

Methods of Rationality Authors Notes copied from
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8/24/10

Author's Notes for Ch. 12, Impulse Control:

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up to Ch. 11.

No, I am *not* going to write the story where Harry (either this Harry, or canon!Harry) ends up as Headmaster of Hogwarts during the Sorting Ceremony. You're welcome to do so if you wish.

I have to confess I'm a bit new to this medium and not clear on the exact rules. I got several complaints about trying to put the omake in the middle of the story, and one reviewer suggested a separate story for Omake. This makes a lot of sense to me, and what I'd really like to do is have a separate story for Omake and Author's Notes on a per-chapter basis, so that anyone who wanted to get the Author's Notes could subscribe. But another person said the last chapter was against the Guidelines because I'm not allowed to reply to reviews, and while reading the Guidelines again didn't show me where it said *that*, the Guidelines *did* seem to say that I can't create a separate story for Author's Notes.

The best solution I've come up with is having my profile always contain the Author's Notes for the current chapter. This means a Note vanishes when the next chapter is posted, which I'm not really happy with as a solution - especially since it means the last Author's Notes were only left up for less than 24 hours - but my guess is that this will provide the best service to the most readers. I *am* saving the old Notes, and may put up a complete webpage containing them at some point or other.

I think that I shall go ahead and express a bit of surprise at all the people who wrote in to say, not just that they personally disliked the omake, but that it was a terrible, horrible bad thing that indicated disrespect for the readers. If you look at the reviews, you'll see that quite a few other people got quite a bit of pleasure out of it. Yes, I'm sure they were all morons, but my point is: does it really seem like posting omake was intended as a *personal insult* to you? Especially since it was my *first* try at posting omake and I had no idea how *you* would react? I am not going to censor myself *preemptively*. I do respond to reader feedback; if a lot of people hate something I probably won't do it again, and if everyone hates something I may go back and rewrite it. But I can't know the ratio of upvotes to downvotes until I *try*.

Right now, for example, I'm trying to put the Author's Notes in the profile, and assuming that since anyone who dislikes ANs won't encounter them, that means they're allowed to be a little longer and a little more personal. If that still doesn't work for you, let me know.

Please don't worry about this story changing too much to pander to the reviewers. In total seriousness, I could not do that if I tried. My problems have to do with being undersensitive, not oversensitive.

End of Author's Notes.

8/24/10

(Many thanks to ata for sharing this one.)

Author's Notes for Ch. 17, 'Locating the Hypothesis':

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up to Ch. 16.

Aaand people are still complaining about the divide by zero thing.

Look, just as a rationalist can benefit from trusting that reality itself is never confused or inconsistent, so too, a reader can benefit from trusting an author, if the author is worthy of that trust. Look at the early reviews for Chapter 13 and see how many people lost out on their enjoyment by assuming that I'd just given up and was writing crack. (Just for the record here, if I *was* writing a crackfic featuring Spock, Belgarath, Captain Vimes, Pham Nuwen, Kenny from South Park, and shipping Tohsaka Rin x Miles Vorkosigan, then by the end of the story there would be an unexpected yet logical revelation involving advanced anthropic arguments which would make it appear perfectly reasonable in retrospect that they were all speaking English.) Have some trust in me as an author. Haven't I earned it by now?

So yes, just as one would assume if one trusted the author, Hermione is making a *math joke*. People who are comfortable with math *do that*. I know why the compactness theorem for first-order logic implies that no first-order theory can express the concept of finiteness. I did not wake up one morning and forget that you are not allowed to divide by zero...

...oh, never mind. I give up. Edited to make Harry talk about $\lim_{\epsilon \rightarrow 0^+}$ approaching zero plus.

If everyone who complained about the joke would kindly send me your picture, we can add them as illustrations to the Wikipedia entry on "Pedant".

Sorry about the 10-day delay with this chapter, it really kicked my butt for some reason.

The first episode of this chapter was prompted as a response to reviews from voider and WaxWings.

End of Author's Notes.

5/2/10

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up to Ch. 18.

Two months. Over three thousand reviews. What can I possibly say, besides thank you?

Still, *_My Immortal_* had over eleven thousand reviews. You wouldn't want people to think that fic was better than this one, right?

Sorry about the pace slowing down. I started this fic partially to prove to myself that I could still write thousands of words per day, so long as I was doing something easier than the rationality book I was bogging down on. Now I've started pair writing (that means there's someone else next to me while I write the book) and my productivity has gone *way* up, but that in turn means I don't have as much free writing energy. But this is still fun, and the future chapters I have planned are too good *not* to write, so don't go worrying just yet. And hey, still updating pretty damn fast in an absolute sense. Oh, and not to be even more of a review whore or anything, but that thing where you write reviews begging the author to update? It totally works on me. (*Coughs.*)

Someone asked if Professor Blake was Anita Blake. Let me put it this way: Do you know any other Blakes who would teach Defense and get caught in a closet with three fifth-year Slytherins?

Congratulations to Vorpall on [SpaceBattles](#) for either (1) conducting a *flawlessly* rational analysis of Harry's Time-Turner experiment or (2) making the same mistakes I'm making on *every single point*, including our views of [free will](#) (see especially "Thou Art Physics" and "Timeless Control" in the solution sequence). I know it's not fair for me to meddle in a perfectly good Internet argument like that, but when someone says "It can't be ineffable if you're effing it" I've got to back them up, you know?

For those of you who, like me, sometimes have to look up details of canon: Severus Snape had a Muggle education up to the age of ten and was enough of a genius to be inventing his own spells by his fifth year at Hogwarts, at which time he was dating Lily Evans.

Rowling's typical point totals at the end of a Hogwarts year don't make mathematical sense to me, unless on average all four Houses are losing points about as fast as they are gained. If there are 3 classes a day, hence 15 classes a week, then if all 7 years of a House and their 115 classes per week gain only 30 points per week, there'd be well over a thousand points gained by the end of the year. That's not even counting Quidditch scores, which are apparently added directly onto the total House points (Harry in Book One gets caught wandering out of bounds, he and his friends lose 150 points, and Harry thinks about how he just lost all the points he gained as a Seeker). So are Houses also losing over a thousand points a year to end up with just a couple of hundred points left over? For purposes of this fic, I'm assuming that a typical point gain in a week is ~30 points, or ~50 points during the first week of classes when teachers are a bit more generous; a typical point loss in a week is ~10 points; and Harry's gain of 17 points on the first day was atypical; so there were ~50 points total in Ravenclaw after four days, as of the first class on Friday.

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End of Author's Notes.

8/24/10

(Many thanks to ata for sharing this one.)

Author's Notes for Ch. 19, 'Delayed Gratification':

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up to Ch. 19.

Double update time! If all goes according to plan, Ch. 20 will go up on Sunday morning.

There are 534 unread items in my RSS feed.

Do not read the Author's Note for Ch. 20 until *after* you have finished reading the chapter.

EDIT: Many reviewers complained that Ch. 19 was jarringly harsh. I tried an edit to make it less jarring, and will compare reviews before and after to see if the impact was lost as well. If the impact was lost, I shall restore the old version and damn the torpedoes...

...and it looks like the impact *was* retained in the new version! Thanks to everyone who criticized the old version for helping me become a stronger writer! You win, I lose, and please believe that if enough people tell me about my mistakes then I will stay up until 3AM struggling to fix them.

End of Author's Notes.

5/9/10

COME BACK AFTERWARD AND READ THIS WHEN YOU'RE DONE

It has been *agonizing*, waiting to get to this chapter. Up until now, all my conversations about this fic have been going like this:

Friend: "Words words Methods of Rationality words complimentary words"

Me: "Yeah... sure... thanks..."

(Thinks: *Voldemort horcruxed the Pioneer plaque.*)

Friend: "Words words can't wait for the next chapter words words"

Me: "Oh... okay..."

(Thinks: *My version of Voldemort has read the Evil Overlord List and knows about nuclear weapons and has HORCRUXED THE PIONEER PLAQUE because MY Voldemort is SMART. But I can't tell him that.*)

Friend: "Words words love what you've written so far words words"

Me: "Thanks... I guess..."

(Thinks: *Just wait until he reads about Voldemort horcruxing the Pioneer plaque.*)

Thanks to Yvain01 and Reborned for answering my request posted here earlier! Behold this fic's first fan art!

Version one (Yvain 01)

Version two (Reborned)

(Very slightly NSFW - contains Pioneer plaque, Pioneer plaque contains outline of a naked woman.)

This was the first chapter I wrote that made me cackle maniacally while I was writing it. I also cried for a while after writing their scene in starlight. Writing anything is about a hundred times as intense as reading it. Two orders of magnitude. Not kidding.

Don't worry, it won't be the last such chapter.

Wow was Ch. 19 controversial. Reactions ranging all the way from "I felt like I was Harry, learning what he was learning!" to "YOU SHOULD GO TO JAIL FOR ADVOCATING CHILD ABUSE." Many of you asked why Voldemort was strengthening his enemy.

Congratulations to cloudpiece on being the only reviewer to suggest that Lord Voldemort might possibly have an ulterior motive for teaching Harry Potter *how to lose*.

Don't get me wrong: Harry did learn a valuable lesson. It's also a dangerously double-edged lesson and someone who *wasn't Lord Voldemort* might have tried to teach it a little differently.

While patterns in which warm!Harry thinks are usually good techniques to learn - and this is always true if words like "rational" or "Bayesian" are invoked or Harry thinks about how he can cite literature - things which the *Dark* characters say should be treated with, well, suspicion? Professor Quirrell a.k.a. *Lord frickin' Voldemort* is not an author mouthpiece. I shall include a disclaimer at the top of Ch. 21 to this effect.

Since many reviewers are still asking if Quirrell is Voldemort, I tried putting in a final sentence from "Professor Quirrell's" point-of-view and got such reader outrage at the subtlety that I gave up and removed it. I am now seriously asking for help and suggestions on what I can do to make it clear to all readers that Professor Quirrell *is* Voldemort. So far we have the following facts:

- 1) canon!Tom Riddle applied to teach Defense at Hogwarts and put a curse on the position when he didn't get it.
- 2) canon!Quirrell is possessed by Voldemort.
- 3) It has been repeated within the fic that the Dark Lord has lost his last body but is somehow still alive.
- 4) The author has summarized the First Law of Fanfiction as "Frodo gets lightsaber, Sauron gets Death Star".
- 5) The Defense Professor at Hogwarts is
 - 5a) A drooling zombie
 - 5b) Who occasionally undergoes a drastic shift of personality *and*

5c) Becomes a genius *who*

5d) Loves the spell Avada Kedavra *and*

5e) Is extraordinarily knowledgeable about Battle Magic *and*

5f) Talks about how he always wanted to teach Defense at Hogwarts *and*

5g) Wanted to be a Dark Lord when he was a young Slytherin and made a list of all the mistakes he would never make *and*

5h) Talks about "pretending to lose", which he learned through a horribly humiliating experience in a martial arts monastery which was wiped out by Lord Voldemort shortly thereafter, except for one student who was a friend of his *and*

5i) Doesn't seem to understand why Harry *wouldn't* want to become a Dark Lord *and*

5j) Talks about how much he hates this flawed world *and*

5k) Has manipulated Harry into disliking Dumbledore *and*

5l) Thinks that when Harry knows him a little better, Harry will deduce that he would want to cast a spell on the Pioneer 11 plaque which will "make it last a lot longer".

The reader is supposed to know at this point that PQ is LV. How can I make it clearer without it being disruptive? If you have ideas, please share them.

hjdevnull offered a suggestion for fixing the fixed version of Ch. 19 which I tried my best to implement (change is to the section where Harry is being pushed around in a circle by the Slytherins).

On another note, some readers have complained about the part in Ch. 7 where Draco talks about raping Luna. One commenter on TV Tropes called it "random". It is *not* random. It serves an *unsubstitutable* literary purpose. There was literally *nothing else I could think of* that my readers would even *notice*, unless I wanted to have Draco eat someone's kitten, and *that wouldn't make sense*.

If you're wondering why I mention this now, I would like to offer the following brief exam.

Question 1: (70 points): Which of these characters has crossed the Moral Event Horizon?

(A) An eleven-year-old who talks about rape.

(B) An adult who tortures to death an entire martial arts monastery.

Question 2: (20 points): Which of the above two characters will get reviews saying that they are too horrible to read about and have permanently lost the reader's sympathy?

(A) The eleven-year-old.

(B) The adult.

Question 3: (10 points): How many reviews will even *mention* the thing with the monastery?

(A) 0

(B) 2

So... yeah. There was literally nothing else I could think of.

PS: This fic has now been given [its own TV Tropes page](#).

5/19/10

Author's Notes for Ch. 21, 'Rationalization':

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 21.

Thank you to Farsan for observing that readers may still doubt regardless of any hints, and *want* to doubt, and hope for a twist, and forgive the *lack* of a twist later, but *not* forgive a too-early revelation that leaves *no room* for twists. This makes things much clearer to me.

And thank you to another reviewer, I can't find the name, for observing that readers placed in a viewpoint character's perspective will tend to instinctively suppress knowing anything the viewpoint character doesn't know. This is a phenomenon I genuinely had no clue about as an author.

I guess I panicked at the thought of being unable to say something to my readers that I *wanted* them to know, that I wanted to *rely* on them knowing... of being *unable to share* something I'd waited a while to share... but I can also see now that I shouldn't have panicked, and that the work will survive a little extra mystery even if I didn't mean it to be mysterious.

Well, thanks for helping me to become a stronger writer, Farsan and whoever else.

So! Harry's first week has just ended, 21 chapters and ~130,000 words in.

And some of you are worried about pacing.

There's an old saying that if it's boring to write, it will probably be boring to read. One of my favorite anecdotes is from a writer who decided that he would write all the exciting, fun parts of his novel first, and go back and fill in the boring middle parts later. When he had finished writing *just the fun parts*, he looked over what he had, came to an important realization, and sent the finished work off to his editor.

Now this story has a plot, an arc, and a direction, but it does *not* have a set pace. What it has are chapters that are *fun to write*. I started writing this story in part because I'd bogged down on a book I was working on (now debugged), and that means my top priority was to *have fun writing again*.

And it's not the best algorithm for writing - it won't produce the most tightly designed works of literature - but when it comes to *having fun writing each chapter*, it's hard to beat the Algorithm of Awesome, which works as follows:

First, know the overarching direction in which your fic is going. Then, think of possible events that move in this direction. If they are *awesome*, add them to the plot. If they are *not awesome*, leave them out.

After I realized that this was the algorithm I was following, I came to the further realization that some of the events I had planned beyond Harry's first week were *not awesome*, which meant that they would be no fun to write, and also would look out of place in the rest of the fic. There may be a *short* delay in updating while I revise the plot and make sure the new version is plotted correctly, and also, er, take a bit of a break actually. A *short* break. Now I know you've heard that before, but *don't panic*. I already know where this story is going and how it ends; I have things already written that would eat me in my dreams if I never got to post them; and I couldn't stop writing this if I tried. Furthermore, people have figured out my real name, and my real-life friends have found this fic, and they know where I live. So please, don't worry.

PS: Oh, and just so you know, this fic was *almost* destroyed by a single comment from Sarky on NerinOnline:

I don't normally read fanfiction, but...

... but Harry Potter and the Methods of Rationality really is quite wonderful. And nobody gets tentacle raped or anything! ^_^

With some fast action and creative thinking, I managed to *contain* the damage Sarky did to this chapter. It's still in there - there was no way to get it out entirely - but at least you have to look *really closely* to see the tentacle rape.

Don't say things like that around me.

6/5/10

Author's Notes for Ch. 22, 'The Scientific Method':

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 22.

In Book 6, canon!Harry casts Sectumsempra on Draco, a curse which Harry knows is "for enemies", and, unfortunately, it works even though Harry doesn't know exactly what it's supposed to do. I've also been informed (I haven't read Book 6 yet) that Harry tries other unknown spells from the Half-Blood Prince's book to find out what they do, but hopefully I can get away with assuming that they also had some slight hints on them.

In Book 5, Padma Patil and Anthony Goldstein are appointed as Ravenclaw prefects, therefore they are Harry's scholastic competitors now. Harry's thoughts about them should be understood as rationalizing his observations of this canon-derived fact, rather than expressing my own opinions on which Ravenclaws would be expected to excel. This really ought to be clear by now, but Harry is *not* a self-insert, and I just write down what he thinks.

A reviewer pointed out that J. K. Rowling has declared Squibs to be, by definition, born to at least one magical parent; looking up the reference shows that she also said the magical gene was *dominant*. I'm not clear on how this is to be squared with the existence of Muggleborns, except, of course, by magic. Plus if the magical gene is dominant then almost all Muggleborns would presumably have only one copy, and then when two Muggleborns marry a quarter of the children would be Muggles. In this case I think I have to say that I'm just not sticking to JKR's rules, and also plead, of course, "but that wasn't in the books".

This is *the* most sciencey section which I have planned for the whole fic, so please don't panic about this being the start of an accelerating downward trend.

Please note that in this and the succeeding chapter, Harry's experimental work and reasoning and conclusions would be rejected by most scientific journals. Not saying it's *wrong*, just saying that modern scientists generally try to make their work look much more rigorous than this. (Practically all work done before the twentieth century would be rejected by any current journal; whether the higher standards are actually helping is a separate question.)

The *Journal of Irreproducible Results* was bought out and the entire editorial board moved to the *Annals of Improbable Research* which now inherits their tradition, but in 1991, when this story takes place, it was still known as the *Journal of Irreproducible Results*.

There've been complaints that the summary does not represent the story very well to interested readers. If you can think of a fair way to describe this story in 255 characters or less, let's hear it.

Those of you who are frantically clicking this every hour to see if it's updated - yes, I google "Methods of Rationality" and read your blog posts, so I know you're doing it - please keep in mind that you *can* subscribe to email alerts that will notify you of each new chapter.

Also, does anyone know where I can find a good, short summary of the seven books of canon, for the benefit of readers who are trying to read this without knowing anything about Harry Potter?

"He investigates things on his own rather than talking to adults in authority, just to name one thing; he's sorted into Gryffindor rather than Ravenclaw. (As is Hermione.) Also, Ron Weasley (who makes a cameo appearance in chapter 7 of the fic, then disappears) becomes his best friend, and Draco Malfoy his worst enemy. (Okay, not really his **worst** enemy, but with luck you get what I mean.)" -- David Goldfarb, trying to explain canon!Harry to someone who'd only read MoR.

"I have only read the first two books, so when I read the time-turner scene, I first believed that [Less Wrong] invented the artifact and the situation as an over-the-top satire of this phenomenon. Giving young children time-machines so they could attend more classes, yeah right. When I figured out that the scene is copied from the original books, I screamed in shock and outrage just like rationalist Harry did." -
- Daniel Varga [slightly edited]

Continuation will post sometime Sunday if all goes well.

6/6/10

Author's Notes for Ch. 22-23, 'The Scientific Method' and 'Belief in Belief':

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 23.

Chapter 22 notes:

In Book 6, canon!Harry casts Sectumsempra on Draco, a curse which Harry knows is "for enemies", and, unfortunately, it works even though Harry doesn't know exactly what it's supposed to do. I've also been informed (I haven't read Book 6 yet) that Harry tries other unknown spells from the Half-Blood Prince's book to find out what they do, but hopefully I can get away with assuming that they also had some slight hints on them.

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Chapter 23 notes:

Thank you to The Alec for seeding my second attempt at summarizing this fic.

First reviewer to note that humans aren't the only ones who can do magic: bluepard.

Many of you offered the suggestion that the accomplishments of Merlin and the Founders had been exaggerated. I confess I didn't think of this hypothesis - hopefully I would have if Harry had been putting forth a genuine and honest effort to list out all the alternatives. I did make an absent-minded mental note that there were many more than the six listed, but that sort of major branch is still the sort of thing I should have at least thought of. What Harry is *mainly* thinking about at this point is manipulating Draco! And as I already knew the true answer relative to the fic, I myself wasn't honestly curious.

But the main evidence against this hypothesis that we'd already seen (and which Harry also saw) is the Cloak of Invisibility. Dumbledore, the most powerful wizard in the world, holds the Cloak and tells us that he can't make such a thing, that the art has been lost. In other words, there are non-duplicable artifacts lying around as continuing proof of the lost powers. And of course, the fact that these artifacts continue to *function* but can no longer be *made* is major evidence favoring hypotheses 2 and 3 over 1. In fact it's considerably *stronger* evidence than the magical creatures. It's not clear that a Dementor or phoenix is as powerful as the spells that are being lost; fading ambient magic could still be enough to support all the magical creatures because they're just not as powerful as wizards. I decided that Harry would not say this to Draco, and then also decided that it was an honest oversight on Harry's part.

I apologize to everyone who got excited about this being a Magic Fades Away story, but (cough) you should've remembered the Cloak of Invisibility and what Dumbledore said about it, plus the Sorting Hat did suggest that there *were* lost secrets of its creation. Also (double cough) you probably should have

suspected Harry's motives for showing his *contagious alarm* so visibly, just as Draco was first considering a scary alternative hypothesis to blood purism. (First reviewer to note this: Guile.)

Some of you have now responded that the Cloak of Invisibility was made by Death. My own research suggests that the canon!explanation is that this is a fairy tale relative to the Harry Potter universe. In any case, *here* Dumbledore clearly states that the art has been lost, and there are similar artifacts such as the Sorting Hat whose makers are known.

Many of you suggested that too many wizards are sharing a limited supply of magic, which I also didn't think of; but this I don't consider a major branch apart from "magic is fading" (the effects are not easily distinguishable).

In chapters 22-23, Harry makes two major mistakes. The first mistake is betting too much on seeing the Mendelian pattern. His recent experience with Hermione should have taught him better than to stake his manipulation of Draco on finding what Harry's logic claimed should be there. But you don't *always* lose on *every* imprudent bet.

Harry's second mistake is that magic could be on a single *chromosome* while still involving many different *genes*, and chromosomal crossover with a nonmagical homologue of the chromosome could still be degrading the quality of the magic. Muggleborns could acquire degraded magic chromosomes from Squib ancestors, which degraded chromosomes would then be reintroduced into the wizarding population. Hermione is then born from Squibs with *recent* wizarding ancestors. In fact, the apparent frequency with which Squibs are born to wizards is a counterargument that there are large amounts of vulnerable DNA on the magic-bearing chromosome. It would admittedly be improbable for all the magical genes to be on one chromosome - unless, of course, that part of the chromosome is artificial! However, the logic that purebloods should then be noticeably more powerful still goes through.

The reason why Harry overlooks this is simple: He's read about Mendelian patterns and chromosomes in books of scientific history, but hasn't studied enough genetics specifically to know about chromosomal crossover, just like me when I was his age.

I realize this is going to sound odd, but Harry is not *supposed* to know all *that* much science. He's eleven.

End of Author's Notes.

6/10/10

Chapter 24 notes:

To all of my friends saying that this fic is now Harry/Draco, shut up or I'll ship Draco with McGonagall. Thank you.

6/12/10

Author's Notes for Ch. 25, 'Hold off on Proposing Solutions':

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 25.

You can't reasonably be expected to get this reference on your own, so the idea is that the Weasley twins are a metaphor for [Aumann's Agreement Theorem](#).

Because it's just that kind of fic. That's why.

One anonymous reviewer wrote: "I know I've arrived a bit late, but this story is incredible and I'm really liking it so far. Still, for your literary genius, I don't think you're capable of shipping Draco and McGonagall."

That would be *completely wrong* and it wouldn't fit into the story *at all* and it would be *impossible* to set that up while keeping everyone in character and it took my brain around thirty seconds to think of how to do it *anyway* and now I'm tempted to actually *do* it and *didn't I tell you not to say things like that around me?*

I may have to rule that this was an attempt at deliberate reverse psychology and refuse to be manipulated by it, though. Let's all hope.

End of Author's Notes.

6/15/10

Author's Notes for Ch. 26, 'Noticing Confusion':

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 26.

Thanks to Puto for noticing a really awful bug in the first published version of this chapter - I reversed 'warm' and 'cool' in the parable of the hot plate, so that the side nearer the fire felt warmer. It should be fixed now, but all I can say is AAAHHHHHHHHHHH and sorry.

Yes, there *is* a (canonical author-intended) solution to the impossible puzzle, but my current plan is that it will *not* just appear in the next chapter, though it will be mentioned in the fic eventually.

There's a lot of little things you can pick up on by reading this fic *twice*, instead of once. For example, rereading all of PQ's lines in Mary's Room, and imagining Skeeter listening to them.

I thought about whether to post this chapter now, or on Saturday to space things out. But after updating on Saturday, Sunday, Thursday, and Saturday, I thought I'd go for Tuesday, just because...

...well, I continue to deny that this is a self-insert fic. Harry is not made out of all my parts, and he is made out of several parts that are not me, except in the sense that all parts of all characters are made out of their authors somehow. I never had a mysterious dark side - no, not even as a kid. There are pieces of me that McGonagall gets to use and Harry doesn't, or that Professor Quirrell gets to use and Harry doesn't, or that Hermione gets to use and Harry doesn't, and so on. There's only so much of yourself that you have to go around between all your characters, and you want to split yourself up to

create interesting dynamics. That's the problem with writing a self-insert, it uses up all of you at once. But anyway...

...I *do* resemble Harry in that I am a wee little bit of a show-off. Did I mention that I'm writing a real book on rationality at the same time I'm doing this? Anyway I am feeling a bit tired now, and I hope I've earned some forgiveness if the next update takes longer than the last four.

Before anyone asks: No, I do *not* think that the world is a brighter place every time a journalist dies. Professor frickin' Quirrell is not an Author frickin' Mouthpiece.

But if a man named Declan McCullagh ever asks to interview you, tell him no.

6/26/10

Author's Notes for Ch. 27, 'Empathy':

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 27.

Erm, I have to say I'm a bit horrified by some of the reviews celebrating the death of Rita Skeeter. I know I didn't exactly write her as a sympathetic character, but consider yourselves lucky that the story's tone at this point didn't allow it, or Rita Skeeter would *have* two daughters attending Hogwarts, and the next scene would be Professor McGonagall calling them into her office to let them know that their mother went out on an assignment and never came back. I actually wrote some of that as a possible Omake. Maybe I'll finish it later.

Another possible Omake would be the scene in Mary's Room from Rita's point of view, her slight nervousness when Professor Quirrell mentioned having sealed the room, her sudden start when Professor Quirrell talked about tiny Animagi, her relief at hearing him say he wouldn't test for it, coupled with a growing fear that he already knew and was toying with her, followed by the shock of realizing that she had, somehow, been fooled by evidence that should have been unforgeable, knowing that she had to run before Lucius found her, run as fast as possible, but she was trapped in the room, listening to the words that Professor Quirrell made Harry repeat and suspecting with growing horror that she'd been righter in her article than she knew, her sudden frantic crawl as the waitress knocked and she realized that the door was about to open to let her out, and then her life ending so quickly that there wasn't even time to shift, just a single instant of realization before the crunch.

Maybe I'm just too sensitive, maybe it's just that as the author you live the life of every character in your stories, but I don't think Rita Skeeter was bad enough to deserve what, um, I did to her.

Some other readers have been saying a very silly thing, so let me state the following: It is possible that the human species has gotten through its entire history to date without a single professional editor ever sending back a story with a comment reading "This villain is too strong and needs to be weakened." Please bear this in mind when writing your own stories.

I know some of you really hate OCs, but Lesath Lestrangle was inspired by Jeremiah Lestrangle from "His Own Man" by Crunchysunrises, so he's not really *original*; you might consider it a sort of fanon, if that helps.

Those of you who are all like "Lily Evans was a good and virtuous woman and she broke off her friendship with Snape because he was studying Dark Arts, and she didn't go anywhere near James Potter until he stopped bullying", remember, Harry only knows the information Severus gave him. But also... a plain and poor boy is a good friend to a beautiful girl for years, and loves her, and pursues her fruitlessly; and then when the rich and handsome bully cleans up his act a bit, she goes home with him soon after... considering just how *normal* that is, I don't think you're allowed to write it and not have people at least *wonder*.

Nikara wrote in a review: "Harry reminds me so much of the kids at the gifted summer camp that I work at. His plots and the way that he speaks sounds so much like a CTY kid that it's almost uncanny."

Gosh, I thought to myself, *who could these mysterious "CTY kids" possibly be* -

No, I lie, I already knew that "CTY" was the Center for Talented Youth at John Hopkins, and a "CTY kid" was a high scorer on the tests they administer as part of their nationwide Talent Search program.

So, um... good call, that.

7/3/10

Author's Notes for Ch. 28, 'Reductionism':

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 28.

I'm not really happy with the way Ch. 28 came out, which is why I'm posting Ch. 29 on Sunday. Maybe it's just me, maybe not.

Luosha reasonably points out that the simulationist theory of empathy isn't quite a known scientific fact - there's some evidence pointing in that direction, and I can't honestly pretend I believe that the brain contains entirely separate chunks of neural circuitry for being angry and simulating other people being angry, but it's not like we completely mapped and analyzed the brain and proved it. Much the same could be said of timeless formulations of quantum mechanics: throwing out time produces such an increase in elegance that I can't imagine that the final theory will keep it, but that is not quite the same as proof. I'll include disclaimers for both in the heading of the next chapter; it would break up the rhythm too much here.

Yes, they had carbon nanotubes in 1991, I checked. Although what they *didn't* have in 1991 was the term "planning fallacy". I am indeed allowing some degree of timelessness in science, though not technology, and it's an interesting literary question which heading carbon nanotubes fall under - though in this case, moot.

End of Author's Notes.

7/4/10

Author's Notes for Ch. 28-29, 'Reductionism' and 'Egocentric Bias':

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 29.

Luosha reasonably points out that the simulationist theory of empathy isn't quite a known scientific fact - there's some evidence pointing in that direction, and I can't honestly pretend I believe that the brain contains entirely separate chunks of neural circuitry for being angry and simulating other people being angry, but it's not like we completely mapped and analyzed the brain and proved it. Much the same could be said of timeless formulations of quantum mechanics: throwing out time produces such an increase in elegance that I can't imagine that the final theory will keep it, but that is not quite the same as proof. I'll include disclaimers for both in the heading of the next chapter; it would break up the rhythm too much here.

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Literally *no one* seems to have gotten Aftermath 2 to Ch. 28, so I guess I made that one too subtle. Sigh. Still learning, I guess.

The name for Ch. 29 doesn't really fit, but it was the best I could manage to convey the notion that everyone has their own story with themselves as the protagonist.

End of Author's Notes.

7/26/10

Author's Notes for Ch. 30-31, 'Working in Groups' pt. 1 & 2:

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 31.

I am proud to announce that this fic now features celebrity endorsements from New York Times bestselling authors [David Brin](#) and [Eric S. Raymond](#).

(Of course the Dark Lord Potter forum still has this fic in the Recycling Bin.)

Tsukiko-Moonchild produced [this piece of fan art](#) for MoR, unfortunately before reading the whole fic, so (as the artist noted) it doesn't *quite* fit the Verresverse... But it still made me happy. It feels good to inspire art. And now I'm craving more. How does one go about getting fan art? Does anyone know?

I've been wondering about the pacing of future chapters, and I suspect that some of them will do better from being broken up into pieces of varying length, some very short. I hope this is okay with everyone,

providing that I post all of the pieces simultaneously. So this is the experiment, and if for some reason you really hate it, let me know.

I suspect that some of you will be a bit disappointed that Ron Weasley has started existing again. Well... Ron may not exist for Harry or Draco, but he surely exists for Hermione, and to make it be otherwise would defeat the whole point of this chapter.

7/26/10

Author's Notes for Ch. 32, 'Coordination Problems' pt. 1:

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 32.

If you're lucky, I'll finish writing the next chapter sometime Sunday, probably late Sunday, and post it then. But my friends have been complaining about withdrawal symptoms, so I thought I'd better just post what I have.

(That's what you get for complaining about withdrawal symptoms, by the way.)

I had less fun writing this chapter than any of the others, which is probably one reason it took so long (besides the fact that I've been busy the last couple of weeks). My original plot outline didn't have this chapter in it. It just went straight to the final result before Christmas. And then I realized my readers would probably lynch me if I tried that. But I hadn't thought of anything awesome for the final battle. And I was *stuck*, because I didn't want a final battle that was completely uninteresting, and I'd used up all my good ideas on the *first* battle and set a standard I couldn't live up to, and it took me a while to come up with a premise, and then even longer to realize what the chapter's rationality-theme was, and that made it even harder to write... yeah, that all wasn't fun for me.

What fun? New [fan art](#) for Ch. 18 by Lanthanum, and for Ch. 30, [fan music](#) no less by Entropic Specter, who wrote, "Jeez, now look what you've done. You've made me make up a simple tune to sing the Sunshine Regiment's marching song to, and I'm horrible at making music! Oh well, have it anyway."

I've decided that anyone who creates fan works gets a (very brief) cameo while supplies of nameable characters last. Scott is Yvain, Matt is Reborned, Cesi is Lanthanum, Specter is Entropic Specter, and Ali and Bogdan are forward references. You also get a link to your home page or webcomic or whatever, though so far no one has asked for one.

Oh, and I *finally* got to incorporate one of my own research topics into the fic.

Several reviewers have asked why dangerous!Transfiguration allows Professor McGonagall to Transfigure her desk into a pig that breathes in oxygen and breathes out a snort of carbon dioxide.

So the first answer is that I wrote that in because it was in canon, and didn't realize it was a problem until some reviewers pointed it out. Congratulations, you win.

With that said, the obvious retroactive rationalizations are as follows: (1) Professor McGonagall used a specialized Charm rather than free Transfiguration. This is the generic explanation I left open for anything in canon that doesn't fit the rules. (2) For the same reason organisms don't eat their own waste products, pigs don't breathe out anything that'll end up incorporated when another mammal breathes it in. Plants might be in trouble, but not people. (I have no idea whether this is actually true.) (3) Once magic is in the mix, things don't work by reductionist chemistry any more, they work by Forms like the ancient Greeks believed in. Just because the desk has been Transfigured into the Form of a pig doesn't mean that the carbon dioxide breathed out has an actively Transfigured Form; the carbon dioxide has had its own Form permanently transformed by something that was Transfigured, rather than having any change maintained by active magic. Contradicted to some extent by what I had McGonagall say about a constant loss of the body's matter to the atmosphere, but I could always go back and delete that. (4) The first wizards to experiment with Transfiguration didn't realize that there ought to be a problem, so there isn't one. (5) It's an [emergent phenomenon](#)

Kevin S. Van Horn writes: "Harry is wrong in thinking that 'He wouldn't have just shown that $P=NP$ once you had a Time-Turner, this trick was more general than that.' First of all, the problems in NP are precisely those where a solution, if it exists, can be checked in polynomial time. Thus, any problem you can solve in polynomial time with a Time-Turner is in NP. Secondly, there's the issue of what happens if no solution exists. In that case, what information do you send back in time that would let you verify in polynomial time that no solution exists? You'd have to send back some information that can be used to prove, in polynomial time, that there is no solution. This is the definition of co-NP. Thus the Time-Turner will only give you polynomial-time solutions to problems that are in **both** NP and co-NP. As a concrete illustration, consider the Traveling Salesman Problem. A salesman wants to visit each of N cities one time each and finish back at the city from which he started, and he wants to minimize the total distance traveled. To use the Time-Turner to solve this, you could get a tour (a specific order in which to visit the cities) back from the future, and you can quickly compute the length of this tour. But how do you know that there is no shorter tour?"

I'd dispute that "find the password to this network" or "find Slytherin's Chamber of Secrets" can legitimately be said to be in NP, but the point about co-NP is well-taken.

8/7/10

Author's Notes for Ch. 32, 'Personal Financial Management', and Ch. 36-37, 'Status Differences' & 'Crossing the Boundary'

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 37.

So first of all, my apologies for the snafu with 'Personal Financial Management'. I wrote this *after* I started, and *before* I finished, 'Coordination Problems', and thought that I could wrap all the Christmas sections into one narrative, via the device of a flashback. And then when I *finished* 'Coordination Problems', I realized the tone had changed, and the flashback wouldn't work. So I have inserted the chapter and then moved it into place as the new Ch. 32, which may well entail some sort of

inconvenience, and is probably a bit jarring for ongoing readers; but for all those readers who will come after, this is the best way, I think.

Expect delays on the next update. Next weekend I'll be speaking in San Francisco at a certain conference alongside James Randi (our planet's most famous skeptic, my father was on Milt Rosenberg's radio show with him around two decades ago, how time doth pass) and John Tooby (one of the founders of the field of evolutionary psychology, with whom I may get to discuss the evolutionary psychology of human general intelligence, which I've been wanting to do since forever, yay!)

It was a nice suggestion, but I don't think I can *actually* get away with starting off my talk by saying "happy happy boom boom swamp swamp swamp". And unless he's reading the fic, we probably can't get Ray Kurzweil to say it either. Maybe I can get away with sneaking it onto a Powerpoint slide. Interestingly, my own talk shall touch upon the theme of a shortly-upcoming MoR chapter, but I doubt I'll actually be able to time it for simultaneity, fun as that would be.

(I'm not actually going to link to the conference, but I shall venture that if you were to google James Randi plus John Tooby plus Ray Kurzweil, that would point you in the correct direction.)

Latest fan art: [Three pieces by](#) Dinosaurusgede (write me so I know what name to give your cameo!), [Skay-39](#) (Leo in Ch. 36, final panel is unrelated doodle), and [Inwitari Turelie](#) (Tania in Ch. 34) who I forgot to mention last time.

8/3/10

Author's Notes for Ch. 33-34, 'Coordination Problems' pt. 2 & 3:

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 34.

...Yeah, I know I said I'd break them up into small pieces and post them simultaneously, but these pieces aren't too small, are they? 5000 words is an okay size for a real chapter.

There is now [an awesome PDF version](#) of *Methods of Rationality* due to Bogdan Butnaru (cameo in 32, better cameo pending). This version, thanks to a bit of advance coordination, has Ch. 1-34; future PDFs might not always update with new chapters at the same time they're posted. If there's strong demand for a PDF version that updates at the same time as the chapter, let me know.

There is new art from [Alicorn](#) (webcomic, [Hi to Tsuki to Hoshi no Tama](#), cameo pending), from [Inwitari Turelie](#) (Tania in Ch. 34) from [Krepta17](#) (Kimberly in Ch. 34), and **some truly beautiful fan art from [UnknownCartoonsLover](#)** (cameo pending).

I don't *think* most future chapters are going to be this Xanatos. I think I just had to get it out of my system by writing, at least once in my life, something more complicated than *Death Note*. In fact someone said it was more complicated than *Primer* and that was just part 1. Note that in this case, we have Harry plotting to *deliberately cause a Thirty Xanatos Pileup* among the soldiers of the other armies, which I propose should have a Xanatos Ordinal of $w+1$ (that is, omega plus one). Considering that the

chaos of the complete battle, *including* Harry's own plot and Dumbledore's, was used by Professor Quirrell to make the point of his speech, it is clear that the complete Xanatos Flowchart for this chapter would have an Xanatos Ordinal of at least $2w+1$.

A word on the rules this fic follows. It is *not* a strict single point of departure. Changes from the original Harry Potter universe may occur for any of the following reasons:

- 1) Changes growing out of the fic's single point of departure - a single event that happened differently, at some point in the past. For example, Petunia seems to have married a scientist.
- 2) Changes that smooth over the seams of the universe. When Rowling wrote the first book, it seems likely that she had not yet decided that there was a systematic, reliable curse on the Defense position. But of course, if the curse really had been operating for decades, everyone would have noticed and would be *expecting* something to go wrong with Professor Quirrell.
- 3) Changes that result from taking a hypothesis more seriously. For example, if Harry Potter had really saved the whole nation on October 31st, 1981, wouldn't politicians invite him to ceremonies marking the 10th anniversary?
- 4) Changes to the laws of magic so that, y'know, there *are* some. There are stories which can get away with having the laws of magic be unclear, because they are part of the background setting rather than the plot. This is not one of those stories.
- 5) Changes that result from this not being a children's book. Writing a children's book is much harder than writing a story for grownups. *I* can't do it. Therefore this is a story for grownups... and *that* means it is impossible that an evil Peter Pettigrew is hiding out as Scabbers, the pet rat of an enemy wizarding family. In a children's book, this can be taken in passing. In a story for grownups, it would mean Pettigrew was holding the Idiot Ball. It is a general law of MoR that no one is ever holding the Idiot Ball.
- 6) Changes that result from a general philosophy of upgrading obstacles to match the more powerful protagonist. One illustration of this is that in *Goblet of Fire*, there is a point where canon!Harry on a broomstick faces a dragon called the Hungarian Horntail... which in Ch. 16 of *Methods* is said to breathe fire quickly and accurately enough to melt a Snitch in midflight, implying that canon!Harry would have gotten roasted in an instant if he'd tried the same thing in this universe. But of course the Triwizard Tournament could not possibly take place the same way in this universe, because this is not a children's story, and in a grownup story that plan would require Lord Voldemort to be holding the complete set of all seven Idiot Balls.
- 7) Changes that are required to make the fic artistically complete when seen against the background of Harry Potter fanfiction, such as including at least one completely wrong ship.

I've posted a disclaimer in chapter one to this effect ("This is *not* a strict single-point-of-departure fic"). If anyone thinks this was a *bad* idea, now would be a good time to speak up.

Author's Notes for Ch. 38-40, *The Cardinal Sin* and *Pretending to be Wise* pts 1 & 2.

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 40.

[Warnings](#) on this story *will update* on a certain future chapter. I have *not* yet added any spoilers to the warnings page, but I have added the anticipated name of the future chapter (still some way ahead), so that anyone worried about those sorts of warnings will be able to check the warnings page when they see that chapter title. This is so that I don't have to post, at the top of a key chapter, anything as spoilery as "Warnings have updated."

Even more fan art from the increasingly awesome Dinosaurusgede for [Ch. 6](#), [Ch. 7](#), and [Ch. 17](#). Dinosaurusgede has cameo'd as Mr. Durian in Ch. 38 - I felt he deserved a major speaking part for all that. Also fan art by [Dnaliw](#) for Ch. 18, [Auddie](#) for Ch. 32, and [Kuzosama](#) for Ch. 27. Kuzosama, please contact me with your cameo information.

I expect some people won't like Ch. 39. Rest assured that it's the only plotted chapter of its kind. No other long dialogues have been planned, but I didn't see how I could avoid this one. Ch. 39 is also the largest change I needed to make to Rowling's laws of magic, emphasis on *needed* - otherwise, you perceive, character motivation goes out the window - and I plan no other deviation that large or significant.

It's an interesting question as to whether Harry is behaving as a Flat Earth Atheist with respect to his skepticism about an afterlife. To be rational, you want to have the sort of mind that, if it finds itself in a world with no afterlife, doesn't believe in an afterlife, and if it finds itself in a world with an afterlife, does believe in an afterlife. J. K. Rowling clearly believed that the Potterverse had an afterlife, and wrote it accordingly; if Harry finds himself in that universe, and he still doesn't believe in an afterlife, that's not necessarily a good sign for his rationality.

On the other hand, J. K. Rowling probably wrote the Potterverse using standard patterns she'd picked up about afterlife beliefs - what a LessWrong.com reader would call "cached thoughts". And of course these cached thoughts about 'what it means for there to be an afterlife' are all drawn from people in *this* universe claiming that *this* universe has an afterlife. Rowling is used to the idea that people who believe in an afterlife still cry at funerals, i.e., that people who profess to [believe in](#) an afterlife don't *anticipate-as-if* their dead friends just took a one-way trip to Australia. And Rowling didn't change that when she put her characters into a world with a Resurrection Stone. So instead of behaving like the people in Robert Sheckley's "Immortality Inc.", to whom immortality is simply a fact, the people in Rowling's Potterverse still cry at funerals, and make desperate sacrifices to protect the lives of their friends, and are devastated at their deaths; and Voldemort is still frantic for immortality at any cost, even the cost of fracturing his immortal soul so that it gets stuck in Limbo forever, which doesn't seem like a wisely calculated cost-benefit tradeoff.

But thankfully, despite her own belief that the Potterverse had an afterlife, Rowling nonetheless managed not to depict anything in her stories that would provide *strong evidence* of an afterlife - something you would *only* see in a world with an afterlife, that you wouldn't see in any other probable world. At least it looks that way as far as I can tell.

So people can doubt it without being stupid.

And that's all the story needs.

8/26/10

Author's Notes for Ch. 41, *Interlude: Frontal Override*

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 41.

Multiple reviewers have requested that short chapters be posted separately as they are written, rather than waiting until a large update can be posted all at once. I am endeavoring to serve accordingly. If anyone doesn't like that, speak ye upward.

For some odd reason, Fanfiction.net seems to be taking a while to show the new chapter after I post it. It didn't used to do that. So I'll post in the early morning when possible, to minimize the number of disappointed readers who click through immediately, in case that happens again. If this keeps up I may have to look elsewhere for mirroring.

New fan diagram by [Christopher Olah](#), and a 1MB GIF fan *animation* by [Lanthanum](#). Auddie gave her cameo to her boyfriend Samuel, and Dnaliw has cameo'd as Charlotte.

To be clear, the last A/N was saying that Rowling believed in an afterlife for the Potterverse, *not* that an afterlife necessarily exists in the MoR!verse. I don't know anything about that which Professor Quirrell doesn't.

Desertopa correctly observes of Ch. 39, "There are certainly ways Dumbledore could have responded to Harry's objections, and there are responses to those responses, and further responses to *those*. Notice how religious threads have a tendency to stretch out over ten pages on a regular basis?"

To those who think the argument was rigged because Dumbledore did not present Argument #127 in favor of death, rest assured that Harry did not present Argument #128 in favor of life, either. It's not like I had Harry quote the priests who, back when smallpox inoculation was being introduced, said that inoculation was "an encroachment on the prerogatives of Jehovah, whose right it is to wound and smite". (Yes, there was a whole backlash against smallpox inoculation by all the deeply wise priests who'd been going around explaining to the bereaved parents how smallpox was a necessary part of God's master plan, and if you read that history it all sounds *remarkably* like the sort of arguments that are being leveled nowadays against researchers who want to do basic research on curing aging...) By a similar token, there's no way that Dumbledore would ever have said anything along the lines of "But if everyone were immortal, wouldn't there be a population explosion?" or "If everyone were immortal, wouldn't the scientific process be gummed up by all the old scientists staying around instead of dying off?" Not *only* would that have been totally out of character for him, an argument like that is claiming that death is a *necessary evil* - that if we could just build liquid fluoride thorium reactors, or legislate that each immortal couple have at most 2 children (*linear* growth being quite manageable), then death would no longer be necessary and we could all live happily ever after. Which is *not* what Dumbledore believes at *all*. And claiming that *we all ought to die* just so that *science can move along faster* is a *silly*

argument, you'd just pass a law forcing senior scientists to retire, not *kill* them. If I'd had Dumbledore say *that*, it would have (a) depicted Dumbledore as clutching at straws to defend death rather than speaking from his heart, and (b) given Harry a much-too-strong position from which to crush Dumbledore with the obvious rejoinders. And that, needless to say, is *not* what Ch. 39 was about. It is what would *actually happen* between that Harry and that Dumbledore, as best as I could possibly write it down.

Some people thought that I was throwing the debate to Harry. Apparently I am so terribly incompetent at throwing debates that I managed to *accidentally* write Harry as angry and Dumbledore as calm. And accidentally have Professor Quirrell exude a deathly chill while he agrees with Harry. And accidentally describe Dumbledore's hand as "a little wizened by time, but still strong". (No, dears, this is not the same way Ayn Rand wrote *Atlas Shrugged*.) Along the same lines, and with more or less the same degree of plausibility, someone also thought that I was so terribly incompetent at math as to not know how induction works on positive integers. This degree of mistrust in the author can decrease a reader's enjoyment of a story, so while individuals are of course entitled to distrust whoever they like, I do suggest that sort of *unrealistic* distrust ought to be kept out of the main TV Tropes page, and moved to the discussion section. Thank you.

End of Author's Notes.

8/27/10

Ch. 42:

Because the fic wouldn't have been artistically complete without it, that's why.

Okay, I'll post short chapters as they're done, and for long connected chapters with lots of pieces, only post when there's enough pieces to warrant a major update. I'll also try to avoid deleting Author's Notes after short periods. Hopefully this gives everyone something to dislike.

Dinosaurugede just keeps getting better. Fan art for [Ch. 24](#), [Ch. 26](#), and [Ch. 30](#), plus an updated version of [Ch. 17](#).

FYI: *Not* complaining to everyone who posted their own arguments about the afterlife in reviews! I am annoyed rather at the assertion made by some readers, probably not you, that Dumbledore not saying X meant I was throwing the debate.

Note that we never see *anyone* defend the lifeist position in J. K. Rowling's original books, not even to the extent of a single word, and the only pro-immortality character is depicted as having thereby turned into a horrible snake-creature. And Rowling later claimed that the Harry Potter series was a story about death; if we take her seriously about that, then that treatment can't be passed off as a casual background assumption either. So I will openly call that a flaw, and note that it is the *only* aspect of Rowling's work that I have called a flaw in any Author's Note. And I shall be pleased to accept criticism of MoR as overly lifeist from anyone who can point me to a comment, review, blog post, or any other

published item, dated before August 26th, 2010, wherein they complained that Rowling's work was too deathist.

9/5/10

Author's Notes for Ch. 43-46, *Humanism* Pts 1-4.

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 46.

ADDED1: No, I'm not saying Lily Potter was being selfish! She could've just walked away if she was being selfish! The point was that she realized that even if she did let Voldemort murder her, that wouldn't save Harry either. I've deleted a line of text, which will hopefully decrease confusion upon this point.

ADDED2: I know that Rowling *says* that Dementors represent depression, not Death. But if the Ravenclaw door asks you, "What looks like a corpse, is unkillable by any known means, puts you into a permanent unhealable coma with a single kiss, and can only be temporarily fended off using happy thoughts formed into the shape of an animal?" and you answer "Depression", you ain't gettin' in there. I don't even consider this interpretation a *departure* from canon. Those things are Death.

ADDED3: Ponicalica: "Could Ryougi Shiki kill a Dementor?" ...that is just *so* much more interesting than Star Destroyer vs. USS Enterprise, I can't even begin to describe it.

New fan arts by Dinosaurusgede: [Malfoy's Dragon Army](#) and [Potter's Chaos Legion](#). (Lest some viewers be confused: membership shown is not exactly MoR!canon.) New cameos: Dinosaurusgede is Auror Komodo, UnknownCartoonsLover is Auror Goryanof, and Bogdan Butnaru is Auror Butnaru. Yes, if you do that much work you can get more than one cameo.

And now.

Ahem.

If you'll excuse me, I'd like to go on a bit of a rant about some of the more idiot responses to Ch. 42, namely the ones who said "OMG this fic is now slash and I'm too good to read slash so I'm going to stop reading and let everyone know that!"

The obvious response to this would be to start inserting actual slash. But while I'd willingly take a pill that made me bisexual, this pill does not yet exist, so right now, writing actual slash would be about as much fun for me as a root canal.

So behold this rant, then:

I think of myself as someone who deliberately cuts against the grain of status and prestige. Which, of course, is something that everyone likes to think about themselves. But then again, my claim *does* have a certain credibility, because I had a reputation as a "real" writer before I started writing Harry Potter fanfiction, and I did that with malice aforethought to intentionally drop myself down multiple levels on the Geek Hierarchy. Snobbery offends me; I am offended by people who are prejudiced against beauty because of its form or its medium. I am offended by people who think "Calvin and Hobbes" can't be real

art because it's a comic strip, and I can curse them with no darker fate than that they go look at some ugly, pointless, fake "modern art" that will impress their friends more. And I am equally offended by people who look down on fanfiction because it's fanfiction, who'd take something beautiful like "Always and Always" and turn up their noses at it. So I write Harry Potter fanfiction and be damned to them all. Someday, when I think I can get away with it, I will write deep intellectual self-insert pornography that is even better than MoR just so I can watch people's heads explode.

That, at any rate, was the damn-the-torpedoes, screw-the-critics, defiant iconoclastic spirit in which I decided to write this wacky little story just for fun, during my downtime from working on a nonfiction rationality book.

I should not have been surprised, but I was, to find my work being read by many people who took their Harry Potter fanfiction *extremely seriously*, and who were shocked at the way I was casually violating some of their most cherished artistic conventions.

And if I claimed that there was anything *odd* about taking Harry Potter fanfiction just as seriously as, say, 18th-century classical music, then I would of course be revealing *myself* as a great big snobby snob.

I came in thinking that I was making a great show of defiant iconoclastic spirit by writing Harry Potter fanfiction, and that means I wasn't nearly as iconoclastic as I thought. And for this I am heartily ashamed.

However.

If you think that *everyone* who writes Harry Potter fanfiction should take it as seriously as you take yours, and that it is sinful for anyone to enjoy it unless it's done *exactly your way* according to *your* favorite artistic conventions, then you are being a snob about *Harry Potter fanfiction*. I am just barely sensitive enough to the status conventions of the real world to notice that this is a tiny bit incongruous.

Don't get me wrong. You can write Harry Potter fanfiction. You can take it seriously. You can craft it with care. You can make it mature, emotional, and deep. You can have artistic conventions, and criticism of work that tries to obey those conventions and fails. And you can do all that with a straight face, because beauty knows no law but beauty.

What you *cannot* do with a straight face is be a great big snobby snob about Harry Potter fanfiction.

You cannot, for example, claim that *your* kind of Harry Potter fanfiction is real art, but that no Harry Potter fanfiction which involves slash can possibly be taken seriously.

Not unless you have stayed in your tiny little corner of the Internet for so long that you have totally lost perspective on what the rest of the world thinks about Harry Potter fanfiction in the first place.

Thank you.

End of Author's Notes.

9/25/10

Author's Notes for Ch. 47, *Personhood Theory*.

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 47.

Raise your hand if you also thought that the part of the movie "*Up!*" where dogs were revealed to be sentient was like, a billion times more significant than anything else that happened during the movie.

Sorry about the three-week delay. I was working on a difficult project, and also, for some reason, Ch. 47 was incredibly hard to write. It is my new least favorite chapter, though I have learned to my surprise that the chapters I don't like are often not disliked by readers. I suppose that, even though it sounds deeply wise, "If it wasn't fun to write, it won't be fun to read" may not actually be, y'know, *true*.

I'm still undecided, but I *may* post Pt. 0 (the prelude) of the next sequence late on Sunday. I'm beginning to think that I can't get away with having an official policy about how to post sequences, besides just "going with my intuitions" or "posting things that I want to get off my mind" or "cruelly torturing my readers".

New fan arts: [Dinosaurusgede](#), [Dinosaurusgede](#), [EStokes](#), [Dinosaurusgede](#), [Dinosaurusgede](#), [Dinosaurusgede](#), [Bojanglethe3rd](#), [MathAndChaos](#), [Reborned](#), and a slightly rearranged movie version of Harry's monologue in Ch. 45 by [Yvain01](#). And I'm not quite going to count [this](#) as cameoworthy, but nonetheless, I'm flattered.

I should note that the original version of Ch. 7, the one I first posted, did mention Narcissa, before I went back and retconned it after further plotting. Hopefully most of you didn't read that version and the rest of you forgot, but if anyone is having a memory anomaly, that's probably where it's from.

This seems like the appropriate chapter to link to my *other* widely read (shorter) story, [Three Worlds Collide](#), which contrasted to Ch. 47 may help break the illusion that any given character of mine is equal to the Mind of the Author. For mature audiences only.

MoR now has over 7,000 reviews, which I think puts MoR into the top ten most reviewed Harry Potter fics on fanfiction.net, hence probably the top ten most reviewed Harry Potter fics period. Thanks! By the way, I note that *the* most reviewed story on FF.net is a *Twilight* fanfic called "Masters of the Universe" with 56,000 reviews, which could well make it the most reviewed story on the Internet, and that if *everyone* reading MoR reviewed just their three favorite chapters, we could easily top that.

I am amazed that not a single person got the hint in Ch. 45. Or at least, if anyone did, they didn't review it. I thought I was being pretty blatant that time, guess I was wrong. Say, you know what I envy J. K. Rowling? I envy that she has the sort of readers where if she writes the initials R.A.B., people will pour through all her previous books looking for a character with those initials and solve the hint. 'Cuz I *have* been diligently embedding hints all through MoR. I bet that if you were to reread MoR and copy everything that looks like a hint into a separate document, and then look through all of the hints at once, you would, like, notice some stuff. Just sayin'.

A word of advice: When you are recommending this fic to friends, do not tell them that Harry destroys a Dementor. One reviewer noted that Dementor destruction has been done many, many times, and to their knowledge, it was done well exactly *once*, and that was in Ch. 45 of this fic. It is a legendarily awful mark of horrible HP fanfiction, which is one of the reasons I did it, knowing full well that afterward nobody would ever be able to do it again. There is, however, no possible way to convey "there's a Dementor takedown, only it's good" to someone who hasn't read the fic. Not only is it a spoiler, there is just no way they'll *believe* you. It's like trying to say, "Ch. 42 has Professor Quirrell saving Harry from certain death at the hands of a yaoi fangirl horde, only it's not crack." If someone hasn't seen that, they won't believe it just because you say so.

Notes that were added to the *Humanism A/N*, in case anyone missed them:

1: No, I'm not saying Lily Potter was being selfish! She could've just walked away if she was being selfish! The point was that she realized that even if she did let Voldemort murder her, that wouldn't save Harry either. I've deleted a line of text, which will hopefully decrease confusion upon this point.

2: I know that Rowling *says* that Dementors represent depression, not Death. But if the Ravenclaw door asks you, "What looks like a corpse, is unkillable by any known means, puts you into a permanent unhealable coma with a single kiss, and can only be temporarily fended off using happy thoughts formed into the shape of an animal?" and you answer "Depression", you ain't gettin' in there. I don't even consider this interpretation a *departure* from canon. Those things are Death.

3: Ponicalica: "Could Ryougi Shiki kill a Dementor?" ...that is just *so* much more interesting than Star Destroyer vs. USS Enterprise, I can't even begin to describe it.

4: After Daphne says to Tracey, "You know what that would make you? The sad little lovestruck girl who dies at the end of Act Two", and Tracey shouts "You take that back!", I *almost* had Daphne say, "[Isn't it sad, Tracey?](#)"

End of Author's

10/6/10

Author's Notes for Ch. 48, *Utilitarian Priorities*.

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 48.

Ch. 48 notes:

The next chapter, "Prior Information", should go up in the next couple of days.

New fan art by [Abigail](#) (cameo pending, [her webcomic](#)). MathAndChaos has cameo'd as Casey McNamara.

[Wing Chen](#) has translated the first chapter of *Methods of Rationality* into Chinese. Does anyone know of good software for group translation projects, or, failing that, does anyone with sufficient time to make the commitment want to set up a central *Methods of Rationality* translations page and coordinate the efforts of any and all volunteer translators? (This [Hollow Ataraxia](#) translation project seems to be using some sort of interesting software, but I don't believe it's standard.)

Arielrondil gets credit for being first to observe the implications of a *speak with plants* spell. I also see that "The Unfortunate Implications of Parsletongue" [sic] was a thread in the Dark Lord Potter forum - started by someone with a *Methods of Rationality* quote in his signature, no less. Rest assured that the Dark Lord Potter forum lived up to its usual standard, if not quite perhaps its *advertised* standard, for intelligent and informed discussion.

When I started writing Chapter 1 of this fic I misremembered Petunia as fat, while canon describes her as overly thin. (When I wrote Chapter 1, I didn't know if anyone was going to be interested at all in a fic like this, so I didn't do the checking my reviewers have now trained me to do.) Several people have complained about this, so I've now edited Chapter 1 so that Lily's potion makes Petunia prettier but does not make her lose weight *per se*.

Since the last A/N a number of people have discussed hints and gotten a few good ones, including one reader who got a hint in Ch. 46 that was so subtle that I didn't think *anyone* was going to get it. You have restored my faith in my readership.

A request:

When one writes nonfiction like, say, an explanation of quantum mechanics or Bayes's Theorem, and publish it online for free, it's widely viewed as a public service. And if one encourages people to link to it, well, that's just trying to promote some free helpful online materials - it's not like you're trying to sell them an expensive textbook.

I do worry that things might be different in the fanfiction community, where all fanfiction is free, and not charging for your material isn't seen as so much of a public service. And so I fear that asking people to, say, blog this fic, might be seen as too much self-promotion... but in point of fact MoR is intended as a public service just as much as when I write a nonfictional explanation of Bayes's Theorem. (Of course it's also an indulgence of my fiction-writing addiction and I get kicks when people read it, as with all fanfiction, but it's not *just* that.)

And just like spending a month writing up a sequence on [the proper use of words](#) doesn't do much good if no one knows it exists, the work I put into MoR only does as much good as there are people who hear about MoR.

So let me put it this way: If you merely *enjoy* MoR, then you can easily whack back that tennis ball by leaving reviews, which I myself enjoy. But if you learned from MoR, or changed your mind, or the fic otherwise succeeded in having a real impact on you - and that's something you think is valuable and

would want to share with other people - then do please blog if you have a blog, tweet if you have followers, or just tell your friends if you have any friends. (I suggest the Twitter keyword [#hpmor](#).)

To encourage this, I intend to start doing a roundup of the latest blog posts in each A/N, and hope that this is not seen as too offensive by the usual fanfiction community. Email the URL of your blog post to (sentience at pobox dot com), since Fanfiction.net eats URLs in private messages.

I've also started listing social network pages for *Methods of Rationality*. So far I see a [Facebook](#) page and a listing in [StumbleUpon](#). Any others? (As above, email since FF.net eats URLs in private messages.)

And to show that I believe in the categorical form of the imperative, I now link to [Hybrid Theory by Blade and Epsilon](#), a (gigantic) fanfiction which had an impact on my mind with respect to the concept of Determination. (Oh, and it's also so epic that it makes the Lord of the Rings look like a squirtgun fight, but that's not why I'm linking it.)

End of Author's Notes.

10/7/10

Ch. 49 notes:

No, not *that* Rule Thirty-Four. Rule 34 of the original [Evil Overlord List](#).

[Abigail](#) has cameo'd as Abigail Myrtle.

Blog roundup: [Anna Paradox](#), [TheOtherSarshi](#).

MoR now has a [Deviant Art group](#) thanks to TheOtherSarshi, who is seeking DA points to run contests.

Interesting comment by Uximata: "I suppose it could be part of Parseltongue to give any snake-shaped thing sapience when talked to (right now there is a very bored sink somewhere in canon Hogwarts)."

Several reviewers suggested that Harry, having seen Death, should now be able to see Thestrals. Thank you for pointing this out, I might have missed that.

One reader asks if I can give a time before which I definitely *won't* update, so that they can stop checking every hour (apparently RSS and email aren't good enough to stop the addiction). I'm not sure if I can get away with that, but I'll try it and see what happens: I don't expect to update again *before* Saturday the 16th, and will even go ahead and *commit* to not doing so as to eliminate doubt. If I would have otherwise been able to update earlier then I won't try this again, but at any rate you should have a few days free from obsession now.

Amanda Knox was accused and convicted of the murder of Meredith Kerchner in a highly controversial case. Komponisto [posted](#) some links to the different sides of the Amanda Knox case and Wikipedia to a LessWrong.com post, asking us to all independently evaluate what we thought happened. Essentially everyone on LessWrong who did that independently decided she was innocent. Komponisto has tried this in a couple of other atheist/skeptic fora and *not* gotten this result, just the standard controversy,

which just goes to show that there is an *awful* lot more to rationality than being an atheist or skeptic, a theme I harp on sometimes.

I'm also told that Amanda Knox is reading a printed copy of this fic in prison. I don't know if it helps, Amanda, to be told that your innocence is demonstrably obvious to any sufficiently good rationalist, but it's true.

10/16/10

Author's Notes for Ch. 50, *Self-Centeredness*.

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 50.

New fan art by [Dinosaurusgede](#) (aren't you glad this was omake?), [Dinosaurusgede](#), [Dinosaurusgede](#), [Dinosaurusgede](#) (epic!), and [Scudamor](#).

Blog roundup: [Jonathan Graehl](#), [Tyler August](#), [Untheist Priest](#), [Charlie Ego](#), [Yomikoma](#).

Yes, I'm working on a large multi-chapter thingy and that is why you are getting short chapters in between, of which this is the last. No new update before Saturday the 23rd at the earliest. If you're going into withdrawal, here's [Trust in God, or, The Riddle of Kyon](#), if you haven't gotten to it already.

I'll be having lunch at Charlie's Cafe in the Googleplex on Thursday the 28th. 10 people have RSVPed already but there should be room for at least 24 total. All Googlers reading this are welcome, contact Mike Stay to reserve a place while supplies last.

I've inserted a longer description and some notes into the start of [Ch. 22](#) (where Ch. 21 ends Harry's first week at Hogwarts). If you've got a better suggestion for the MoR slogan than "Because if you had magic, you'd start getting creative", go ahead and offer it - but nothing which even slightly implies derogation of Rowling's original work, please!

Alicorn of LessWrong.com is doing a rational!Twilight fic called Luminosity ([FF.net version](#), [preferred web version](#)), now up to 51 chapters. It's not quite the same style as MoR, but, well, sample quote: "Then I looked at Edward again; my eyes just drifted there naturally, as though he were a bright red object on a background of gray or the only moving item in a still visual field." Yes, this is Bella with a brain. I don't know what other changes there might be, because this is the only Twilight-based thing I've ever read (or am in the process of reading, rather). I did not realize until now that Twilight vampires are *literally* supposed to sparkle if they go into sunlight; I thought that was people making fun of Stephanie Meyer. Meyer can't *possibly* have not been giggling to herself as she did that... I hope? Dear Merlin, I hope...

It seems that someone signing themselves "DLP Anonymous" - i.e. Dark Lord Potter - edited my Wikipedia article to note that I wrote "mediocre Harry Potter fanfiction". Stay classy, DLP! I'd be tempted to retaliate in kind, only the Dark Lord Potter forum doesn't have a Wikipedia entry, because they fail the notability test, because nobody ever mentions them in newspapers or anything, because they're completely unimportant.

Although to be fair, there was *one* intelligent thing said on DLP about Methods of Rationality, which is that the pacing more closely resembles a season of TV episodes with an overall arc, than a movie. I'm considering whether or not to include a note to this effect in the Ch. 1 preamble.

(I recently gave this bit of advice about foreshadowing, believable character changes, and tightening chains of causality, and thought I would include it here, somewhat edited:)

A good story shows things in this order:

(A implies B)

(A)

(B)

So in this case, you want to show e.g. Tom Riddle thinking about the perfect happy utopia of Muggleborn-free wizardry that he plans to create (A implies B), then show him seeing the horror that Voldemort created (A), then show him regretting it (B). Not that this has to be Tom's *exact* motivation, but *something* shown in advance has to make it plausible that he will experience regret instead of laughing in delight.

The *wrong* way to do it is (A), (B), (A implies B), that is, an event occurs for no reason obvious at the time and is rationalized to the reader afterward. Suppose I'd written Ch. 45 by first showing Harry's happy thought about the defeat of Death (A), having that destroy the Dementor (B), and *only then* explained to the reader that Dementors are Death and that animal Patronuses work by forgetting Death (A implies B). Lo, it would have sucked. [If anyone quotes this elsewhere, please remove the last two sentences to avoid spoilers!]

So you wouldn't write:

Hermione likes Ron. (A)

Hermione likes Tom. (B)

Hermione thinks about why she switched. (A implies B)

This sort of out-of-order causality happens when you make a mistake and then try to fix it afterward, and the wonderful thing about the nonlinear time of an author is that every time you find yourself trying to excuse something you feel uncomfortable with, the correct thing to do is go back and rewrite so that you never made the mistake in the first place.

One also needs to avoid making the (A implies B) too cliched and obvious, having it evidently be nothing *but* the setup, i.e., Hermione thinking about how she wishes Ron were more dominant. Having Hermione think of Ron as an adorable nebbish "despite his bad grades" would work.

So that's my advice, please take it with a grain of salt, and the moral is that there are no premature character changes, there are only unbelievable character changes. The delay before character change

occurs isn't there to stretch things out, it's to show things in advance that make the causality more believable.

End of Author's Notes.

10/25/10

The Channah Challenge

My younger sister Channah Yudkowsky, currently a senior at Stern College, recently went on a date with a boy who turned out to be reading *Methods of Rationality*. She's always wanted a famous older brother and keeps bugging me to hurry up and become famous already, but even after this latest episode, she's having trouble believing that I'm making progress.

So I bet her that at least three people would come up to her and say "Big Brother is watching you" or if you prefer, "Your big brother says hi", if I posted the request in this fic. Deadline is Thanksgiving and the first three people to do it (at least) get cameos, whether or not I win the bet. If you already know Channah well enough to phone or IM her, and you happen to be reading this, that counts too. Also, if you know anyone attending Stern College, please feel free to tell them about this fic so that they might see this notice... but *don't* tell them directly to just contact Channah, I would consider that cheating.

Author's Notes for Ch. 51, *Title Redacted*, Pt. 1.

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 51.

[German](#) translation of Ch. 1-2 by Jost Migenda, let him know if you want to contribute more chapters.

Strange little blog post: [A Markov chain mashup of MoR](#)

I know that many readers prefer their doses of MoR complete and finished no matter how long it takes, but I'm not sure that's working for *me* on this update - I think I need to post what I've got already by Sunday night, even though it's not a finished sequence, for my own strange reasons. Chapters already written prey on my mind until I post them, and that's probably part of the reason this is going slowly. Sorry about that!

I would like to take this opportunity to [hail Discordia](#), and say that yes, in fact, I *would* like it very much if you started convincing people that I was some sort of shadowy conspiratorial figure. Honestly I'm disappointed that this hasn't happened already.

People occasionally ask me, "Why would you make this?" And I can only reply, in the words of [Wondermark](#), "Well, first I tried *not* making it, but that didn't work."

Author's Notes for Ch. 52-54, *The Stanford Prison Experiment* Pt. 2-4

The Channah Challenge is just above the Author's Notes.

Next update no *earlier* than Saturday the 30th, and probably later.

New fan art by [Dinosaurusgede](#), [Dinosaurusgede](#) and [Dinosaurusgede](#). I should mention at this point that Dinosaurusgede's artwork has taken over my mental image of what my characters look like, and when I see the movie version of Hermione, I think to myself, "That's just a movie star, the real Hermione isn't incredibly pretty, that's not what she's about." Except that I'm pretty sure Professor Quirrell [looks like this](#) (HT Ghost In The Steak on TV Tropes).

Many reviewers seem to think Harry is being stupid in this chapter. Well... all I can do is ask whether you'd be saying he was stupid if they were off to rescue Sirius *a la* 5,000 other fanfics, on the same information? Harry's done a lot of stupid things in this story; the thing about this particular stupidity is that for once you've got background concepts that Harry doesn't, so your brain *automatically* does a double-take at "Rescue Bellatrix from Azkaban" that it wouldn't do for "Rescue Sirius from Azkaban". Then again, as the saying goes, realism is no defense in fiction; if the reader doesn't believe it, the reader doesn't believe it. I could try to go back and edit in more setup, if I could think of what setup would help; but I wonder if maybe nothing would suffice to overcome the perceptual-level recognition of "rescue Bellatrix from Azkaban" as "dumb".

End of Author's Notes.

11/2/10

Author's Notes for Ch. 55-56, *The Stanford Prison Experiment* Pts 5-6.

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 56.

Ora Weinbach has completed the first witnessing of the Channah Challenge and has received her cameo. Jeremy Jaffe has completed the second witnessing and his cameo is pending. One witnessing remains, to be completed by Thanksgiving. You must either *already know* Channah in order to validly contact her by phone or email; or you must manage to say "Big brother is watching you" or "Your big brother says hi" *in person*.

New fan art by [Dinosaurusgede](#), [Dinosaurusgede](#), [Dinosaurusgede](#) (powerful), [Andrew Semler](#), and [MathAndChaos](#).

Next update no earlier than Nov 6th if you're lucky.

To anyone who assumed *Professor Quirrell* was holding the Idiot Ball, you reeeaaally need to have a little more trust in your author.

Yes, "lead-pipe Legilimency" is a deliberate play on "rubber-hose cryptanalysis" (fun fact: my father is a friend of Bruce Schneier); it's just that "rubber-hose Legilimency" does not sing properly. For this, someone on TV Tropes awards me a Missed Moment of Awesome. Oh ye of little faith.

I shall remark, regarding the appearance of Dumbledore, that regardless of whether a character is good or evil, it is an unvarying rule of fiction that problems are solved by protagonists. If Dumbledore solves

your story's problems, that means Dumbledore is the protagonist. And if Dumbledore is not the protagonist, he is not allowed to solve your story's problems.

I shall also remark that the writing behind this chapter follows what I think of as the "[Anvil Chorus](#)" plot structure. Is there a TV Trope for that? (The greatest exemplar of the Anvil Chorus I've seen is *Midshipman's Hope* and the other Seafort Saga books by David Feintuch.)

ADDED 1: Several readers commented that tension was rising and falling in Ch. 56. On reflection, they were right, and I've done a minor rewrite accordingly.

ADDED 2: Forgot to list recent cameos: Auror Bahry is [Bojanglesthe3rd](#), Gerard McCusker is [Scudamor](#), Andy's cat is [Andrew Semler](#), and Xiaoguang "Mike" Li is an old friend who got a cameo as his birthday present. I should also mention that my mother was once known as Ruchy the Flying Girl and that my father is a well-known Assassin working for the Martian Government-in-Exile, if you were hoping to locate their cameos somewhere in the text.

End of Author's Notes.

11/6/10

Author's Notes for Ch. 57, *The Stanford Prison Experiment Pt 7*.

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 57.

The movie trailer that Harry saw is [here](#), if you're wondering.

Lots of new fan art! Chaotic Reactions renders Ch. 2's infamous cat incident: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#). [Noelle Curry](#) (cameo in Ch. 57) offers her take on cover art. [Lanthanum](#) has an idea for Book 2. [Samuel H. Lyall](#) thinks the price isn't right. [Tom Reagan](#) looks into Bahry's past, donated his cameo to Isabel Brooks (Ch. 57), and note that this is now *fan art of a cameo of a fan artist*, isn't recursion wonderful.

CodyAHM suggests that lovers of the Ch. 11 Sorting Hat Omake check out [this](#).

Currently rereading: [Harry Potter and the Wastelands of Time](#) on my new Kindle 3. I'd forgotten how well-written this was. (If you're wondering how a story gets from fanfiction.net to a Kindle, the answer is [this service](#) followed by [Calibre](#).)

Several people said they liked the magical battle scene between Bahry and Professor Quirrell. This made me feel bashful and undeserving, and I would direct you to [Wastelands of Time](#) or [A Black Comedy](#), both of which do it way better. I also got compliments on competent!Amelia, which made me feel likewise undeserving, since standard fanon has her as competent. And specifically, I happened to be rereading [Odd Ideas](#) by Rorschach's Blot (giant oneshot collection) and noticed that my Amelia seems awfully similar to his.

Notes from last time:

ADDED 1: Several readers commented that tension was rising and falling in Ch. 56. On reflection, they were right, and I've done a minor rewrite accordingly.

ADDED 2: Forgot to list recent cameos: Auror Bahry is [Bojanglesthe3rd](#), Gerard McCusker is [Scudamor](#), Andy's cat is [Andrew Semler](#), and Xiaoguang "Mike" Li is an old friend who got a cameo as his birthday present. I should also mention that my mother was once known as Ruchy the Flying Girl and that my father is a well-known Assassin working for the Martian Government-in-Exile, if you were hoping to locate their cameos somewhere in the text.

End of Author's Notes.

11/7/10

Ch. 58 notes:

kyle90 and an unnamed friend thereof, suggested that Harry had transfigured a guided missile and attached the pouch to it, after which they'd all climb into the pouch; which is not *quite* something my version of Harry could do on his own, but could easily have been factored into the modifications that Professor Quirrell made earlier to let his own snakeform inhabit it; and would have been *more awesome than what Harry actually did*. kyle90 wins.

11/29/10

Author's Notes for Ch. 61-63, *The Stanford Prison Experiment*

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 63.

Ch. 59 notes:

There are now [.ePUB](#) and [.MOBI](#) texts of MoR, brought to you by [dhasenan](#), which should refresh every morning at 8am Pacific time.

Much new fan art, quite a lot of which I rather liked: [Cameron Edward](#) does a marvelous depiction of the Patronus, [Scudamor](#) shows us the failing strength of Bellatrix Black, [SlvrCrystalC](#) (Dr. Crystal Camblebunker in Ch. 59) shows us Harry versus the Reapers, and [Matt Kemis](#) shows Bellatrix huddled in a corner. And then there's [Dinosaurusgede](#), [Dinosaurusgede](#), [Dinosaurusgede](#), [Dinosaurusgede](#), [Dinosaurusgede](#) and [Dinosaurusgede](#). ChaoticReactions has cameo'd as Celestria Relevo. Jeremy Jaffe has cameo'd from the Channah Challenge; only one witnessing remains and Thanksgiving is fast approaching!

After I post Ch. 63, I'm going on a hiatus (which I don't expect to last any longer than one month) while I (a) plot out the next sequence, (b) finish up the first draft (emphasis on *draft*) of my nonfiction rationality book which seems to have turned into two books actually, and (c) now that it's certain I can produce the books, go looking for a publisher who's willing to put a heavy push behind them. The nonfiction books won't be *quite* as popularly targeted as MoR, but they'll be as popular as I can make them; and they contain enough concentrated rationality that if anyone tried to read the whole thing in

one go, the sheer magnitude of enlightenment would pop their brain like a party favor. I expect them to generate enthusiasm. If you're from a publisher that can potentially push the books hard enough that they live up to their potential, drop me an email (sentience at pobox dot com).

(And if a book on rationality doesn't sound like a bestseller to you, consider that as soon as this fic gets another 24 reviews, the fifth most reviewed Harry Potter fanfiction, out of over half a million contenders, will be a fic whose premise is that Harry Potter is a rationalist. There's a larger demand for rationality than you might think.)

After the hiatus I may *try* to slow down the pace; I think I'm pressuring myself too much to update quickly. Sometimes it's hard to remember that writing this fic is supposed to be *fun*; and we are now heading into increasingly heavy waters instead of light humor and that's harder for me to write. But don't worry, I hate unfinished fics, and I try not to become what I hate.

I think I've finally come up with an answer to everyone who asks "How long is this fic going to be?", which is that it will *resolve at least as much* as got resolved in canon, but *in less story time*.

To whoever started a rumor that the fic had stopped at Ch. 58: When this fic is over *you will all notice*, okay? It will not be the sort of thing you would accidentally miss. Thank you.

Ch. 17 has now been retconned so that Dumbledore now speaks of Lily's "friend" instead of "boyfriend", since the original was an error on my part rather than an intended departure from canon.

Ch. 1 now mentions up front that the pace of this story is that of *serial fiction*, i.e., that of a TV show running for a predetermined number of seasons, whose episodes are individually plotted but with an overall arc building to a final conclusion.

Ch. 60 notes:

Blog roundup: [Mark Bishop](#). (Remember, email me at sentience at pobox dot com if you want your blog post to appear in the A/N.)

Ch. 61 notes:

Behold the very first *fanfiction* of MoR - actually an AU based on a Dinosaurugede drawing, but I'm still feeling quite proud, and the MoR spirit shines through. Presenting [Once Upon a Tower](#) by TheOtherSarshi, with spoilers potentially up to Ch. 53.

And a nice large crop of new fan art on top of that: [Mike Inside](#), [Fan Tong](#), a powerful piece by [Quantum Spork](#), and what a surprise, [Dinosaurugede](#) and [Dinosaurugede](#) (great big awwwww for the last one).

Ch. 62 notes:

[Quantum Spork](#) has cameo'd as Merry Tavington.

And so the Channah Challenge ends, with 2/3 witnessings completed, and at least two readers who met Channah and recognized her as the girl from the challenge *but didn't say the god-damned words*.

An edit occurred to Ch. 61 about four hours after the original posting, adding Dumbledore's line about Atlantis, so as to not have Muggle technology overshadowing the promise and peril of magic.

Ch. 63 notes:

New fan art: [Karen Rustad](#) (THAT is what Fawkes looks like... well, not *looks* like, but *feels* like), [Scudamor](#) (snerk), [Dinosaurusgede](#), and [Dinosaurusgede](#) (the perfect expression on Harry's face).

A couple of links I feel like posting: [a horrible little short story](#) and [Daniel Radcliffe \(Harry Potter\) sings Lehrer's Song of the Elements](#).

[Spanish translation](#) of MoR by Raw Power (Ch. 1).

In another 150 reviews this will be the fourth most reviewed HP fic on FF.net, and (at least when I try it) the fourth Google result on "rationality".

Those of you who complained I did not foreshadow other students having Time-Turners, reread Daphne's aftermath in Ch. 46.

I hereby dub this fan couple "Voldandy" and I can't see why no one's written it yet, they're perfect for each other. Yes, in Ch. 63, Dumbledore plots to trap Voldemort in a Veela bond with Belldandy. Methods of Rationality: *Still* not crack.

Other reader-suggested solutions to Harry's dilemma in Ch. 62 - which I didn't think of, because once I came up with my own solution, I stopped looking to see if there were better ones, a rather common mistake - would be to Polyjuice someone else wearing a Time-Turner into Harry, or Memory-Charm Professor Flitwick. I don't think those are better solutions than PQ's, but they're good enough to deserve mention.

I don't usually give shoutouts to reviews but I'll make an exception for [k1000a92](#).

—

Writing these last three chapters over the last week or so, totaling 29,000 words by FF's count, in one damn week - if I'd done this whole sequence in November, I would've won NaNoWriMo - made me realize a simple point that is very obvious in retrospect.

I cannot announce update times in advance.

I cannot even update on a sufficiently predictable basis that my readers *anticipate* a particular update time in advance, such as a weekend, and write sad, pleading [Twitter updates](#) when I don't.

Because then I have to get the update done by that particular time.

*And that turns HP:MoR into **work**.*

Obvious in retrospect, but I just hadn't caught on before; the Aha! moment was when I realized that I might have trouble enjoying my hiatus because of *needing* to update 30 days forward, and not having an update done yet.

So my *revised* plan is that I will *start working on the fic again* after no more than one month of hiatus, but you may *not* get an update directly at the end of one month, and for the love of heavens, don't ask "Where is it?" one month from now. I was working *faster* before I started trying to update on a predictable basis. I think I *have* to be unpredictable and work on the fic whenever the whim strikes and update whenever, because otherwise it starts turning into a job.

I strongly advise that you add the RSS feed, or sign up for fanfiction.net to get Story Alerts by email.

The best I can offer you people who keep on mashing the damned intermittent reward button like lab rats - it hurts me to think about you doing that, seriously, it *does*, it makes me feel like some kind of horrible drug pusher - is that **the next update will go live at 7PM Pacific Time on some unknown day**, so there is **no point in checking every five minutes**.

Meanwhile, remember, over the next month, that I *have* written other things than MoR. There is a whole universe of [Less Wrong sequences](#) out there; and this also seems like a good time to mention my short story [The Sword of Good](#); and for no particular reason, [The Simple Truth](#) and [Twelve Virtues of Rationality](#).

And before anyone starts any silly rumors, the fic is not over, Harry's first year is not over (how would *that* even work?), and it is still the second Sunday of February in story time.

End of Author's Notes.

1/3/11

Author's Notes for Ch. 64-65, *Omake Files #3* and *Contagious Lies*

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 65.

[Cameron Edward](#) has cameo'd in Ch. 65. JaimeAstorga produced [this demotivator of Professor Quirrell](#) (original statue is of Machiavelli). Arram Sabeti [commissioned](#) Julie Kang to do this picture of leading anti-deathist Aubrey de Grey [casting the True Patronus Charm](#).

Thanks to [stock analyst Dan Dzombak at the Motley Fool](#), and [cartoonist Stephen Notley of Bob the Angry Flower](#), for their mentions of HPMOR.

Blog roundup: [The Role-Playing Jew](#), [Lemonsquid](#), [Moshe'z](#), [Oscar Bonilla](#), [Arram Sabeti](#).

Updates may be slow for a while. It's probably better *not* to complain about them being slow. How often I get around to writing depends on how pleasant it is to think of writing; and I'm trying to shift my mind back from associating the painful thought "Oh, dear, I need to update, I'm late" to the fun thought "Hm, if I write more, I can do one of those happy optional voluntary updates!"

I've noticed of late that some people are unfavorably comparing canon to MoR. So again, let's all remember two points: *Primus*, J. K. Rowling successfully wrote stories to entertain children, which is a *different and harder problem* than writing stories for grownups. *Secundus*, if this story had been set in Narnia, or Middle-Earth, or Iain Banks's Culture, or *our own real universe*, the protagonist would be pointing out just as much apparent folly - I was *not* trying to pick on Rowling in particular.

Speaking of changing the world through Science, rationality, and exploiting the obvious avenues to world optimization that everyone else seems to be bizarrely overlooking: The nonprofit which pays my salary, the Singularity Institute (distinguished as the charity with *the* greatest expected return in altruistic utilons per marginal dollar, i.e., it is the most awesome nonprofit in the entire world), is currently running their annual fundraising drive.

I am *not* requesting donations to the Singularity Institute as payment for reading this fanfiction, which is free, free, forever and always free. Optional payment for reading this fanfiction may be rendered in the form of reviews, or twitterings and blog posts which help spread the rationality further.

However, those of you who *happen* to be on the lookout for awesome nonprofits, know ye that [all donations to the Singularity Institute before January 20th will be matched dollar-for-dollar](#) by Jaan Tallinn, cofounder of Skype, and Edwin Evans, CEO of [Quinly](#), up to \$125,000.

End of Author's Notes.

1/13/11

Author's Notes for Ch. 66-67, *Self-Actualization* Pt 1-2.

Warning: Potential spoilers ahead if you have not read up through Ch. 67.

[Karen Rustad](#) has gifted her cameo to Jenny Rustad in Ch. 67.

Blog roundup: [Techno-Socialist](#). I never consider any work of mine to be truly successful until someone suggests that it could serve as the centerpiece of a new religion.

Next update will be at **1PM Pacific Time / 9PM Oxford time** of whatever day, since I'm currently making a special trip to Oxford to research Harry's background in greater detail -

No! Just kidding. I'm currently in the UK to attend the Oxford Future of Humanity Institute's winter conference. I won't remark further on what I'm doing there except to say that the main difference between fantasy novels and the real universe is that fantasy novels allow their heroes to unravel ancient mysteries, learn the secrets of terrible forbidden powers, and try to save the world from unspeakable inhuman horrors threatening to devour us all, using less time, less research, fewer people and a smaller amount of capital infrastructure.

Apparently some people have been complaining that FF.net's ads have gotten worse and more intrusive. I don't see them myself, actually, because I'm running a helpful Firefox extension called NoScript. The main difficulty with mirroring this material elsewhere is that I apply occasional edits to it, including

random past chapters when someone finds a spelling error. If anyone built an ad-free mirror of HPMOR that re-updated all chapters once a week, updated chapters less than a week old every day, and updated chapters less than a day old every hour, I would be happy to link to that as an alternative. Meanwhile don't forget that there are PDF and EPUB versions, etc.

End of Author's Notes.

1/24/11

Author's Notes for Ch. 68, *Self-Actualization Pt. 3*.

[Facebook page for the Oxford speaking thingy.](#)

I'll put up recent fanart, etc. with Ch. 69. I was rushing to get this one out before the 9PM deadline.

End of Author's Notes.

1/28/11

Author's Notes for Ch. 68-69, *Self-Actualization Pt. 3-4*.

And I'm back from Oxford, where I spoke at the winter conference of the [Oxford Future of Humanity Institute](#), gave a talk at the [Oxford student transhumanist group](#), and, per a reader suggestion, made sure to try some of Ben's Cookies in the Covered Market and visit the Ashmolean. Didn't make it to the History of Science Museum, I'm afraid, and there didn't seem much point in visiting the Botanical Gardens during that particular season.

There have been very minor retcons to Ch. 68 (you do not need to reread it) owing to the fact that I didn't realize what Dumbledore was up to until I wrote his Aftermath conversation with Minerva. I was reading the reviews, looking over what I'd written, and thinking, "Huh, why *is* Dumbledore being so insensitive?" and still didn't figure out why until later. Brains are scary things, aren't they?

Also, this thing with S.P.H.E.W.? You're thinking I've been working up to that for a while, right? You're wrong. It just *happened*, just now.

New fan art: [MoonrakerJay](#) depicts the infamous lightsaber duel, [And I Move Smilingly](#) shows us an older General Chaos (and says no cameo is requested), [Gucieck](#) gives us a faraway view of the Rocket Escape (also didn't want a cameo but requested this link to [gucieck.net](#)), and [Liz of All Trades](#) gives us a closeup of Harry's Bag of Holding. Mike Inside has cameo'd as "Mike inside Hufflepuff" in Ch. 69 (that took a while to set up properly), Elizabeth Beckett in Ch. 68 is Liz of All Trades, and Arram Sabeti plays himself in Ch. 68.

Looking over my notes, I notice that I seem to have lost EStokes's cameo information. EStokes, if you read this, please recontact me (sentience at pobox dot com).

Silly me, I thought Rowling made up Snape's backstory after the fact. Turns out I underestimated her. It would seem that 'Severus Snape' can be rearranged to spell 'Pursues Evans'. Well played, J. K., well played.

On Reddit, Methods of Rationality [is now canon](#).

Several people have asked how I know that HPMOR is the 4th-most-reviewed Harry Potter story online. The answer is that I checked all the sources I could find through Google; the most convenient source is probably [this community of HP stories with 3000+ reviews](#).

Several others have asked whether I read all the reviews. Yes, I do. Also, I've stopped complaining about nobody getting the hints.

I don't know if it's going to end well for Egypt, but whatever else you say, those protesters *are* heroes.

ADDED: Recently got this paragraph in an email from Mom, about my grandfather ("Saba") who was being honored in a ceremony to celebrate his lifetime of work in genetics:

"After they all spoke Saba spoke briefly also about how he came to this research. He told how he came to read his first book on genetics at age 12: when he was 9 he got his first library card, which was quite a ceremony in those days. You were only allowed to take out 2 fiction and 2 non-fiction books at a time, and there he was with a whole NYC library before him, how could he choose? So he decided to go through all the books alphabetically. And by the time he was 12 he'd reached M (he said that "canada" was just endless) and came across a (now) classic genetics book by some M author (not Mendel!), and fell in love with it right there. !!! BTW when I was a kid (14-ish) and we were living in East Rogers Park I remember that Saba finished off all the books in that library and we had to start going to the branch in WRP (on California) so that he'd have new books to read. We'd come in with two full laundry baskets of books - one basket for me and Saba, one for Gershy and Ari. The librarians would blanch when they saw us coming. So much for 4 books at a time!"

As the saying goes, the difference between reality and fiction is that fiction has to be believable. My grandfather is too Ravenclaw to be believable as a fictional character.

End of Author's Notes.

2/22/11

Author's Notes for Ch. 70, *Self-Actualization Pt. 5*.

Latest fanart: [Lanthanum](#) and [Tom Hart](#) for Ch. 49, [Autopolydidact](#) for Ch. 58, [Gothescalcus](#) shows us Daphne with extra sparkles, and an awesome 6-page webcomic of the Grey Knights vs. Sunshine by **Dinosaurusgede**: [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#). From GeeJo on LessWrong, this Google Docs spreadsheet shows [all the time travel in the Azkaban arc](#) in Ch. 51-62.

The very first **HPMOR Reader Meetup** will be held on **Monday, February 28th**, the first anniversary of the fic's publication, in New York, at **7PM**. The currently planned location is the public space at [550 Madison Ave](#). We'll bring nametags, thus allowing us to identify each other in the crowd (your fellow readers are the ones wearing nametags). I myself will also be wearing a button saying *Speak the truth, even if your voice trembles*. Please check this A/N sometime Monday to make sure that there haven't been any last-minute changes to this plan, although no last-minute changes are currently planned.

I will be speaking at Yeshiva University on Wednesday, March 2nd, starting at 8:30pm, 2495 Amsterdam Avenue, New York NY, in Belfer Hall (the tallest building on campus), room B430 on the 4th floor. You do not need to be a student to attend but the max capacity is 115 persons so I don't know if there'll be room for a large crowd.

Ch. 64 has updated with reader-contributed or reader-inspired rationalist versions of *Hamlet*, *Moby Dick*, and *The Matrix*.

In canon, Tonks graduated in 1991, but having her seventh year overlap Harry's first year is widely accepted fanon.

People keep asking whether I read all the reviews. Yes, I do. Also this fic is now within 1,100 reviews of being the #1 most-reviewed Harry Potter fanfiction online, and within 500 reviews of being #3. Closer, and yet closer...

Sorry about the long pause between updates. Partially this is because we're in a bridging section of the fic, which is harder to write. It takes my brain a while to produce bridge that has the requisite minimum level of HPMOR-ness per paragraph. There's some other reasons for this particular delay, at least one of them counterintuitive, but I shalln't go into that. Writing sections that are heavy on dialogue is often quite arduous for me - I think mostly because I worry too much that people will hate dialogue-heavy sections.

I can't honestly say that I learned anything from them that I didn't already know, but a couple of mentions for interesting fics: "[The Key to a Successful Interview is a Good First Impression!](#)" is a Ranma 1/2 fic which obeys the First Law of Fanfiction, as follows: Ranma has emotional maturity, Akane has self-awareness, and Shampoo has a belt-fed grenade launcher. THIS is how you do a First Law fic. Also "[The Dark Lords of Nerima](#)" features a great deal of plotting and a certain amount of humor and is quite well-written and I suspect some HPMOR readers may enjoy it.

End of Author's Notes.

4/5/11

Author's Notes for Ch. 71, *Self-Actualization Pt. 6*.

Divia Melwani and Shannon Friedman are pleased to announce the very first meeting of the [Society for the Promotion of Heroic Equality for Witches](#), a meetup for female readers of *Methods of Rationality*, at **1:30pm Saturday April 9th** in **Mountain View, CA** in the Bay Area. See [here](#) for more information.

Do not miss [orngice223](#)'s "[Sphere of Stars](#)", fan music for Professor Quirrell and Harry looking upon space in Ch. 20 and Ch. 36. It's ethereal, instrumental, and... I don't know how to compliment music, so I'll just state that I've listened to this piece considerably more often than once.

The following stories have all declared themselves fan-fanfiction of MoR: [Nightmares of Azkaban](#) by Owl344, [Harry Potter and Selective Perception](#) by Kensu, and [Harry's Game](#) by Black Logician.

Blog Roundup: [Science in Real Life](#), [Three Quarks Daily](#), [Quirrell in Venice](#).

Ch. 1-3 of a Polish translation of MoR, by Forsake, has been posted to [two forums](#).

There have been so many inquiries from people who want to do an audiobook of MoR that I have given up and created an [Official MoR Audiobook Project Etherpad page](#). Go ahead and add your name if you think you've got the right voice and acting ability to read someone's voice, read the narrative of a chapter, edit the audiobook, contribute audio recording equipment, help fund the project, etcetera. (I'm not coordinating anything beyond setting up the Etherpad page!) If you've already generated an audio recording of a chapter, go ahead and add it.

Fan art roundup: (Takes a deep breath): [LunchBagArt](#) shows us what is probably the first Patronus casting in Ch. 51; [HalfBloodDragon](#) gives us an evil General Chaos and cameos as Rianne Felthorne; [Darke Lady](#) shows us Harry's dark side so I'm declaring it goes under Ch. 18; [Threesan](#) shows us Daphne in Ch. 69 (please contact me with your cameo name!); [Elanor Pam](#) is nobody's sidekick; [Jaime Astorga](#) of [Legally Free Content](#) brings us a sprite animation of Harry's first Patronus casting; and [Dinosaurusgede](#) and [UnknownCartoonsLover](#) bring us another 5-page epic of Ch. 67: [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#). (Whew!)

I'm sorry about the recent dropoff in *Methods of Rationality* speed. I'm not sure myself what exactly is going on, and my main hypotheses are as follows: (1) Writing the *second* draft of my nonfiction rationality book, where I'm actually polishing sentences, is using up the same cognitive resources as writing MoR, in a way that writing the *first* draft did not. (2) I've been running around doing a lot of talking with people and socializing, instead of staying quietly in my apartment writing things, and this has taken up my time and energy. (3) Either this current bridging section with S.P.H.E.W., or more scarily MoR generally, seems to be less fun to write now - perhaps because I made the terrible mistake of trying to update on a regular schedule, but possibly also because the previously planned plotline had some trouble with basic things like conflict, tension, and character goals. Currently thinking about how to fix this.

The thought also occurs to me to try adapting the pair writing technique that I use for my nonfiction book, to work with MoR, as follows: I will try writing a chapter on an Etherpad where someone else can watch me write, and if I stop writing for a few minutes, type in a "Where are you?" comment. This would probably be relatively slow and boring reading, as compared to just seeing MoR chapters materialize whole. *This is not going to be a fun privilege, it will be throwing yourself on a grenade for the good of other readers.* If you think you're up for that anyway, send me an email at sentience@pobox.com with a subject containing the keyword "EtherReader".

I may sometimes update the profile page between story updates, mostly because it's getting to be a pain to write up all the new fan works and news at once. Needless to say, the profile page will also never update except at 7pm Pacific Time.

Latest fan works: (Apr 05)

No new fan works since the last update.

Current writing status / other news: (Apr 05)

Just published the last chapter, haven't started working on a new one yet.

End of Author's Notes.

5/27/11

Author's Notes for Ch. 72, *Self-Actualization Pt. 7*.

[A weekly podcast of HPMOR](#) is currently in progress, with a new chapter going up every week.

Thanks to [Rachel Aaron](#) (*The Spirit Thief*, *The Spirit Rebellion*, *The Spirit Eater*) for her endorsement of MoR!

[French translation of Ch. 1-12](#) by AdrienH. Also, [French translation of Ch. 1-3](#) by Zogwarg. My deep apologies to Zogwarg for not remembering to avoid this collision.

Mallux offers a poem inspired by HPMOR, [China Bowl](#).

Fan art: [Randolph Lee](#) depicts Quirrell in the hospital; [Skay-39](#) shows us the moment when Avada Kedavra collides with Patronus; and [gazzafizza06](#) brings us the three Generals, [Harry](#), [Draco](#), [Hermione](#), [Hermione](#), and [Harry](#).

Katarina and Joshua went and [cosplayed as Methods!Harry and Methods!Hermione for Vericon's masquerade](#), in camouflage uniforms with the appropriate patches for Chaos and Sunshine. They were recognized.

Two anonymous readers produced this [ready-for-printing pamphlet/book form of the first 10 chapters of MoR](#), which, when printed out double-sided, folded and bound at Kinkos, and then left lying around his dorm, was apparently quite effective at getting his dormmates to start reading *Methods of Rationality*.

[ShallanDavar](#) has done the first HPMOR music video, produced using fan art.

PsycheKoneare, you have my enthusiastic permission to translate MoR into Korean, in fact, anyone can translate it into anything; however, if you PM me to ask for permission, it helps if your FF.net preferences allow me to send private messages *back*.

Since I don't think people will check it obsessively, I may update the running author's notes (new fan art and such, *not* the story) at times other than 7pm, which will take a bit of a load off my mind and inbox.

End of Author's Notes.

8/27/11

Author's Notes for Ch. 73, *Self-Actualization Pt. 8: The Sacred and the Mundane*

If you're attending Yale in the fall, Tom McCabe (BK '12) is trying to get a rationalist community / club at Yale started - we get a bizarrely high number of rationalists from Yale, for some reason. (Hi Wendy! Hi Sarah!) Contact [Tom McCabe](#) for further details.

Links: Current status of the [Summer 2011 Singularity Challenge](#), the [Singularity Summit](#).

Translations: The [French translation by AdrienH](#) is up to Ch. 28. Congratulations! New [Russian translation](#) by Jack Dilindjer, Ch. 1-4, contact him if interested in helping. Jost Migenda of the [German translation](#) wishes to credit Alex, Martin, and Arne for helping with several chapters.

Productions: [York Bezbozny](#) is casting voices for his audiobook project, and there is now an [Android app](#) by Cart Reed. And Merlin save us all, [Sam Potter](#) has produced a video, made using Sims characters, of the podcast narration.

Fan art: [Raymond Arnold](#) (maximize your window before clicking on this Patronus!). Dylan Vaughan brings us [Loss of a Mentor](#) and a casual moment with [Quirrell](#). [Elanor Pam](#) (Paula Vieira in Ch. 72) shows us Harry making Hermione an offer she can refuse. Inwitari Turelie (Tania in Ch. 34) brings us the moment you all knew was coming: [Soldier Gryffindor](#).

Cameos: In Ch. 72, Tom Hart is Tanaxu, Gothesc calculus is Gottschalk, and Elanor Pam is Paula Vieira. Ch. 73 has seen the cameos of Randolph Lee and Reese Belka, and Threesan as Robert Jugson III. Arty Grey will show up in Ch. 75.

Poetry: Adam Spitz has produced a quite amazing fan poem begging for more updates, the [Potter Progress Plea Poem](#). And Lanthanum brings us [The Ballad of Harry James Potter-Evans-Verres](#).

Life notes:

I'm sorry about the delay. Point one, a lot of people expressed dissatisfaction with Self-Actualization so, before I resumed posting, I wanted them to know that the arc would close out at a predictable and regular pace, rather than going on indefinitely. Point two, I found the Self-Actualization arc really difficult to write for several reasons - there's a 2,000-word section in Ch. 75 that literally had me blocked for a month, though it seems acceptable now. I hope things go faster now that we're out of the Self-Actualization arc, but I make no promises. At least I think I've learned something as an author from the experience.

I need to move to Berkeley, CA soon. I'm looking for a 3+ bedroom house or apartment with at least 2 bathrooms with showers, W/D hookup, dishwasher, central heat, at least one quiet bedroom, either on a top floor or with no audible noise from walkers above, I'd kill for central A/C but it seems to be literally unknown in Berkeley so I need windows that can take window A/C, parking somewhere for two cars, if a shower isn't attached to a bedroom it shouldn't be adjacent to it. Bonuses if it's near a BART, near Emerson and Shattuck, or is in a complex with a swimming pool. \$2500/month is as high as I can go at the moment.

Update 8/26:

Please ignore all the reviews suggesting that my offer to do the moral equivalent of shaving my head on Youtube if a charity meets its donation goals will bring about the downfall of all Harry Potter fandom everywhere. This is a *fake* backlash coordinated by a troll forum called Dark Lord Potter, whose shtick is pretending to be snooty exclusive Harry Potter fanfiction critics (yes, really), and which hates hates MoR for being higher-status than them. Helping a charity would predictably set them off. And while I do thank everyone who jumped to this fic's defense, having these sorts of arguments in the reviews is not the way I want to increase my review count. Thanks to Dark Lord Potter for helping to keep this fic #1, though.

(Dark Lord Potter specializes in concern trolling, messages which start out looking serious and helpful to lure you into the start of the argument. Be extremely wary if you get a private message suggesting that your fic has promise but could benefit from the critique at DLP. I got one of those early on and then later discovered that the sender had been bragging in the DLP IRC channel about how he was going to bring me to the DLP forums so they could all bash on MoR and crush my soul. Yes, really.)

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End of Author's Notes.

8/30/11

Ch. 73-74, *Self-Actualization Pt. 8-9*

If you're attending Yale in the fall, Tom McCabe (BK '12) is trying to get a rationalist community / club at Yale started - we get a bizarrely high number of rationalists from Yale, for some reason. (Hi Wendy! Hi Sarah!) Contact [Tom McCabe](#) for further details.

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Cameos: In Ch. 72, Tom Hart is Tanaxu, Gothescalcus is Gottschalk, and Elanor Pam is Paula Vieira. Ch. 73 has seen the cameos of Randolph Lee and Reese Belka, and Threesan as Robert Jugson III. Arty Grey will show up in Ch. 75.

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Life notes:

I'm sorry about the delay. Point one, a lot of people expressed dissatisfaction with Self-Actualization so, before I resumed posting, I wanted them to know that the arc would close out at a predictable and regular pace, rather than going on indefinitely. Point two, I found the Self-Actualization arc really difficult to write for several reasons - there's a 2,000-word section in Ch. 75 that literally had me blocked for a month, though it seems acceptable now. I hope things go faster now that we're out of the Self-Actualization arc, but I make no promises. At least I think I've learned something as an author from the experience.

I need to move to Berkeley, CA soon. I'm looking for a 3+ bedroom house or apartment with at least 2 bathrooms with showers, W/D hookup, dishwasher, central heat, at least one quiet bedroom, either on a top floor or with no audible noise from walkers above, I'd kill for central A/C but it seems to be literally unknown in Berkeley so I need windows that can take window A/C, parking somewhere for two cars, if a shower isn't attached to a bedroom it shouldn't be adjacent to it. Bonuses if it's near a BART, near Emerson and Shattuck, or is in a complex with a swimming pool. \$2500/month is as high as I can go at the moment.

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Update for Ch. 75: Yes, I know this wasn't quite as good as Ch. 74. They can't all be as good as Ch. 74. Also, at some point you have to choose between abandoning the sick baby or spending another three goddamned months trying to rewrite it. I do think I learned something from the experience, anyway.

Nobody has yet succeeded in producing a complete list of the references in Ch. 74, including a rather surprising failure to decode the reference to *the* work, you know, the one that I simply *had* to refer to *somewhere*. The other reference that absolutely nobody got isn't too surprising, since it's obscure even by my standards. I'll also take this opportunity to mention that there is now a "[Characters](#)" listing for HPMOR in TV Tropes and it seems kinda sparse. I mean, just naked trope lists? I was looking for some more, y'know, in-depth analysis there.

The story about the boy who stumbles into a dark ritual etc. is recounted in the (alas, incomplete and hiatused) webcomic "[Ow My Sanity](#)". Motto: "Putting the love back in Lovecraft."

End of Author's Notes.

9/10/11

Update for Ch. 76: Okay, I think this chapter was, like, a bit less transparent than I thought it was. I've done a couple of quick edits that I hope might repair this, mainly strengthening a hint and removing a couple of inadvertent red herrings.

And I don't usually come right out and say things like this, but *no Hermione is not the last magical descendant of Merlin*, and if you thought she was going to be because *Mr. Hat and Cloak said so*, then I want you to consider very carefully the alarming proposition that you might be [believing everything you read](#).

Edit again: Changing it to "the last magical descendant of Ravenclaw" in case there's something about Merlin specifically that is frying people's brains. I don't like doing this sort of thing, but this chapter did *not* have its originally intended impact.

Edit thrice: Screw it, I don't want the impact of the Groundhog Day attack messed with by people deciding whether or not to take the last words seriously. Edited to make it completely vague.

End of Author's Notes.