Harry Potter and the Sacred Text 4.24 - Rita Skeeter’s Scoop: Integrity

Chapter 24
Rita Skeeter’s Scoop

“Everybody got up late on boxing day. The Gryffindor common room was much quieter than it had been lately. Many yawns punctuating the lazy conversations. Hermione’s hair was bushy again. She confessed to Harry that she had used liberal amounts of Sleek Eazy’s hair potion on it...”

Casper: I’m Casper ter Kuile

Vanessa: And I’m Vanessa Zoltan

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

V: So Casper, I know that we mentioned in last week’s episode that people would not have to hear about our CrowdFunder anymore.

C: That we’d be done.

V: Yes, however we didn’t hit our goal. We tried something bit and I think it’s important whenever we fail on this podcast we get to say that we demonstrated that failure is okay.

C: I don’t call it failure, I call it learning.

V: Yes! We learned.

C: And we should contextualize. We earned more money than last year, we had more donors than last year. And we feel the love and support of this community like never before.

V: And we’re so grateful,

C: YES!

V: for your support.

C: But we did hear from a couple of you who were waiting for your tax returns before you want to make a donation. So just for you we are extending our deadline to April 20th. Yes, my friends! You too can still be a part of this amazing community effort!
V: I would also just like to thank everybody who wrote to us with this feedback that it would've been better for you if we had waited until tax returns. I feel like we have gotten several comments like that over the last few years where people just give us such generous, thoughtful, helpful feedback that has made us better and I just want to thank all of you for always having our back and making us do our jobs better.

C: Thank you everyone.

V: Thank you. And we will see many of you on Sunday in Minneapolis.

C: Woohoo! Twin Cities here we come! And don’t forget tickets still on sale for our Pittsburgh show on May 17th and our London show on June 10th. Thanks everyone.

Our theme this week is integrity and Vanessa, you’re going to tell us a story.

V: I am.

So for my entire life, for as long as I can remember, every Friday night we called my grandmother in Israel to wish her a shabbat shalom and then we would call my grandparents who lived locally in Los Angeles and wish them a shabbat shalom on the shabbotts that we weren’t actually physically with them. And I did this until my grandmother in Israel died, I called her every Friday night. And I called my grandparents throughout college, my 20s, and even my early 30s I was still calling my grandfather Pappa who was still alive in Los Angeles. Every Friday night to wish him a good shabbat. And over the last couple of years as he was in his mid 90s and his health was declining and his mental facilities were diminishing, the calls just became silly. Where I would call and say like Hi Patpa, it’s me Vanessa. I’m just calling to wish you a good shabbos and he like clearly didn’t know who I was and he just sort of wanted to get off the phone. He would say thank you darling, I love you, and jhang up. And I was like okay. And So eventually I just sort of stopped making the calls. You know with the time difference I would sort of have to interrupt my night whatever I was doing here. And it felt rude to interrupt that for a meaningless call. Well, in the last couple of months his health was really deteriorating and then a couple of weeks ago he stopped eating and my mom put him on hospice and we were just trying to manage his pain but it was clear that he would die within a few days. And I was trying to get home to Los Angeles in order to be there, but with all the Noreasters that have been hitting it just took me several days to be able to get home. And you know, usually when somebody stops eating they tend to live for about 5-6 more days but Papa was pushing like a week, 8 days, and the hospice nurse said to my mom, “he’s clearly waiting for someone but so many people have come by. Who is he waiting for?” And my mom said, “he must be waiting for my daughter, you know, who’s on her way.” My mom told me this and I was like “Okay, tell him to wait ’til Friday, I’m trying, you know, as the snow was falling here in Massachusetts. And for some reason on Thursday night, the night before I was going out to Los Angeles, I called my mom to see how Papa was doing and for the first time ever, I said, “Mom, can you just put me on speaker.” And she said “sure.” And so I said “Hi Papa. It’s me Vanessa, I love you.” And
what was amazing was that he died about 30 seconds later. And it just made me realize that I
should've been calling all those Friday nights and I definitely didn’t stop calling because of a
lack of integrity it was because I thought that it was silly and like, there was no point to it. And I
also had that feeling that the there was no point in my saying “I love you” to a morphine induced
sleeping Papa. But there does seem to have been some impact or it was a crazy coincidence.
But regardless that experience just taught me the importance of having integrity in your actions
even if it feels like a meaningless gesture. And I think I saw that in this chapter when the three
kids go down, Hagrid hasn’t been coming to class. And they are banging the door that they want
to talk to Hagrid for ten minutes. And after a minute it becomes clear that Hagrid is not coming
to the door and they just keep banging on the door. And I think that sometimes having integrity
in those meaningless gestures still matters. Hagrid is inside and hearing that they love him ten
minutes’ worth. So even if you can’t change the actions of something just having integrity in your
gesture matters. So I’m excited to talk to you about that this week Casper and what exactly we
mean when we say integrity.

C: Vanessa, I’m so grateful for your story and I’m so touched by in some way he was waiting
and that even if you couldn’t be there physically, like, that integrity of your action, like that wish
to just tell him like, I love you, and it’s okay, to give him the permission nearly that maybe he
needed in some way. Ah, I’m just really moved by that story.

V: We’ll post on our blog this week some pretty cute pictures of me and Papa.

C: Vanessa, integrity is such a good theme for this chapter I think, so we should remind
everyone what happens, and I’m glad to go first to do that service for our listeners.

V: That is very generous of you to serve our listeners.

C: You’re welcome

V: On your mark, get set, go!

(ticking starts)

C: Okay, so this chapter is really all about Hagrid. You know, there’s been that scoop in the
newspaper, and like Ah, He’s a giant, Blah, scary, and Rita Skeeter’s like mmm...I’m going to
bring him down, and blah, blah, blah. And then, umm Harry, Ron, and Hermoine go to there
because Harry and Ron because Ron and Hermoine are like chill now. And they are like Come
out, come out and Hagrid doesn’t respond. And then they go to the Three Broomsticks, and
have like butterbeers and umm and they are trying to figure out how Rita Skeeter knows all
these things and Draco’s being like ha ha ha and we meet Professor Grubbly Plank, who’s
pretty boring but she brings a unicorn. And then they come back and Dumbledore’s there eating
cake.
C: You know narratively, not very strong but like again, little moments. Will you help fill in the other half of the story?

V: Yeah. I don’t feel like it’s half, but yeah.

C: Okay, here we go. 3, 2, 1. Go!

(ticking starts)

V: The big thing that I think that you didn’t touch on is that Harry is struggling with the egg for the next task. And Hermoine is like how is it going and he’s like Great! And then Crouch, I mean Bagman, is like how’s it going, and he’s like I don’t want to talk to you about it. And Bagman is sort of willing to cheat and it becomes clear that Bagman also owes money to goblins, and something is amiss there. Umm, it turns out that a lot of parents want Hagrid to stay. The unicorn thing, Draco’s being a real jerk, I feel like you got everything else, right?

C: Yeah, just that like Crouch is missing.

V: Oh yes, Crouch is missing.

(buzzer sounds)

V: That was the first 30-second recap where we like straight up just helped each other.

C: (Laughs.)

V: That was beautiful.

C: You know, because we have integrity.

V: Yes. What is more important than our vanity is our listeners knowing what happened...

C: We are willing to break the rules for the integrity of our purpose.

V: So, Casper let’s start with maybe the clearest moment of a lack of integrity and integrity. Bagman. Right, he’s supposed to be the person who’s overseeing the Triwizard Tournament. And he offers to Harry to help Harry cheat. I am willing to have no integrity on things but that just seems like such low integrity that his life would become meaningless. If you’re going to cheat at the one thing your whole life stands for, then who are you? Bagman! I’m not asking you, Casper.
C: (Laughs). I mean it does make you wonder like was his whole glorious career founded on a lie?

V: Yeah. And that's why he has turned to gambling.

C: Yeah, well, the thing is. He approaches Harry and we'll find out later why he's so invested in Harry winning, but I love that Harry first asks “Have you talked to Cedric?” because Bagman frames it as we would all want a Hogwarts Champion, wouldn't we. Harry's not beyond having a Hogwarts Champion he just wants to make sure that it's fair amongst the Hogwarts Champions. So I think we certainly see Bagman’s lack of integrity around this competition but we also see a little bit of Harry’s potential hypocrisy in that yes, he's willing to accept help as long as it's fair between the Hogwarts people that’s okay. Throughout this chapter we'll see Harry really navigating in a conflicted way this question of integrity around the competition. But, Bagman is a clear case of someone who has broken with his values.

V: Well and part of the reason Harry doesn’t want Bagman’s help is because Bagman has so little integrity that Harry's like “I don't trust you. I don't know what your motives are. And so you might give me bad advice.”

C: Absolutely. Who's giving the help is supremely important to Harry.

V: Yes! Which makes sense for Harry. He’s someone who has integrity within certain relationships and is very loyal to the people he’s loyal to and then is to a large extent is willing to blatantly disrespect people that don’t matter to him.

C: Yeah, well let’s dig into that. I think that helps us get at this question of what is integrity. Because I think in those cases whether it’s Hagrid showing them the dragons or Hermoine teaching him how to summon the broom really well, you know he’s willing to put relationships above his own integrity. And I think in small and big ways all of us do this to some point. Because integrity is really about the alignment of what you think with what you do.

Okay, so I think we have a perfect case study in the text. Which is Cedric. Cedric is positioned throughout this whole book as the paragon of integrity. He values fairness. He values being a fair sportsman. He competes hard, but he plays fair.

V: And will even diminish himself in front of his father to make sure that Harry isn’t getting the short end of the stick.

C: Exactly! He is a good man. When it comes to this. And so, Harry straight up tells him about the first task. Harry’s doing this lovely thing of saying “Watch out Cedric, Dragons are our next task.” And in this chapter Harry reflects on why has Cedric just not outright told me what this task is. He’s clearly figured something out but all he’s telling me is to take a bath. Harry’s frustrated. And I actually think it points to Cedric’s kind of conflicted inner nature where he both
feels a pull to repaying Harry’s debt and telling him what the task is and a real loyalty to the fairness of the task by saying we’re not allowed to help each other. And so I think, not doing either fully, leaves him kind of exposed in both.

V: I’m someone who is very good at justifying moments in which on the surface in my opinion I don’t have integrity because I’m like my higher loyalty is to x. And so I like to think that I have a lot of integrity in my work but if I have a friend in distress, and I’m saying it’s actually an integrity in my higher principle to my friends, than getting this work done.

C: I feel the same way about ice cream. I’m committed to ice cream in my life. And I will not go for a run and go have an ice cream because that is my goal.

V: Well and that’s it. It’s like such a slippery slope because I’m like I have integrity in self-care and therefore I need this nap.

C: (Laughs)

V: And not get my work done. And it’s like No, Vanessa, you’re just taking a nap. So I think it’s hard sometimes to figure out whether or not you are acting with integrity. I mean, even with Papa, right, I justified it, that like, it was rude, I would be out with you and I was like excuse me, let me step out to call my grandpa who doesn't care whether or not I call him. Like, why am I doing that? But looking back, I think I should have and so it’s interesting the ways that we rationalize things. And it’s hard to suss out like what is you actually living to a higher principle.

C: Yeah, I mean that question of kind of trusting your inner gut or temperature in some way, it’s hard. And sometimes we only realize after we’ve done something that it wasn’t quite right. We see it at the end of this chapter where finally the trio have gone back to Hagrid’s hut. Dumbledore is there. They speak to Hagrid. And Hagrid is kind of going through this process of realizing, you know what, forget Madame Maxine, I’m not going to be afraid of Rita Skeeter. I need to be proud in who I am and then he talks about his dad. He says, you know my dad would be ashamed of me for being ashamed. I need to be proud. And then, Hagrid says to Harry, you know what I would really love. I would love for you to win this tournament. And Harry’s like, “oh boy, just add more pressure. Okay, fine.” And then Hagrid asks like, well so how are you getting on with the tasks? Do you know what the egg is? And Harry said, uh huh, yeah I got it. And then the text said, “Lying to Hagrid, wasn’t quite like lying to anyone else.” And I feel like that’s the moment where Harry realizes like, Oh, I’ve been out of integrity. This was a misstep and I made a wrong judgement. And now like I’ve kind of made it worse and I don’t know what to do. I think often we don’t realize when we’re out of integrity until it’s too late.

V: Yeah. And I mean part of why Harry has to lie to Hagrid in this moment is because Hermoine is there and he’s already lied to Hermoine. Something that my grandmother used to say is that lies have very short legs, they catch up to you quickly. And I think that’s right. Part of the reason
I am such a fastidiously honest person is that I know that I’m not smart enough to remember my lies.

C: (Laughs).

V: So, I’m like, I’ll be found out so quick I might as well just tell the truth.

C: Even when it’s hard for people to hear the truth.

V: Even when it’s hard for people to hear it, even when it’s embarrassing for me to say it.

C: The thing I was really thinking about throughout this whole chapter was if integrity is about you know consistency, about our inner life in our outer action, the whole theme of this chapter is about wholeness. That you don’t have to divide yourself. And this whole book in so many ways is about dividing yourself. Or about you know whether or not it’s Crouch Jr. who is inhabiting Mad Eye Moody or if it’s Madame Maxine hiding this part of her identity that is part giantess. And most importantly in this chapter, Rita Skeeter being completely dishonest about the fact that she can turn into a beetle and pick up stories that she’s not allowed to do. Like she’s breaking the law when she does it.

This theme of separating ourselves which leads to being out of integrity at least in one place of our life. That seems like a theme that is so present in these books because I think it’s so present in our lives. It’s so hard to be consistently who we are in different places because it’s nearly impossible to.

V: I think it is impossible to.

C: Like, we can’t actually show up in every place in the fullness of who we are because it would be inappropriate, it might be risky, it doesn’t fit within the rules of how we’re supposed to be at work. With our family. In school.

V: With children. With students. With our boss.

C: Right. When we talk about the need for boundaries, what we’re also saying is that we have to boundary who we are. And that we therefore create separation in ourselves which means that being in integrity. Integrity is impossible.

(Music starts for ad)

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(Music for ad ends)
C: Speaking of Grubbly Plank, can we talk about how fabulous her unicorn moment is? I mean, we all know that blast ended skrewts are not our favorite animal. But Grubbly Plank is really doing something great. Like, bringing a unicorn to the classroom is not something you do every day.

V: So, I have mixed feelings about this. I think that women are often ignored in the classroom. And so that it is lovely that Grubbly Plank has picked an animal to really like elevate the attention that girls are getting in the classroom. However, half of her class doesn’t learn at all in this class. Because unicorns prefer the touch of a woman. And I don’t know, as somebody from an education background, yes, there’s an argument to be made for lifting women’s voices but not just not teaching half of your class. I’m going to say something outlandish here. I think boys deserve to learn too.

C: It’s interesting to think about Grubbly Plank because she’s always contrasted with Hagrid. And Hagrid for all his gifts and his love and his care, he’s not a good teacher.

V: Nope.

C: And Hermoine realizes that. Frankly, Ron and Harry do too. But they are so overwhelmed by their love and support for him that they will withstand whatever. You know, attack is aimed at Hagrid. But you know Grubbly Plank is a better teacher. But sometimes integrity isn’t what we want. And I think that’s interesting. Sometimes, what we want is the loyalty, is the friendship, is the comradery. You know, it’s too painful to let go of something we love in order to do what’s right. And I think one of the big messages we take away from this book is you know choose what is right over what is easy. But like, sometimes choosing what is right means not choosing someone that we love. And that’s in some ways much more difficult.

V: Well, and also it then becomes is it right?

C: Mmm…

V: I don’t know. I pick loyalty over integrity.

C: I want to think about that for each of us.

V: If I disagree with a friend, who’s on a rant, will think very carefully about loyalty over telling them what I really think. Is it worth informing them that I disagree with them? And almost always the answer is no and I’m going to be like yeah, I can’t believe that happened to you. I just think that the world is so hard sometimes. In the way that I would justify it to myself is I mean as I was saying earlier, I think the principle that I hold myself to is one of like being loving and supportive. I also have a real love of truth. And I’m constantly struggling with like love over truth but I think that I might put loyalty above integrity in that way. And the question to me is whether or not that’s still integrity.
C: Let me throw in one more question to that dichotomy between loyalty and integrity. Because I think time is the other factor that we have to throw in here. If it’s someone going on a rant and we’re listening to them, I totally get it. We need to just hear it, affirm it, we’re loving on this person. The truth from our perspective is not really relevant at this moment. But if every day, the relationship is like that. Right, if that challenging of my integrity to stay loyal to you continues over a stretch of time, that’s when it breaks for me. If I constantly have to sacrifice my integrity to be in relationship with you, I can’t do that forever.

V: I completely agree with that. At a certain point, I’m not being myself in order to be friends with them.

C: Right!

V: So the relationship is a total lie.

C: Exactly! Then the relationship itself doesn’t have integrity anymore.

V: Right!

C: Oh, I love that.

V: So you’re not even being loyal to them.

C: So if we think about that juxtaposition between integrity and loyalty with this kind of added dimension of time, the trio’s reaction to Hagrid, I think is really stuck in this chapter. They’re choosing loyalty, they’re not choosing their integrity of education even though especially Hermione, it’s clear, like wow, that unicorn lesson, was super helpful. If Hermione is learning 50% new stuff in a lesson, you know that lesson is well planned. But, who’s to say that the trio made the right choice?

V: Yeah. I don’t think that they did. I mean, I think to your point, their loyalty to Hagrid actually hurt them. Because Hagrid is doing a job he is bad at.

C: Yeah, because over time, this is going to really impact their understanding and education. And like, who knows how a better understanding of magical creatures would help them in their battle against Voldemort.

V: Yeah, they might know more about Nagini.

C: Absolutely!
V: We would know more about snake lactation. And Hagrid would potentially be advocating for his like wizarding status to be changed so he can get a wand back. Or he could go and get more training as a teacher, but…

C: And go be on grade 3 at school.

V: Right, he like has an 8th grade education. And loves monsters. Not magical creatures. This is a bad job for him. I think that’s the thing, that’s something that I really struggle with, with integrity. I have a younger brother who I love very much and he’s one of the best people that I know and I always got accused of being hard on him when we were younger. And I always thought it was a sign of respect. I was like, Mom and Dad, you are constantly enabling him to be this baby whereas he’s only a couple of years younger than I am and I believe in his ability to do this. And it sounds disloyal, because I’m like being mean to him, frankly, but I think I’m actually being loyal. Sometimes having integrity in the truth, makes you more loyal to someone. These things are very overlapping, but I do think it comes down to time. Right, because this is a prolonged relationship that I have with my little brother. This is about my students’ education. Whereas in small things, I think it’s okay to pick loyalty over truth right now.

C: Yeah and if we think of integrity not as a static thing but as a thing that grows, then we should think of loyalty in the same way. That you’re not just loyal to the person who they are today, but who they could become.

So it’s time for Casper’s maybe left field insight into the chapter. I was really thinking about what does true integrity look like. So much of our conversation has been about the challenge of living in integrity especially as it regards to relationships and relationships in a large part are facilitated through language or at least through a self consciousness. So it really struck me that Professor Sprout is in the greenhouses and they are kind of steaming up. Um, because there’s so much activity, and maybe think that in some ways plants are living in full integrity and stay with me here. Because they don’t use language, there’s no self deception yet there’s just a straightforwardness to how they respond to stimulus, to sunlight, to rain, to warmth. There’s a wholeness to foods. Right, like natural foods. There’s something about…

V: They can’t help but be themselves.

C: That’s what I think is so beautiful!

V: I don’t think this is an outlandish thought. I think that poets will often put sort of like the heart and desire in conversation with plants and animals. One of my favorite poems is Peonies, by Mary Oliver. And she says that “Flowers bend their bright bodies and tip their fragrance into the air and rise their red stems holding all that dampness and recklessness gladly and lightly.” And she calls them beauty the brave, which I love. And that gives me something to aspire to. I would like to be beauty the brave, right. And think that my bravery is beautiful. And so, no, I think that putting our ego in conversation with plant is interesting.
C: Like the natural world responds differently. Like even when the trio is banging on Hagrid’s door, Hagrid stays silent but Fang barks really loudly. Fang responds. There’s maybe a path forward like what you’re saying, how can we learn from the natural world to be reminded of our true nature in some way.

V: And which things in the natural world do we want to be like? Right, there are some animals who eat their young. No. But maybe we want to be like the peonies.

(Music starts)

V: So Casper, this week we are doing one of our favorite practices of Flora Legia once again, where you and I each pick a sentence that sparkled out at us and then we put the two sentences in conversation with each other. Which sentence did you pick this week?

C: “Let her try!”

V: (Giggles) That’s when Hermoine is like Rita Skeeter!

C: “Let her try!” Yeah. How about you?

V: “He climbed up the side of the ship, stretched out his arms, and dived right into the lake.”

C: That’s a beautiful sentence.

V: Thank you. So now let’s discuss a little bit. Casper, why did you pick your sentence?

C: I love this sentence because it’s about Hermoine fully claiming her righteous indignation and her courage and her like, nearly foolish willingness to take risks sometimes. And we think we of Harry as the reckless, foolish lead character in some ways and Ron’s blind loyalty. But like, Hermoine has all of that too in spades and I just love how fearless she is. I want to be that fearless when someone threatens me or someone I love. “Let her try!” And we know that she’s going to get her revenge so it’s extra sweet. How about you, why did you choose your sentence?

V: This is when Krum is training for the next task and so he goes for a swim in the lake and I for a year went swimming once a month regardless of the weather, and you came with me one month. In November! So it was chilly. And it was just such a fun goal and those moments where you are standing over water and you are about to jump. And, you know it’s going to be cold. Is a gleeful, terrifying, joyful moment of aliveness. And one of courage. And just like this great moment -- I went on one of my swims in the Irish Sea in the winter and there were all these octogenarians who were like doing their morning swim in the Irish Sea and they were like “Girls,
it doesn’t get warmer the longer you wait.” And I just love that Krum doesn’t even take a second, he just jumps right in. So, I think it shows that Krum is just like I gotta do something I’m gonna do it.

C: That’s such a good life lesson. It doesn’t get warmer the longer you wait.

V: Yeah, they were just like get in.
So, shall we now put the two sentences in conversation?

C: Yes.

V: Please read me yours.

C: “Let her try!”

V: “He climbed up the side of the ship, stretched out his arms, and dived right into the lake.”

C: Oh, I like that. It’s as if your sentence is responding to this kind of invitation. Like, bring it on. And there goes Krum, like diving straight in.

V: Yeah.

C: And in some ways so does Hermoine. She’s diving straight in into this challenge. To counter Rita Skeeter’s kind of vile fake news.

V: Yeah. And I also like the idea of like, Let her try. And then she’ll dive right in. Right? It’s if you give people a moment to try something maybe they will, they’ll rise to the occasion and they’ll dive right in even though it’s cold.
Shall we put the sentences in opposite order?

C: Yes. Alright, you go first.

V: “He climbed up the side of the ship, stretched out his arms, and dived right into the lake.”

C: “Let her try!”
Oh do you know what I’m thinking of Vanessa? The body of water is of course where the next challenge is going to take place and Krum is going to have his shark head, and the person who really struggles with this challenge is going to be Fleur. And I’m thinking that Fleur is going to be trying to save her sister and fails. That’s about as far as my brain has gotten...
V: No, but that, I had never thought about the fact that she has a harder task than anybody else. While obviously it's lovely that Harry is trying to save Ron and Victor is trying to save Hermoine, and Cedric is trying to save Cho, trying to save your younger sibling is a totally different stake to have.

C: I've never thought about that…

V: Me neither.

C: These are all like crushes or friends, that is not the same as your sister.

V: And it's a child. Everybody else is like of the same age or older, and so Fleur has an unfairly hard task here, in trying to save her sister.

C: Even in the water the patriarchy lives.

V: Because Fleur loves her sister more than she loves whatever boy she's flirting with. She gets punished for that love.

C: Mmmmm.

V: But I do think, do you know what maybe a potential lesson is? Is something that I try to do when I'm panicking is say, Okay, you're going to make it worse. In moments of panicking, to try to remind yourself to slow down.

C: Makes me think of one of the Dalai Lama quotes that, usually I meditate at least for an hour every morning, but on a busy day I meditate for two.

V: (Laughs) Exactly.

C: (Laughs)

V: The more rushed you are the slower you should go.

C: Yeah.

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(Music for ad ends)

C: Vanessa, this week's voicemail comes from Margo Zarinpas. (not sure if this is right.)
Voicemail: Hi Vanessa, Casper, and Ariana, my name is Margo and I live in Minneapolis. I’m calling with a blessing related to the chapter the Yule Ball and I’ve probably read this chapter twenty times before but I’ve never noticed a specific line until this re-read this year. So Harry and Parvati are dancing and the text tells us that Moody comments on Harry’s socks which he can see through Harry’s robes. And Parvati says, He is so creepy. I don’t think that eye should be allowed. And Harry doesn’t really respond or acknowledge in any way and the text moves on to other subjects. And that line struck me because Pavarti is completely right. If Moody can see through clothes, that’s a real threat to the students. And I agree with her. That eye probably shouldn’t be allowed. And the line struck me so much because in high school I was a lot like Harry. I had this math teacher who learned so much from and I really looked forward to his class. But in retrospect he was completely lecherous and sexually harassed many of his students, was completely disgusting in his behavior. And recently a group of alumni from my high school got together to recognize that this man had spent decades harassing students who came through our school. And they started working with the school district to make sure that never happened again. And I say I was like Harry because at the time I knew what he was doing was completely inappropriate but it didn’t really bother me, I wasn’t the target, I didn’t speak up. And in retrospect that’s completely horrifying. And so I wanted to call in and give a blessing to Parvati Patil and the incredible alumni from my high school who are advocating for change now and anyone else who is calling out inappropriate behavior. You are all an inspiration to me and I hope to be more like you.

C: Margo, thank you so much for that voicemail. And I hear you. And in your kind of reflection on your own experience that sits uncomfortably and in your admiration for people who are advocating for change, like at a local level, in our families, in our schools, as well as kind of the big national and international picture that we’re all looking at as a culture finally. So thank you for that.

V: And Margo, I also just wanted to add that I think it’s important that when we look back on these moments when we were children, to forgive ourselves for what we might be seeing as our own complicity in these things. You know if you liked the attention that someone when who looking back was giving you inappropriate attention. I think it’s really important to know that you were a child and you did nothing wrong. They were the adults. And I just think it’s important for us to forgive ourselves for those things. And I also just want to validate that it is super creepy that Moody can see through clothes. And again, shame on the powers that be. Shame on Dumbledore. Shame on the principal in your school who didn’t do a classroom visit to see that your teacher was behaving inappropriately. These things are allowed to thrive on a structural level.

C: Yes.

So, Vanessa it’s time for us to bless someone from the pages of this chapter and I feel like I want to offer like so many blessings, but who did you want to give a blessing to for this chapter?
V: Like Margo, actually, I would also like to offer a blessing to Parvati. Because we see that same strength in how she is treating Harry after the dance. Right? Harry asks her to the dance, and she’s very flattered to be asked by the champion. But she still feels like she had the right to be treated well at that dance and Harry has not apologized for his treatment of her. I think for a 14-year-old young woman to have a sense of how she deserves to be treated, and not take anything less because he is the popular boy is a really good start to her becoming a fabulous young woman as she continues to grow. And so, I want to offer a blessing to women everywhere who know how they deserve to be treated and advocate for it.

C: Well also go get a cute boyfriend from Beauxbaton.

V: Yeah, just go get a French boy.

Casper, who would you like to bless this week?

C: My blessing is for Hagrid. He’s gone into what I like to call a doom spiral. He’s feeling sorry for himself for good reason, nothing is worse than being paraded in front of a whole nation for something that you don’t want people to see. It’s so humiliating.

V: And he’s being outed against his will.

C: Yeah. Just so many layers of pain and trauma and discrimination here. So my blessing is for Hagrid. First of all, because this has happened to him and it happens to many people against their will. But I also love that he’s able to draw strength from his father who has been dead for some time. Like Hagrid really is alone in the world in terms of family until later in the books. So I just want to wish my very best for anyone who maybe wants to draw on their parents or their ancestors or somehow the memory of someone who knows a bigger truth than what they are stuck in right now. And to help give them courage in that moment.

V: Here, here.

(Outro Music Starts)

C: You’ve been listening to Harry Potter and the Sacred Text. You can follow us on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook and leave us a review on iTunes. I LOVE to read them, I do it every week. Or you can send us a voicemail by recording it and sending it to harrypottersacredtext@gmail.com.

V: Next week we will be reading chapter 25, The Egg and the Eye through the theme of Preciousness. This week’s episode of Harry Potter and the Sacred Text was produced by Ariana Nedelman, Casper ter Kuile, and me, Vanessa Zoltan. Our music is by Ivan Pyzow and Nick Bohl and we’re part of the Panoply network. You can find ours and other great shows on Panolpy.fm.
C: Please join our crowdfunder at harrypottersacredtext.com and help us reach our two goals of 2,000 donors and $75,000. Thanks for this week’s voicemail by Margo Zarinpas, thanks as ever to Rebecca and Charlie Ludley, Julia Argee, and of course, Stephanie Paulsel. We’ll see you next week.

V: And we’ll see some of you in Minneapolis!

C: Woop woop!

(Outro music fades)

V: Ummm...we should have music written for this.

C: (Laughs)

V and C: Doot doodle doot doot doo (making music noises)

V: Welcome to Casper’s brain wave corner.

C: (Laughs)