

## Three Patch Podcast – Episode 102

*When the Author Isn't Dead*

March 1, 2020

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## When the Author Isn't Dead

Consulting Fans: Finnagain, Emmagrant01, DrinkingCocoa, Producer & Editor: DrinkingCocoa

– What do you do when a creator does something so hurtful that you have to reconsider your fandom?

*(Music intro: Hank Azaria, Spamalot (Original Broadway Cast Recording): He Is Not Dead Yet)*

**Not Dead Fred:** *I'm not dead!*

**Robin:** *Here, he says he's not dead!*

**Lance:** *Yes, he is*

**Not Dead Fred:** *I feel happy. I feel happy! [singing] I am not dead yet, I can dance and I can sing, I am not dead yet, I can do the Highland fling, I am not dead yet, No need to go to bed, No need to call the doctor 'Cos I'm not yet dead!*

**Minstrels:** *[singing] He is not yet dead, That's what the geezer said, Oh, he's not yet dead, That man is off his head, He is not yet dead, Put him back in bed, Keep him off the cart, Because he's not yet dead...*

*(Music fades)*

**DrinkingCocoa:** Hi, this is DrinkingCocoa and I'm here today with:

**Emma Grant:** Emma.

**Finnagain:** And Finn.

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**DrinkingCocoa:** I decided that I would call this panel "When the Author isn't Dead." Because we're going to be discussing some issues that often make people say, "Well, the author's dead, I don't have to listen to what they're saying." Which is true, except sometimes the living author is hard to shut out. So the question I wanted to discuss was, what do you do when you're in a fandom and the creator says or does something so hurtful that you have to reconsider your relationship with that fandom?

**Emma Grant:** Mm hmm.

**DrinkingCocoa:** The question came up for me in December when JK Rowling broke a long Twitter silence to tweet support of an anti-trans harasser. And this was so unexpected and harsh. Within less than a day, many Harry Potter organizations, including ones that had worked with her very closely in the past, released very strongly worded and swift condemnation, saying, "You've made this a choice and we're standing with the trans and non binary members of our community and not with somebody who would side with a harasser." And that left people really wondering: what do I do with my fandom? How do I participate or not in events that have to do with the world that this creator made? What do I do with the objects that I own that I bought from this property? Is it so awful that it just makes me feel sick and I just have to turn my back on all of it? Or do I want to stay with it, but feel queasy? Or lose friends? It reminded me of a lot of issues that we've also dealt with in the Sherlock fandom. I know there are certainly people in Sherlock fandom who found that there was something or other that happened within the show or something said by one of the creators that made them want to back away, somewhat or entirely, or to make their own rules about which parts of the fandom they'll accept and continue with and which parts they will just not engage with anymore. And it just made me wonder how other people have handled it when things like that come up. So: Have you ever had to reconsider your relationship to a fandom because of the creators, and if so, what are some of the ways you decided to handle that?

**Finnagain:** One of my earliest instances of having to reject a story that I really liked and identified with might have been Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card. I found out that it was coming from someone that had such a persistent rejection of homosexuality, that that was like a key part of this man's psychology and image in the world. And I couldn't -- I couldn't go back. At that time, I wasn't out myself, but I think I've mentioned here before that my father was gay and the way in which his society, his experience treated him was a huge factor in his eventual suicide and so it was just like a red line for me, I think. I couldn't participate in something where that came out of nowhere. To be part of, then, this world, like why would... I could not continue reading these books, I could not continue engaging

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with this at all. And it was just such a shock. I think for me, that was the first time where I realized there was a line. These associations cannot be always dismissed. It matters who the creator was to me for this.

**DrinkingCocoa:** Wow.

**Emma Grant:** Something really similar happened to me with hockey RPF.

**DrinkingCocoa:** Ooh.

**Emma Grant:** I was really, really into it, it was a really a source of joy. But sometimes I could no longer have this fantasy version of this person when confronted with the real person posting garbage on Twitter, and it actually kind of killed my love of hockey finally. I finally had to come to terms with the fact that there's a lot of racism and sexism and homophobia in that sport, and there are in all sports, but in that sport in particular, they're not doing much to deal with it and I kind of had to take a step away from loving that sport finally, not just the fandom. And I feel bad about it because on the one hand, there are a lot of people of color and queer people who are in there and fighting to say, "I have a place here, I get to enjoy this sport. I get to play this sport. I belong here." And I feel like I just kind of wimpily stepped back and said, "No! I can't!" But at the same time, it's just, it stopped being fun. There's only so many hours in the day.

**Finnagain:** Culture changes, yeah, have to be done from within as well as, you know, and, and it's okay to not be in that fight, Emma, there are people that are also trying to keep that going and make that change.

**DrinkingCocoa:** There's a feminist literary critic named Elaine Showalter. And I've loved her work for a long time. And then I had to disengage from loving her because -- do you remember when Marie Kondo's US show started? And then, weirdly, people started saying all these horrible racist things against Asian women?

**Emma Grant:** Mm hmm!

**DrinkingCocoa:** And she wrote that "Well, I hate perfect little Asian women" because -- I don't know what. And I felt so startled and slapped. I didn't know the whole time that I was loving and quoting and referring to her work that she would look at me and think these things. That was strange.

**Emma Grant:** I remember how hurt you were by that. This is a person that you respected.

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**DrinkingCocoa:** It's strange thinking that you were interacting with somebody thinking, "Oh, we're all humans." And then you find out actually, they weren't thinking that when they looked at me.

**Emma Grant:** Mm hmm.

**DrinkingCocoa:** Then when you guys started talking sports, I realized, okay, no, that was the fandom that I really had to leave. And this was figure skating. And that really was a decision where I was \*in\* the fandom. I organized my year around events, and I had friends that I had only made through that fandom. And it was a big part of my life for many years, and the "creators," meaning the people who run the sport and make money off of it internationally and make rules that are corrupt and exploit the athletes. It was so sickening what they were doing that I left the fandom because of the creators. And yeah, it was a huge loss. There are people that I hardly ever see now, and I loved them and still do, and a huge amount of knowledge that's just sitting there in my head rotting. (Laughing) But I couldn't participate, I couldn't contribute. It was impossible to lie anymore.

**Emma Grant:** Mmm, mm hmm.

**DrinkingCocoa:** If you try to shut things out and say, well, I know it's corrupt, but I'm just here for the kids and their families or whatever. At some point, if it's really pervasive, the illusion can't be sustained. And I guess that was really formative for me when I hear people say, you know, the creators did something unforgivable, the only ethical thing to do is to turn your back and just drop it because how can you support such people? And everything they create is poisoned now. Okay, I did that once, not because I lost interest, but because of a decision and it can be done but it impacts a lot of things in your life. If it was something that was that dear to you.

**Emma Grant:** Mm hmm, yeah.

**Finnagain:** Oh. (Sighing.) So should we talk about Sherlock then?

**DrinkingCocoa:** (Laughing) Sure.

**Finnagain:** So sometimes, you know, when I think about Sherlock, I think about this team, right? That I've developed a loyalty to, in a sense, and so when I'm judging involvement, I'm thinking about all of those people. And that's also meant that so many have had the chance to individually disappoint me. (Laughing) Right from the beginning of Sherlock fandom, a

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big part of it was that I suddenly became a very big Benedict Cumberbatch fan. And there's a lot of ways in which I have respect for him as a person but uhh -- when dealing with quotes of celebrities, I think it's difficult to judge them fairly. But one thing that they can pretty often communicate is ignorance. Whether or not there's more to that, even things coming out of that first season, to hear Cumberbatch talk about the character of Sherlock, I suddenly realized that was always going to be a bad idea. Because he didn't have to think about this character the way that we saw it. Right? You know, he, he knew his performance, not the edited result that was presented to us as a show. And so when he was saying things like, talking about Sherlock being a little bit on the autism spectrum, and then that being carried off in all directions in ways that were maybe not helpful, or him talking about Sherlock's sexuality... it just, like, every instance of that felt somehow like a personal attack because here's this creator that was actually involved in the definition of this character that I had come to interpret with so much specificity. (Laughing) And I needed to practice divorcing those things in order to make sure that I didn't feel like I needed to privilege his perspective. Because if I did that, that would break too many other things that were important in my enjoyment of this fandom community. My appreciation for Sherlock as a character required me not to think about him the same way as apparently... (laughing) the actor thought about him.

**Emma Grant:** Hmm. You make a great point, though, about how each person even who's involved in the production only kind of sees their bit. But that makes it so much more difficult as a fan to figure out how to respond when the show goes in a direction you didn't want it to. When I compare that to the Harry Potter situation, where this really all came out of the head of one person.

**Finnagain:** Yeah.

**Emma Grant:** I mean, you could argue that Harry Potter is so much bigger than JK Rowling that she's almost irrelevant now. (Laughing) And that's like the death of the author thing. But also like, it's huge. It's so much beyond her. I mean, it's an amusement park. It's movies. It's people making cookbooks. It's all these things now. Sherlock, I just look at it kind of the way you were saying, there were so many people involved that I can't be too pissed at Benedict Cumberbatch for things he said, because he's just an actor in the end, you know?

**Finnagain:** Yeah.

**DrinkingCocoa:** When there's a group of people that gets really insulted by a creator or by the content, then by necessity, everybody is somewhere on the spectrum of whether it

affects them or not, whether they notice it or not. And there is no pretty way to handle this. It will hurt. It always hurts. It is all about privilege.

**Finnagain:** Mm hmm.

**DrinkingCocoa:** The thing about JK Rowling saying something anti-trans: there were always indications in her writing that her omission of trans or non-binary people was not only one of ignorance or invisibility, but possibly prejudice.

**Finnagain:** Yeah.

**DrinkingCocoa:** So readers can go all over the map from "I don't know, I was seven years old, and I didn't notice it" to "Well, I was seven and I noticed it." You know? Or people saying, "Where have you been all this time? She's always talked like that and this is just the proof" and other people say "I try to excuse her case after case after case." That kind of dissension between fans, that's part of the difficulty that people have to navigate. And that's the kind of thing where even if you try hard to say "the author is dead, the author's dead, it doesn't matter," if they're not actually literally dead, sometimes what they say brings up stuff that you did notice. And with Sherlock, I could see that happening with race.

**Finnagain:** Yeah.

**DrinkingCocoa:** Because, well, I know... (Laughing) The Blind Banker was \*so\* bad that it was funny. And I just, I didn't feel any conflict about just declaring loudly that it never happened? And actually the author not being dead helped with that because Steve Thompson is on the record as calling that crappy. (Laughter) But something that I repress and I have terrible bad conscience about it is the ending of my favorite episode, Scandal in Belgravia, where they put Lara Pulver in hijab?!

**Finnagain:** Yeah. Ugh, that final cutscene is just...!

**DrinkingCocoa:** Like, what?! (Laughing)

**Finnagain:** It's, it's cartoonish and --

**DrinkingCocoa:** And you could have done all of that, just by having her somewhere in England. You didn't have to do this! (Laughing)

**Finnagain:** No.

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**DrinkingCocoa:** That, combined with that weird turban...?

**Finnagain:** Yeah. Fight?

**DrinkingCocoa:** -- martial arts scene at the beginning of Blind Banker, which nobody remembers because nobody watches Blind Banker?

**Finnagain:** Yeah.

**Emma Grant:** Oh my god, I have forgotten about that!

**Finnagain:** (Laughter) Yeah, I know.

**DrinkingCocoa:** If there was some controversy from one of the core creators of Sherlock that was super, super racist, I think those things would come back and we would feel them again. And then there would be a trust issue between, say, me and someone saying, "Well, I don't see why it's a big deal that Mycroft rigs the Korean elections. You're overreacting." (Laughing, gasps) So yeah, that's to me where the author isn't dead is when something they say reminds you of issues that had been uncertainly settled before, and brings up issues of trust between you and your fellow fans and the community that you're in together.

**Finnagain:** Particularly sins of omission. You can play a game of like, well, was that on purpose? Were there other reasons? But then, as soon as that gets articulated explicitly, it's like, oh, no, sorry, that was actually -- um. The evidence is there, it's done. It's done. It's done.

**DrinkingCocoa:** I love and adore the Fantastic Beasts film series. They were not novels first. They're written as scripts, and then actors create the roles. So most of us do not trust JK Rowling to write characters who were people of color. That goes for queerness, too. There's a non-binary actor in Fantastic Beasts who is going to have to deal with the fact that the writer has made this anti-trans comment while they work to bring this character to life. It is easier, I think, to retain engagement with a team project? If you can see what people are doing to even out all the details, because, you know, obviously the struggle that they have in their workplace is similar to anyone else's struggle in the workplace.

**Finnagain:** Oh, I feel sick in sympathy.



**DrinkingCocoa:** Just, how do you go to work when the person that hired you is saying that about you?

**Finnagain:** Yeah. I mean, except that people do because they have to -- but. Yeah.

**DrinkingCocoa:** Exactly!

**Finnagain:** Which is...ugh!

**DrinkingCocoa:** So in that case, would you then boycott the film series? Because of what the creator said. If you were someone who was interested before, would you continue to watch?

**Emma Grant:** I think a lot of people, their initial reaction to the JK Rowling thing was to say, "Well, I love the story, and I love the fandom and I've enjoyed all these other things like the films and the amusement park. So I don't want to do anything that's going to directly give money to JK Rowling," but that's really complicated, too. So you might say, "I'm not ever going to buy any more copies of the Harry Potter books," okay. But I'm sure she gets a cut every time you buy a ticket to Universal Studios. (Laughing)

**DrinkingCocoa:** Right.

**Emma Grant:** I mean, selfishly, I want to continue to enjoy all of this stuff (laughing) and thumb my nose at her. I don't know, like, I don't want to give up all the fun fandom things, but can we do that? Can we still have fun as a fandom and still, like, celebrate the positive aspects and then be critical?

**Finnagain:** Sometimes the change, though, in the decision of support or not, isn't a decision so strongly articulated. Sometimes it's a gradual falling out of love. Kind of.

**DrinkingCocoa:** Mm hmm. Yeah.

**Finnagain:** Sort of like, you get worn down?

**DrinkingCocoa:** I mean, that's actually in some ways a more merciful thing to have happened. That's different from feeling powerfully conflicted, and yearning for the uncomplicated love that you remember.

**Finnagain:** Yeah.

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**DrinkingCocoa:** For me, the hairsplitting was like, I don't think I can go and remove all of the influence that she's had over the person I've become over decades. You know, the stories that helped me make certain decisions, the thoughts I was thinking that helped me raise my children. I can't go back and just erase those parts.

**Emma Grant:** It's also such a big part of our culture, and we talk about things like Star Wars or things like Harry Potter. They're so huge that you can't pull them out. I mean, in my courses that I teach, on the very first day I tell my students I'm a Hufflepuff. You can't just not --

**Finnagain:** Yeah! But at the same time, bringing it up constantly is a reminder of -- ugh, it's a way of delegitimizing, unfortunately, as a consequence of delegitimizing the hurt of the people that have been directly damaged by her position.

**Emma Grant:** Mm hmm.

**Finnagain:** And that's the part that makes me pause a lot, is like, well, you know, I can say I love these things, and it's unproblematic for me but in showing the support, who am I hurting? And who am I othering and separating? Any fannishly-oriented, any pop media-aware trans person will have heard of what JK Rowling said, and will know the position of that and now that is something that everyone needs to consider when you are talking about her. How are you going to express that and incorporate that without that being a message of approval?

**Emma Grant:** Right.

**Finnagain:** The implicit is approval. So how do we make it explicit if you want to continue to incorporate this?

**Emma Grant:** Mm hmm.

**DrinkingCocoa:** In my neighborhood in February, everybody brings their art to this gallery and we all display it. So I was so psyched, I had this \*amazing\* Snape month of January thing planned out that I can't even tell you how excited I was to do it. I commissioned two artists from Fandom Trumps Hate to do art for this. I had it all planned out. And then in late December, when I'm getting ready to start on my Snape project, Rowling says this thing.

**Finnagain:** Yeah.

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**DrinkingCocoa:** And if this were a Harry Potter convention or something, I would have gone ahead and done it and made a lot of the content addressing what that has done to our community. But it's not; it's just a community art show and I live in a trans community. This is, like, the place in Philadelphia where people go to hang out. So there was just no way. There was no reason to ruin someone's day by even bringing it up. So I'm disappointed, but I dropped the whole thing. There are people that I could have the nuanced conversation with about this, and then there are people who don't deserve that kind of rude surprise (laughing) when they were having a good time.

**Finnagain:** Yeah.

**DrinkingCocoa:** Is there a time that you gave something a pass on principle?

**Emma Grant:** Not gave a pass, but didn't let myself engage with in the way that I wanted to. It was Voltron: Legendary Defender. And a lot of that had -- didn't have much to do with the creators as it did the fandom and the awful, awful trash fire and toxicity of that fandom. I loved the characters and I really enjoyed most of the show. I loved the fanfic. But I just couldn't let myself go any deeper than I did because I just knew it was like, there be dragons. (Laughing) That's not exactly what you're asking, though. That wasn't so much about the creators as it was about the fandom.

**DrinkingCocoa:** It's not but I'm so glad you brought it up! The relationship to other fans, and to the fandom, is a much bigger part of this than perhaps I was considering at first. That's the answer to people who, possibly slightly guiltily, are still staying with the Harry Potter fandom is, "Well, I don't know how much I can succeed in ignoring the creator, but I know who I met through this fandom and I'm not giving that up."

**Finnagain:** Yeah.

**DrinkingCocoa:** Fandom is more than the material. Also, everything you said just now, Emma, about Voltron, it reminds me of Bernie Sanders?? (Laughter)

**Emma Grant:** Like hey, this fandom kind of thing?

**DrinkingCocoa:** Yeah, the content I'm sure I would like, but the fandom seems really kind of not my thing. (laughing)

**Finnagain:** The top-line instance for me is Game of Thrones.

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**DrinkingCocoa:** Oh yes.

**Finnagain:** There were things about the production that made me very wary. And so I just didn't bother getting involved. And then it turned out to be a disaster in terms of the very end. And then the interviews came out with the people, the show runners that were so incredibly, just, narrow-minded and disrespectful of the project itself, let alone the community that had grown around it. For me sitting on the sidelines, I got to see people watching their theories fall apart --

**DrinkingCocoa:** Oh.

**Finnagain:** And to see that process that I had been on the inside of in the Sherlock fandom, you know, where I'd seen the investment and the devotion already existing. And then going to that disillusionment of, oh, wait, none of this is nearly as controlled as we thought it was. And maybe those hints of discontent that we could see here or there, particularly as someone who followed Spoilercast, the signs of unrest and unease... yeah, were actually legitimately there and were an expression of the quality of the product that was being produced. And so for me to watch Game of Thrones and to see the experiences of the creators, to see that the same kinds of things and being like, ah, *\*these\** are the warning signs.

**DrinkingCocoa:** Yeah.

**Finnagain:** These are the problems. This is what we could have been looking for. If we had been able to read the production, we would have been... better prepared. Or at least some of us would have been. There's so many ways in which a production of that scale can fail. I guess the question that I had at the end of it was... at what point should I take this personally? (Laughter) Like...at what point should I feel like it's my fault for being so in love with this? At what point should I be, like, how dare you disrespect our love? At what point is this at all about me? Because obviously that's what I was dealing with. I feel like I've lost so much from it. (Exhale)

**Emma Grant:** My very first fandom of my entire life was Star Wars. And when the prequels came out, I entered the fandom and it was full of people who just said, "You know what, this movie was terrible. But Qui-Gon and Obi Wan? That had something going on."

**DrinkingCocoa:** Yeah.

**Emma Grant:** It was, "You know what, this movie sucks, but there's this really great piece of it that we all loved, and we're just gonna run with it, and it doesn't matter if George Lucas doesn't like it." And that's colored all of my fandom experience.

**Finnagain:** Yeah, if you can start without a creator, essentially, then (laughing) you're pretty good.

**DrinkingCocoa:** The struggles I see within Sherlock fandom are: how much can we willfully make our own rules? Nobody in BBC Sherlock fandom has failed to have that initial passionate love. Everybody, no matter how (laughing) bitter and jaded or hurt, there was a moment of pure pure love; otherwise, you wouldn't be in the fandom. So can you make up rules like "Okay, well, in my world, this story stopped after season two except for, like, select bits from three and four that are part of my personal canon"? Or will people say "I only write Reichenbach fic"? Or "Mary never happened," or who knows? There's these rules that we make up. And then sometimes something that the creators say or do breaks through that. And people say, "Well, I can't, I can't lie anymore, I can't maintain this," and leave. And other people are just completely protected the whole time saying "Whatever, did the creator say something? Again?" (Laughing) That's just a range that I see is people trying to salvage what they love.

**Finnagain:** In the struggle that I had to understand series 4, I felt like I owed the "team" the effort to understand what they were trying to do, even if there are parts of what they actually did that were...what I felt to be very inconsistent with the story they've been telling before. Maybe I didn't understand what the story was really trying to be before. And so maybe if I gave it the time and the attention, and if I reworked it, I'd come to understand the story they've been trying to tell, in order to make a more coherent narrative across the four series. And to do that, I had to also listen to what the creators were actually saying. And to go back and think about, like, you know, if so-and-so is saying this, about who John's character was, how do I make sense with what we saw before and after? Coming out of that, that effort to be loyal really damaged what I could enjoy in the fandom.

**DrinkingCocoa:** Wow.

**Finnagain:** It really changed my understanding of the characters. It's really hard for me even to ship Johnlock at this point, \*because\* I've gone through that effort of trying to understand, well if that's not what they were doing, what the fuck were they actually doing? And through that I've come to this point where, like, I am so far away from the relationship I once had to this material. It's so much work to let go of that and actually find the things that everyone else seems -- not actually everyone, but most seem to actually be

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playing with, in their selection of what to celebrate within the series. And that maybe was a mistake on my part. Maybe I should have been like, "Eh whatever, fuck it," and just stayed with the things that we did so well. Because it's been a mess, honestly. Yeah, they can cross a line. They can shatter our fantasies irreparably. And that sucks. In the process of looking for the most coherent interpretation of the facts, theories get disproven. And then what do you do with that?

**DrinkingCocoa:** Yeah.

**Finnagain:** There are times when you realize you're desperately wrong. And your love of the studying process isn't enough to change that.

**Emma Grant:** I think that what you just described is the reason why I don't dig into things anymore? (Laughing) I think that I kind of intentionally stayed away from doing that kind of deep analysis of what was happening and kind of intentionally kept it to the shallow bits that were fun to read and write fanfic about.

**DrinkingCocoa:** Any one of us who's trying to be pure about this, it's simply impossible.

**Finnagain:** Yeah.

**DrinkingCocoa:** Everyone has something that they're pure about avoiding or resisting because it's bad and then something else that is their furtive, "I'm never giving this up. I'll just feel guilty and rationalize and lie about it. But I'm never giving this up!" (Laughter) I think the sensation of when somebody first is on fire with joy, that falling in love and feeling the response?

**Emma Grant:** Mm hmm.

**DrinkingCocoa:** Okay, that's what I'm going to mark off for myself as sacred. And yeah, that does definitely create issues such as if there's some horrible, racist, sexist piece of shit that somebody \*loves\*, okay, I'm not going to trust that person. That's true, that is going to happen. But I do want to honor what happens inside people when they engage with something creative in a way that just lights them on fire.

**Finnagain:** Yeah. Maybe the experience of having loved and lost...

**DrinkingCocoa:** Yeah.

**Finnagain:** -- also makes us a lot more judicious about what we choose to invest in the first place. And there's the way in which we sort of step around the like, "Well, maybe I should do a little research on this one before going ahead." I mean, I will read artist bios. (Laughing) Like, I'll be like, this is really good...hold on. I just want to -- just want to check up on this person's politics before getting a little too deep on this. I just want to see what kind of stuff they've put out otherwise? Okay! Let's say you... have any of the following magazines critiqued this person's work? (Laughing) It's a defense mechanism.

**DrinkingCocoa:** It's like sending a little advance team.

**Finnagain:** Yeah, basically, yes, yeah.

**Emma Grant:** Interesting. That's kind of how I ended up getting into Good Omens, because so many people I trusted loved it, and I trusted them.

**DrinkingCocoa:** It's safe here. (Laughter)

**Emma Grant:** Yeah, exactly.

**Finnagain:** I think something that gave me confidence about Good Omens is how I saw the people behind it discussing the material and reacting to issues. When I don't recognize that quality in the show runners, and that becomes a lot more of a delicate thing.

**DrinkingCocoa:** Death of the author is something that I can't relax and believe in.

**Finnagain:** Yeah.

**DrinkingCocoa:** Because what you've just described is the opposite.

**Finnagain:** Hm!

**DrinkingCocoa:** You know, what the author says is essential for engaging with this joyful stuff.

**Finnagain:** For me anyway. Yeah. (Laughing)

**DrinkingCocoa:** Well, definitely for me, and I think for anyone who's ever clicked an archive warning on AO3...! It does matter to me to know if, if I feel like someone's in good faith.

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**Finnagain:** Mm hmm! While we have this conversation, death of the author is a very important principle for fandom in the sense that their explicit take does not reign supreme. I absolutely respect that. However, the author can haunt a text. When that has happened, if I'm finding the material too haunted by the shittiness of the creators, and if other people tell me, "Do not go there, that is a \*haunted\* house!" (Laughing)

**DrinkingCocoa:** Yes. Yep, yeah.

**Finnagain:** "Things are going to go wrong, you will get hurt. Other people have been, I don't know, murdered there in the past," (laughter) like that's, that is important to know, too. The author should not contain us. However, that is still the sand on which we build.

**DrinkingCocoa:** The haunting is not a bug. It's a feature.

**Finnagain:** Hm! Mm hmm.

**DrinkingCocoa:** We don't respond to art because it's pure and perfect and flawless, except for the annoying times where the author or creator lets their human error mess things up. You know, we respond to it \*because\* of the human error. That's the beauty. And so I don't think there exists the art without the creator. To me, having that always be part of the picture is really valuable.

**Finnagain:** (Laughing) This is a conversation that doesn't end as we continue to experience these things.

**DrinkingCocoa:** Do you have any last words?

**Finnagain:** Ahh, I hope we can keep loving through whatever happens next? That's all. (Laughing)

**DrinkingCocoa:** Oh, good.

**Emma Grant:** Every time I think I'm never going to love something that hard again, it's never gonna happen again, somehow it keeps coming back.

**Finnagain:** Yeah, fortunately, there are a lot of creators in the world.

**Emma Grant:** True.

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**DrinkingCocoa:** It's a good time for that. All right, well, thank you!

**Emma Grant:** Thank you.

**Finnagain:** Bye!

**DrinkingCocoa:** Bye!

**Emma Grant:** Bye!

*(Music outro)*

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### **Transcription Team**

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### **Contact**

Other consulting fans are encouraged to contribute to the discussion by posting comments on our various social media outlets, sending email, or leaving voicemail. Here's where you can reach us:

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### **Music**

**When the Author Isn't Dead** – Hank Azaria, Spamalot (Original Broadway Cast Recording): He Is Not Dead Yet

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