

# Episode 153 - Puffs (Part 1)

w/ Katy Nuttman

PM = Past Mike  
EM = Editing Mike  
KN = Katy Nuttman

*\*If there is a mistake or mis-translation in this transcript please feel free to reach out to Mike for clarification! (potterlesspodcast@gmail.com)\**

PM

Hey, it's me, the final remnants of your Thanksgiving leftovers. Now, I know it's slim pickings here at the final bits of the leftovers from your delicious meal and you're looking at the prospect of a cranberry sauce-only sandwich, which might not be the most enjoyable experience. But you know what could make it a more enjoyable experience? While you're eating that, you could listen to an episode of this podcast.

## **[Announcements 0:18 – 3:34]**

PM

But, without further ado, let's get into Episode 153 of Potterless, the first of a few covering Puffs, the Play, live on off Broadway recorded edition, guest starring Katy Nuttman.

## **Intro Music**

PM

Hello, internet, and welcome back to another episode of Potterless, the tale of a grown man who never read the Harry Potter series as a kid. He read them as an adult. And then he went and saw a fun play off Broadway about it. My name is Mike Schubert. I'm the grown man. And we are talking about that off-Broadway play, which is Puffs. And I am joined by someone that I performed lots of improv – or, I guess, I performed improv under your directorial tutelage and one time with for Shot Prov. But it's an old Seattle friend of mine, Katy Nuttman. Katy, how's it going?

KN

Hi. How are you?

PM

I'm doing very well all things considered.

KN

I regret the fact that we did not have the opportunity to perform more together. And I think I even regret the fact more that you just called me an old friend.

PM

Oh, I meant old friend as in I haven't lived in Seattle for over two years. Not an old — once I said, I was like, "That was bad. You talk professionally and that wasn't good."

KN

No, that's totally fine. We haven't been able to see each other in a while because, I guess, there's a global pandemic and living, you know, on opposite sides of the country.

PM

That'll do it.

KN

But I am a, a youthful 32. So --

PM

Mhmm. And I'm an old 28. But I'm very excited to have you on for this particular discussion because you're checking all the boxes in that you have put on theater. You teach theater professionally at a school. You have done a lot of improve. And then, also, you're one of, if not, the biggest Harry Potter fan that I know.

KN

Yes, I, I absolutely grew up with the books. My copy of Prisoner of Azkaban is split along the spine in several places because, when I got into them, that was my favorite book. And Book Four hadn't come out yet. So, I just kept continuously rereading, and rereading, and rereading Book Three. So, it's kind of a disaster. And I've listened to both versions of the audio books, both the British and the US versions.

PM

Mhmm.

KN

So, yeah, you – one might say that I'm a little obsessed and also theater. So, you put all those together and you end up with an off-Broadway play.

PM

Yes, exactly. I also will say that there was one time we were going hiking in Seattle and I hadn't finished reading a Potterless chapter for a recording I had scheduled the next day. So, we listened to the audiobook on our drive to the mountain. And that shows how dedicated of a friend and fan you are.

KN

Yes, because I think it was just that I happen to have them all. Like, you told me what book you were reading.

PM

Mhmm.

KN

And I was like, "Great, I'll download it and we can listen to it together." And I was like, "Oh, my gosh, I get to listen – like, ground floor of Potterless is happening right now."

PM

Yes.

KN

And you kept like bouncing ideas off of it as we were driving back. And, and I was like, "I can't, like, say anything." I'm trying to, like, neutral face. And you're pausing and taking notes. And I'm like, "Ah, yes, this is perfect. I'm so glad that he notices this."

PM

Oh, this crossover clearly has been years in the making. So, let's get right into it. Now, your experience with Puffs, I saw it both live and then also in preparation for this podcast. I watched the replay of it using Broadway HD, the free trial. Did you get the chance to see it live or have you only seen the recording version?

KN

No, I have only seen the recording. So, last spring, my – I have a good friend of mine who was actually going to be directing it at her high school.

PM

Oh, cool.

KN

And, so, that was kind of the first that I had actually heard of it. She was like, "Yeah, I'm doing this Harry Potter play. It's called Puffs." And I was like, "Oh, that sounds hysterical." And, so, I started looking into it. I'm like, "That does sound hysterical." So, I kind of looked into it, but I hadn't really done any – being able to see it live. And I had planned on going to see her show of it too. And then March 13th hit and everything gets shut down. And plays and musicals get cancelled. And everything is just caput. So, I have not had the chance to see it live, either professionally off Broadway or with a high school troupe.

PM

Mhmm.

KN

But then you contacted me and you were like, "Hey, there's this play. Do you want to talk on the podcast about it?" And I was like, "Oh, my god, dreams come true. Yes." So, like any good theatre person, I procrastinated until the very last moment.

PM

Smart. Mhmm.

KN

And I watched/read it last night. I did not use the free Broadway HD trial. I paid for it.

PM

I'm sorry that I didn't tell you. Ahh. I mean good they're getting money. I don't know if my Broadway HD seven-day free trial got them in any money.

KN

Oh, no. No, no, no, no, no.

PM  
Ooh.

KN  
It is not good that they are getting money because I paid Amazon for it. I did not pay Broadway HD.

PM  
Oh, no. Ohhhh!

KN  
So --

PM  
Jeff Bezos, how dare you?

KN  
Had I known about Broadway HD, then, yeah, I totally would have gone there. But, instead, here we are and Amazon has more of my money.

PM  
Hmm. Well, for anyone out there that does want to watch it, you can get it on iTunes, which I guess is better than giving money to Jeff Bezos. But you also can watch it for free by going to Broadway HD and signing up for a seven-day free trial, which does last 10 days.

KN  
Talk about bank for your buck. Although, to be fair, I do feel like there have definitely been seven days of my life that have lasted for 10 days. And, like, the past seven months have definitely lasted for 10 years.

PM  
Mhmm. Mhmm.

KN  
So, time is a flat circle. And --

PM  
Yeah, it's a flat circle, and then also a figure eight, and then also that interloping Hot Wheels crisscross crash track.

KN  
Yes.

PM  
That just speaks along to each other. That's what time is right now. So, I think this plays fantastic. Have you seen Harry Potter and the Cursed Child Parts 1 and 2?

KN

I have not seen it, but I have read it.

PM

Okay. So, you, I would guess, are not a fan because you've read it. Or do you actually like it?

KN

Correct.

PM

Okay.

KN

No, I – how did you know? It is an awful script and I absolutely hated it. When it first came out, some theater friends and I got together and we actually rented a space in Seattle to do, like, a stage reading.

PM

Man, that would have been so cool if the play didn't suck.

KN

Right. It did. And we were so excited. So, there we are sitting in this, like, empty rehearsal hall, big circle, all of us theater people, cast list goes out. We're reading it. And we get about 10 pages in and we're kind of like, "Wait. What, what the hell is this?" And we continue reading it and our plan had been to, like, marathon the whole thing that night. And we get through part one and we're like, "We just – we can't do this anymore." So, we went out and we got drinks and then played on the giant swing set outside of the MoPOP Museum and got drunk.

PM

Smart decision. I wish, if I had walked in and, as I finished Part 1 of Cursed Child, they said you could see Part 2 or you could leave and get drunk and go on the swings, I'd probably pick option B.

KN

Definitely. I have also heard from friends though that, if you go see it, it's much more enjoyable.

PM

Yeah, but it's still not good. It's fine. The problem is you have to pay and it's not worth it. So, the whole point of this tangent is I think Puffs is the true play that exists. Like, in my head cannon, Puffs is the true one. And I've also seen A Very Potter Musical and I did enjoy it. And it might just be because I don't like musicals, but I think Puffs is also better.

KN

Okay.

PM

It's, at least, more up in my wheelhouse. I don't know if you've seen the Very Potter Musical stuff on YouTube.

KN

I, I also have not because I – I don't know. I don't know why I have resisted it. But I'm kind of sometimes a purist about things. And I'm like, No, there is this --

PM

Okay.

KN

-- section. And, and I even feel that way about Fantastic Beasts to, to some extent.

PM

Oh, I mean those are also bad. So, it makes sense.

KN

Well, I will say I feel that way about, like, the screenplays, the little companion book that came out, the little teeny tiny one.

PM

Oh, yeah. Yeah.

KN

Love that.

PM

Really fun.

KN

Absolutely. Excellent way to put things together. The fact that she did it as part of a charity fundraiser, super fantastic. Love that. But then it just feels like a lot anymore.

PM

Mhmm.

KN

And, so, again, I want to go see Cursed Child because this has been my entire life. And, also, as a theatre person, I need to see that magic on stage happen. I need --

PM

That stuff is cool.

KN

-- to see the technological pieces of that.

PM

If you can get discounted tickets, the effects are worth the price of admission.

KN

I just saw Frozen. And, by just saw Frozen, I mean back when we were allowed to see theater. I think it was January of last year.

PM

Yeah, but that just – January just happened.

KN

And, so, that was phenomenal to see them using puppetry. I – also, I have notes in here about Puffs. I am a sucker for puppets.

PM

Hmm.

KN

I think that they are just absolutely phenomenal and one of the greatest theatrical techniques that we can ever use as human beings. So, when puppet started coming out in Puffs, I was like, "Oh, I'm sold. I'm here. I'm totally on board." And, so, the puppetry in Frozen was fantastic. And then the set changes and everything else like that. Like, that is what I need to see Cursed Child for. But I also think I'm going to have a healthy dose of wine before I go so I can ignore the plot.

PM

It was a smart, smart decision. Yeah, Kelly saw Frozen. And the funniest thing she told me about it is that, before the play started, they had to give parents and children a, "Please don't sing along to the songs warning," which I think is incredible.

KN

As a theater goer, you – you got to see a jukebox musical or something where everybody knows it. And I'm like I paid \$60 to see them sing. Not to hear you and your child sing.

PM

Correct.

KN

The encore, the curtain call, sing along totally. If you are invited, that's great. But, if you have not spent years training, you do not know what you're doing. So, stop.

PM

Perfect. Well, with all of this taken care of, let's get into Puffs, the Play. It also – what's the alternate title? It's like Puffs or seven years at the certain --

KN

Seven Increasingly Eventful Years at a Certain School of Magic and Magic.

PM

God. So good.

KN

Yeah. At some point in the introduction, the stage directions here --

PM

You have the script.

KN

At one point, it says like, "Magic for boys and magic for girls."

PM

Yes, they, at one point, make a joke about male magic and female magic because --

KN

Yes.

PM

-- and I didn't realize this until they made that joke. And, now, with all of J.K. recent Twitter garbage, it makes more sense. Why is the name of the school gendered? That is -- why is it not just Hogwarts School of Magic? Why does it have to be Hogwarts School of Boy Magic and Girl Magic? Like, I, it does sound very profound and cool. Like, saying Witchcraft and Wizardry, I get it, sounds nice off the tongue. But, when you take that step back and you realize, Oh, that's weird.

KN

This is just bigotry. Okay.

PM

It's -- yeah, it's just -- much like the tweets, it is wholly unnecessary.

KN

Hogwarts School of Bigotry and Hatred. Hooray!

PM

Oh, no. Yay.

KN

Don't forget, there are also very few black people and none of them are consequential in this world as well. So, as long as we don't have black people, why should we include non-binary people?

PM

You know, it's okay because we have the one Jewish kid. So, we're good. We have Anthony Goldstein holding down the fort. So, let's get into Puffs. It opens with a McGonagall narration/your theater announcements, but she's got her wonderful McGonagall voice going on. And then the narrator comes out, one of my favorite characters, and he does lights taking away with the Put-Outer, not the Deluminator as I refuse to go with this rename. But,



early on, we get an instance of one of the very few things I do not like in the play. And it's that dinging noise. I really don't like it.

KN

Yes, I hated that.

PM

I love this play. And this – the dinging noise is used for a lot of different things. It's used for scene changes. It's used for when they do things that get them points.

KN

In the first part of it, I really struggled with this because, as I started reading it, I was like, "Oh, this is also not a good script. And it's very heavy on the stage directions." So, then I was like, "Well, maybe I'll watch it and that'll be better." So, I read about – I, I don't know – the first couple of scenes or so. And then I started watching it. And then I started kind of reading and watching simultaneously. And I did not like the dinging noise because it also wasn't consistent through the whole show.

PM

Ooh.

KN

They're very heavy handed with it at the beginning. But, towards the end, it's like they've just forgotten it. And I think that one of the biggest things in improv that we teach is to hold on to your shit.

PM

Right.

KN

If you create something, if you establish something, if you determine that this is a pattern, then you have to remember that that's important. And that's a gift that either, as a creator, you have given to the other people on stage. Or, in a scripted piece, that's a gift that you've given to the audience. And you have to follow through on that promise. So, I was, A, annoyed that it existed in the first place and then, B, annoyed that it did not continue.

PM

See, I guess I was happy that it stopped because I did not like the noise. And I also – it also could be this is a recording thing versus seeing it live. I did find that all of the things that were not the microphones of the performers – so, when the character who is, I guess, Ludo Bagman has a microphone or when they're doing the McGonagall things in the beginning, it felt like every other noise was a lot louder. And some of the sound effects are really loud too. So, this also could just be a watching the video at home experience that the dings were also a lot louder because I didn't remember being that annoyed by them in person. But I do remember thinking this feels unnecessary. I'm happy to report this is one of the very few negative things I have about this play because I genuinely adore it.

KN

In the foreword from the author, he does say, "There are many sound cues. And I will apologize now to any future designer in charge of this." And, and I think that that started – right, because he was a sound designer, that he wrote the play from the perspective of a sound designer. And he's like, "Look at all these cool things that I can do" instead of letting the story and the characters drive the sound, which, again, like we all have our faults. I'm not gonna pretend like I've ever written a play. And I certainly would come at it from a stage managers perspective, which is not at all where you should be writing a play from. But, with that in mind, it is a little bit forgiven in that, in terms of the, the level of the sound effects that were there – umm, level is not the right word – then sheer amount of sound effects that were present.

PM

Mhmm.

KN

That kind of justifies it in my mind. And, again, I appreciate that they went away for the sake of letting the characters tell the story instead of just trying to create the sound escape. But, also, I didn't like that it was something that got let go of. And, if you can let go of it later, then why have it in the first place?

PM

For sure. I think it's true. So, let's get into the actual story. So, they start to introduce, like, the Harry Potter story. But they introduced that they are instead following the story of another orphan. And it is an orphan that was born of wizard parents, but those parents died in a chocolate frog-related incident. And then the orphan was sent over to Cattle Springs, New Mexico where they're raised by Muggles. And we get the great introduction where the dad who becomes Its Wayne's Uncle opens the door and goes, "Yeעה!" and then immediately is handed a baby and goes, "Oh, no!"

KN

So, with this, I just want to interrupt and say the, the chocolate frog accident, they say don't ask. So, I didn't ask, but I did start imagining. And I had just seen a TikTok that reveals how babies have x-rays taken. And, if you've never seen that --

PM

I haven't.

KN

-- it is hysterical. They put this baby into this, like, plastic tube that puts their arms up above their head. And it is very Augustus Gloopy.

PM

Okay.

KN

So, the video is pictures of babies in plastic tubes playing the Augusta Gloop Oompa Loompa song. So, it said chocolate frog accident.

PM  
Ahh.

KN  
So, I'm picturing some sort of like Willy Wonka-Harry Potter crossover chocolate frog factory wizard being sucked up a giant tube incident.

PM  
I like it. The Augustus Gloop demise was always the most terrifying of the things that happened to the children for me, I guess, because I'm claustrophobic. But it just – like, that just – getting sucked up a tiny tube felt bad. That does not seem pleasant.

KN  
See, I was always on board with that one because I thought it would be more like a waterslide but with chocolate.

PM  
Mhmm.

KN  
I don't think I fully comprehended the, like, death or disappearance aspect of it. But the squirrels were the ones that weirded me out.

PM  
Wait. Which one is the squirrels?

KN  
Is it for Veruca Salt? And she said she wants a squirrel. And I want the squirrel. I want the squirrel now, daddy. And then, like, the squirrels just carry her away. They're – they're trained to shell all the peanuts.

PM  
Is that in the Johnny Depp remake? Because, in the original one, she just falls down the golden goose chute.

KN  
Oh, I don't know. I'm thinking Gene Wilder.

PM  
There's Blueberry Girl. There's Veruca Salt falls down the golden goose thing. My TV gets shrunk really small. But Augustus Gloop goes into the chocolate tube.

KN  
And then Charlie.

PM  
And then Charlie. So, maybe it was in the remake.

KN

Who drinks the fizzy lifting soda and also breaks a rule. But, apparently, the rule that he breaks isn't bad enough.

PM

He loses. He gets nothing.

KN

He's – there all naughty children. But he's poor. So, we forgive him for that.

PM

Yes, his grandparents all live in the same bed all of the time. So, we have to give him a candy factory.

KN

Yeah.

PM

So, anyway, Harry Potter. They announced that Wayne is a regular boy with regular problems of someone in 1991. And it shows him playing the GameBoy blowing the cartridge. So good. So choice.

KN

Detailed.

PM

Oh, it's wonderful.

KN

Beautiful detail.

PM

It reminds me of something that happened to me when I was in college. I bought a GameBoy Color in order to prepare for a Pokemon-themed orientation week that was happening the next year. And I bought it off eBay. And I had Pokemon blue with it. And I put it in and I flipped on the power, I just put in fresh batteries. And it didn't work. And I was really, really disappointed. And then I thought, "Wait a second." I took it out. I blew it. I put it back in and flipped it on and then it worked. And I was like, "This is perfect. I would not have wanted it to be any other way." Like, if it worked when I first did it, this would have been way less fun. But the fact that I had to blow on the cartridge to make it work made me so happy. It was so good.

KN

Yeah, it's a, a rite of passage almost --

PM

Mhmm.

KN

-- in order to, to play video games from that era.

PM

It's necessary. It's necessary. And any scientist or game designer that says it doesn't work is a liar and they know it. So, an owl comes in with a letter. And Wayne is very confused and his uncle says, "Oh, I forgot to tell you. You're a Wizard, Wayne. Also, wizards exist. And you are one just like your British parents. Oh, your parents are British." And then says the he'll tell him more on their way to the airport. So, just of a, a wonderful exchange. And this sets the stage of something that, I think, goes throughout the play, which I really like. It's just the speed of the jokes is so quick. And it really works to the advantage of the play when they are making fun of stuff or just in general. I like, how quick hitting all of the jabs in Puffs are.

KN

It has to be in order to get through seven books of knowledge, or history, or experiences in either depending on the version that you have 90-ish or 110-ish minutes as is quoted in the book and also on the cover. I guess I should preface this and say too that I have the -- the copy of the script I have is the Two Act Edition for Young Wizards.

PM

Hmm.

KN

They also have Young or Not Young Wizards and One Act Editions so depending on all of those pieces --

PM

Oh, cool.

KN

And depending on what you're looking for. As a high school producer, you can buy lots of different things and whether or not and it includes the F word. So, it has to be that quick in order to get all of those experiences in. And there is a note from the director about that, too. It's just like, "Go. Go fast. You have to go fast, otherwise, it's not gonna work."

PM

Yeah, that makes sense. And it's funny you mentioned it because, very soon after, the narrator says that, "They will be taking a in-depth look into the life of this child." And then he starts to say, "Over the next five hours split into two parts" and then record scratch noise. And he goes, "What? 90-ish minutes?"

KN

So, when I was a kid, I got a CD for Christmas one year. And it was the A-Teens covering ABBA music --

PM

Yep.

KN

-- because --

PM

Mhmm. Mhmm.

KN

-- I am the coolest person ever.

PM

My sister had the same album.

KN

And I remember listening to it. And my mom was like, "This is just ABBA but on speed." And, so, as I'm watching this and watching things unfold, I'm like, "This is just Harry Potter but on speed." And, so, I had this weird connection of, like, me reading Harry Potter and listening to A-Teens. And, now, it's the other way around that I prefer ABBA, shockingly, over the A-Teens. Real surprise in here. And then – but also watching Harry Potter on speed. So, it's kind of a little inversion of my life.

PM

Ah, that's very fun. That's very fun. I do appreciate that this is a double joke. It is simultaneously poking fun at Cursed Child and then also just letting you know and letting the people in the audience know, "Yeah, it's about 90-ish minutes." I thought there was an intermission. But, in the recorded version, there's not an intermission. I'm pretty sure there – I'm not – I don't remember. Is there – no? Is it just a straight through?

KN

Well, in the recorded version, there is no intermission, which I got very confused about because, as I'm again reading along with this, I'm like, "Wait. There's extra dialogue in here. And there's different pieces." And, so, as I'm trying to figure it out, I'm pausing, and rereading, and figuring out, like, what's been skipped and pieces like that, too. So, there's obviously options that you can choose as a creator, which I think is one of my favorite things. And, again, in – with other parts and future parts, there are options like choose one of these lines, have your actor memorize all seven of them and see what they feel like in the moment.

PM

Hmm.

KN

Don't have them communicate with the other actors about what they're doing. Just improving.

PM

Ahh.

KN

Yeah.

PM

It's very fun.

KN

And I love that in a script. That's one of my favorite things that we got to do with the 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee.

PM

Oh, a great show.

KN

It's beautiful and has a lot of room for improv. So, that was the first musical that I ever directed as a high school teacher. And I chose it because I was like, "Well, I'm an improviser and I'm gonna teach my kids how to do it, too." And it was a lot of fun.

PM

That's very good. I was once a guest speller. My college put it on and a lot of my friends were in the show. And there was a raffle to pick the four whatever guests spellers that they get it from the audience. And there was like a big bucket that you put all of your slips into. And then there was a small bucket where clearly they were taking them out and putting the winners. And I remembered my friend was the stage manager or assistant director or whatever it was. She was taking the papers. So, I filled mine out and she just took it and put it into the small bucket to guarantee that I would be a speller.

KN

It's such a great show. And I love that that gives the actors a sense of freedom too, especially when you're looking at this at a professional level. That's eight shows a week. You can get real tired of that --

PM

Right.

KN

-- really fast.

PM

Mhmm.

KN

And, so, giving them a way to stay on their toes is something that I always find enjoyable as a performer too.

PM

Yeah, that's really fun.

EM

Past Katy, that does sound really fun. Hello, everyone. It's me, Editing Mike. How's it going? Have you been enjoying the episode? I hope you've been enjoying the episode. You know what I find really fun Past Mike and Past Katy? Having enough money to pay bills. So, in order to do that, we need to take a little bit of a break to talk about sponsors and the segment that we like to call WINGARDIUM AD-READ-OSA!

**[25:30]**

**WINGARDIUM AD-READ-OSA!**

**[30:33]**

PM

So, we get to the sorting and the Sorting Hat, I love, is the paper fortune teller thing. I don't know if there's an actual name for this.

KN

Yes. Yes.

PM

But I used to do that in middle school all the time. You, resident high school teacher, is this still cool? Are, are kids still doing this?

KN

Oh, absolutely not.

PM

Ah, damn. The youth.

KN

Not even a little bit. I don't know that it was ever really a high school thing.

PM

Mhmm.

KN

I think that elementary school kids are probably still super into it because --

PM

Okay, okay.

KN

-- a cootie catcher is what I always call them.

PM

Cootie catcher.

KN



I think a cootie catcher will always be the height of coolness in, like, second grade and you're like, "Oh, I have this mystical power." But, by the time you get into fourth grade, you're like, "Oh, oh, no, it's – it's not magic. It's just paper."

PM

Numbers, and colors, and things written about my crush on the inside.

KN

Ooh.

PM

They have – and this is a very early instance of them. I guess not getting sued by Warner Brothers. I'm very excited. I mean I have interviews scheduled with a lot of different people that worked on Puffs and acted in Puffs. I'm very interested to see all of the different skirting around legal ramifications they had to do.

KN

Yes.

PM

And there's some things that I picked up on because I have a little bit of familiarity with trying to not get sued by Warner Brothers for making your career off of a Harry Potter-related endeavor. So, I, I can understand some of the little tricks that they did. One of which is that they never call some of the characters by their full name.

KN

Correct.

PM

He's never Cedric Diggory. He's either Cedric or Mr. Diggory.

KN

Yes.

PM

But they never call him Cedric Diggory because I do know that the name Cedric Diggory all together is a registered trademark. Because, if you try to buy wands from Warner Brothers on the Warner Brothers page, you can learn which names in Harry Potter are registered trademarks and which ones aren't, which is a very fun endeavor. Bellatrix Lestrange not a registered trademark.

KN

I noticed that as I was reading it, too because that's – in terms of the way that they're being sorted, right? Seamus Finnigan or, well, Finnegan, Seamus is in here.

PM

Mhmm.

KN

So, that one's clearly not trademarked. But then they come up to one that says – oh, it just says Goyle.

PM

Mhmm.

KN

So, Gregory Goyle is obviously trademarked, but Goyle is not.

PM

Yes. So, there's a lot of different tricks that they have to do. But what they first do here is they have the four houses, which are brave, smart, snake, and puff which is, mwah, so good. The fact that Slytherin is just snake is very, very, very good.

KN

It's very fitting.

PM

Mhmm.

KN

It absolutely fits into the boiling it down. And I think that's part of why, when I first started this, I was very hesitant because I have to admit that I am very defensive of Hufflepuffs. I, myself, am a Gryffindor.

PM

Same.

KN

And I absolutely adore Hufflepuffs though because I just think that they are the best, kindest people. And I want to be more like them.

PM

Yeah.

KN

And I emulate them. I love them. I, I look at what they do. And I'm like, "Oh, gosh, they're so kind. I'm just such a bitch sometimes. I wish I could be that kind. I wish I could be that loving and that forgiving and, and create that environment where everybody is just happy. But, no, I'm just here getting shit done.

PM

Mhmm.

KN

And, so, when I first started this and they're like, "Oh, no, we're just Puffs." And, and I was like, "No, but I – but I love them. Why are we making fun of them?" And then I just kind of started and I was like, "Wait. Remember this is satire."

PM

Right.

KN

We're taking everything to an extreme here. It's okay. There's gonna be some redemption in the end.

PM

Right. Right.

KN

So --

PM

I am in the same boat. I'm a Gryffindor. I have some slight Puff tendencies. It would be my secondary house. My wife is incredibly Hufflepuff. And I think that she, like outside of Harry Potter World, like, inspires me to be a better person. But then, also, specifically, like the qualities you're talking about, it's stuff that I wish I had more of. And I also guess it's part of just being a kid versus coming old. It's that, as a kid, you think of the people like, "Oh, they're loyal and they're good friends. Whatever." You could be that in a different house, but when you're older and, like, my least favorite people in the world are flaky people.

KN

Yes.

PM

The fact that being a Hufflepuff and being loyal is, like, supposed to be shit on and is shit on by J.K. And I will always try to clarify my stance. It's that I love Hufflepuffs and I don't think they're bad. I think that J.K. Rowling, as the narrator, was so mean to them for no good reason. So, I think to take their traits, which are inherently very good and we should all aspire to have, and, for whatever reason, for those to become like, "Oh, well, they're nothing," I'm glad to play makes fun of that. And then, by the end of the play, shows that it's really good and they are the best.

KN

They are the best. And I am also dating a Hufflepuff. And he did not know for the longest time. And, so, I had him take the, the Pottermore Quiz. And I was like, "Listen, we, we can't continue this relationship until you know what House you are in." I'm pretty sure, but we just want to make sure.

PM

Of course.

KN

So, he, he gets Hufflepuff and he was kind of disappointed at first. And I was like, “No, you have to remember that the, the way the stories are told are skewed.” And I kind of told them, “You know, here's all the things that I love about you and why it's valuable to me that you are a Hufflepuff. And they're closest to the kitchens.” And he got really excited about that.

PM

It's really good.

KN

And that was the selling point, which I also love that that continues to come back. In, in every iteration, one of the best things about the Hufflepuff is being close to the kitchens. And I think not just for the easy access of food, but also because, when you're at a party, where does everyone hang out? In the kitchen.

PM

Yep.

KN

What's my favorite holiday? Thanksgiving because it's centered around the kitchen.

PM

Yep.

KN

All of these things are, are so wonderful. And it just has that sense of, of warmth and love to it.

PM

Mhmm.

KN

And I love that we get to find that in here.

PM

Yeah. Yeah, for sure. As a college student whose dorm was the one closest to the kitchen, I thrived and loved that. And there was – also, one of the dorm buildings at Rice, the, the kitchen area at one of them, they didn't close off the soda machine. And it was very easy to break into the ice cream machine because it was just like one of those latch slide horizontal doors. So, if you just pushed it down, and then moved it left, and then down into the right, you can undo the latch. So, anytime I went to a party while at Rice, if it was getting hot and sweaty or whatever, I would go downstairs get some Powerade to, like, rehydrate myself and then steal a couple, you know, Blue Bell ice cream bars and then I go back. Being close to the kitchen is important.

KN

Yes, that is the, the hufflest, the puffiest thing that I could ever imagine happening in college. And I, I adore that.

PM

So, Wayne, while they're doing the sorting, he does something that I appreciate. And this play does a good job. The whole point of the play is to give you a perspective outside of just Harry's very biased Gryffindor perspective, which I think is great. But, also, this play does what the Harry Potter books didn't do as often as I would have liked. And they make a lot of [Inaudible 36:56] references. But, also, they just treat the kids as kids and they do normal things. And Wayne, in the scene, is just nervously talking to someone in line before sorting. And that is such a mode. Like, that is so real. And, if I'm trying to put myself in the shoes of a student, especially if you're a Muggle born, there would have been way more things where kids are like, "So, what, what happens when you put on the hat? I've never heard of this before." And there's just not a lot of those moments in the actual canon stuff. And I really appreciate that Puffs does it a lot.

KN

I go the exact opposite way with that.

PM

Hmm.

KN

Like, yes, I absolutely love it. But it's a completely Puff response as well, right?

PM

Hmm.

KN

Let me emote. Let me share. Let me talk. Let me figure this out. Whereas my Gryffindor response is just like, "Shut up and get through it." Yeah. And I feel like that's Harry's response, too, right?

PM

Yeah.

KN

It's that that comes back to him being a Gryffindors. He's like, "I'm just gonna stand here, and watch what happens, and see all of these terrifying things and this yelling hat." And then he kind of sucks it up and has that little conversation, which I also love that we get to see as we see Harry sorted.

PM

Mhmm.

KN

That we get to see him saying that out loud. So, that is a fantastic little nod.

PM

No hat. Anything but that.

KN

But, yes, the, the way that was staged as well having these kind of stream of consciousness things and then he stops. And then turns around and continues and talks a little bit more and then realizes he's talking too much and then stops. And then keep talking more. It was beautifully done. It was kind of one of the first parts where I was like, "Oh, okay. Maybe – right, this is satire. I'm gonna enjoy this."

PM

It also makes the reveal of Harry – because this is the first time we actually see Harry not as just the baby prop, it makes that reveal so fun because Wayne is just talking to this hooded person that doesn't say anything at all. And then they call for Harry Potter and Harry rips off his robe that he's wearing and then just goes up all prancingly like – and it's just a great introduction to Harry and the way that they portray Harry in this play because the portrayal of Harry is so funny. It is so funny.

KN

Yes, absolutely. He is, for sure, not the same Harry that we have seen in other productions as well. He's not this stoic brave hero leader. And seeing that contrasted with Wayne's desire to be that person, right? I'm an orphan. No magic school. All of these things happening to me is such a classic piece of any young adult literature that has come out in the past 20 years. It seems like that there is a chosen one. And, obviously, Harry Potter has had a, a huge influence on that. But, when we look at so many other dystopia of fictions as well, that it's clearly down to one teenager to save the entire world. Ahh! And Wayne is like thirsting for that. But, also, he's a Hufflepuff and that's okay.

PM

Mhmm.

KN

Because, in his own way, he's, he's going to experience his hero's journey as well.

PM

Yeah, it's a really fun flip because Harry oftentimes laments that he has been stuck with this Chosen One status. And he gets it and he has to deal with it. Whereas Wayne is a complete flip. He wants it so badly and just doesn't get it and then has to deal with that.

KN

The grass is always greener.

PM

Mhmm. So, Wayne goes up. He is sorted into Puff immediately. It's like hat is placed on top. Puff. Like, right away. And then we cut to the introduction to all of the Puffs starting the running bit of them constantly saying hi to each other --

KN

Hi.

PM

-- very loudly in unison, which is very Puff of them. So, the roster of Puffs, we have -- and these are their actual names, Warner Brothers lawsuit skirting included, J. Finch Fletchly, Susie Bones, Sally Perks. That was just a complete new name, right? That wasn't any sort of Hufflepuff character we know.

KN

I had the intention of going back to double check it, but I believe she has a new one. She's definitely not one that I can remember. It has been probably about a year since I've revisited the books, which is -- you know, maybe it's time for that. It's -- it's comfy, cozy time, right?

PM

Yeah. Yep.

KN

And its rainy. It's dark.

PM

Mhmm.

KN

I can light some candles in my fireplace. It's time to revisit Harry Potter.

PM

Yeah. You're in the Seattle six-month span where it's great and rainy every day before the six months of perfect summer.

KN

Yeah, it is the long dark. So, I need some comfort and some joy. So, yeah, I will double check on that. But I'm pretty sure that Sally Perks is, is a student that we are not familiar with.

PM

Right. So, then we have Ernie Mac, who is obviously Ernie McMillan. Hannah, just Hannah, but that's Hannah Abbott. Leanne who is also a new creation.

KN

I don't think she is.

PM

Oh, Leanne is someone?

KN

I'm not positive about this.

PM

Interesting.

KN

But Dumbledore's Army --

PM

Mhmm.

KN

Wasn't it Leanne that snitched on them?

PM

No, that's Marietta Edgecombe.

KN

Thank you. Thank you very much. I could have sworn that was -- there was something -- again, that's another one that I'm --

PM

Oh.

KN

-- looking forward to, to refinding.

PM

Who is the -- who is Katie Bell's friend? Was she Leanne? Maybe that was it. Katie Bell had a friend that told someone about her getting possessed. And I can't recall if that was Marietta Edgecombe or someone else.

KN

Oh, oh, maybe that is.

PM

Hmm.

KN

I'm pretty sure Leanne is, is a very minor character that is mentioned. But --

PM

Yeah, that might be it. That might be it.

KN

I also could be wrong.

EM

You are not wrong, Past Katie. Hi, it's me. Editing Mike. How's it going, everyone? Past Mike and Past Katie we're on the money here. Leanne is that friend of Katie Bell who saw her get possessed. She is from Hufflepuff. She doesn't really have a role outside of this one particular instance in the main books. But she's there and she's a Hufflepuff. Hooray! Anyway, back to the podcast.



KN

Thank you for the Marietta Edgecombe though.

PM

You know, I, I still deal with adult acne. So, I, I have a kinships to Marietta Edgecombe having death scar acne.

KN

Yeah.

PM

Wait. Was she the one who had acne beforehand too that they made fun of her for? There's some girl that just has acne that they make fun of her having acne.

KN

No. I believe --

PM

I'm gonna Google acne girl Harry Potter. Eloise Midgen.

KN

Yes, that's in Book Four before the, the Yule ball. They were like, "Well, you could ask her." "Oh, no, we couldn't possibly ask her. She has acne. Ugh."

PM

I hate that shit so much. I think it is the absolute worst. It is so unnecessary. I guess it could be realistic of teenage boys being the worst people on Earth.

KN

Okay. And then it, it comes back too when they talk about Ginny, right? Well, Ginny has nice skin, doesn't she?

PM

The nice skin thing I always -- I always took is Harry just not finding a, a way to talk about Ron's sister being hot without sounding weird and him just stumbling over his words and saying, "Nice skin." But, yeah, they talked about Eloise Midgen twice. And the two times they talked about her is in reference to her acne. And I really, really don't like that a lot because it is the most unnecessary. And, now that J.K. Rowling is very clearly sucky, it makes me think more it's just J.K. Rowling like, "I'm gonna make a character that I'm gonna shit on."

KN

Yep, acne. And fat phobia is also a huge thing.

PM

Oh, it's so huge. It's so rampant.

KN

Looking at pieces like the fat friar and the fat lady in the portrait and looking at how she describes Umbridge as well.

PM

Mhmm. Mhmm.

KN

That – I mean, clearly, overweight people couldn't possibly be quality people either. And, so, it is --

PM

No way.

KN

-- very disappointing to see that, you know, as, as we have reflected on that and gotten older too and realize that none of us have lived in this vacuum and have – maybe didn't catch it the first --

PM

Mhmm.

KN

-- 18 times that we read through it. But, as we continue to grow and continue to learn and recognize the, the lack of representation or the unfortunate bigotry that is present in the representation that is there, it's – it is really sad to see.

PM

Yep. Yep. Yep. Yep. But we're learning from it. Hooray!

KN

Yay! Gross.

PM

So, the final Puffs that we get to meet are the other members of our new trio, which is Oliver Rivers and Megan Jones new creations. And then, finally, after getting introduced to all of the Puffs, we get from offstage, "And my name is Cedric" and you get this wonderful guitar riff that comes. And, ahh, the, the Cedric portrayal is so fun. It is so fun. I had the pleasure of meeting the actor who played Cedric at LeakyCon. And he is the nicest person. And it's fun the way he portrays it because, when I saw I live at New World Stages, it was a different actor playing Cedric. And this actor had a different spin on it where he was a very tall, very muscly dude. So, he was more of this like, "I'm just this perfect specimen Cedric. Look at me." Whereas this Cedric, he is also still tall and in very great shape but not as like buff as the dude we saw when I saw it live. But the Cedric – like, I like that he's just nice and cool. Like, he just is a nice, cool person. And he's very likable. And I like – not that I dislike the guy who I saw when I saw it live. But I thought that this video version portrayal of Cedric was a harder to achieve cool. Like, he's more likable because he's just a nice fun dude less so than being this very attractive, very rich guy.

KN

It's fascinating to me to think about how Cedric is this really cool dude, right? Everybody loves him. He's very popular. But, also, he kind of flips that trope of, most of the time, the popular guy is kind of an asshole, right?

PM

Mhmm.

KN

But, because he's a Puff, he's also super likable and is super encouraging of Wayne and is very supportive of everyone. Like, he clearly has an influence over everyone as the story progresses and has that popular like, "Oh, well, if he's doing it, I'm doing it too." But, at the same time, he doesn't take it to a level of arrogance. And I find that very endearing.

PM

Mhmm.

KN

Which is also super fun because the actor who plays Cedric also doubles as Voldemort.

PM

Oh, it's such a perfect – such a perfect thing.

KN

Yes.

PM

And I'm – explicitly, one of the episodes I'm going to do with the Puff actors is I'm doing just the people whose roles are wildly different from each other. And I think that's something that this play does really well.

KN

It's fun to see him as an actor take on both of those roles and make it very distinct.

PM

Mhmm. It's great. It's really solid. So, Cedric lays down some advice. He also, at one point, warns the Puffs that they're gonna get picked on and bullied and a lot of kids are going to shoot curses and spells at them. And then announces, "Here is a list of curses that you can be expected to get hit by in the next week," and a giant list just falls down from the rafters, which is very solid.

KN

The stage directions here have some of the spells that are listed.

PM

Oh, good.

KN

And I love the way they have done the spells in this whole play. So, as you hear them, they are vaguely reminiscent. Most of the time, you can like partner them with something else that works. But, also, they are spelled different in the text. So, they've gotten around some of the pieces of, of legality by just spelling it different. So, even if it's pronounced the same, it, it might be spelled differently. And, so, some of the truly terrifying and embarrassing sounding spells are listed including wedgie-o, noses, boggeres, forget us your parentses, et cetera.

PM

That's a very good. It's something that, when I saw it live, I was not close enough to be able to read that list. But watching the video, I was able to pause. And the ones that I took note of were potty mouth, smoosh face, and bark epidemias was my personal favorite, which I don't know if that means like an epidemic of barking or barking skin. Like, epidural.

KN

Yeah. See, that's – that's exactly what – I'm like, "That could go two ways. It's – it's that either you can no longer speak and you are only barking or it turns your skin into a tree bark.

PM

Oh, into tree bark. I was imagining like my skin was making barking noises. But, yeah, wow, it's got so many dimensions.

KN

Okay. So, which one would you – if you were being cursed with this, which one would you rather have? That you cannot speak and you can only bark or that your tree skin has formed.

PM

I would go with tree skin because, now, I'm Groot from Marvel.

KN

Oh, okay. Good point. I think I would also go with tree skin because that's the – probably the closest I'm ever gonna come to invisibility.

PM

Aah.

KN

So, I can just go like, hang out --

PM

Camouflage.

KN

-- in the woods and have no more responsibilities.

PM

It's pretty good. So, Cedric continues and he asks the Puffs, "What do you think the most important part of Magic School is?" And Oliver goes, "Learning magic." And Cedric goes, "Wrong."

KN

Wrong.

PM

The House Cup, which is just – this play made me realize so many things that I had already thought like, “Oh, that’s kind of weird.” And then I take the extra step back and go, “That is really weird.” Hogwarts really doesn’t seem to put a lot of emphasis on education, especially the fact that these kids are 11 when they show up to the school and a good chunk of them are Muggle born. And a lot of people have no idea what they’re doing. And it doesn’t feel like they prepare students for that very well.

KN

No, there’s – the idea that there’s no, like, Wizarding preschool or Wizarding – you know, before what is essentially third or fourth grade.

PM

Mhmm.

KN

There’s no education. That’s just left up to the families. And they touch on that several times through here too, specifically, with Oliver and his love of Math and how that comes through and helped save people in the end.

PM

Right.

KN

Spoiler alert. Also, looking at things, like, there’s a moment with a certain potions professor and he teaches another critical part of growing up. And I find that absolutely hysterical as well that things like that were not covered. And it’s clearly not a valued education thing. And the other thing with House points too is that those are very clearly very important in the early books in Harry Potter as well. But, as he gets older, as Harry has more things to deal with, he’s like, “Whatever. It’s just House points.”

PM

They don’t talk about the House Cup past Book Three, do they? I really don’t think they mentioned it at all.

KN

No, it’s canceled for Book Four because of the tournament.

PM

Right.

KN

So, there’s already enough competition. We don’t need more competition.

PM  
Mhmm.

KN  
Book Five, I believe Harry is in kind of a daze, post Sirius.

PM  
Right.

KN  
Book Six, I don't know. Book Seven, he's not even there at school. So, again, it's been about a year since I've revisited these things. And I really should have brushed up before coming on the podcast. But --

PM  
You've -- you've watch -- you've read the script. You've watched the script. Come on. No, you're totally, totally fine. So, this is when they get into their resounding cry for the House Cup of getting third or nothing.

KN  
Third or nothing.

PM  
They say maybe we'll win. Maybe we'll come in second. Maybe we'll get third, third or nothing, which is just -- that is one of the few things I knew about Puffs before I saw it. And, when someone told me that joke, I was like, "This is gonna be good." Like, I don't need to hear anything else about the play. The fact that the Puff's resounding cry is third or nothing is so funny.

KN  
I compare that to looking at people in the Olympics, right?

PM  
Hmm.

KN  
And how frustrating -- when I was younger, I was like, "-God, that must be so frustrating to get the bronze medal, right? There's two people standing there. You are that close, but you just got the bronze. And, as I've gotten older, I've come to think, "Wait a second. That means that you are the third best in the entire world at whatever it is that you're doing. And that's still pretty damn cool."

PM  
Yeah.

KN  
And, obviously, the House Cup is not nearly as important or exclusive, I guess, as a bronze medal. But I don't think that I will ever have the opportunity to be the third best at anything. I

love seeing that as – again, that's such a Puffy quality to be able to take joy in being third. And it's something that we can all learn a little bit more about ourselves. Instead of being bitter that we got second or third, we can take joy in what we do have.

PM

Yeah, that's great. And I think that's a great note to end this episode of Potterless on, this first part of the Puffs discussion. What a fine note that we should all be happy with bronze. And it's true of – I feel like I've heard this that the bronze medalists are always the happiest or, at least, they're happier than the silver medalists because, you know, at least, you got something.

KN

Yeah.

PM

Or, at least, you're not fourth. Like, I feel like fourth would be absolutely the worst imaginable.

KN

Again I would still take being fourth and the best in the world at, at, literally, anything right now.

PM

I would take getting to go to the Olympics. Are you kidding me? Like, Olympic Village, you get to chill out with all the other people. Maybe you pass the Olympic Basketball Team, the Women's Basketball Team. You can say hi to Sue Bird, Seattle legend. Come on.

KN

Yes. Yes. And her new fiancé Megan Rapinoe. Super excited about that.

PM

Yeah. Oh, so happy for them. Gosh.

KN

Right? That's – it's perfect. It's the definition of a Seattle power couple.

PM

Mhmm. Mhmm.

KN

And I could not be more in love with them.

PM

Mhmm. Yes. Well, this has been so much fun. I'm so glad you're on. I'm glad you're gonna be on for the next episode as well. But, in the meantime, if people want to find you doing stuff, is there – is there anything that you're here to promote? I don't know if you've got stuff going on in the online world. This is normally what I do for people who have podcasts and stuff.

KN

Yeah. No. I don't do a lot of content online because I am a high school teacher. And, so --

PM

Makes so much sense.

KN

-- therefore, my entire career rides on whether or not I can behave myself in a way that other people find appropriate, which is slightly disappointing. So, all of my -- like, my Facebook, my Twitter, my Instagram, all of that is locked down super tight. So, if you don't know me in person, then you don't get to know me online. But --

PM

Are you still doing Jet City Shows whenever the world is normal again?

KN

Yeah. So, once the world opens back up again, I will absolutely be involved in performances at Jet City improv. I regularly perform there and, occasionally, direct shows there as well. I don't necessarily have anything in the pod right now. But who knows? Once the world is open again, I will likely be inspired by something. And, perhaps, it will be as great as Puffs.

PM

Look, if you do a sequel to the play that you directed me under Nancy Yu -- if you do Nancy 2: This Time It's Personal.

KN

Oh, I was gonna go Nancy 2: Electric Boogaloo.

PM

Oh, that's very good. Yeah, that's really solid. Nancy Yu 2: Electric Boogaloo would be very solid. I will gladly take up -- if you'll have me, I'll do two-week residents of some guest role. I can be the villain or Ned Nickerson or something for --

KN

Yes. Yes.

PM

-- for a brief stint. And we'll get Nathan to schedule another Shot Prov for us as well.

KN

Oh, Shot Prov, I would -- I will do Shot Prov in a heartbeat. I absolutely adore that show. It takes very little rehearsal time and preparation time, yeah, and is, is absolutely just a blast.

PM

Yeah, all the time is afterwards. It's -- it has the most recovery time of any -- of any improv show.



KN

Correct.

PM

Oh, man. Well, Katy, thank you so much for joining. Listeners, thank you so much for listening.

KN

Thank you so much for having me.

PM

Of course. The pleasure is all mine. And, as they say in the Wizarding World of Harry Potter before they meet all of their new puff friends, Wizard On!

KN

Wizard On.

**[54:28]**

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