(Theme Music Begins)

Vanessa: Hi Chloe.

Chloe: Hi Vanessa.

Vanessa: And welcome everybody to this special guest edition of the Women of Harry Potter and the Sacred Text. We are lucky enough to be joined today by Duchess Chloe Angyal of Coralville, Iowa; (intro music fades) who is a contributing editor for marieclaire.com and my low-key soul mate, we don’t like to brag about that too much though.

Chloe: I was going to sing the theme song.

Vanessa: Yeah yeah yeah, go.

Chloe: (sings) doooooo dooooo dooo doo how’s that?

Vanessa: Amazing, perfect.

Chloe: Do you just want to tell Nick very kindly that we’ve gone in a different direction?

Vanessa: (laughter) Nick, you’ve been replaced we found a acapella singer and she’s got a cover...

Chloe: I’ve got the pipes for days.

Vanessa: Are you going to start touring with us instead of Nick and just like doing our sacred practice music, our ad music, all of it?

Chloe: I think it’s bigger than that, I think we need to start a band.

Vanessa: (laughter) And what is the name of our band?

Chloe: The low-key soul mates.

Vanessa: Duh. No it’s got to be like The Snitches or something.

Chloe: The Basic Snitches.

Vanessa: Wow, that was a little too quick. I now think you stayed up all night brainstorming ideas for this. So Chloe, we invited you here today to bless a woman of Harry Potter. And I am wondering who you would like to bless today? And why?
Chloe: I would like to bless Molly Weasley because of all the work that she does to nurture and feed the revolution.

Vanessa: Oh I never thought of her like that, she is like the entire kitchen for the army.

Chloe: The kitchen, the therapist, the person who gives everyone this home and heart that they need to go back out and fight. And I also want to bless her because she has a kind of wisdom and knowledge about the world that so often gets discounted and silenced. Like if you had a dollar for every time her husband or one of her sons is like, “he’ll be fine Molly, don’t fuss,” and she’s like, “no my fears and my concerns are based on real information, I’m not an irrational woman. Stop telling me to relax and smile more.” It’s so frustrating.

Vanessa: Do you mind pointing us to just like a moment in the text in which you feel as though Molly is demonstrating this brand of awesomeness.

Chloe: Yes, there is a moment in the beginning of the sixth book where Dumbledore has gone to get Harry from the Dursleys, and they’ve gone via Slughorns’s house and then they come to the Burrow in the middle of the night and Molly is awake. And she’s there at the table with Tonks, and she and Tonks have clearly been having, like a deep and meaningful conversation about what we later realize is Tonks’ romantic life, that is clearly affecting her mental health. And then Harry shows up and she offers Harry and Dumbledore some food, some sustenance, and nourishment. Dumbledore goes on his way, she gives soup to Harry. And then Arthur comes home and she cooks for him, and she’s been up all day cooking and cleaning and taking care of, not just her own children, but all of the people that she has adopted. It’s such a vital contribution. And obviously I love, “not my daughter you bitch,” everyone loves that line, it’s a super badass moment, but that’s just the culmination of all the work that she’s been doing throughout seven books to keep people fed and safe and loved and whole.

Vanessa: Yeah and I was just visiting some friends of mine who are foster parents and they just brought up such an obvious point that I had never thought about, which is that you don’t get maternity leave as a foster mom. They got a kid dropped off and they just had to go to work the next day, and I feel like Molly is constantly dealing with that. She suddenly has to take Harry and there is no planning time, there’s no adjustment period, there’s just constant fires being put out.

Chloe: Well and the extra support that she does get is because Harry is special not because she, in her sacrifice, is special. Like when they get extra security from the Ministry, it’s not to make Molly’s life easier, it’s to protect Harry, the precious creature.

Vanessa: How do you think Molly does hold on to her sanity? Like we don’t see Molly with the self-care regimen and I don’t understand how she hasn’t lost her mind, right? Towards the end of the books, everybody on that clock is just in mortal danger, she’s not talking to one of her sons, her daughter has been kidnapped and taken into the bowels of hell, her husband has been attacked; she is keenly aware of how horribly wrong all of this can go. And yet she still
completely holding it together, and is able to say, “not my daughter you bitch.” Like what is this strength? Where does it come from? I would be broken.

Chloe: And I think we see instances where she’s coming close to that, there’s the scene at the beginning of Order of the Phoenix where they’re cleaning out the Black house and she goes to try to dismiss and Bogart and she just can’t. Her fears are too much for her and she just can’t do it. And it’s kind of this moment where Harry realizes what the stakes really are. And he sees Molly in fear, and I think he has the same response that the rest of us have which is that Molly’s unbreakable, nothing can get to Molly. And then he sees her lose it and he’s like, “oh man, any one of these people can die – one or more.” But I know that you will appreciate this as someone who both enjoys and make media for women; she does have a self-care regimen. She reads, Witch Weekly, she reads Gilderoy Lockhart’s books, not because she cares very much about how he vanquishes dark creatures but because she has a thing for Gilderoy Lockhart. It’s nothing compared to what it should be, she’s not going for monthly massages, and doing wizard sheet masks and taking wizard yoga. She’s definitely not getting what she needs, but I do think we see her carving out time to do things that give her pleasure or at least distraction. And it’s worth noting that gets made fun of, like Witch Weekly gets dismissed as shoddy journalism and Gilderoy Lockhart gets revealed as a fraud. Her self-care regimen is belittled and dismissed and that’s hard to watch.

Vanessa: So part of me wants to be like, she must feel such a profound of sense of satisfaction though, like she is filling the bellies of children and she is taking care of Tonks who is a warrior. Part of me wants to make her this angel of the house, right?

Chloe: Mmmhmm.

Vanessa: That is just so sure of her place in the world, and that what she is doing is a form of radical hospitality lived in perpetuity. But like the other part of me knows that that’s nonsense and that we need outside validation in order to feel good about what we do and she deserved a statue as one of the heroes of this war. It’s really hard to feel self-satisfied when the only thing you get at the end of filling bellies is a sink full of dirty dishes.

Chloe: And here’s the thing, if people were to make a statue to her it would be her in battle with a wand in her hand in the “not my daughter you bitch,” moment. Not her making soup, not her counseling Tonks at the dinner table, not her lugging the clock around worrying every second of the day about the health and safety and lives of the people that she loves most in the world. All of that work goes, it’s taken for granted that sacrifice that maternal sacrifice gets taken for granted and it’s also a good reminder that this entire series is made possible by maternal sacrifice.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Chloe: Harry is who is he is because his mother died trying to save him, and Voldemort is who he is because his mother decided to give up her life for different reasons. Over and over again in this series we see mothers taking huge risks for their kids. Lily does it, Molly does it, Narcissa
does it, and with the exception of Lily, everyone else’s sacrifice is just taken for granted, like that’s just what mother’s do.

Vanessa: Right, like there should be statues all over the world of women making soup for the revolution.

Chloe: Yeah and I think we talk about the history of movements, we so often talk about the people who do the public facing work, the marching in the streets, the giving speeches at rallies, the standing on the front lines of a protest; and the contributions of women, which are often to stand in the background or to make food or to be the emotional support system of the important men who are out doing important things, those contributions so often get sidelined, and made invisible or down played. And it’s a tough line to walk because you want to recognize women’s revolutionary capacity to stand on the front lines and lead rallies and give speeches and things like that, and also those aren’t the only kind of labor that matter. It’s not the only kind of contributions to resistance or to revolution that matter. And those big important men who are on the front lines couldn’t do what they are doing if they didn’t have wives, and I don’t mean, I mean like the person playing the role of “wife,” I don’t necessarily mean their actual wives or women, but you need that domestic support system in order to go out into the world and do Great Things.

Vanessa: And you know the people who are left behind by the people who are off doing the great things, their lives are made harder by the Gandhi’s’ and the Martin Luther Kings. Gandhi’s children never got proper education because they were busy following him around from India to South Africa and South Africa back to India. And he made a vow of poverty which meant he couldn’t afford to educate his children even though he had went to England and got a Law degree. There are always these familial victims of these “great men,” and these “great causes.” In order to do great things the people closest to you are being sacrificed.

Chloe: And I think when women do that sacrifice is either fetishized or just taken for granted and not even seen or heard or talked about or memorialized in statues. It’s just what mother’s do, or what wives do.

Vanessa: And when women are the people out there doing the great things, it’s “why aren’t you home with your children? Where are your kids right now?”

Chloe: Right.

Vanessa: So there’s a complete double bind in that. So what do you think, I mean obvious offering a blessing to Molly is a lovely way to be honoring her, and I hope that some women listening are feeling themselves in Molly and know that we want to honor the sacrifices that they make in order for other things to happen. But what do you think a real, an appropriate honor for Molly within the wizarding world would be?

Chloe: I mean I keep thinking about Eliza Hamilton and an orphanage. Or some other systemic care-giving facility or organization that would relieve individual women of doing what Molly
was stringing together on a shoestring her whole time. Sacrifice sounds like it’s a one-time thing and it’s done to you and you let it happen, but actually it’s an ongoing series of choices that you have to keep making and keep being painful. And it’s a nice way to think of the work that Molly’s doing as active and involved even though she’s not out casting spells on bad guys. I don’t know, sort of a living memorial rather than a statue. Statues are cool, but what do they do?

Vanessa: I love that idea. The Molly Weasley Soup Kitchen.

Chloe: Yeah, or like School for Activism or School for Resistance. Something, I think this is why people love the DA is that it’s not a thing it’s an organization; it is a living progressing, entity. It’s not an amulet, but there’s the language in the book about how he feels like he’s carrying around a talisman, but it’s not a static thing, the reason it’s so comforting is not because it’s a medal or something, it’s a living, breathing, active organization.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Chloe: So that’s what I think the “statue” to Molly Weasley would be.

Vanessa: Yeah, I’m just thinking that the only time we really see Molly acknowledged for her genius is when Arthur has been attacked, I don’t remember who says it to Dumbledore, but somebody says, “somebody should tell Molly,” and he says, “she probably already knows, that great clock of hers.” And I feel like Dumbledore knows that Molly has made this clock and that there is sophisticated magic involved, in creating a system by which she can know what is going on with her family. He’s in that one line, sort of honoring her genius of caretaking. And so I was just thinking, I like your answer better, but my answer is I would want that clock in the Smithsonian.

Chloe: Here’s what I want, I want it patented and sold to wizarding families everywhere and for Molly to get all the royalties and put them in a self-care fund and to spend them only on herself and only on vacations where she doesn’t have children to take care of.

Vanessa: Except that Molly being Molly, she would donate half of it to the Molly Weasley School for the Next Generation of Advocates.

Chloe: Okay we’ll have to come up with a better name and acronym for that because that’s...

Vanessa: I’m a great namer of things Chloe.

Chloe: Sorry.

Vanessa: So Chloe, as always, we like to end with a game on Women of the Harry Potter and the Sacred Text.

Chloe: Yes.
Vanessa: And so I’ve made up a game, and as per usual I’ve named it so well, and so succinctly and so aptly because I’m great at naming things, and it is called “Which animal is taking care of their babies in this way?”

Chloe: Wow you are good at naming things.

Vanessa: I know! So it’s a multiple-choice quiz. So question one: What animal can fit up to fifteen babies on its body for transport? (a) a grizzly bear (b) an opossum (c) beavers (d) elephants.

Chloe: It’s got to be an opossum.

Vanessa: Yes it is an opossum, well done you. I can’t believe you didn’t fall for my grizzly bear.

Chloe: Elephant was close, I was wavering.

Vanessa: Yeah. Okay question two: What animals make sure to have several mom figures in their babies’ lives? (a) polar bears (b) wombats (c) elephants (d) beavers

Chloe: Okay I know what the right answer is, but you’ve also chosen my animal in the world as one of the wrong answers.

Vanessa: Correct I did.

Chloe: Because my Patronus is a wombat, and I feel like this is really unfair...

Vanessa: I know.

Chloe: Because that’s not the correct answer, the correct answer is elephants. But you tried to trick me.

Vanessa: I didn’t try to trick you, I tried to lure you.

Chloe: Okay you tried to lure me into talking about the greatest creature in the history of creatures: the Australian Wombat. Okay question three.

Vanessa: Okay number three. So far you are getting 100% and it’s a four-question quiz, so best of luck to you.

Chloe: Okay.

Vanessa: Okay question three: What babies live with their moms for decades? (a) millenials (b) penguins (c) elephants (d) orangutans.
Chloe: Millennials.

Vanessa: *(laughter)* That is a trick question, because that is correct.

Chloe: But so is elephants right? Or orangutans,

Vanessa: It is orangutans but it is also millenials so we will accept both answers and I think that you get a bonus point for getting both answers correct. So with a possible five out of four score, Chloe here is your last question.

Chloe: I’m ready.

Vanessa: Which underwater creature whispers to it’s young? (a) a humpback whale (b) a dolphin (c) turtles (d) manatees

Chloe: Oh man, humpbacks.

Vanessa: Okay you’re so annoying; you got five out of four. *(Chloe laughs)* Well Dr. Chloe Angyal thank you so much for being on this first guest episode of the Women of Harry Potter and the Sacred Text and thank you so much for blessing our dear Molly Weasley.

Chloe: Thank you for having me and bless you, Vanessa and Ariana for creating this podcast and for letting me come hang out with you, it’s super fun.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Chloe: Wombats forever.

Vanessa: In two weeks time you can find me, Vanessa, blessing somebody on Patreon. I haven’t decided who yet, so come to Patreon to find out who I will be blessing in two weeks. *(outro music begins)* This episode of *Women of Harry Potter and the Sacred Text* was co-produced by Ariana Nedelman and me, Vanessa Zoltan, our music is by Nick Bolh and this is a production of Not Sorry Productions with Night Vale Presents. We will talk to you all in two weeks on Patreon and in a month right here. *(Outro music fades)*