Harry Potter and the Sacred Text: 4.18 - The Weighing of the Wands: Glory

Casper: Hi, everyone! It’s Casper.

Vanessa: And Vanessa!

Casper: And we want to say a huge thank you to everyone who’s already donated to our crowdfunder. We’re halfway through the month, so we’re halfway through our time to have 2,000 people donate and raise $75,000. We’ve only got a few weeks left, so if you’ve been thinking about the time to donate, now is the time!

Vanessa: Like, right now! You can keep listening to the podcast. Go to harrypottersacredtext.com, click on the big orange button, like, why aren’t you doing it right now?

Casper: We’re raising money to carry on through the end of Book Four, of course, but into The Order of the Phoenix where the struggle really begins. And we’re launching a really exciting new project.

Vanessa: We are launching a feminist production company called Not Sorry Productions, which the vision statement was really easy to write. It was “End the Patriarchy.”

Casper: (Laughs) Vanessa’s going to be hosting a new podcast about sacred writing and we’re so excited to see that launched in the fall. So go to harrypottersacredtext.com, click on the big orange button, and join us as we start this next adventure together. Thanks, everyone.

Vanessa: Chapter Eighteen: The Weighing of the Wands. (Intro music begins) “When Harry woke up on Sunday morning, it took him a moment to remember why he felt so miserable and worried. Then the memory of the previous night rolled over him. He sat up...” I’m Vanessa Zoltan.

Casper: And I’m Casper ter Kuile.

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

(Intro music ends)

Vanessa: Casper, I loved you on This Movie Changed Me.

Casper: Thank you!

Vanessa: It was just also so nice - it reminded me of all of what I love about You’ve Got Mail with all of the clips from the movie. It is an exceptional film.
Casper: It has an amazing soundtrack - The Cranberries - ugh, so good.

Vanessa: Aw, RIP.

Casper: I know.

Vanessa: It reminded me that daisies are my favorite flower.
Casper: They are the happiest flower-

Vanessa: Friendliest. Why do I know this movie better than you?

(Casper laughs)

Vanessa: I thought this movie changed you?
Casper: It changed me so I couldn't remember what happened.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Casper: So you can check out my interview with Lily, and they also have episodes on Star Wars and The Nightmare Before Christmas, if you love those movies.

Vanessa: So, Casper, it’s your turn to tell a story today, and our theme is Glory.

Casper: Yes, and it was suggested by my cousin, Velmut, who lives in Holland. So I thought about Velmut and my grandparents, Case and Clara, also lived in Holland, and they met during the Second World War when both of them were part of the resistance movement. And growing up, I always heard these incredible stories about my grandparents - they died when I was six, but the stories really live on, and they were responsible for taking allied airmen, Canadian, American, British airmen, who had been shot down over Holland and had somehow parachuted to safety, knocked on a door and been given shelter, and then being taken into the kind of resistance channel to bring them back to Britain where they would, you know, be able to fly again. My grandparents were part of the route home, and they would go to rural train stations, pick up this English or Canadian, often 19/20 year old and then pretend that they were all part of the same group, take the train back to Western Holland, Rotterdam and Amsterdam, and then get them to the beach, where there would be a rowing boat that would take them across the channel. Insane, heroic stories. And the story that really sticks with me is of one particular airman, who not only did they take him across the country on the train, but, you know, they missed their connection or something, so they decided to stay the night at my grandparents’ house. And the young airman was so grateful of being given a place to stay and safety on his way back, that he wanted to give his wedding ring. It’s the only thing he had on him that he could give to say thank you. And my grandparents were like, “oh you’re absolutely crazy. No
way. This is ridiculous, don’t do that.” And you know the next morning they saw him off, and off he went to safety. And my grandparents, particularly my grandmother, was not the greatest cleaner from all accounts. Like things were often a little messy, and years, literally years later when she finally lifted the carpet to clean and vacuum, she found his wedding ring. I just think of those kinds of stories of heroism, and generosity, and courage, at levels that are I feel like are way beyond my everyday. But also way beyond what I would even do! I feel so proud to be connected to that story. There’s a sense of glory - a glory about the things they did, glory about what it meant in that moment, and then, in some way, a kind of a glory that lives in me, and I want to explore that in this chapter, especially because we have so many complicated and interesting examples of what glory is about as the champions are put on display. When they’re photographed, and interviewed, and they’re pulled out of the everyday to do these extraordinary things as the Triwizard Tournament kind of really gets going.

Vanessa: Glory to me seems like an extreme sort of pride. Something is glorious when it’s so beautiful that you can't help but be proud of it. And I found it really interesting in this chapter what I realized people found glorious. Right? Like Snape finds it glorious to humiliate people, but Ollivander finds the wands that are out in the world to be glorious for him. I think you find out a lot about people’s priorities when you notice what it is that they find glorious.

Casper: Yeah. Let’s remind everyone what happens in this chapter because it is action-packed, people. So, thirty seconds on the clock, Vanessa. Are you ready?

Vanessa: Born ready.

Casper: Here we go. 3 - 2 - 1 - thirty-second recap!

(Ticking begins)

Vanessa: Hermione brings Harry toast because he’s like, “I don’t want to go down to the breakfast room and have to deal with everybody.” And then he’s in class and Snape is like, “I’m going to kill you,” which is so weird. And he gets pulled out of class by Colin Creevey to go do the weighing of the wands ceremony, and Rita Skeeter interviews him and does the Quick Quills quote and like says he has tears in his eyes, and he’s like, “I do not have tears in my eyes.” And Dumbledore pulls him out, and he and Rita have a tête-à-tête and then they have their photographs taken, and they weigh all the wands, and Ollivander is like “ah, yes, I remember this wand. It’s attached to Voldemort.”

(Buzzer sounds)

Casper: Very good.

Vanessa: Thank you.
Casper: *Very good.*

Vanessa: *Would you say that it was glorious?*

Casper: *No doubt!*

Vanessa: Okay, let's see what you can do. On your mark, get set, go!

*(Ticking begins)*

Casper: So everyone is kind of angry at Harry and he's like, “oh, well I know the Hufflepuffs will support Cedric and the Slytherins hate me, but even the Ravenclaws don't like me.” So he's feeling you know all the more lonely and isolated. And then he's like, “well at least we've got double potions, ha ha ha.” And then horrible things happen in potions and like Ron doesn't sit next to him. And Draco and he curse each other but it hits, um, um, other person, and Hermione’s teeth really grow. And then Snape says this burn and is like, “I don’t even see a difference.”

*(Buzzer sounds)*

Casper: Heh, heh, heh.

Vanessa: Your obsession with Snape’s burns really trouble me.

Casper: I just wish I was that clever!

Vanessa: You are clever-er than he is! These are not clever lines; this is a small man delighting in the humiliation of a teenage girl.

Casper: *Wow, that makes me feel really bad.* *(Laughs)*

Vanessa: *(Laughs) Sorry. Actually, this transitions beautifully into our theme!*

Casper: Hmm.

Vanessa: As I think your story illustrates, I think we can tell a lot about a person by what it is that they glorify. And we'll move on from you glorifying Snape, but something that I really noticed about Draco in this chapter is that he is not someone who finds glory in positive things. *(Casper: Right)* He really puts a lot of stock in humiliating other people and subjugating other people, and that is the only way that he thinks that he can find glory.

Casper: I completely agree, and I think it has a lot to do with the fact that he isn't extraordinary at anything else. Like there's nothing that marks him as special, and he's so desperate to stand out and to have glory, that it feels like the only way that he can do that in his imagination is to
belittle everyone else and be the meanest bully on the playground. You know, he started this little campaign with the little buttons that say, “Potter Stinks.”

Vanessa: Which, by the way, speaking of like quality burns…

Casper: Yeah, poor burn.

Vanessa: Right?

Casper: It’s like not even lukewarm.

Vanessa: I just think this just speaks to the fact that Draco doesn’t actually think he is better than Harry, or I do think the burn would be better. It’s not even a like sincere complaint that he’s lodging. (Casper: Right) It’s not “Potter’s a fake. Potter’s a phony. He got this by false means.” He can’t even come up with a real burn.

Casper: Yeah. So let’s compare Draco’s reaction and his feeling of insignificance to Ollivander. Because Ollivander examines each of the four wands, right? Fleur, then Cedric, and then Krum, and then Harry.

And twice he encounters a wand of his own creation with both Cedric and Harry. And then for the other two wands, he encounters someone else’s labor - Gregorovich is introduced in this moment here, which is important. And there’s this interesting reaction in Ollivander because he does critique them. You know, he says, “well this Veela’s hair is an unusual choice and, you know, it’s a little erratic.” But there’s also a respect in the difference, which I think is different from Draco’s reaction. Like he can see the glory of other people’s work even if it’s not what he would have done.

Vanessa: I first want to say that I do think that there is something sexist at play with the “Veela hair is temperamental.”

Casper: Oh I hadn’t even thought of that.

Vanessa: Like anytime a woman is called temperamental, or histrionic, or hysterical, I’m like, we would call that something different if it was a man.

Casper: Yeah, so true.

Vanessa: But yeah, I think that people latch on to glory either when they are incredibly confident and proud or in the opposite situations when there is a lack of confidence there, you latch onto a false sense of glory.

Casper: I immediately think of, you know, especially Germany after the First World War when it had been kind of humiliated with all of these reparations and you know had lost the First World
War, this vigor of Hitler was a tower of strength and of authority - you know really standing up against the humiliation. And so that sense of what is your glory based on totally resonates.

Vanessa: And you hear language of like, “we want to want to restore this to its full glory.” Right?

Casper: And former glory. Right? Like this bygone era I think of British colonialism and a sense of, “oh at that point we were you know were big and powerful and now we’re this forgotten backwater.” You know I think Draco, even thinking about his father as like, “I’m not living up to what I should be.”

Vanessa: And Draco is also living in a post-Voldemort world, (Casper: Right) or he to some extent thinks he does, and so he’s being raised by people who were raised when they were like the prime race and when Pure Blood status was widely respected, and Dumbledore was not Head of Hogwarts; somebody who was more tolerant of Pure Blood status was. And so Draco has a desire in this, like, white supremacist way to return to the former glory that his family had.

Casper: Do you know what I’m suddenly thinking? Is that his curse on Hermione is not missing Harry; that he has cursed her by choice.

Vanessa: I think you’re right.

Casper: Because she’s already known to have a slight overbite, and the teeth are something she was probably self-conscious of, you know, she’s growing-

Vanessa: And he’s just made this comment of like, “don’t touch me. I just washed my hands.”

Casper: Exactly! So that Mudblood language is already in his mind. And Harry, he knows, is super protected and you know is beyond reproach and all of this stuff, so Hermione is like an easy target to hit.

Vanessa: And he gets a chance to humiliate her back. You know, it was just a few months ago that she slapped him.

Casper: That's right.

Vanessa: But I think that that's right. It was confusing me why he was trying to curse Harry with beaver teeth. And I think that you’re exactly right - that he was going for Hermione. And a good way to hit Harry is to hit Hermione. (Casper: That’s right.) Like he loves her so much, she’s the only one who’s being loyal to him in this moment. And yeah, I mean that’s actually a really effective way to hit both Harry and Hermione at the same time. But, Casper, I want us to just take a step back and really think about what glory is because I do think that this moment of wanting to hit Hermione, which you have now convinced me of, that Draco is trying to restore a sense of like Pure Blood glory, right, and humiliate a Mudblood. But what does it mean?
Sometimes glory is a good thing, sometimes it does lead to this sort of nationalism, and then there’s like a religious devotional aspect of glory. Right? Jesus in all of his Glory. How do we hone in on what we mean when we say glory in this chapter?

Casper: Yeah, I think you know glory maybe on its surface level is really about honor won by like notable achievements. Right? Like you’ve done something and prestige, and honor, renown, and fame come with it? But you’re right. I mean there’s also an element of what’s beautiful, like a glorious sunrise or something with grandeur and majesty. And then this religious angle of something that’s praiseworthy. Right? Glory be to God in the highest or you know, I just think of the endless glory in some of the best Christmas hymns. That sense of wanting to praise something that’s bigger than yourself. And I’m really interested that you mentioned war. Because I think we are, you know, throughout these books, we have to remember that we are living in a post-war society and we’re about to go back right into it at the end of this book. It reminds me of one of the greatest anti-war poems, which was written towards the end of the first world war by Wilfred Owen, which he kind of inverts what glory means or he points to its dangers. And the closing lines are:

"My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
   To children ardent for some desperate glory,
   The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
   Pro patria mori."

Which means, the Latin there means, “it is sweet and fitting to die for one’s country.” And so he’s saying don’t believe in that lie that it is beautiful and glorious to die for your country. That’s not true. Like he has seen the reality of war. And I feel like that has something to say about this moment because we have the fanfare of the press and the photographs, and what’s really going on there’s a 14-year-old boy who’s being made to do things against his will and being put in harm’s way.

Vanessa: He’s being set up as like a sacrifice.

Casper: Yes! Yes, that’s just like these men going to war!

Vanessa: He’s actually being set up as a sacrifice both by Dumbledore and Voldemort.

Casper: Oh, that’s brutal.

Vanessa: I’m trying to think of moments in which glory is a good thing. I think that such sacrifice is required for glory, and I wonder if that’s the difference between like glory and an accomplishment is that there needs to be some sort of bloodshed. Right? I’m thinking of like a prima ballerina taking her bow at the end of an amazing performance. I would say right, like, “that was glorious,” but I can’t imagine how bloodied her feet are and the training that she went through, right? Ballet is all about making effort look effortless. And I’m just wondering if that is
the thing about glory is that major sacrifice has to be involved and therefore if you’re going for glory, you have to make sure that the sacrifice is worth it. That it is a thing worth fighting for. Casper: That’s really interesting the idea that the sacrifice is what makes it glorious. I was thinking it might be more about the visibility? I don’t know. I think if the story I shared about my grandparents and the fact that they were given, especially my grandmother, was given the Victoria Cross, like she was awarded medals by both the British and American government, which is this kind of glorious thing. Right? It makes something, maybe it makes the sacrifice visible? Maybe the truth is between our two points.

Vanessa: I don’t think it’s between our two points; I think you need both. I think you need a ton of sacrifice and then you need the public recognition in order for it to be glory. You don’t really have private moments of glory.

Casper: Right!

Vanessa: You have private moments of satisfaction. You have private moments of celebration or joy, but you don’t have private moments of glory.

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Vanessa: Or Vorby Parker.

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Casper: Yeah.

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(Ad music ends)

Vanessa: So, Casper, on the theme of Glory, I feel like we have to reckon with Ms. Rita Skeeter.

Casper: This is the first chapter where we meet her in person, and she is a piece of work. The first thing I noticed reading this time around, is earlier in the chapter Harry writes a letter to Sirius, and goes up to the owlery to send it away, and Hedwig is like, “oh I’m ready!”And Harry’s like, “no not you because you’re too obvious to be seen. I need to use a school owl.” And Hedwig as she flies off, like, pushes her talons into Harry’s shoulder’s skin, and like makes him bleed. And the first thing that struck me reading about Rita this time is that her fingers are like talons. So it reminds us that her fingers, which of course she uses to write, are where her power is and where the damage is that she does to people. And she is brutal. The first thing she does is to take him into a broom cupboard! Talk about PTSD! Like let me take this child who has suffered 11 years of abuse living in a cupboard back into a cupboard to talk about his dead parents!

Vanessa: Do you think she knows that about the broom cupboard?

Casper: Oh, she’s been watching this child for like years.

Vanessa: Okay, I disagree with that. I don’t think she knows that. I do think that she is isolating him, which is a terrible thing to do with a child. But then once she gets interrupted by Dumbledore, I do feel like she has this moment of glory where I would imagine that as a reporter, you don’t often get to actually meet the people who you skewer. And I’m almost impressed with the pride that she’s like, “sorry that I insulted you publicly, Dumbledore.” But she just takes a victory lap for it and says, “some people are out of touch,” and doubles-down on what she wrote, sort of taking this like moment of glory. Right? If glory has to be public, I don’t think it has to be in front of hundreds of people. Sometimes it’s just about standing in front of somebody who you want to be respected by and being like, “yeah, I did that.”
Casper: She’s so brutal though. I mean we talk so much about fake news right now, and I feel like Rita Skeeter is the original fake newser. The way in which she creates falsities. The very powerful descriptive qualities that she has, you know, “Harry holds back tears as he talks about his dead parents.” It’s extremely compelling and you can imagine how readers would be drawn in by her skill. She clearly has some glorious skills, but she’s using them for evil.

Vanessa: So, Casper, I was curious. I’m going to tap into the fact that you’re British here. Or the fact that we like to pretend that you are. So Rita is like clearly a tabloid journalist, but the Daily Prophet is like a mainstream, serious paper. Is this the way that British papers work? That there’s like tabloid stuff on the front page of the main reputable papers?

Casper: I would say that there’s definite difference between what we call the “broad sheets,” so things like the Times and the Guardian, and then the tabloids. But of course the tabloids sell much better. And in fact there’s a totally different standard of what is considered newsworthy that gets put in the tabloids. And the British press, I would say, is internationally renowned for its invasive nastiness, especially around celebrities. And so in some ways, it feels like the Daily Prophet without many kind of alternative newspapers on sale in the wizarding world, it brings those two together and what’s so dangerous then is then how do you know? Like how do you know if something’s trustworthy and something is gossipy? ‘Cause what she writes is extremely compelling and it looks like it could be true, which is of course the most dangerous thing. Vanessa, I’m going to be a little cheeky; this isn’t really so much about the theme of glory, but I noticed something glorious in reading this chapter today, which is that as Ollivander examines the four wands, there’s some beautiful symbolism which I just never noticed before. You know, he examines Fleur’s wand, and first of all, it’s made of rosewood. Of course “fleur” means “flower” in French, and then he conjures up through a spell this beautiful bunch of flowers. So there’s this kind of echo of floral imagery throughout her passage. Then with Cedric, it has unicorn hair, which is a symbol of innocence. And when we think of Cedric’s death in this book, there’s this foreshadowing even in his wand, which I’d just never seen. Krum, Ollivander tests it by casting a spell that has this group of birds soaring out of the wand, and it just reminded me of Krum’s incredible flying. And then finally with Harry, it has phoenix feather at the core of the wand, which is all about the symbolic nature of life after death or life resurrecting from death, which of course we’re going to see in Book Seven. So I just love noticing those little things as we think though because there is something glorious about little details which you only uncover on your, you know, eighth, ninth, tenth reading.

(Theme music plays)

Vanessa: So, Casper, this week we are going to return to the sacred practice of Pardes.

Casper: Yes!
Vanessa: And I am going to pick a sentence at random for us to analyze. The sentence is, “Snape’s eyes met Harry’s, and Harry knew what was coming. Snape was going to poison him.”

Casper: Hmm.

Vanessa: So, Casper, what is the Peshat, or the intended meaning of this sentence?

Casper: So we’re right at the beginning of the potions lesson, and Snape has introduced that today’s topic is going to be antidotes. And Snape walks over to Harry, and Harry’s like, “oh God, I’m going to be the test bunny. And he’s going to test if my antidote really works by poisoning me and use that, you know, as a way to kill me off.”

(Vanessa giggles)

Casper: Imagine if that’s your learning environment. Like it’s the boss from Hell. Right?

Vanessa: Yes! A+. Good work. The next step in Pardes is Remez. And so the Remez is when we pick one word from the sentence and we sort of try to trace it throughout the seven books. So read I’ll read it for you one more time, Casper, and then you can pick the word. “Snape’s eyes met Harry’s, and Harry knew what was coming. Snape was going to poison him.”

Casper: There’s only one right answer, which is the word “eyes.”

Vanessa: Yes!

Casper: Yeah.

Vanessa: That was the right answer.

Casper: Yeah. It’s so striking, especially because really the main thing we learn about Lily is her eyes, and that Harry has Lily’s eyes. Right?

Vanessa: Snape is looking into Lily’s eyes!

Casper: Exactly.

Vanessa: And it’s making him feel like he could die.

Casper: Yeah.

Vanessa: Yeah, I’m just trying to think of any other times we hear the word “eyes.”

Casper: Oh I think of the basilisk’s eyes, I think of...
Vanessa: Mad-Eye Moody's magical eye.

Casper: Oh my goodness yes, that can see. Well with the basilisk, if it looks at you, you die. With Moody’s eye, it can see out the back of his head, it can see through things and people. I’m also just remembering that Harry wears glasses, so even as Snape is looking into Lily’s eyes, there’s a boundary between what Snape can engage and Harry’s own person, right? There’s a sort of shield just through his spectacles.

Vanessa: And I’m wondering about Snape’s eyes, right? The text says Snape’s eyes met Harry’s. We know that Snape is capable of Occlumency. So to some extent, he doesn’t need to use his eyes the same way that other people do. Like I count on being able to sort of like read someone’s facial expressions and tell things by their tone, whereas Snape can read people’s thoughts. So I’m also curious about that - what it means for him to lock eyes with Harry. So let’s see how that potentially changes the way we read the sentence, which is, “Snape’s eyes met Harry’s, and Harry knew what was coming. Snape was going to poison him.” I’m struck by the fact that Harry thinks he knows what’s coming. Snape cannot possibly be about to poison him!

Casper: And maybe this says something about, you know, as Snape is looking into Harry’s eyes, he knows so much more than what Harry knows as he looks into Snape’s eyes. And so when we feel like there’s a moment of connection, there’s always our own interiority that shapes the reality of what’s going on.

Vanessa: Okay so next step in this process, Casper, is Derash in which we wonder if there’s sort of a lesson that can be taught from this piece of liturgy. Which is, “Snape’s eyes met Harry’s, and Harry knew what was coming. Snape was going to poison him.”

Casper: I think what I would try to preach is that we often misunderstand where danger lies. You know, Snape is kind of trying to terrorize the students and is putting on bravado to say, you know, “I’m going to poison you all,” but he’s never actually done anything to harm his students directly. Snape has only psychologically terrorized his students, not physically; and when we compare him to Moody, who actually put one of the Unforgivable Curses onto the whole classroom, that should be a warning to Harry that there is someone who actually presents real danger and has no qualms about stepping over lines. Literally stepping over the line to put his name into the goblet. How about you, Vanessa?

Vanessa: What I think I would preach on would be the power of de-escalating situations. I wonder what would happen if Harry sort of rolled his eyes at Snape in this moment. Rather than taking the threat seriously, like instead he was like, “sure you are.” Right? Like in the face of scary things, just to like defuse I think could go a long way. And we know that Harry is capable of that right? Petunia is like psychologically terrorizing Harry and Harry makes jokes back. And for some reason with Snape, he just doesn’t. And I think it could go a long way if Harry was like, “poison me. Fine.”
Casper: Or do a like dramatic, like, medieval fake death of like “I die, I die!”

Vanessa: Right, I’m just struck by the power of humor in this moment. So, Casper, I will read this to you one more time and we will see what Sod, what secret, emerges. “Snape’s eyes met Harry’s, and Harry knew what was coming. Snape was going to poison him.”

Casper: I’m just suddenly feeling like Snape is poisoning himself.

Vanessa: I had the same exact Sod emerge.

Casper: Really? Yeah. You know, he’s constantly working with potions, and yet everyday with his hatred, and his fear, and his duplicity, like that kills him.

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Casper: That’s so cute.

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Vanessa: I am currently reading The Idiot by Elie Faterman and she is reading her novel to me, and it is, it’s so good! She does all of these Russian accents - it’s fantastic! I really recommend this book.
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Vanessa: And if you read something really good, tweet at us and recommend it to me.

Casper: That's audible.com/potter or text “potter” to 500-500.

(Ad music ends)

Casper: It’s time for our voicemail.

Vanessa: And this week’s voicemail is from Lia Hagan.

(Beep)

Lia: Hi, my name’s Lia Hagan, and I’m calling from New York by way of Nebraska. I wanted to take the time today to bless Peter Pettigrew. One thing I’ve noticed over my million and four years in the Harry Potter fandom is that the one character who people really don’t give the benefit of the doubt is Peter. And I understand - he betrayed his best friends, it’s really hard to like him. But the thing about Peter is he didn’t betray Lily and James right away. He left them in hiding for months before he told Voldemort. We know this because A.) the Potters went into hiding in the summer and they lived until Halloween and B.) later in the books, Harry finds a letter in Grimmauld Place from Lily describing being in hiding for a really long time. For at least a month, probably two or three, Peter kept this secret. A secret that Voldemort really wanted to know. And I think people forget about that. I think people forget how hard that must have been. Personally, the thing that I think about when I think about Peter Pettigrew is my mother. She is a serious alcoholic and a few months ago, she tried for a month to be sober and she took it really seriously and she’s done that before, but the thing that made this time different was she dedicated the attempt to me. She said, “I know that my drinking has ruined your life and because of that I’m going to stop.” And I really wanted her to stop and when she started drinking again, my automatic reaction was to be furious because she must not have been sorry. She must not have cared. But what I realized is that that month still meant something. My mom couldn’t stop drinking forever. That maybe she will someday, but right now that’s not in her ability. And I know because I’ve seen her try. And Peter, he couldn’t defend Lily and James. He couldn’t. And that’s a flaw in him. But also I think we have to bless him for those few months because that is an immensely difficult thing and James didn’t choose Peter to be the Secret Keeper because he was weak; he chose him because he was his friend. And I think if we don’t remember that friendship - and if we don’t remember that Peter Pettigrew was a person with feelings and not just a traitor - I think if we don’t remember that, we’re really missing something valuable about the books. So I just wanted to call in and say that.
Casper: Lia, I was like where is this going? Blessing Peter Pettigrew? Like no way! And then, oh my God, I totally get it. What a beautiful blessing, what a beautiful voicemail. I so appreciate you sending that in. Thank you. Vanessa, now it's time for us to bless someone. Who are you blessing this week?

Vanessa: Okay, so now everybody say it with me-

Casper and Vanessa: I would like to bless Hermione.

(Casper laughs)

Vanessa: She brings Harry toast!

Casper: So sweet.

Vanessa: She knows he doesn’t want to go down to breakfast and she’s like, “let’s go on a walk.” That’s it. It’s just brilliant, and such a good friend, and so thoughtful. And I want to bless Hermione. I’m not even ashamed. Who would like to bless this week, Casper?

Casper: Well when Hermione and Harry go on their little walk, Harry has a last piece of toast and throws it into the lake, and we see a little tentacle reach for the piece of toast and take it underwater, and I want to bless that little monster living in the lake! Because I love doing that. When there’s like a little bit of food leftover, like, it’s good not to waste things, so I want to bless that little sea monster and anyone else who finishes leftovers.

(Outro music begins)

Casper: You've been listening to Harry Potter and the Sacred Text. Follow us on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, or leave us a review on iTunes. You can send us a voicemail at harrypottersacredtext@gmail.com. Next week, we’ll read Chapter Nineteen: The Hungarian Horntail through the theme of Delight. This episode was produced by Ariana Nedelman, me, Casper ter Kuile, and Vanessa Zoltan. 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.

Vanessa: This week’s voicemail is thanks to Lia Hagan. We’d like to thank Rebecca and Charlie Ledley, Julia Argy, and Stephanie Paulsell. See you next week.

Casper: Bye, everyone!

(Outro music ends)

Vanessa: (Singing) A few of my favorite- when the dog-

(Singing)
Casper and Vanessa: Bites!

Casper: I always thought it was when the dawn bites. Because it can be really cold in the morning.

(Vanessa laughs)

Casper: It can!