

Episode 150 - Fantastic Beasts Book (Part 3)

w/ Micah Tannerbaum

PM = Past Mike

EM = Editing Mike

MT = Micah Tannerbaum

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, your eyeballs. Now, for the past week, you have been doom-scrolling or doom-watching TV awaiting the election results. And, now that they are finally in, how about you give me a bit of a rest and use your ears for a change and listen to some episodes of this podcast.

[Announcements 0:12 – 2:25]

PM

But, without further ado, let's get into Episode 150 of Potterless, the third of four parts covering the Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them spinoff book, guest starring, Micah from Mugglecast.

Intro Music

PM

Hello, internet, and welcome back to another episode of Potterless, the tale of a 28-year-old man who never read the Harry Potter series as a kid. He read them as an adult. And, now, he's reading more books that are spinoffs of that main series. My name is Mike Schubert. I'm a grown man and I'm joined today by a longtime Harry Potter podcaster, someone who we've talked about doing our crossover and it's long overdue, but we're finally here. It is Micah from Mugglecast. Micah, how's it going?

MT

Good, Mike. Good to see you too. It's – it's been a while. I think it actually is probably close to almost a year since we saw each other --

PM

Oh, my gosh.

MT

-- at LeakyCon.

PM

I hate how true that is. I've been talking about LeakyCons recently in these episodes of Potterless. And, in my brain, it's always like four months ago. But you're right. It's a year ago. I hate it.

MT

Yeah, it is really wild to think that it's been that long. And I know you joined us on Mugglecast for an episode since then, but --

PM

Mhmm.

MT

-- I think a lot has happened. Congratulations, by the way.

PM

Thank you.

MT

I know I sent you text message, but I, I believe you got married.

PM

Yeah.

MT

So, congratulations.

PM

Thank you. I did. And that was somehow this year. I got right under the deadline. We got married February 29th. We're all good. And it feels like it's been two weeks, but also 12 years. So, nothing matters. Time is irrelevant.

MT

Exactly. Right.

PM

So, we're gonna be blitzing through the Fantastic Beasts in this book. Before we get into it though, what was your experience with this book when it came out as someone that read the series like a normal person unlike me?

MT

You would think that I would have read it when it was released, but that is not the case.

PM

Ahh.

MT

Actually, for the first time, the, the Quidditch Through the Ages Illustrated Edition just came out earlier this month. And, honestly, that was the first time I sat down and read Quidditch Through the Ages from cover to cover. It's -- it's obviously great having pictures in there. That -- that's certainly helps. And I think, definitely, for Fantastic Beasts, the first time I probably

sat down and read it in full was when the illustrated edition was released. And, again, I just think having those visuals to go along with is helpful.

PM

I agree. I think for the Beasts for sure it made me wish that I had the illustrated version. But, alas, I just have the text one which is super fun and great. So, let --

MT

There are some illustrations in there, aren't there? A few.

PM

Yeah, there's, like, some crude little J.K. Rowling pen-esque --

MT

Mhmm.

PM

-- drawings that are fine.

MT

Fine. All right.

PM

So, we left off at the Dugbog, which is a XXX rating. It's a marsh dwelling creature. When it is stationary, it can look like a piece of driftwood. But it feeds on small mammals, mandrakes, and then, also, human ankles. Keeping on our theme of just very nonchalantly peppering in human pain in the description of these creatures.

MT

Yeah, it's -- so, what it's saying is don't touch driftwood, basically. That's -- that's what the moral of this story is.

PM

Honestly, yeah. There's a lot of these creatures in this later section of it where they say they look like perfectly normal things, but, "Oh, just kidding. It might actually kill you."

MT

Mhmm.

PM

Like, the one that looks like a shadow but also could just suffocate you. If I was a wizard, I would be afraid of everything. I'd be afraid of everything.

MT

Right. The name almost -- if, if I was thinking of it without reading the description -- I don't know if you were a big Pokemon fan.

PM

Mhmm.

MT

But a Diglett. Like, a little creature.

PM

I was 1,000 percent – 1,000 percent I was imagining a Diglett. Not a piece of driftwood that could bite off your ankle.

MT

Yeah.

PM

Ugh. Anyway, let's move on to the next one, which is the Erklings which is a XXXX rating. In the Dallas LeakyCon show I did where I gave everything superlatives, I made this the most likely to be a metaphor for a jewel, the sick vape pen. It's a German elfish creature. And it has a cackle that lures children in that this creature wants to eat. So, this was the whole jewel thing where it's like, "Come on, kids, I'm totally fine," and then destroys children. But, if this thing sings and lures in children and then eats them, is that not enough to give a XXXXX? I feel like XXXX doesn't really do it justice.

MT

That is a great point. I, I'm looking at this right now. You would think XXXXXXXXXX maybe not even enough to classify this, this beast because, in my notes – and, and I'm not sure what I can say and what I can't say. So, I'll just say creepy as bleep.

PM

Oh, you can totally curse. You can totally. It's fine.

MT

Oh, okay.

PM

We got that Red E, baby.

MT

Yeah. So, so, in my notes, I said creepy as fuck.

PM

Mhmm.

MT

That was literally just the three-word description I used for the Erklings. It – you know, it's appropriate. You're having this discussion around Halloween time.

PM

Right. Right.

MT

But I think that, if that was in a movie, it would definitely steal the show and, and really creep a lot of people out.

PM

For sure. And, also, going into this, just based on the name, I was thinking, "Oh, this will be some sort of mildly annoying animal. Get it? Erklings, it irks you. No. No. No, it lures children in with a sweet song and then devours them. Cool. Thanks. I love it. Only four stars? Sure, why not. Or only XXXXs? Sure, why not.

MT

Yeah, don't give it stars. And, yeah, you have to give Xs.

PM

So, the next one is the Erumpent, which is XXXX. You might remember this because of the Erumpent horn from the main series. It is a large grey African beast. It's basically a rhino, but the horn can pierce anything. It says it can pierce anything. And inside the horn is a liquid that will make whatever it injects explode, which is just horrifying.

MT

Yeah. And I – and I remember the Erumpent from the Fantastic Beasts series. Jacob has run in. It doesn't go so well. I mean he does get away at the end of the day. But, yeah, it looked like he was about to be part of the mating season that they mentioned in the description.

PM

Yeah.

MT

And I thought very interesting too that, that they are in very small numbers out in the wild because the males tend to explode each other during mating season. Probably not in the way that, you know, one would think. But, like, you know, they're battling for that, that female attraction. And, and, you know, they're doing each other, I guess.

PM

Yeah, I guess. I guess it's just, "Hey, you can't talk to her. I was talking to her. Let me jab you with my exploding horn."

MT

Exactly.

PM

And, now, you're going to explode. I guess, at least, the one silver lining is they're not extinct because people are hunting them. So, I guess that's the only positive spin on it. But, yeah, it's unfortunate to learn that they're endangered because they're killing themselves off out of jealousy. Hooray.

MT

Now, do you think it gets the XXXXs just for the explosion factor? Because, now, if you're comparing it to the Erklings XXXXs – I'm trying to figure out how she goes about classifying or how Newt, I should say, goes about classifying all these because there has to be different factors that lend themselves to the XXXXs.

PM

Yeah, that was something in the previous episodes I did about this book that I was frustrated with. It's that there's no description. Aside from a few footnotes, there's no description of why this got the rating that it got. And the only time we see a footnote is when you get the rating because of respect like the merpeople, or unicorns, or whatever. But it's strange to have a rhino with a horn that can pierce anything and makes things explode and then also thing that can lure in children and then devour them getting the exact same rating. They feel very different. My guess would be that the XXXX is because of a horn that can pierce anything and then makes you explode. That does feel pretty scary. But I don't know the rating system is just bonkers.

MT

All right. I agree with that.

PM

So, we move on to the Fairy, which is a XX. And the book says that it gets the best press from the Muggles. It says they are conjured by wizards for decoration and they cannot speak. They kind of vibrate talk like a hummingbird. Feels pretty on par with our depiction of fairies we see in things like Peter Pan, fairytales, et cetera.

MT

Yeah. Yeah. But this one was just kind of boring to me to be honest with you.

PM

Mhmm.

MT

It felt like it needed to be there. She needed to include it and she did.

PM

Yep. Yep. Check the box. Moving on, Fire Crab, XXX. Now here's what's wild about the Fire Crab. It says this in the book, "Despite its name, it resembles a large tortoise with a heavily jeweled shell." So, why – why fire crab? You could have made it not Fire Crab. Was it at any point in the books mentioned to where J.K. Rowling couldn't have written this out? I don't get why you've made a fire turtle, but called it Fire Crab. Am I missing something? I don't get it.

MT

I don't know. Like, I, I agree with you. It, it should have just been Fire Turtle or I mean – I don't know – come up with a cooler name. It just feels like she settled. Fire crabs, I mean – I mean the coolest things is that it shoots flames out of its rear end.

PM

Mhmm.

MT

I mean maybe draw name from that and get some inspiration there.

PM

Yeah, fire ass. I don't know. But – or, if you're gonna call it a Fire Crab, make it a Fire Crab and don't make it a Fire Turtle. I don't know why we've committed to it being a tortoise.

MT

Right.

PM

It says that they're native to Fiji and it has a preservation that keeps it safe from Muggles and Wizards. And then, yeah, shoots flames out of its ass. Fire Crab, baby. I know it's in that Hogwarts mystery iPhone game. And I didn't think about it until the book very clearly pointed out that it's a turtle. But, yep, it's a turtle. Here we are. The next one is the Flobberworm. Again, this feels like the J.K. Rowling had to put it in the book because it was mentioned in the main series. We know what they are. But the one thing I will say is that it's a X rating. And it's the first thing that was given a X rating in the book. I think there's only one other creature that gets the X, which stands for boring.

MT

Yeah, I remember Flobberworm from the series and just – I don't know – they're – they're kind of gross, honestly, right? All the mucus pouring out at both ends.

PM

Mhmm.

MT

You can't tell which is the head, which is the tail.

PM

Nah, never great.

MT

Does it really scare people away? I mean you probably just look at that and run the other direction.

PM

The other thing is this textbook is called Fantastic Beasts. Not every beast.

MT

Ooh.

PM

So, couldn't you have just not put in the boring ones?

MT

Mhmm.

PM

It's not called Magical Beasts and Where to Find Them. It's Fantastic Beasts. So, you would think this would be a textbook featuring the best of the best.

MT

True. No, no one X's allowed.

PM

Yeah. Like, why even bother? Why waste the ink?

MT

True. You, you could go XXX and higher. That – that's really what it should be --

PM

Right.

MT

-- in my opinion.

PM

You could have Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them and Mundane Beasts and Where to Avoid Them if you don't want to be bothered with them.

MT

But would that really sell?

PM

No, but, if it's a textbook, you just assign it to people and then the school has to buy it off of you.

MT

Fair point.

PM

So, the next creature is the Fwooper. It is a XXX rating. I identified this one as most likely to be Gangnam Style because it's an African bird with vivid plumage. It's got fancy quills, brilliant eggs. But it's song sounds nice at first but, eventually, drives the listener to, as the book says, insanity. There is a footnote in the book about a guy who listened for three months straight in an effort to show that the song isn't dangerous. But then he came to the Ministry of Magic wearing nothing but a toupee, which was actually a dead badger. So, yeah, it does seem like listening to the song isn't great. It just seems like what happens when there's a song that just gets overplayed on the radio and it just drives you kooky.

MT

Yeah, I just – I really liked the name of this beast. That's about it.

PM

Fwooper is a very fun name.

MT

This one seems like it required a bit of thought on J.K. Rowling's part. Whereas, when we were just talking about the Fire Crab, not as much thought went into that.

PM

No. If anything, there was not enough thought in that you've named it one thing but made it another. So, we move on to the Ghoul, which is a XX rating. It's kind of like an ogre. I do find this confusing. And we brought this up in earlier episodes about why Ghoul isn't a ghost. Is this a mythology thing I'm missing? I always thought Ghoul was a synonym for ghost, or specter, or something like that.

MT

Yeah, I, I thought so too. And, and I'm thinking back to some of the Halloween movies I may have watched over the years. I've – I tend to agree with you. I've never really differentiated the two. Maybe a ghoul is a bit more sinister than a – than a ghost. It has a little bit more of an edge to it.

PM

They hide out in homes as we knew from Ghoul in the Attic, which always confused me when I read the book because I expected this to be a ghost in the attic. And then it is this ogre troll-esque creature. But this Fantastic Beasts book says there's an entire removal task force to get it removed from home. So, I guess you could be a Ghoul exterminator as a profession in the Wizarding World.

MT

Is that like a plumber?

PM

I mean maybe. They say they have a task force for this. It feels like you don't necessarily need a task force for each beast. I feel you could just have a general, "Hello, there's a creature in my house that I would like to get rid of" force. You can be a part of that super animal control if you will.

MT

I like that idea. But, yeah, as you said, the Ghoul came through in the clutch in Deathly Hallows for Ron.

PM

Yep. True.

MT

Took on some Spattergroit.

PM

Took one for the team.

MT

Yeah, I mean did more than Percy.

PM

It's very good. I'm always here for a Percy slam. So, the next one is called the Glumbumble. It is a XXX rating. In the first edition of the book, which I also have, it's the Ron and Harry Notes version. And the word bum is circled. Pretty solid for a middle school joke. Love a butt joke. It says they're gray, furry, flying insects that produce melancholy-inducing treacle. Is that Wizarding CBD?

MT

Sure.

PM

Yeah.

MT

Why not?

PM

They can ruin beehives. And they feed on nettles, which are prickly plants. So, I think these things are great. I'm here for them. I have been on many a hike where I got hit by a stinging nettle in the calf. And it's itchy for quite some time. So, I fully support a creature that's going to eat these. Give me this. Give me a beast that wants to eat Poison Ivy. Give me a beast that eats mosquitoes. I'm here for all of them.

MT

Yeah, finally, a useful beast.

PM

I'm down for it. Now, a non-useful piece the Gnome. Its next. Its XX rating. It's a garden pest. We know it from Molly and the Weasleys having to deal with this. So, let's go on to the next one which is the Graphorn. It's a XXX rating. It's a large grayish purple, humpback beast with two large horns. And it's very aggressive. And, sometimes, mountain trolls mount them, which I have written here with turn them into mounting trolls. Mountain trolls, a mounting troll. And the only other note is that the height and the horn of the Graphorn are worth a lot of money.

MT

We see a lot of this throughout Fantastic Beasts where the horns of certain beasts are used in trading and, and --

PM

Mhmm.

MT

-- sort of black market type of activities. Though I will say, looking at this picture of the Graphorn here, it just looks angry. Like, yeah, I don't know. Like, did he just get mounted? Or maybe he's posing? Maybe that's what it is.

PM

Ooh, maybe he's mean mugging for the camera because he's got an image to uphold.

MT

I can see that.

PM

I'm supposed to be a tough guy. I got a XXXX rating. I really got to look like I've got a XXXX rating.

MT

That's right.

PM

So, another XXXX rating beast, which is next is the Griffin. It is used to guard treasure like a Sphinx. And that's pretty much all they say about it. So, let's go to the Grindylow, XX. We know about the Grindylow. It's the green water demon. It was in Book 4. It feeds on small fish. But it's aggressive towards Wizards and Muggles. And it's, at this point, that I realized that this is a theme where we just have a beast and we talk about it for a little bit. And then, at the very end, we say, yeah, you know it eats this. It eats this. But, you know, it's also aggressive towards humans. And it's just always peppered in at the end like we're not gonna notice.

MT

Isn't that just expected? When you're reading a book called Fantastic, do we normally just expect they're gonna come up and snuggle with you?

PM

I don't know. I mean, honestly, there are so many of these beasts that it says humans should be afraid of them or that it'll eat an entire human or, at least, part of a human. Then maybe it would be more useful if it just said, "Hey, this one doesn't eat humans." Like, you'd probably be better off just writing that Newt. So, the next creature is the Hidebehind. It is a XXXX. I have identified this as the most likely to be criminally underrated. So, it's an accidentally created species. So, here's how it was made. Phineas Fletcher intended to import a traffic Demiguise, one of the creatures that can become invisible, into North America. But the Demiguise escaped on the ship and it mated with a stowaway Ghoul. And it created this new beast, the Hidebehind, which is nocturnal. And it has the powers of invisibility. It is tall and silver-haired. It's basically a skinny bear. And it's preferred prey is humans because Phineas mistreated its parents. So, normally, I'm not here for beasts that attack humans. But this is just a revenge plot and I can get behind it. I can get behind the Hidebehind.

MT

Oh, I, I see what you did there. I had written down kind of when I was going through this and looking at the picture. Basically, Demiguise plus Ghoul equals Bigfoot.

PM
Yeah.

MT
At least from the drawing, that's what it looks like. So, the legend of Bigfoot was born out of this one-night stand between a Demiguise and Ghoul on a ship between the UK and America.

PM
It's a recurring theme of the parents that don't make sense. Similarly to how Mr. Krabs and SpongeBob gave birth to a whale, who's to say how magical beasts are made? Parents can just look wildly different from their offspring, crossbreeding.

MT
You know, I'm more curious in how the Demiguise wooed the Ghoul. Or was it the other way around?

PM
Oh, yeah. Give me – honestly, give me an entire movie about just this. That should be its own Fantastic Beasts movie. Give me the compelling story of the Hidebehind out for revenge, but also show me the love between the parents. You could have a RomCom first half.

MT
Hmm.

PM
And then it's a revenge action thriller second half where the Hidebehind is trying to destroy all the humans that were rude to its parents.

MT
I like it. Put it out there. Make sure you get royalties.

PM
And make sure J.K. Rowling gets none of them.

MT
Exactly.

PM
So, the next feature is the Hippocampus. It is a XXX rating. I've identified it as the most likely to not work. It's Greek. And it has the head and four quarters of a horse and the tail and hind quarters of a giant fish. So, we have a mermaid, but it's half horse, half fish. And I just – even with a little drawing, I just don't see this one working man. You either have to have a really big fish tail or a really small horse front half. It just feels like there's a lot going on here.

MT

And where does it primarily live? Is it – is it water dwelling? Is it land dwelling? How does that work? Does it split time?

PM

That's the thing. It feels like it would have to be water dwelling because, if you're a horse with just two legs, that's not going to do you a whole lot of good. But, of the same vein, if you're a horse, your fin fish half is gonna have to do so much work to move your giant front half of your body.

MT

Ahh, that's, actually, a really interesting point and think about like the mechanics of it.

PM

It's just massive. It's gonna take so much fish power.

MT

Fish power. Well, maybe a little merpeople can help. It says that they like to work together.

PM

Ahh. Yeah, I guess it's like the merpeople's Centaur if you will.

MT

Hmm. Well, it says they domesticate them. I don't know a Centaur --

PM

Oh, nope.

MT

-- really like the idea of being domesticated.

PM

Hmp. Then it's just a merpeople's horse.

MT

There you go.

PM

Fish horse, here we are.

MT

They ride them into battle.

PM

Yeah. Ooh, I can see it. I can see it. So, the next creature is the Hippogriff. It's got XXX. It says it should only be tamed by experts. But then there is a note in the Ron and Harry Notes Edition that says, "Has Hagrid read this book?" The Hagrid burns just keep coming.

MT

Mhmm.

PM

And I'm loving it. I'm very here for it.

MT

Well, he's not a very qualified professor.

PM

Nope.

MT

I don't know if you – what your feelings are, but --

PM

Great dude. Not the greatest teacher is how I feel.

MT

Yeah, we've talked – we've talked a lot about it on, on Mugglecast. Just, you know, everybody loves Hagrid, right? The person.

PM

Mhmm.

MT

The professor, ehh, a lot left to be desired.

PM

Teaching isn't for everyone and, and then maybe it's not for Hagrid.

MT

Exactly.

PM

I feel like the true place where Hagrid would shine is if he was a guest lecturer for a regular standard Care of Magical Creatures Professor because then that Professor could work with Hagrid to rein him in a little bit. And then Hagrid just does demonstrations. Maybe you just have Hagrid co-teach the incredibly dangerous animals or the tricky to tame animals. Or you have Hagrid come in for the hands on experience lessons.

MT

Hmm.

PM

Kind of like how in middle school, at least, I had a science teacher. And then, once a week, we would do science lab. Hagrid should be the science lab equivalent of Care of Magical Creatures. Once a week, you get a hands-on lesson with Hagrid and the other teacher makes sure Hagrid doesn't wild out.

MT

Yeah, I, I like that a lot actually

PM

Hire me, Hogwarts. Come on. Let's do it.

MT

Yeah. Yeah.

PM

Let's revamp this curriculum. First step, get a counselor. Second step, Hagrid is science lab now. So, the next creature is the Hodag. It's a XXX rating. It is horned with red glowing eyes and long fangs. And it's the size of a dog. Its powdered horns make a man immune to the effects of alcohol and able to go without sleep for seven days and nights. This is why I identified the Hodag as the most popular for the superlatives because, basically, this thing just lets you get fucked up and have no repercussions and you can stay up for seven days. It's like cocaine mixed with Adderall mixed with chugging Pedialyte after drinking a bunch. It's just – powdered horns, man, these got to be so much money on whatever market because this is just incredible.

MT

And its name just sounds like you're gonna have a good time, right?

PM

Yes.

MT

Get down and Hodag, you know.

PM

Yeah. Oh, yeah.

MT

And it's really cool and the Illustrated Edition of a Fantastic Beasts. It reminds me a lot actually looking at it of, of the grim.

PM

Mhmm.

MT

Yeah, a little bit of different end of the spectrum though, I would say, than the grim just given all the benefits you get of meeting up with a Hodag. So, this one might be in my, like, top three of the Fantastic Beasts. It's gotta be.

PM

Yeah, it's unfortunate that you have to grind and powder down the horns in order to get these effects. I am not here for animal mistreatment by any means. And it's unfortunate. But

maybe it's mirroring reality in poaching and stuff happening in the real world. But, yeah, the fact that you have to powder down the horns is unfortunate. It would be way better if it was a cow and its milk that did this or if it was something where you didn't have to harm the animal. I do feel bad about that portion because it does really seem like these powdered horns are super great. So much so that MACUSA had to convince Muggles that they aren't real due to significant interest, which is the most believable thing I've read in this entire book.

MT

Oh, maybe it gives you the horn.

PM

Aah.

MT

Or maybe, if you become close enough with it, it just kind of – it gets old. It pops off. He grows another one.

PM

Yeah.

MT

Maybe there's some domestication that can go on with Hodags.

PM

Well, I know that there are some – whether it's deer, stags, elk, I'm not exactly sure how it works. I'm not well versed in any sort of animal. But I know there are some of those types of animals where their antlers just kind of pop off eventually. One of my old coworkers up in Washington was very into a – I don't know if there's a name for this type of hiking. But you go out hiking and you'll camp out and stuff basically following places where elk walk around in the hills of Washington. And you just kind of follow their trails trying to find the antlers that have popped off. So, it's similar to hunting, but you don't harm the animals. You just figure out where they have traversed and follow the path. And then you get some sweet antlers. And that's what he did. So, maybe that's how they do it. I would like to live in this world.

MT

I'm for it.

PM

So, the next piece is the Horklump, which is another X, I think this is the only other X. It's a fleshy, pinkish mushroom that is covered in black bristles. And it has tentacles instead of roots, which is gross.

MT

Yeah, I think just the name itself is deserving of a X. Kind of going back to what you're saying about, you know, you just staying away from certain things if you're – if you're a muggle or, or even if you're a wizard. Like, you have to be afraid just to walk into a park, or a – or a forest, or near a river. All these things are around you that just could, you know, bite your

ankles or poison you with their tentacles when you were just maybe, you know, walking around and not expecting anything to happen.

PM

Yeah, I have always been afraid of mushrooms in the ground because I know some mushrooms are poisonous. So, anytime I see any mushroom anywhere, I avoid it. I'm not good enough at foraging to know what mushrooms are good or not. So, I just kind of have a avoid all mushrooms stance when I go hiking. I feel like this is the same case. If I was a wizard, I would avoid any mushroom because what if it's got technical roots? Agh. So, the next creature is the Horned Serpent, which has a XXXXX rating. There are many varieties of it. There is one in North America that has a jewel that makes it invisible and able to fly, which is terrifying. And it says one of the houses in Ilvermorny is named after it. So, here we are big, old dangerous flying snake that can turn into visible. Not a fan.

MT

No, definitely not. And, as you talked about, one of the – one of the houses of Ilvermorny is named after it. And I would assume that is the comparable house to Slytherin.

PM

I guess, probably, yeah.

MT

I know that does exist in many places around the world, but it almost feels like we were given the Horned Serpent in exchange for Hogwarts and, and the UK having Basilisk in the Chamber of Secrets. I don't know if you feel the same way, but it's – it's terrifying.

PM

It feels like American Basilisk.

MT

Yeah, exactly.

PM

So, the next creature is the Imp, which has a XX rating. It's similar to a Pixie. It eats insects. Nothing really interesting here. The next one is the Jarvey, which has a XXX rating. I've identified this as the class clown. It's an overgrown ferret that can talk but only in short, rude phrases. It lives underground. It eats gnomes, moles, rats, and voles. And I like the thought of a creature that can only say mean things. I think this is fun. It's a sassy parrot, basically.

MT

I'm a fan. There are speculations – I don't know if this was ever confirmed. But the Jarvey – something with the Jarvey was responsible for why Newt was expelled from Hogwarts --

PM

Ahh.

MT

-- all those years ago. And maybe we'll see more of it in the upcoming Fantastic Beast films. But it was one of those things that was thrown out there and then never really fully fleshed out. But --

PM

Wait a second. J.K. Rowling throwing something out there and then not going deeper. What? I've never heard of that before.

MT

But, if there were any beasts that could get you expelled, at least for inappropriate activity, it would certainly be this one.

PM

Oh, 100 percent. As someone that once got detention in high school for sitting next to a kid that said something mean very loudly. I can completely relate to Newt here.

MT

They -- there has to be memes out there now of, of Jarveys, right? Or, or --

PM

I -- maybe.

MT

Can we start the trend?

PM

Let's do it. Yeah. We can do it. And then we can patent the meme so that we get royalties every time someone makes a meme because that is how memes work. So, let's go to the Jobberknoll, which is a XX rating. I've identified this as the most likely to be an appendix. And, by appendix, I mean your body part appendix because it's a tiny blue speckled bird that eats small insects and it makes no sound until the moment of its death, at which, it lets out a long scream made up of every sound it's ever heard but backwards. So, for the appendix analogy, it's this thing that just does nothing. But then, when it's dying, it goes out in a ball of flames.

MT

I, I would have given this X. What is it doing other than annoying whoever's around?

PM

The thing that I really wanted to know here is how long does it live because, if it's regurgitating every noise it ever heard, I'm assuming it's trimming the silence in between. But still, if this thing lasts for multiple years, when it dies, it's gonna be a really long and annoying nonsensical noise. I just need to know the life expectancy because I really want to know how long these sounds are. If you're hiking and it's a multiple hour long hike and a Jobberknoll just happens to die, is your hike ruined because, just for an hour and a half, you just hear, like, [inaudible 30:48]? Like, what is -- I've -- this is the one where I just wanted to know so much more. I wanted to know everything about this one.

MT

And, and could you stop it? Like, what happens if you interrupt it? Does it live? Are you a savior of the Jobberknolls?

PM

I, I have no idea. So many questions. The next creature is the Kappa. It's got XXXX rating. It's a Japanese water demon. And, in the Ron and Harry version, Japanese is underlined. And then it says Snape hasn't read this either. Was this a reference to anything? Is Snape anti-Japanese? I was very confused. Did Snape have a Kappa in the book? Is that what they were getting at? I don't remember the Kappa ever being mentioned before. I don't get what the Snape-Japan line means.

MT

I'm not sure either. Maybe they thought that Snape looks like a Kappa. Could that be it?

PM

I have no idea. It says it's a monkey with fish scales instead of fur. So, it could be a way of calling Snape ugly. But I'd have to see if a Kappa was in the books at all. Maybe one of Snape's rude questions where he was testing Harry he asked about a Kappa. And, now, Harry's like, "Hey, how could you expect me to know about this? It's in Japan. Thus, I shouldn't know about it."

MT

It makes a very brief cameo in crimes of Grindelwald.

PM

Ahh.

MT

In the circus, it's in the tent. And it just kind of pops out of the water very, very briefly. It's not the most appealing looking thing as you can imagine.

PM

Right.

MT

That's a good question, though. Why reference Snape and Kappas together? You're -- you're onto something. This could be a whole new --

PM

Mhmm.

MT

-- theory that gets pushed out there.

PM

So, the final note about the Kappa is absolutely bonkers. It says that the Kappa feeds on human blood. But it may be persuaded not to harm a human if it is thrown a cucumber with that person's name carved into it. That is so wildly specific.

MT

I found this really, really odd. I – it's funny because we, we just recorded our Halloween episode on Mugglecast and we were going through and reading some of the Fantastic Beast descriptions --

PM

Mhmm.

MT

-- in really eerie, creepy voices. And I ended up with a Kappa and I was reading this description. And it got to the cucumber part. And I said, "I don't know that I can make this sound creepy."

PM

No, it's absurd.

MT

Or scary. Like, what? You're writing your name and etching it into a cucumber and then giving it to it as a – as a peace offering?

PM

Also, does this mean Kappa's can read? How does the Kappa know that it's the name? Do you have to use the full birth name? What if someone has changed their name?

MT

Mhmm.

PM

What if someone goes by a nickname? Could I use Mike instead of Michael? What are the options here? Also, I feel like carving a name into a cucumber would not be very easy.

MT

No, not at all. And how much time do you have? Like, let's say you're just out on a stroll and, and you come across one of these beasts. And you – you're just gonna hope you have a cucumber in your pocket. And you can take it out, write your name down, and save your life. You know, I mean how does it know that you are who you say you are?

PM

Right.

MT

That's the other thing.

PM

And, also, it's a water demon. So, if you're going swimming in Japan, do you just have to make sure, "Okay. I've got my swimsuit. I've got my sunscreen on. I have a cucumber with my name carved into it strapped to my leg in case I come across a Kappa." What is this?

EM

Look, Past Mike, I agree. I also think Kappa's are absolutely ridiculous. And I'm currently buying a lot of cucumbers to keep us safe. But, in order to pay for the cucumbers, we have to take a little bit of a break for WINGARDIUM AD-READ-OSA!

[34:20]

WINGARDIUM AD-READ-OSA!!!

[38:37]

PM

Ahh. So, the next one is the Kelpie, XXXX rating. It is a horse with bulrushes, which are those reed things with the brown cylinders on the top. I had no idea what this name was. I had to Google it. I've seen them before. I never knew the name before. But it has those as a mane, which I think is fun for a water horse. It lures the unwary on its back and then dives to the bottom of a lake or devours the rider. And, apparently, the Loch Ness Monster is the world's biggest Kelpie. I wouldn't say that the Loch Ness Monster particularly looks like a horse. I felt like it was always snake dragony, but here we are. Kelpies, super terrifying.

MT

I feel like this section of the book is just a PSA to stay out of the water.

PM

Real talk. Real talk, especially these types of creatures where they lure you in by being really cool. If I was walking through a marsh and I saw a horse with the reeds for a mane, I'd be very tempted to hop on it. It seems like a lot of fun. Now, I have ridden horses exactly once before on the beach on my wife and I's honeymoon. And our two horses were fighting with each other while walking along the sand. Most terrifying 15 minutes of my life. I don't think I'm ever gonna get on a horse again. I did not like it. Would not recommend.

MT

Well – and this just takes it to the next level because --

PM

Oh, yeah.

MT

-- it's basically bating you.

PM

Yeah, for sure.

MT

It saying, "Oh, come ride me." And, once you do, you – you're basically done for unless you're Newt, right? Then you know how to tame a, a Kelpie if you're Newt. But, if you're not Newt, I mean there's no, like, cucumbers up here. Is there?

PM

I was – yeah, I was gonna say, "Do you need a zucchini for this one? Do you need a butternut squash?" So, the next creature is the Knarl. It's got a XXX rating. It looks like a hedgehog. If food is left for a hedgehog though, it will accept the gift. But if you leave it and its Knarl, it will assume the householder is attempting to lower it into a trap and will savage that householder's garden, plants, and/or ornaments. So, yeah, Knarl, terrifying hedgehog.

MT

Yeah, just don't leave food out in the garden, I guess. That – but – now, what – here's the question, what if you grow your own vegetables? Does the Knarl know, "Oh, they're just growing them versus offering them up to me?"

PM

I believe the book says if you leave food out for it. So, I think growing it versus leaving it out would be bad. But, yeah, you raise a good point. What if you have an apple tree and an apple falls off on the ground. And it rolls towards a Knarl nest. And then it says, "You've offered me an apple. How dare you!" And then it eats your entire garden. It doesn't seem great. I do know that hedgehogs though can be more dangerous than they let on. When I moved to California for work, I was considering getting a pet hedgehog because I thought it would be fun. But they're not legal as pets in the Bay Area of California because, apparently, people would get hedgehogs. And they get bored of them and then let them out into the forest. And then they destroy bird habitats.

MT

Monsters.

PM

Those little devils.

MT

Now, that should be in there instead of the Fire Crab.

PM

Yeah.

MT

Or the fairy or the Imp.

PM

Yeah, give me a regular hedgehog.

MT

Just the hedge – yeah, exactly.

PM

Or, oh, what if Sonic the Hedgehog was actually mythical beast? That would have been fun.

MT

No.

PM

So, the next creature is the Kneazle. It's got a XXX rating. It is a small cat-like creature. And it can suss out sketchy characters. So, it'd be great at Among Us. Isn't there rumors that Crookshanks is part Kneazle? I feel like I've heard this fan theory before.

MT

Yeah, I believe so. It would explain just how good Crookshanks was at befriending and, and kind of snuffing out Sirius as well as Peter Pettigrew, right?

PM

Yeah, for sure.

MT

It was really Crookshanks who moved that plot forward.

PM

Definitely. So, the next feature is the Leprechaun, XXX rating. It's more intelligent than a fairy but less malicious than Imps, Pixies, Doxies. They're only six inches tall. And they're safe to humans. And it says that they do the whole gold trick and the end of the books says "vanishes after hours to great amusement." And, in the Ron Harry Edition, there's a little note where Ron – it says Ron at the end – wrote, "But not to mine," which is very fun. So, the next creature is the Lethifold, aka the Living Shroud. And this thing is nightmare fuel. I think this wins top prize for scariest creature. Here's what it does. It lives in tropical climates. It resembles a black cloak that is half an inch thick, but it's thicker if it recently killed and digested a victim. It glides along the ground at night. And the most thorough description of it is from Flavius Belby. I can only hope is Marcus Belby's great, great, great grandfather. In 1782, he was attacked by one while on holiday in Papa New Guinea. And here's what his description said. The Lethifold slid under his door at 1:00 in the morning. It's slithered up onto his bed. And he stayed perfectly still because he was afraid and he wanted to figure out what it was. But then it eventually touched his chin and he sat upright. So, then the Lethifold wrapped his entire face. He tried to shoot spells at it and it didn't work. It eventually got to the point where his entire body was wrapped and he knew he was going to suffocate and pass out. So, he, in the book says, "groped for his wand," my favorite word. And then he casts his Patronus spell, which then saved him. And he's one of the few people to survive an attack because, usually, Lethifolds attack people in their sleep. And the person then just cannot defend themselves. So, yeah, that's a Lethifold. This feels very Miyazaki Spirited Away cloak demon-esque and I hate it.

MT

Can you imagine being a kid growing up in the Wizarding World and learning about Lethifolds and just trying to fall asleep at night?

PM

Oh, god, no. We talked about little things you have to be afraid of, oh, the water, the horse, the mushroom. Now, you just have to be afraid of sleeping in tropical climates.

MT

Yeah. And, and who's to say that somebody doesn't bring a Lethifold over to whatever country it is that you live in. And it --

PM

Right.

MT

It breeds with a Ghoul. And then, all of a sudden, you have the super-powered Lethifold that you didn't expect.

PM

Yeah.

MT

But it's amazing growing up in the Wizarding World. This is just one of the things. But how scary it must be just to even lay down at night because you don't know what to expect.

PM

You couldn't even feel safe taking a nap. I hate it. It's horrifying. It's so scary. There's a footnote in the book that has a story about a guy who faked his death by one. He wrote a note that said, "Oh, no. I'm being suffocated by a Lethifold." And then he started a new life with a new family and a new woman. But his mistake was that he only went five miles away. Come on, guy. Five miles? What are we doing here? That's not far at all. You're gonna run into your ex-wife at the grocery store. What are you doing?

MT

Yeah, I actually enjoyed that, that little -- that side story.

PM

I thought it was funny, but it's just so silly. How foolish this man must be.

MT

Mhmm.

PM

So, the next creature is the Lobalug, XXX rating. It's found at the bottom of the North Sea. It shoots out venom and Merpeople use it as a weapon. So, I do like the thought of a creature that another beast has turned into a gun. I'm here for it.

MT

It's also just got a really odd sounding name.

PM

Yes, Lobalug.

MT

Yeah. I wasn't even sure how to pronounce it. So, I let you do it.

PM

I probably am butchering it given my track record.

MT

But the – yeah, the Merpeople seem like they have a lot at their disposal.

PM

Mhmm.

MT

They can put together a solid army down there.

PM

Honestly, yeah. If I was Voldemort, I probably would have tried to win over the sea.

MT

Mhmm.

PM

There's a lot of terrifying sea creatures, which tracks with, on real Earth, all of the sea creatures that are down there that all seem absolutely horrific. I'm never going scuba diving. Are you kidding me? I will stick to snorkeling.

MT

Yeah, I – you watch those specials on Netflix and, and you see – like, they turn all those cameras on when they go down deep into the ocean – all this stuff that's down there. Yeah, it freaks you out.

PM

I feel like, once a month on Twitter, there's a photo of a grotesque-looking sea creature. And then the description is all of the ways in which it kills other animals. So, speaking of sea creatures, we now move on to the Mackled Malaclaw, which is a XXX rating. It looks like a lobster. But, if you eat it, you get a fever and a green rash. And, if you get bit by it, you become unlucky. I don't know how that all work, but I guess it has anti-Felix Felicis running through its venomous teeth maybe.

MT

Maybe-ish. They're just stuck with the Fire Crab. I don't think we'll get another lobster looking creature here.

PM

See, but the Fire Crab is a tortoise. So, it's different.

MT

That's true.

PM

I wonder if it tastes good, though because it talks about, if you eat it, you get the fever and the rash. But does it taste really good? And is it worth it? Is it like how, sometimes, one of my lactose intolerant friends eats ice cream even though he's going to have bad trips on the toilet for the next couple of hours? Is it worth it? Could you take some sort of pill?

MT

In that moment, yeah. It's a good question.

PM

I think it would be extra interesting if it tastes really good. And you just got to know I'm going to love this for an hour while I'm eating it. And then I'm going to dread doing this for a day. But it's so tasty. I got to bite this lobster-shaped bullet.

MT

Mhmm.

PM

So, the next beast is the Manticore. And this is another one of those taking a real mythical creature and adapting it for the Wizarding World. XXXXX rating. It is a Greek beast with the head of a man, body of a lion, and the tail of a scorpion. Horrible combination. Fear-inducing. It also crones while it eats its prey. Its skin reflects charms and its sting instantly kills. This feels like an incredibly overpowered beast. What do you even do?

MT

Run.

PM

Correct. Correct answer.

MT

Hopefully, you have a broom and you can fly away because that seems about the only thing it can't do. It's – it's fly after you.

PM

Teleport. Port key. But I have seen some iterations of the Manticore in Pixar's Onward. The Manticore doesn't have a human head. It's got the lion head, but then it has wings.

MT

Ooh.

PM

So, I guess this Wizarding World one doesn't have wings. But, yeah, this thing seems terrifying. When you add a scorpion tail to something bigger than a scorpion, it's just a rough situation you've got in front of you.

MT

Yeah. And, and, to your point from earlier, this would have been the perfect creature for Voldemort to try and recruit or, or get a – you know, an army together of Manticores. Are you kidding me?

PM

For sure. But, yeah, try to win over more than just the giants. I get that they're large and stuff, but they fight with each other. It's hard to reason with them. Why don't you try to get any of these other creatures that seem more terrifying? Try to tame one dragon. I don't know. You're Voldemort. You're supposed to be the best dark wizard out there.

MT

Yeah, very short sighted on his part.

PM

What a silly, silly evil dark lord. Feels like there was a lot of potential here. But he got beat by a teenager. So, I guess it tracks. So, next beast, Merpeople, as we have mentioned, it feels like they have a lot going for them. They are a XXXX rating, but the book clarifies that this is a respect rating. It says that the sirens from Greek mythology were actually Merpeople as were the Selkies of Scotland and the Merrows of Ireland. They don't really go into much detail about the merpeople here, which I think was a missed opportunity because I feel like merpeople get mentioned during so many other Fantastic Beasts in this book that I thought the merpeople blurb would be very large. And it's really not that lengthy.

MT

Do you think it's because we got more of them in Goblet of Fire and --

PM

Yeah.

MT

-- spent some time in the, the lake with them?

PM

I guess that would be the only explanation. It's that we've already kind of learned about them. So, you don't need to know more because that does track. A lot of the beasts that are in this book that were in the movies, it's not a lot of detail. It feels like there was a lot of room for an interesting Merpeople description. I feel like, if this textbook actually worked like a real textbook – if you had it for the class and it was broken into chapters and not just an alphabetical glossary, I feel like merpeople would be their own chapter. They've got so much going on and we just get, you know, a paragraph or so.

MT

Right. Was it the same for centaurs? I can't remember.

PM

Centaurs had a bit more. It talked a little bit more in-depth about their astrology and stuff like that.

MT
Mhmm.

PM
Merpeople felt alarmingly short.

MT
They probably would have demanded more too just knowing the, their attitudes. But, yeah, you would think too, because Dumbledore has such a great relationship with the merpeople, that there'd be a little bit more information here that he possibly would have shared with Newt.

PM
Yeah, I agree. So, we move on to the Moke, XXX rating. It is a lizard that can shrink. And its skin is popular for money bags, and purses, pocketbooks, wallets because it can do the same shrinking effect and hide your stuff from getting pickpocketed, which I think is fantastic. I'm here for this.

MT
This is basically the opposite of a Niffler.

PM
Oh, yes, the yin and the yang. Niffler steals all your stuff. This guy protects your money.

MT
Mhmm.

PM
So, next creature we have is the Mooncalf, which I've identified as the most likely to be a Ponzi scheme. It only comes out at night and then it dances. And, if the silvery dung of a Mooncalf is collected before the sun rises and it's spread upon magical herbs and flower beds, the plants will grow fast and become strong. Okay.

MT
They're just – I mean we're entering a stretch of beasts that have appeared in the – in the Fantastic Beasts films now. And, and everybody loves the Mooncalfs. They're very kind of cute, wide eyed creatures. And Jacob has an interaction with them. That is, you know, fun and lighthearted, but he doesn't do anything with their crap --

PM
Yeah.

MT
-- that I'm aware of. I mean maybe, if he was informed a little bit more by Newt the value of these feces, then, then he could have – he could have made it big.

PM

For sure.

MT

Especially in like the 1920s. I mean think about it. It's the great depression time. Like --

PM

Wooh.

MT

-- that stuff would have gone a long way in terms of making a career for him somewhere else.

PM

Look at me, I've grown super corn. I've grown mega potatoes.

MT

Mhmm.

PM

It's the first GMO. It's Mooncalf dung. But I got to give credit to J.K. I do think it's fun to have a creature with valuable poop. And it's basically super manure, which tracks. Manure does help plants grow. But, now, we've got super cow down here. I am here for it. I think this was very fun. I actually enjoyed this description a lot. I also want to see what a Mooncalf dancing is like.

MT

The, the -- you know, like, they group together. They sway back and forth. I could see it. But, yeah, Jacob has a really very brief scene with them where he's -- he's helping Newt out and he goes and he feeds them. But there's so much -- that was the one thing about that, that scene right inside his briefcase. It's just there's so much happening around that you literally need to, like, pause the movie, see all the beasts in the background.

PM

It's almost as if Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them was not very much about Fantastic Beasts or Where to Find Them.

MT

Oh, no, not at all. Just like crimes of Grindelwald, I'm not really sure they're about the crimes of Grindelwald.

PM

It wasn't about his crime, specifically. It was more about his rise to power. I feel like rise of Grindelwald would have made more sense.

MT

Hmm.

PM

And it has the same kind of vibe.

MT

It does.

PM

Well, a missed opportunity.

MT

I mean I didn't understand the second movie at all. So --

PM

No one did. No one did. No, not a single human did. So, we move on to the Murtlap, XXX rating. It's a rat with an anemone on its back. And it eats crustaceans but, also, the feet of those who step on them. I was going into Murtlap thinking this would be fun because, "Oh, yeah, I've seen some Murtlap. I remember that." But, now, I've learned it eats feet. And I don't like it.

MT

Yeah. And, so, here's the question though. If it eats feet, why did it bite Jacob's neck in Fantastic Beasts? Shouldn't it have eaten his feet?

PM

You would think. And I grew up in New Jersey. I went to the Jersey Shore a lot. And there are many times when I step on a crab or something in the ocean. And there's no way for me to see it because, with the ocean and the salt water and everything, you can't just see to the bottom. So, it's not like I'm intentionally trying to step on Murtlap. The book says it'll eat the feet of those "foolish enough to step on it." But I don't know, man. I feel like it's easy to make that mistake and I wouldn't want that accidental, "Oops, sorry. I didn't mean to step on you there," to result in, "Now, my foot is gone." It feels like such high stakes.

MT

These just ties into a lot of our conversation already today about, basically, yeah, you can't go outdoors.

PM

Mhmm.

MT

You can't enjoy the fresh air.

PM

Mhmm.

MT

You can't sleep soundly in your own bed in the Wizarding World because there's just too many things that could eat your feet, suffocate you. It's wild.

PM

It's truly wild. So, let's end this episode of Potterless on the next creature, which is nice and cute and we all love him from the movies. It's the Niffler. It's got a XXX rating. Cute little duckbill platypus looking guy that steals coins and stuff. Adorable. I'm here for it. I support it. It's cute. I liked that it's become a main character in the movies. And it makes me happy to think about this instead of a Lethifold suffocating me next time I go to sleep.

MT

Everyone loves a Niffler. I have not met somebody yet. Unless, they stole from you. Then I can understand why you don't like the Niffler. But everyone loves the Niffler in the Fantastic Beasts films. Cute, cuddly.

PM

The Pikachu of the Fantastic Beasts films basically.

MT

That's a great comparison.

PM

The main character. The mascot.

MT

That is a really great comparison. It is the Pikachu. Except, it likes to steal things instead of electrify them. But, hey, look --

PM

Look.

MT

-- it comes through the clutch.

PM

We all -- we all have our vices.

MT

He comes through in the clutch. By the way, we need a name. We're -- we're two movies and the Niffler doesn't even have a name.

PM

Man, yeah. Newt Jr., the Niffler. Niffly. Something.

MT

Something. I, I don't know.

PM

Newt 2.

MT

But he does come through in the clutch. Assuming it's a he. I, I don't know. You know – and, and stealing the, the blood pact. So, sometimes, stealing is good. That's, I guess, the moral of the story.

PM

Crime can sometimes pay if the crime is from stealing from the Crimes of Grindewald. So, with that note, we'll end this episode of Potterless about the Fantastic Beasts book. But, Micah, thanks so much for joining and chit chatting about these silly critters. If people want to find you on the internet or your podcasts, where can they do so?

MT

Yeah. First off, thanks for having me. This was a lot of fun.

PM

Yes, this is great. Thanks for coming on.

MT

I learned a lot about – I don't know what. But --

PM

I learned a lot. I don't know what I learned. But there was a lot of new information in my brain. And I'm sure more important things have now been deleted from it.

MT

Yeah. We – I just start, like, days down the line drawing comparisons to some of the beast we talked about. You know, things will pop up. I'd be like, "Where did – where did that come from?" But, no, thanks so much for having me. And, as far as Mugglecast goes, we are on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, @Mugglecast. So, folks can find us there. And we release episodes every week. So, we hope – you know, if you enjoyed my ranting and raving here, coming give us a listen. And, Mike, you know, you've joined us and we're hopeful you'll join us again in, in the future. So, love kind of the, the cross podcasting that's going on.

PM

I'm down for it. You guys being on the pod is long overdue. Glad we could make this happen. We have plans later to do the Lego Harry Potter video games together, which will be a very fun set of episodes. So, I'm excited about that. But, yeah, thanks so much for joining on. Listeners, thank you so much for listening. And, as they say in the Wizarding World of Harry Potter when they are trying to convince themselves that it's safe to go to bed, Wizard On!

[57:57]

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