ask for certain things. I really see Harry's awareness of how to manipulate people growing incredibly.

Vanessa: Oh yeah, and I mean, he even knows not to say "Hogwarts" but to say "school" -

Casper: Exactly.

Vanessa: - which I am very impressed by Molly's awareness of this. In the letter she writes to Vernon -

Casper: Absolutely.

Vanessa: So, first of all, I just love that the Weasleys are like, obviously, Harry is coming with us to the Quidditch World Cup. We're just gonna pretend to placate his aunt and uncle by sending this letter, but Molly's letter to Vernon, other than her stamp faux pas is absolutely brilliant. She uses a lot of language that she could say Hogwarts, but instead she says "the remainder of the school holidays and see him safely onto the train back to school". She doesn't say like "We can take him to Platform 9 3/4 and get him onto the Hogwarts Express". And just the - I mean, like this political move of asking permission in this way when really, like, she knows that she's going to come pick up Harry no matter what.
Casper: Yes, and, I mean, she does mention the Department of Magical Games and Sports, she mentioned Quidditch, I mean, there's enough magical references that she's making *but* each of them, I think, are signalling their importance. She says, *(posh tone)* "my husband has connections at the Department of Magical Games and Sports", so she's like signally authority and she does say at the beginning, "we've never been introduced" which is very smart. But then she says, *(posh tone)* "But I'm sure you've heard a great deal from Harry about my son Ron" which again puts Vernon on the back foot because it shows that he doesn't know something that he should know. This is a very, very, like, an aware letter.

Vanessa: Yeah, I mean, there's the potential that she genuinely doesn't understand how disconnected Harry is from Vernon and Petunia and so she's like, "obviously we talk about Harry all the time so obviously Harry has mentioned Ron" but I love your reading that she's hyper aware and she's like, "Are you a terrible aunt and uncle who's never even heard of my son?"

Casper: Exactly! I think this is a letter in the Jane Austen best tradition of poison-penned letter through civility. Like, throwing all sorts of social bombs into someone else's living room with their perfectly crafted letter which has had twelve drafts.

Vanessa: Oh my god, being British sounds so stressful to me!

Casper: *(laughing)* And listen to this, "And tickets are extremely hard to come by", you know? It's just like, "We've got them and you don't!" *(laughing)* "We would of course be glad to have Harry to say!" I don't know, I just feel like the language is really, really thoughtful.

This whole interaction between the Dursleys and Molly, I think, points to a bigger question about the place of magical society within broader British society. You know, we know that the magical world is hidden from most Muggles and there's a long history of tension between those two societies and I wonder, you know, we're going to have such crises that cross over these two worlds in the coming books, if there is at this point any potential of any cohabitation in public and, like, raising awareness of magical issues or Muggle understanding of magic life. I just wonder if that would ever be a possibility or if this kind of sub-society is condemned to invisibility forever. Because I do think we see so many broken relationships especially people who fall between the cracks, like Squibs, right? They can never really belong in either world. There's a cost to this disconnection between these two worlds and you know, you often hear in campaigning about "oh, we need to reach awareness about this issue", "we need to raise awareness about someone's experience" and I do think there's an argument that could be possible if not beneficial.

Vanessa: Yeah, I mean, it's interesting, I completely understand why Molly doesn't invite Vernon and Petunia to the Quidditch World Cup but it would be interesting if Hermione's parents went, right? Why aren't there those crossover gestures when clearly Hermione's parents *are* incredibly supportive of the fact that they have a witch daughter.
Casper: Especially when we think about what motivates evil in this story. It's so much about superiority over Muggles, which my reading of that is really it's a response to the oppression that they feel as magical beings. I feel like that conflict between Harry and Dudley about food is really replicated at a macro level in terms of wizarding and Muggle identity.

Vanessa: And I think you see an exact embodiment of that tension in this conversation between Harry and Vernon, right? Where Vernon is scared of the wizarding community and so the wizarding community either tries to stay hidden and keep secrets and manipulate which creates more fear. I feel like sometimes raising awareness about an issue doesn't feel like enough. But it is such an important first step, right? Something that I know that you've talked about is that the reason that the gay rights movement was able to move forward, in some ways as quickly as it did, because as people started coming out, everybody knew somebody who was gay. But we don't all know somebody who's in a different social class from us. Right, we don't all know somebody who's a different race from us. And whereas to some extent we're all related to somebody who is queer. And so, I do think that awareness and knowing each other really can break down these barriers to have real implications of liberty and freedom and that it would be nice if the Quidditch World Cup was sort of open to the Muggles.

Casper: They'd be amazed!

Vanessa: Oh yeah, they'd all be in love with the veelas!

Casper: I think that they so would. Actually, that could cause serious damage to the economy. (both laughing) But I do think that those relationships of love that cross those kinds of boundaries are these powerful signals of healing and what's possible at a cultural or a macro level.

(transitional music plays)

Vanessa: Casper, are you ready for this week's spiritual practice?

Casper: Yes, I am.

Vanessa: So this week we are going to do Lectio Divina again and I am wondering if you would like to pick a sentence for us.

Casper: Okay, I'm flicking through the pages. (sounds of pages turning) "He was going to watch the Quidditch World Cup!"

Vanessa: Oooh!

Casper: "He was going to watch the Quidditch World Cup!"
Vanessa: Okay, Casper, so step one of Lectio - what is literally happening in this sentence.

Casper: So Harry has just convinced Vernon to allow him to go with the Weasleys to go to the World Cup. And this is the first time that Harry's gonna go to a Quidditch match, it's certainly the first time he's going to the Quidditch World Cup. So he's kind of just realizing "Wow, this is really happening. I've got permission, I'm gonna go."

Vanessa: Yeah, it's like this moment of realization, like, "Oh my god! This is actually going to happen to me!" He finally proposed!

Casper: (laughs)

Vanessa: Right? It's like that moment, where like, "ah! it's real!"

Casper: It's real!

Vanessa: So, stage two of Lectio Divina is allegory. So what words in this jump out at you and remind you of other stories. Casper, can you read the sentence for us one more time, please.

Casper: "He was going to watch the Quidditch World Cup!"

Vanessa: So, what words in here remind you of something else?

Casper: I mean, the word "watch" strikes me a little bit because, I don't know, if he's necessarily been waiting to go and see a Quidditch match. We know that since he met Ron, there's so much of the wizarding world that he's taken on as his own. So he's become a big fan of the same team that Ron loves and he's got a book with watching all the favorite players and their orange kit and all of that kind of stuff. And so there's something here about anticipation. But, obviously, the World Cup just also reminds me of the soccer, football, World Cup. In my experience is really a time when people come together and people are watching games and you know, on the street and wearing their teams' jerseys or flags. Especially in a country where soccer is a big thing, like it is really this incredible sense of the world coming together about something that's bigger than themselves and they still have a stake in it. There's something very powerful in that and that internationalism is going to be such a big part of this book in terms of Beauxbatons and Durmstrang coming to campus. So, how about you, Vanessa, what allegorical kind of stories or images come up for you?

Vanessa: It's also, I mean, the World Cup is what came up for me also. And I just am someone with such mixed feelings about sports or, as you would say, sport. Like, when I think about the soccer World Cup I think about corruption (laughs) and the fact that often slave labor is used in order to build these facilities and I am someone who, the most hate mail I've ever gotten in my life was from local Bostonians when I came out very hard against American football. So, I just
have such strong mixed feelings about sports and how it glorifies a lot of war language and a lot of tribalism where you're just rooting for things for the sake of rooting for things. But then yes, I absolutely the beauty of it. My little brother is an athlete and the positive impact athletics has had on his life is incredible and the community that comes together and it - I do think that sports is one of the only times where you see people of totally diverse backgrounds hugging over something arbitrary. So yeah, I was reminded of just how complicated sports are and I think we see this in this chapter of like, it's probably really expensive to go to the Quidditch World Cup and I mean it's sort of corrupt the way that they even get tickets to go and the privilege involved in being able to go. So yeah, I was reminded of all the complications of something like the Quidditch World Cup.

Casper: I'm just looking at the words in this sentence, especially Quidditch, and we know that the Potter books are amazing at creating some new words and they always have some hidden meaning. So I'm just trying to think, like, quid in England is a way of saying a pound sterling, like a shorthand term for money. And then ditch is kind of like, you land in a ditch, right? It's an obstacle, you fall into it.

Vanessa: So you're saying that Quidditch is a money suck?

Casper: Yeah!

Vanessa: Yeah.

Casper: I'm really just echoing your point, like - ha! I think about gambling in sports, I think about - right? There's something in that quid-ditch.

Vanessa: Casper, I'm jealous that you got two allegories. I'm out.

Casper: (laughing) Well, take us to step three.

Vanessa: Yes, okay, so step three is what the sentence reminds us of in our own lives and I actually have something for this.

Casper: Mmmm, shall I read it one more time?

Vanessa: Yes, please.

Casper: "He was going to watch the Quidditch World Cup!"

Vanessa: So I'm reminded of the summer that I did my clinical pastoral education internship, the World Cup was on. And you know, hospital waiting rooms can be this incredibly diverse place where people come together in really beautiful ways and support each other in beautiful ways. And the hospital I was working at very intentionally didn't have the news on, they had cooking
shows and the Home & Garden Network on because they had done research about how having the news on stressed people out and didn't bond people in the hospital waiting room. But the summer I was there they had the World Cup on and it was really beautiful the ways that it brought people together in the waiting rooms and it was also, it was just so funny, every room where I would go in for a visit the World Cup would be on. It was just a great opening way to connect with people and talk with people and I don't think it would be possible for me to care less about the soccer World Cup but it was such an important performance for that summer as like a way into conversations with people. So, what about you?

Casper: Well, I'm a big soccer fan when it comes to Leeds United -

Vanessa: I know.

Casper: - I just love my Leeds. And it's like, a big season for us. I think this is the season we're going to go back up to the top flight of English football. And the only reason I support Leeds, because when I was thirteen and in boarding school it quickly became apparent that I needed a soccer team amongst all these other boys. And so I really fancied the manager's accent who was from Ireland, his name was David O'Leary, and I was like, he sounds sexy! (laughs) Let's support him! And it's been the love of great things ever since. But I also think, for me, my family's Dutch and so supporting the Dutch football team when I'm in England is kind of a way of like, claiming an identity, which can be a really powerful thing.

Vanessa: Yeah, I just had a moment with a student who wasn't mine, he was wearing a Laker jersey. So I was like, oh, are you from Los Angeles? And he said, yes, and it turns out and we had gone to the same high school -

Casper: Wow.

Vanessa: - And so yeah, I absolutely see the benefit of sports. I just think I also see the downsides.

Casper: That's totally fair.

Vanessa: Thank you. So, Casper, step four of Lectio Divina is what do we feel called to after this experience. But can you read the sentence for us one more time?

Casper: "He was going to watch the Quidditch World Cup!"

Vanessa: So this isn't based on our conversation actually, but what I feel called to is celebrating certain moments more. I think it's so sweet that Harry has this realization and even before he's on his way, he's just having this moment of private "Whoool!" and I don't know, I feel like my life has a lot of things I should be celebrating and taking little moments to be like, "What?! I just got
to have that amazing experience?!” I think I should take more private moments to celebrate the wonderful things in my life.

Casper: I am so with you, I think, on reflection, I think what I love about being a sports fan is that it's not actually about the game itself. Especially because I live far away, right? I'm not in the stadium every week and I'm sure that would be a different experience. But it's the story of hope and possibility about the game that's coming up next. That's the real excitement and who's gonna be on the pitch, what are the strategies that the team's gonna use, and how is this injury going to affect the team in whatever way. I think that's what maybe being a sports fan is really about is about that sense of possibility and hope. And maybe I need to do a better job of finding that elsewhere. Like, ooh, I have this finance meeting coming up - (both laughing)

Vanessa: This is an opportunity for me to bond with that person!

Caser: Exactly.

Vanessa: Ooh, I have these invoices to fill out today! (laughing) I never know if it's pathetic or adorable how much my brothers will say every season, I think this is the Angels' year.

Casper: (laughing) I do the same thing!

Vanessa: But my favorite thing that my elder brother says is like, once the Angels start not doing that well, he'll go, "lots of baseball left, lots of baseball left."

Casper: (laughing)

Vanessa: Because the baseball season is so long and so whenever something is going poorly for me, I say to myself, "lots of baseball left, lots of baseball left." Like, it's fine, lots of baseball!

Casper: I am gonna take that to heart.

(advertisement break)

Casper: This week's voicemail is from Kate McManus.

(voicemail beep)

Kate: Hi, Casper, Vanessa, and everyone at the podcast team. I'm Kate calling from St. Paul, Minnesota. And I just listened to your episode on chapter 2 of Goblet of Fire. I was interested in your Lectio Divina conversation about who Harry reaches out to when he's worried about the pain in his scar. I actually listened to that segment twice and I want to try my hand at phase three. When you talked about how Harry could ask Ron not to tell his father about his scar hurting it reminded me about conversations I've had about being catcalled or having my safety
threatened. I'm speaking from my experience as a cisgendered woman when I say this but we don't always tell authority figures when this happens because they may not help and they may judge or shame us when we tell our stories of our experiences. Yet telling a friend is a way of witnessing to someone who understands. Women might not look like they're speaking out, but they often report to each other over cocktails or cups of tea. And it's tricky to know where that line of reporting is. I'm probably not going to report every man who makes me feel uncomfortable on the bus especially if I never see him again. But, when a former student employee was harassing me for dates I had to tell his supervisor, a man, in a very shaky voice what was going on. Luckily in that instance I was believed and the student faced consequences. But I shouldn't have to feel lucky. This is a long way of getting to my real point. I wonder if some of Harry's fear is that no one will believe him, that the experience wasn't as intense as we the readers know that it was. And that the members of the Weasley family will think less of him. We live in a culture that shames victims for things that have been done to them. In the end, Harry reports to someone as isolated and as powerless to him and it has a real effect on Harry even if he can't immediately see it. First it just makes him feel better, but also, Sirius writes to Dumbledore and then he comes back to Scotland. Sirius is on-hand for the Tri-Wizard Tournament and is one of the inner circle when Harry finally reports another act of violence - that Voldemort has returned and murdered Cedric Diggory. So a blessing for Harry and anyone else who has been victim-blamed. I see you and I hear you. And a special blessing for Anita Hill for teaching us how to stand up to workplace harassment. Anyway, thanks so much for the podcast. I really love listening every week though I have to get used to the new posting schedule. Have a great day!

Vanessa: Kate, sadly, your voicemail is both so timely and so timeless. And what I really loved about it was how you are gleaning so much meaning from the text. I hadn't given thought to how much we can learn from Harry's reporting choices in this moment and I think you've given us a lot to think about here. The thing I would say to male allies is that there's an opportunity for you even if you are a good guy who would never do this, there are a million opportunities for you to let a woman get the last word in a board meeting, to really prioritize not interrupting women. There are still opportunities even if your behavior is not at the point of harassment or assault to notice the possibly more invisible ways in which you diminish women's voices.

Casper: Vanessa, it's time for us to bless someone from the pages of this chapter. Who are you giving your blessing to?

Vanessa: I would like to bless Petunia, I think that it must be really hard as a parent to try and manage a child with weight issues and you want to support them in loving their body for how it is but you also want them to be healthy and teach them healthy eating habits. And it seems as thought Petunia is someone who takes great joy in cooking for her child and so cutting up a grapefruit into quarters and watching her child be hungry, I would just imagine is very hard for her. So yeah, I want to offer a blessing for Petunia and you know, her son is away from school and he's home for the summer and she has to do this difficult thing over the summer and that
just must be really hard. So I would like to bless Petunia and everybody who is struggling with weight issues and supporting one another in being healthy. What about you, Casper?

Casper: I'm going to give my blessing to Ron. Because he's strategically chosen which parent is going to write to the Dursleys, and I think, you know, if you have the experience of being raised by two parents you know which one to go to for which thing, right? There's like that strategic choosing. He knows that Arthur would have been, like, tell me more about the electrical wires in the fella-tone, or whatever is, so he's like, no, I'm gonna ask Mum. So this is a blessing for anyone who is having to kind of navigate the politics of relationships especially in a family. That's not always easy.

Vanessa: I know when to go to Ariana and when to go to you.

Casper: *(laughing)*

Vanessa: In our little family...

Casper: *(laughing)* In our little family.

Before we close the show, we wanted to ask a favor. We're very lucky that we receive really lovely emails and it is one of the nicest things if you're creating something or if you're doing something in public to receive that kind of feedback. And we wanted to invite you if you've seen someone, maybe they wrote an article or were a talking head on a news show or you really respect someone out there in the world who's taken a public stand for something, maybe at a risk, to maybe send them a little note of thanks and to say that you were encouraged or inspired by them or that you appreciate what they've done, especially if they're kind of receiving a lot of backlash. So, you know, it can just be a simple two or three line email saying, you know, I saw that you'd done this and I'm grateful that you're doing it, best of luck. It can really mean a lot to people, so if there's someone that comes to mind as you're thinking about this, we'd be so glad if you'd send them a little note.

*(Ending music begins)*

Vanessa: You've been listening to Harry Potter and the Sacred Text. Be sure to send us your t-shirt designs and buy tickets for our Atlanta live show. You can follow us on Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, and Facebook, and leave us a review on iTunes. Casper doesn't know whether or not to love himself if you don't.

Casper: *(laughs)* That's too real.

Casper: Next week, we'll be reading "Back to the Burrow" through the theme of mystery.

Vanessa: Oooh!
Casper: This episode was produced by Ariana Nedelman, Vanessa Zoltan, and me, Casper ter Kuile. Our music is by Ivan Pyzow and Nick Bohl, and we are part of the Panoply network. You can find ours and other great shows on Panoply.FM.

Thanks to Kate McManus for this week's voicemail. Our social media manager is Harshi Hettige. Big thanks to Rebecca and Charlie Ledley, and to Stephanie Paulsell. We'll see you all next week.

Vanessa: Bye!

(Theme music ends)

Casper: If, and when, you have children, I really hope you're involved in like, organizing their sports day at their school.

Vanessa: To be clear, I do think that there are social justice oriented ways to do sports. Like, it's not about whose best at first base, it's about who loves playing first base most.

Casper: (high pitched voice) I love it more than you love it!

Vanessa: (laughing)

Casper: (high pitched voice) No, I love it more than you love it!

Vanessa: (laughing) Yeah, and then you have them box it out.

Casper: Exactly. Now we're talking.