

Harry Potter and The Sacred Text 1.17 – The Man with Two Faces

Vanessa: Chapter 17, The Man with Two Faces. **“It was Quirrell. ‘You,’ gasped Harry. Quirrell smiled.”**

(Intro music begins)

“His face wasn’t twitching at all. ‘Me,’ he said calmly. ‘I wondered whether I’d be meeting you here, Potter.’ ‘But I thought – Snape—’. ‘Severus?’ Quirrell laughed ...”

Vanessa: 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: I remember early one morning in the third grade I was working on my multiplication tables with the number 3, which I still know really well, and I sat in the front row with my big glasses because I had a hard time seeing the black board. And somebody came to the classroom door, and Mrs. Olsen, my third grade teacher, went and, you know, was talking with the person. I didn’t look back, I kept doing my work. And then Mrs. Olsen called my name, and I looked back and my dad was standing there. And, you know, there was that moment of panic of ‘why is dad in my classroom?’ And my dad smiled and said, “let’s go.” And, you know, I packed up my Hello Kitty pink backpack that was amazing and my dad said, “how do you feel about going to the beach today?” And I remember just being shocked and so excited, and I rarely got an alone day with my dad, I cannot remember many of those. And so we went for quesadillas, and then we went to the beach. And that was what we did that day. And it was just, you know, I remember everything about it, and it was the most fun, special day. And looking back on that now, I realize that that was just a few months after his first brain surgery. And my dad was always incredibly loving, but the way that his love often manifested was in how hard he worked to provide for my brothers and my mom and I. And I think that after his brain surgery he didn’t want symbols of love anymore, he wanted to just show his love. It wasn’t, ‘I work hard cuz I love you,’ it was, ‘there are things that are more important than school and working hard, and that’s us spending time together.’ And I was just reminded of that story, you know ... this traumatic thing happens in this chapter to Harry, and everybody starts showing that they love him in such explicit ways, of Dumbledore showing up to have a one-on-one conversation with Harry after this traumatic thing happens, and Hagrid pulling together this beautiful photo album for Harry after this traumatic thing happens. And ... I don’t believe in silver linings exactly, but I do think sometimes these terrible traumatic things can call us to love in really explicit ways. And I’m going to be excited to talk about that this week.

Casper: Vanessa, I love that story. And I think you're so right. You know, there's – so often we have relationships where we know we love one another, but moments where it's really practical and we change something because of that love, then we're reminded that it's really deep and true. So that really resonates for me. One way that our listeners can show that they love us is voting for m—

Vanessa: For me!

Casper: Voting for me in who does better in the 30 second recap. You know, I really feel that I've grown over the last couple of weeks, and we are so close, so go to harrypottersacredtext.com and vote for whoever you think is the best at 30 second recap. Vanessa, you're going first this week.

Vanessa: I'm ready.

Casper: Go!

(Ticking noise)

Vanessa: It turns out that it's Quirrell who is in the final room for the Sorcerer's Stone, and that Voldemort is in his head. And so Harry and Voldemort fight over the Sorcerer's Stone, and then Harry suddenly feels it in his pocket, and then Harry blacks out from pain and Quirrell's grabbing his arm, and Quirrell's in pain and he's in pain and Voldemort's in pain and it's very dramatic. So we wake up and Harry's in the hospital wing and everybody shows how much they love Harry and he goes to the final feast and then Dumbledore gives all sorts of points and Gryffindor wins the House Cup for the first time in a million years!

(Buzzing noise – 117 words in 30 seconds)

Casper: Well. Brave effort.

Vanessa: I think I put forth an amazing effort and I think that our listeners will reward it. I'm going to put in a pitch now: this is the last chance to vote for Book 1. We will announce in next week's episode who won. You just have one week left to vote for me.

Casper: This is more important than the election.

Vanessa: Yes. Make sure to –

Casper: It's not, it's not. But you should still vote for both.

Vanessa: Practice voting!

They laugh

Vanessa: You ready?

Casper: Yeah.

Vanessa: On your mark, get set, go.

(Ticking noise)

Casper: Harry is surprised to find that it's Quirrell, not Snape, in the final room. And he's trying to get the stone, but he's seeing himself drinking the elixir rather than having it, and so Harry realizes he has to use the Mirror of Erised to get the stone, and he finds it in his pocket and then Quirrell tries to get it, but he gets hurt whenever he touches him. And then Voldemort tells him to kill him, but it doesn't work. Harry blacks out, wakes up, Dumbledore is there and tells him lots of sweet things and life lessons, there's lots of sweets. The Weasley twins wanted to send him a toilet thing. And then he goes to the feast, Gryffindor wins because Neville gets some bonus points AND I'M DONE!

(Buzzing noise – 132 words in 30 seconds)

Vanessa: Okay, you –

Casper: Woo!

Vanessa: --you did pretty well. I just wanna call one thing to the attention of our listeners. There were a lot of unclear pronoun references.

Casper: 'The toilet bowl' is also – it's a toilet seat.

Vanessa: Yes...

Casper: Just to clarify: it's not a whole toilet.

Vanessa laughs

Vanessa: So do you want to start us on our theme, since you're feeling so great?

Casper: The most obvious place to start is really a mini-speech that Dumbledore gives about love that makes Harry cry. You know, he says **“your mother died to save you. If there is one thing Voldemort cannot understand, it is love.”** And that really resonates with your story, that kind of invisible but really strong memory that you have of your dad coming to pick

you up, that visible sign of love. You know, it might not protect you from an attacking Quirrell with a man in the back of his head-turban-thing, but it's more than a memory in a way, it's truth. It's a reality. You can walk through the world knowing that your father loves you. Does that resonate with you, Vanessa?

Vanessa: Absolutely. I've had the same best friend since I was 5 years old, and whenever I felt lonely in a situation I thought, 'well I have Kim.' And it was just this real power of, you know, not feeling lonely in rooms where I felt like I wasn't connecting with other people. I was like, 'well I already have a soul mate.' And I think because of that I've made more authentic friendships and I haven't felt the need to make silly alliances, and I really think that finding who feels like a soulmate at the age of 5 has armed me for my life of just never feeling lonely, cuz I know that Kim is out there loving me. I'm just wondering, do we have complicated feelings about Lily's love, though? Because Lily had to sacrifice herself for Harry, and her love protects him. But he's an orphan now. I'm just wondering if that's more complicated than Dumbledore is making it sound.

Casper: I think love is sacrifice. I think it's impossible to love something without us being changed. Which means sacrificing the person we were or the plan we had, whether it's how we wanted to spend our time or where we wanted to live. There are sacrifices to be made. And I think sacrifice is the currency of love, that's how we know it's real. And I think Dumbledore gives us a comparison to Lily – he explains that Voldemort doesn't love people and never will, that he doesn't protect his friends, that he doesn't sacrifice himself ever for anything. It's always about himself, it's always selfish. And he abandons Quirrell as soon as Quirrell is weak, as soon as Harry's physical touch starts to burn Quirrell's body in this kind of magical way Voldemort abandons him and looks for the next way that he can become embodied. So I think there's ... there's something elemental about sacrifice in a loving relationship.

Vanessa: Yes. I think that that is exactly right, that Voldemort is incapable of love. But Quirrell loves Voldemort. Quirrell sacrifices his life for Voldemort. Quirrell sacrifices the back of his head for Voldemort. And those are all sacrifices that he's making, and he really feels a profound love for Voldemort. So there are these incredibly unhealthy forms of love that – and people can justify their sacrifices saying this is love, but there *is* a love that we judge.

Casper: That's so tricky, cuz I don't read that relationship as 'love.' I read it as obsession, as defined by power. You know, we know that there's a moment where Quirrell is sobbing, which Harry has overheard. And Harry challenges him about that, he says, "you were suffering." And Quirrell is embarrassed and says, you know, "it's very hard to serve my master, and he has to be very hard on me." And so to me that says that, you know, underneath this performance of service to Voldemort there is a fear at the very ground of Quirrell, and he's afraid of being weak. He wants to be strong. And so, I don't know, I just – that relationship doesn't seem one that's grounded in love ultimately to me.

Vanessa: But isn't this just an abusive relationship based on love? Right? I think that Voldemort does make Quirrell feel loved. **"He is with me wherever I go"** right? **"I was a foolish young man, but Voldemort showed me how wrong I was."** This really rings to me of an abusive relationship, but there's still love in those. I just – I think love can be a radical act, and I also just think there are harmful forms of love, where we love people who aren't worthy of our love, we love people who hurt us, and I guess I think that self-love has to be at the center of all love. I know I think that. If you don't love yourself, you can't love somebody else in a healthy way.

Casper: I guess it's tricky to figure out what's really going on with Voldemort and Quirrell, but I think you're right that there are different kinds of love. And love can be true and unhealthy at the same time, and maybe we just need to try and really listen to ourselves of what kind of love we're feeling and experiencing to know if it's healthy or not healthy for us. That's tricky.

Vanessa: It's really tricky. And I don't think that there's a rubric for it. Right? Certainly love that is harming someone else is not a healthy love, and love that is harming yourself is not a healthy love. And I think once you throw sacrifice into the mix as a necessary ingredient to love, those lines become really blurry. But it's a worthy experiment.

Casper: On this theme there's this wonderful Brené Brown quote about I think exactly this situation Quirrell is in, where she writes, "when you get to a place when you understand that love and belonging, your worthiness, is a birthright and not something you have to earn, anything is possible." And I think that Quirrell is just stuck in this place where he doesn't feel that he's –

Vanessa: – he still thinks love has to be transactional.

Casper: Exactly, like he doesn't... he doesn't have that self-love that you were talking about to then be able to love someone healthily. That's ... yeah. I really wanna talk about the title of this chapter, but I don't know if it has anything to do with love.

Vanessa: Okay, we can make it about love. Don't worry.

Casper: So, of course the first time I read it I was like, 'oh! It's Quirrell with Voldemort in the back of his head, it's the Man with Two Faces, yay! I get it.' But I realized that the other person with two faces here could be Harry when he's looking into the Mirror. Because at first he sees himself, white, scared, you know, he's terrified, but then he sees the self which is smiling back at him and winks and he feels the weight of the stone in his pocket. And I'm just like, 'what, what is going on there?' Like, there's two faces.

Vanessa: I think that's really interesting and all about love. There is this other loving, trusting part in Harry that's like, 'don't worry, we've got this.' And we see that again and again in these books, that Harry takes care of himself in really interesting ways. We see that in Book 3 with

the— he saves himself with the patronus. And I think that the message of self-love here is you can save yourself, you already have the answers. There's a great Jewish idea that everything you need is inside one room, and that's because everything that you need is inside of yourself. And I just think that that can be true, I think that there are certain circumstances in which obviously that is much, much harder, but I think that Harry's love for himself gets him through this moment, and then the stone just appears in his pocket.

Casper: I love that, and I think it's so true that, you know, he is scared on the one hand *and* he has everything he needs. And it struck me that in this chapter there's actually a lot of repetition of phrases that happens twice. So there's, you know, Voldemort says, "**He lies... He lies**", "**KILL HIM! KILL HIM!**", "**Seize him! SEIZE HIM!**" So he's constantly pointing to that duality maybe in an interesting way? It just really struck me that there's so much repetition of certain phrases.

Vanessa: Or it's a sign that Voldemort does not trust Quirrell, right? I repeat myself when I'm like, 'you're not listening! Write it down, write it down!' Right? Like ... And so I think that it's not an equal relationship. Voldemort is giving orders to someone who he is treating as less than and stupid and, 'you didn't hear me the first time, kill him, kill him.' So I think it's just an example of how this is not a healthy relationship. Whereas Harry doesn't need to say anything to himself, he just needs to look at himself in the mirror and wink. Can we talk about one more love thing?

Casper: Is it Hagrid?

Vanessa: It's Hagrid! Hagrid shows up to visit Harry in the hospital, and the first thing he does is he says to Harry, like, 'it's all my fault, I am so sorry, I'm never gonna drink again, you got into all of this trouble because I wanted a dragon's egg.' And so first I think that we're seeing that by loving Harry, Hagrid has learned a lot about himself, and the restorative power of love for Hagrid. Then it's like the most generous present ever. He has sent owls to all of Harry's parent's classmates and collected pictures of Harry's parents to make this beautiful album for Harry. It's like the most thoughtful, most loving thing ever. And even though I was annoyed at him for getting Harry and Hermione into all that trouble, I think it's just like the sweetest best thing ever.

Casper: I think also that, just like Harry looking in the Mirror and not having to speak and nonetheless communicating, the same thing happens here. You know, that little passage ends, "**Harry couldn't speak, but Hagrid understood.**" And there's this, kind of, love doesn't need words to communicate between these two.

(Sacred reading theme music plays)

Casper: Because this is the last chapter of the first book, we're going to return to the opening sacred practice that we started with: Lectio Divina. And Lectio Divina, just to remind ourselves,

traditionally is used as a kind of ladder to get closer to God. But the way we read it is to try and understand what might the text bless us with, what meaning or insight is in the text about our own lives that we can find through this practice. So we're gonna read it in four stages: narratively, allegorically, to find what experiences we've had that mirror the text, and then finally to find what is the text trying to tell us, what message is in the text that's here for us to find. So, Vanessa, I've got a little passage, and it's near the beginning of the chapter. In fact, it's on the very first page. **“Quirrell snapped his fingers. Ropes sprang out of thin air and wrapped themselves tightly around Harry.”** So what's happening just narratively? Where are we in the story?

Vanessa: Harry has just come in to this final room, and has become a threat to Quirrell so Quirrell uses ropes to magically tie Harry down so that Harry cannot interrupt Quirrell's quest to find the Sorcerer's Stone. That is where we are on a narrative level.

Casper: Ding!

Vanessa: Ding! I did great job. What's happening on an allegorical level, on a metaphorical level?

Casper: I'm really struck by the phrase, **“wrapped themselves tightly around Harry”**. And we know that what is going to protect Harry is the sacrificial love of Lily. And I'm wondering if there's a sort of mirror happening here between the love that's wrapped around him, that's really physically in his body, and these ropes. I don't know, that just strikes me as a reminder of the love that's also wrapped so tightly around Harry. What do you see, Vanessa? Are there any words or images that strike you?

Vanessa: The fact that they come out of thin air is interesting to me because it's how quickly situations can change on a dime, right? Harry's been doing so well, and he just beats every little thing, and then out of nowhere this thing happens that has totally changed the course of how this is going to go. And I think that that speaks to the nature of life, right? That out of nowhere, like, something can happen where you have to deal with this new challenge.

Casper: Yeah, that's so true. And it's true for Quirrell as well. Like, even without a wand, you know, going from this kind of bumbling buffoon, he's now this powerful wizard who can just snap his fingers. So I think you're right, there can be such sudden transitions in who we are and what we can do that can surprise us. So Vanessa, the third layer is to think about experiences we've had in our own lives. What does this remind you of?

Vanessa: This reminds me of the times, you know, where you get, like, an amazing e-mail and suddenly your life changes. Somebody writes to you and is like, 'here's this job offer.' Or just these tiny things. Someone who I really like and admire called me his friend for the first time the other day, and I was like, (*Vanessa gasps excitedly*). Right? It feels like it was probably a long time coming, just like this interaction between Quirrell and Harry was a long time coming, and

yet things become clear and everything just changes in a moment. But I'm only thinking of good times. I mean that is the way that you get bad news too, right? You just find out and the whole world is dropped out from under you. What about you, Casper? How does this speak to you in your life?

Casper: This may sound kind of silly, but I remember when I learned to snap my fingers. I was so excited by that. You know, I was like, 'I'm an adult, I can snap my fingers.' I'm just thinking, like, Quirrell practiced this magic, this magicking ropes out of thin air. And he stood there probably for like a good three months just trying to snap his fingers, and, like, maybe just string appeared, you know? Or, like, spider web. And then the time when real ropes appeared he was like, 'YES! Nailed it!'

Vanessa laughs

Vanessa: Somebody said something so wise to me once, that just because something comes naturally to you does not mean it comes easily to you. That we're built as humans to walk but when little kids learn how to walk it comes naturally to them, but it doesn't come easily. They fall all the time. So I think that that's... yeah. I love that.

Casper: So, Vanessa, let me just read it one more time: **"Quirrell snapped his fingers. Ropes sprang out of thin air and wrapped themselves tightly around Harry."** So our fourth and final stage is to think about what the text is asking of us. What message or blessing is there in this little section that speaks to you in this moment?

Vanessa: I think what I'm called to is, you know, Harry breaks out of these ropes, we know that he does. And there are those moments where you feel entangled and to remember that you will break out of them. I find that often when I'm in a tough situation it feels like it's going to last forever, and it's not. Harry finds a way to break out of those ropes.

Casper: You know, Vanessa, with such a difficult passage of restriction and kind of imprisonment, we've ended up in quite a positive place. And the phrase that I'm really just stuck on is **"wrapped themselves tightly around Harry."** And I kind of just thought of a hug, it really just makes me want to give a really big, tight, wrap-myself-around-my-husband hug. Kind of funny we ended up there.

Vanessa: This week's voice memo is from Lindsay Surtees.

(Voicemail beep)

Lindsay: Hi, guys. My name is Lindsay. I'm calling from Saskatchewan, Canada. I just wanted to discuss a little bit about Chapter 14 with the topic of rebellion. Specifically, when Hermione was sort of schmoozing Hagrid a little bit into offering some more information than he would have independently. And I think that it was discussed, and I definitely agree, that she was being

quite manipulative in that situation. But sort of what I wanted to open the discussion of and chat about: is manipulation always a bad thing? The more I've thought about this, the more I've realized that I'm quite a manipulative person, you know, whether it's to snag an extra kiss or hug, or some sympathy from my boyfriend, or to get out of a job I don't really want to do at work, or, you know, maybe to bring down a price of an item when I'm shopping. And what I wanted to chat about is: is if manipulation is always a negative thing.

Casper: Oh, Lindsay, that's such a great voicemail. I think sometimes it can be a good thing to manipulate people, especially in an educational setting. You know, sometimes we need to be pulled into an experience that we learn from, or we have to be told to brush our teeth and be, you know, tempted by a reward. So I think it's a difficult line, but if you're in a position where you're responsible for someone else's behavior and the way to get them to behave well is sometimes through a little manipulation, I'm okay with that.

Vanessa: Lindsay, I'm gonna be really annoying here, and ask you a question back, which is: why are you manipulating in those moments? I don't think manipulation is in and of itself a bad thing. I think that, you know, I manipulated my dog through food to be a better dog so that I can trust her to not bite people, right? Like, there are absolutely times in which manipulation can be used for good. So I don't want to bear down judgement of manipulation in and of itself being a good or bad thing. I don't think hope is a good or bad thing. I don't think love is a good or bad thing. I think that these are tools, and it depends on our intentions and our execution of how we use these things that make them good or bad. So, you know, manipulating with the intention of love I think is fine, and manipulating with selfish intentions I think is less good. But I think that these are really complicated ideas and so, that is my answer.

Casper: Vanessa, it's time to bless someone in the chapter. I've chosen the Weasley twins. They have promised to make so much trouble earlier in the book that they will send home a toilet seat, and so when Harry is recovering and he's receiving – perhaps there's flowers there, there's certainly chocolate frogs, and all sorts of delicious candies, the Weasley brothers send a toilet seat (or they try to, Madame Pomfrey doesn't let it in). But they're trying to show that, you know, they think so much of him. It's a sort of an honor that they're giving to Harry, that he has managed to do this great thing that they will send him a toilet seat. And, you know, generous gift giving is so wonderful, just like Hagrid with that photo album. So my blessing is for the Weasley twins today, and anyone who is thoughtful in the presents they give.

Vanessa: I love that you called giving a toilet seat 'generous gift giving.' Please do not ever get me a present ever again.

They laugh

Casper: How about you, Vanessa?

Vanessa: My blessing this week is for Lily. Um, even though she's not here she's offered so many blessings to Harry in this chapter that we've talked about. But I just love the image of her waving to Harry and smiling from Hagrid's photo album. And just – that even when someone is gone they're sort of smiling and waving at you really means a lot to me. So this blessing is for all of the people in my life who have passed away but who I still feel like are waving and smiling at me.

(Outro music begins)

Vanessa: You've been listening to *Harry Potter and The Sacred Text*. Next week, we're going to do a full review of Book One, and announce who won our 30-Second Recap Challenge. This episode was produced by Ariana Nedelman, Casper ter Kuile, and me, Vanessa Zoltan. Please don't forget to subscribe and review. Follow us on Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, and Facebook. You can find our handles @hpsacredtext. Thank you for sending in voicemails this week to Anna Stapley, Asna Esrar, Jason Brode, Jerry Elton, Sarah Schreiber, Sherry Ann Tiffany, Ariel Moeller, Johnny Molendez, Lucas Adams, Cherise Wayne, Nichole Chapel, Millie Stutherd and Clair Stack. We would like to thank Jenn Stark, our amazing social media coordinator. Our music is by Ivan Pyzow and Nick Bohl. We'd like to thank Rebecca and Charlie Ledley, Lauren Taylor, Shane Bannon, and the gorgeous Rufus. We'd like to thank the Harvard Communications Office, the Humanist Hub, and, as always, our *Harry Potter and The Sacred Text* reading group. See you next week.

(Outro music ends)

Casper: Of course, the first time I read it I was like, 'oh, it's Quirrell with Voldemort in the back of his head, it's The Man with Two Faces, yay, I get it.' But –

Vanessa laughs

Vanessa: Every time you get a point in the world you use it to congratulate yourself ...

Casper: Yay!

Vanessa: You're— You know you don't have to work on your self-love.

Casper: I have really very healthy self-love. It's so true. Did I—

Vanessa: — 'Yay! I get it!'

Casper: Did I ever tell you, we had an au pair when I was small, and the first song she taught me in Dutch is the song which translates as "it's difficult to be humble when you're as awesome as I am."

They laugh

Final music: Panoply

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