

The Butterfly and the Spider - Hunter x Hunter ep. 14-16:

Media Club Plus S01E05

Transcriber: robotchangeling

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Introduction

[[“The Boy in Green”](#) by Jack de Quidt plays]

Keith: Welcome to Media Club Plus, a podcast about diving into the media that interests us and the stories that excite us. As always, we are brought to you by Friends at the Table. This season, we're watching 2011's *Hunter × Hunter*, based on the manga by Yoshihiro Togashi. Uh, how did everybody like these episodes? We're back in it. We took a little bit— we took a month off, basically. [Sylvia laughs quietly] But we're back in it.

Jack: Who are we?

Sylvia: You know.

Jack: Do we want to introduce ourselves?

Sylvia: Do we want to introduce ourselves first?

Keith: No.

Sylvia: No? Okay.

Keith: We're skipping that.

Dre: Yeah, no.

Sylvia: We're skipping that this week?

Dre: It won't be a month off for the people who have been listening, you know?

Jack: That's very true.

Sylvia: Kayfabe. This is coming out in the end of August.

Keith: No, we'll—

Sylvia: It's currently, uh, September or some shit. I don't know.

Keith: No, we'll introduce ourselves. With me, [Sylvia laughs quietly] as always, is Sylvi Bullet.

Sylvia: Hey, I'm Sylvia. You can find me on most social medias except for [the one that a certain guy bought recently](#) at @sylvibullet. I even changed my Cohost to that to consolidate.

Dre: Wow.

Sylvia: It's called brand consistency.

Keith: So, wait—

Sylvia: Also—

Keith: So it's cohost.org/brandconsistency?

Sylvia: Yes, it's cohost.org/brandconsistency. [Dre laughs] No, it's cohost.org/sylvibullet, instagram.com/sylvibullet, et cetera.

Keith: One word or underscore? It's just one word, right?

Sylvia: It's just all one word.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: It's all one word. I don't bother with the underscores. I know some people like them, [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] but they're not here right now.

Dre: Wow. Wooow!

Sylvia: Shots fired, Austin! [Dre laughs quietly] No. Anyway.

Keith: Well, to be fair, friends_table is always here, except on [Cohost](#) there's no underscores, I forgot. So it would be dash anyway.

Sylvia: It's a dash, yeah. And yeah, you can go— that's a great segue into me saying you can check out our other show at @friends_table on, uh, [Twitter](#) [Dre laughs quietly] and also [Tiktok](#), and...sorry, the name— Twitter doesn't exist in my brain anymore. I'm over—

Dre: Sure, it's X, yeah.

Sylvia: No.

Keith: It doesn't exist on my phone either.

Sylvia: That's true. Hey, high five.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Actually, that's not true, because I keep the Friends at the Table account on my phone.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Anyway, that's enough for my—

Keith: Oh, I just mean it says X now. It doesn't say Twitter on my phone; it says X.

Sylvia: Oh. Yeah, it does. Cool— I don't want to talk about this. Someone else introduce themselves.

Keith: You can, of course, also check out all the streams that we've been doing cataloged at youtube.com/friendsatthetable. That's where we've been uploading the streams after they've been streamed on Twitch, which is twitch.tv/friendsatthetable. And if you want to support the show, you can go to friendsatthetable.cash. Also with me today, Jack de Quidt.

Jack: Hi, my name's Jack. You can find me on Cohost at [@jdq](https://cohost.com/@jdq) and you can get any of the music featured on the show at notquitereal.bandcamp.com. I'd also like to shout out our amazing cover art by Annie Johnston-Glick, whose website you can find at anniejg.com. That's A-N-N-I-E.

Keith: And Andrew Lee Swan.

Dre: Hey, you can find me on x.com because I'm straight edge [Sylvia and Keith laugh] at [@swandre3000](https://twitter.com/swandre3000).

Sylvia: Fuck off! Boo!

Dre: It's just me and CM Punk. We're the only two people that are on X.

Sylvia: Ugh.

Dre: Just talking about how we won't take Advil. [Jack laughs quietly]

Keith: Oh, I won't take Advil.

Dre: Wow. Okay, Keith.

Jack: I don't think I can take Advil. What is Advil?

Dre: Keith, do you want an invite? Do you want an invite over to edge— x.com, the official social media for straight edge people?

Keith: Well, I take Tylenol, and I take naproxen.

Sylvia: [laughs] Edge.com is different. [Dre laughs]

Keith: Wait, is— that is naproxen is Advil, right? Which one is Advil?

Dre: Uh, Advil is, I'm pretty sure, aspirin.

Keith: Advil is aspirin.

Dre: It's ibuprofen. It's ibuprofen.

Keith: Ibuprofen, right.

Sylvia: Women be profen, am I right?

Keith: Jack, did you ask what is Advil?

Jack: Couldn't remember what it is. Medicines are called different things in the UK and the US.

Keith: Oh.

Dre: Sure. Yeah.

Jack: For example, Tylenol is called Paracetamol in the UK.

Sylvia: I knew that.

Keith: That one I did know, actually. What about ibuprofen? What do you call ibuprofen?

Jack: Uh, we call ibuprofen ibuprofen, and we don't call it Advil at all, so when I hear Advil, [**Keith:** Okay.] I am like, "What the fuck? Who is that?" and then I have to run to the pharmacist, holding the bottle in front of me.

Keith: What about naproxen?

Jack: Never heard of that in my life.

Keith: That's Aleve.

Jack: Don't know what that is.

Keith: It's good. It's the best one. [laughs quietly] It's the one that actually makes my headache go away when I have a headache.

Jack: Welcome to Headache Talk, a new podcast in the Friends at the Table line.

Keith: How many—

Jack: The music is just five uninterrupted minutes of a high painful tone to really get you into the space to be able to discuss the headache.

Keith: Can we go around the horn and— how many days a week do you have a headache for at least half an hour of the day?

Sylvia: Uh...

Dre: Uh...three?

Keith: Three? Okay.

Sylvia: Zero.

Keith: Zero?

Sylvia: Are you guys all right? I mean, like, on average, yeah. I'm a...I'm healthy.

Keith: Jack?

Dre: I get— oh, go ahead.

Jack: Probably two. Two days, and I go, "Ow."

Keith: I think I'm on three.

Dre: Mine are always at, like, the end of a workday.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Mine— I, like, wake up with a headache a lot.

Dre: You're not drinking enough water, it sounds like.

Keith: I'm drinking— I drink so much water. I drink a ton of water.

Sylvia: I just— whenever I have a headache, it's like, oh, there's some sort of substance missing, and I just add that to the equation, and the headache usually goes away.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: I think it's an allergy thing.

Sylvia: And sometimes that's Tylenol, but sometimes it's caffeine.

Keith: I think it's an allergy thing. I, you know.

Dre: Oh, yeah. For sure.

Keith: I get allergies on my face at night, and then I wake up with a headache.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: I've got a recap.

Sylvia: We got everyone, right? We introduced everyone?

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: We introduced everyone.

Sylvia: Okay, cool.

Keith: We all said how many headaches we have.

Sylvia: Okay, cool.

Dre: Uh huh.

Keith: And so—

Sylvia: I hope you're keeping track at home.

Keith: Yep.

Sylvia: This will be on the test.

Keith: Yeah, yeah. Put this on your chart. [Jack laughs] Okay.

Jack: At the end of the bed.

Sylvia: Who will be the headache champion of the show?

Summary [0:06:20]

Keith: [laughs] New event. We finished last episode with the end of the Trick Tower, the prison, the journey through the horrible prison-slash-maze.

Sylvia: Slash Mouse Trap the board game.

Keith: Slash Mouse Trap the board game.

Sylvia: Judging by some of the, like, clips we got of them taking the route down through things.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Weirdly, for the first time, no new examiner. No fun new weirdo to meet.

Sylvia: Well...

Keith: The prison guard who never shows up at the beginning of the last one explains the rules to the new game. I heard— Sylvi, was that you protesting that there is

actually...?

Sylvia: We do have...there's kind of a new character. There's, like, a guide character. There's the—

Keith: There's— yes, I think that her name's Khara?

Sylvia: It is, yes.

Keith: And she's a...

Sylvia: She's just, like, an assistant.

Keith: She seems like a service employee with a forced smile is what she seems like.

Sylvia: The...I don't— how many people here have seen the film *Battle Royale*?

Keith: I have not.

Jack: I have seen the film *Battle Royale*—

Dre: You know, I haven't.

Jack: And I will talk about it a couple of times in this episode.

Sylvia: This'll definitely come up later, but I feel like her design in particular is a nod to a character in *Battle Royale*. I'll get a picture up while you continue with your summary that I rudely interrupted.

Keith: It's funny that we're gonna be talking about— you're all gonna be talking about *Battle Royale*, because I have a different thing that I'm gonna compare this to, which you'll find out thusly. So, the warden explains the new rules to the game. Good news if you're a fan of the world's most popular larp. It's the assassin game. [Jack and Dre laugh quietly] Every one of our remaining freaks draws straws [Sylvia laughs] to determine what they have— does every know the assassin game? We've all been to a high school or a college somewhere in the world?

Sylvia: What the fuck are you talking about?

Keith: No? You don't know the assassin game?

Dre: Yeah. No, I know this game, yeah.

Keith: Okay. Dre knows. Jack, do you know?

Jack: I can, based on the episodes that I watched, intuit what you mean.

Sylvia: Yeah, like, I can guess based on the show, but I've—

Keith: It truly is—

Sylvia: The assassin game, to me, stars Ezio Auditore. [Jack laughs quietly]

Dre: Fair.

Keith: It truly is the world's most popular larp. It's got a long history. In 1982, [Jack laughs] Steve Jackson Games published their version of the assassin game, and it's something that gets played around the world, I know, but a lot in American high schools and colleges. It's the exact same rules as this. Everyone draws straws. You have a target, someone has you as a target, and your goal is to basically be the last person standing. This has slightly different rules. You're basically getting points by collecting people's ID cards. Your card is worth two, your target's card is worth four, and everyone else's card is worth one. Once you have six points, you can go wait for the end date, although I think that you can still get caught if you're caught waiting, which is why one character digs himself a little hole. We'll talk about that later.

Jack: And this is on an island. They get on a little boat and set off.

Keith: Right. [laughs quietly] Yeah, they get on a little boat, and they go two hours to this little island called, I think, Zevil Island?

Sylvia: Yep.

Keith: It looks a little bit like Whale Island, actually, but it's not. So, you might be asking:

who is the main crew hunting? Maybe each other? No, not each other. We learn straightaway that no one has each other as a target. The only character that we get their number straightaway is Gon. It's clearly bad news. He takes it fine. He's actually kind of excited. It's weird. They disembark, and we spend most of our time watching Gon training montage himself [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] to learn how to hunt, interspersed with scenes of Leorio and Kurapika having teamed up, a reveal about my favorite current mystery: what is up with Gittarackur?

Sylvia: Yeah! [Dre chuckles]

Keith: And a lengthy sequence of Gon stalking Hisoka, attempting to put his practice into work, and that's where we are. That brings us basically to the end of these three episodes. Did I miss anything? Did anybody want to...?

Episode 14 [0:10:25]

Jack: I want to— yeah, just, I really want to quickly, in case you haven't seen this episode, the mechanics of the game which is that the way you are— you described it as hunting people's ID cards. What you're actually hunting are the numbered badges that everyone has been wearing from the start of the Hunter trials.

Keith: Right, little pins that everyone's been basically displaying for the last 10 episodes.

Jack: Yes. And as soon as most of the players realize that you can only identify your target based on their pin, there's this great moment where people suddenly cover them with their hands and then take them off their clothes, and we'll get into this as we talk about the episodes, but a really cool way that this sort of arc sets characters apart is by whether or not they choose to hide their numbers, but a lot of the mysteries and mechanics of the early part is: who is hunting whom, and can you remember—not just you the viewer, but can the characters remember—the association between the numbers and the actual people themselves?

Keith: Mm-hmm. And obviously Gon and Killua recognize number 44 right away as

Hisoka. Kurapika seems to know straightaway who he's got. Leorio does not know who his person is, [Keith and Dre laugh quietly] and neither does Killua, so I'm excited for us to see what we find out in these three episodes. We do actually, right before all of this, we get a— we get closeups of the few remaining contestants, and even though we got everyone's name at the end of the last episode, I'm still like, "Who are some of these people?" They have gotten absolutely no screentime.

Jack: [chuckles] Yes.

Keith: We have big eyebrows big mustache guy. [Sylvia laughs] We have a Red Ribbon Army android with sunglasses. [Dre laughs] We have someone I'm gonna call Handsome Leorio. [Jack laughs]

Sylvia: Wow!

Dre: Oh, wow.

Sylvia: Shots fired!

Keith: There's just, like, a guy. There's just like, what if Leorio was, like, not...what if— you know how Leorio looks like too old of a man? What if someone looked the same as Leorio but actually was, like—

Sylvia: Was that age?

Keith: Yeah, was that age.

Sylvia: Okay.

Keith: Uh, fantasy RPG peasant clothes guy. Purple nose, purple hair. Smiling boy? Plain-faced smiling boy. [Sylvia laughs] And then a guy wearing exactly Piccolo's clothes from *Dragon Ball Z*. [Jack laughs] He has the head wrap. He has the purple cape. It's bizarre.

Jack: What's funny about the way you're describing this is that this guy is not...doesn't look like Piccolo really at all.

Keith: No. He does not look like Piccolo.

Jack: This is Piccolo's clothes guy.

Keith: He's not Piccolo guy.

Dre: This isn't...that's not the bow user, right?

Keith: No, the bo user is big eyebrows big mustache guy.

Jack: Who's the one who looks like—

Sylvia: He can—

Keith: Oh, sorry, sorry, no. Sorry, bo...

Dre: Wait, no, he's not.

Keith: Sorry, not...bo staff. That guy's got a bo staff, not a bow.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Okay.

Keith: Got it.

Sylvia: Not the bow and arrow.

Keith: The bow guy is Pokkle.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Pokkle's got the hair.

Sylvia: Yeah, who is the *Dragon Quest* character.

Keith: Right, right.

Dre: Yes.

Keith: Right, but not the Red Ribbon Army android with sunglasses. That's the sniper.

Jack: Yes.

Dre: Ohh, okay.

Sylvia: I love her.

Dre: I—

Jack: There is something to be said— oh, sorry, go ahead, Dre.

Dre: I think her name is Siper.

Keith: Siper or Cypher?

Dre: Siper.

Keith: Siper.

Dre: S-I-P-E-R.

Sylvia: Like a viper with an S.

Keith: Or like a sniper with no N.

Jack: Mm.

Sylvia: You know what? I think that is probably more it, because that is what we see her doing.

Keith: Yeah, yeah. [Jack laughs]

Dre: Wow, she does look like a Red Ribbon Army android.

Keith: She really, really looks like a— or like a *Dragon Ball* era Red Ribbon Army soldier.

Dre: Oh, wow, especially— well, her 1999 version, she looks like Cammy from *Street*

Fighter. [laughs]

Keith: Oh, that's weird.

Jack: There is something really pleasing about— so, they show us little inset shots, almost like picture-in-picture shots of all remaining 24, I believe, candidates. And it is such a...playing with the level of detail that is accessible to the viewer is kind of, like, this show's main trick that it deploys all the time, and I think that it taking the time— well, first whittling its cast of characters down to 24 and then taking the time to show us all of them is this really nice moment, especially as we move into a game that is ultimately about, you know, these 24 people trying to remember who is who and what their special powers are, and getting this, like, silent introduction to all the remaining characters is lovely, and there's a great double punchline to this, which is at the end Leorio butts into the picture-in-picture display as if to say, "You haven't included me." [Sylvia laughs quietly] He, like, pulls the picture-in-picture bar to one side to reveal him, and then Tonpa butts in to reveal that he also hasn't been included, and Leorio— [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: It's a very *Animaniacs* moment.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's so funny.

Keith: I think the—

Jack: Especially because—

Keith: The secret to this is that I think that they're shown in the order that they finished the last thing.

Dre: Yes.

Jack: Oh, yeah, totally.

Sylvia: Because it's the selection order.

Keith: Yeah. So it ends sort of with this, like— quote, unquote “ends” with this big picture of Gon, like, there's our main character, and then it's, no, Leorio and Tonpa also have to muscle in, because they didn't get really included.

Dre: Uh—

Jack: It's also— oh, go ahead, Dre.

Dre: Go ahead, Jack. Oh, I was just gonna say: when Leorio draws— are we talking about the drawing part, right?

Keith: Uh, this is— no, this is the...

Dre: This is before.

Keith: This is just showing— yeah, they're just showing each person in, like, little portraits.

Dre: Okay. Yes, okay, yes. Okay, go ahead.

Keith: [crosstalk] Uh...oh, no, Jack, go.

Jack: [crosstalk] Oh, I just love that we are pairing Leorio and Tonpa. They really are— they deserve each other.

Dre: They sure do. [Keith laughs]

Jack: I am, like, a diehard Leorio and Kurapika together forever stan, but there is something about Tonpa and Leorio as two of the worst men in the competition. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Boy.

Jack: Just constantly getting attached to each other and constantly being like, “The other guy is the problem.”

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Like, Leorio believes firmly that Tonpa is the worst guy in the competition and he's a perfectly normal man, and Tonpa is like, "Look, I was just living a nice normal life of crushing rookies in this competition, and then this idiot showed up to make everything hard for me."

Keith: And it makes sense too, because it's sort of like, you know, that beginning of Tonpa's introduction where he's like, you know, we're following him around sort of complaining at how all the rookies are too scary and too, like, impossible to trick. And it's funny that he gets so attached to Leorio, because it's really like, Leorio's the last guy left that he can get one over on. [laughs]

Jack: [laughs] Yes. Yes.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: The most— the easiest man on the planet to trick.

Keith: Right. Yeah.

Jack: But with, like...to say Leorio has a fiery temper is a massive understatement. Leorio will just go off about anything at the slightest provocation.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: So, I'd like— I'm happy to report that there are six works in the Leorio/Tonpa tag on Archive of Our Own. [Keith laughs]

Jack: Wow! Can you read the titles, if they are not spoilers?

Sylvia: So, the first one is just "Tonpa X Leorio".

Jack: Okay.

Sylvia: By author SlurpMyFatWeen. [quiet laughter]

Jack: Jesus.

Keith: Okay.

Dre: [sighs] All right. Okay.

Sylvia: That's the only thing that sort of differentiates it, so that's why I mention it. The next one is "Tonpa x Leorio: First meeting". So, fine, whatever. The next one is a good name. The next one has my favorite name, which is, "I Love Juice, But Not as Much as I Love You."

Jack: Aw.

Sylvia: And the description is, "Tonpa loves juice, but a fated encounter in a convenience store leads him to eventually loving something more than his juice."
[laughs quietly]

Jack: Answer: Leorio.

Keith: Do you think this is all related to his poison juices that he gives out?

Sylvia: Yeah, probably.

Dre: Yeah, I assume that's the deal.

Sylvia: And the next are all very standard. There's "365 Days of your Love". This next one's a 50 Shades riff, which is "50 Shades of Your Love".

Dre: Oh.

Sylvia: I'm not clicking on that one. [Jack laughs quietly] And then there's another one that's got, like, a bunch of different pairings. This one is called "Crying x Crying". One of the tags on this is the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Jack: Interesting.

Keith: Very interesting.

Jack: I wonder what's going on there. [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: Well, another tag is Tonpa Bay, so I'm assuming he sort of took over there. Anyway, that was my little fanfiction diversion.

Jack: That was great.

Sylvia: Thank you.

Jack: Is there anything else? Oh, I think I have one more thing to talk about before we get on the boat and can kind of get—

Keith: Yeah, I have two quick things, yeah.

Jack: Into the meat of this competition. The one thing that is just this lovely little moment is that Gon— we get a little reaction shot of Gon noticing Hisoka's wound.

Keith: Oh, yep, that was one of mine.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Hisoka has got a cut on his shoulder from the time that he, I think, decapitated the examiner?

Keith: Yeah, the vengeful former examiner.

Jack: Yeah. And this is a really nice moment of Gon looking at Hisoka and going, "Oh, he's mortal. He can be hurt."

Keith: He can be hurt.

Jack: And something in here has hurt him. And it also sets up— it's a really nice piece of foreshadowing for what is going to become really critical in this little arc of episodes, which is blood and physical violence.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah!

Jack: And we will get to this, but.

Keith: There is something so smooth between the noticing of the shoulder, the drawing of Hisoka's name, being excited for it, and then using that shoulder as part of his plan.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Like, really, really works out so well. And is like, it's just such an easy...you know, the prospect of having Gon try and go after Hisoka, and like, being pretty game for it actually and kind of excited by the idea is kind of a hard pill to swallow, and they do some very smooth work to get that working, where it's like, oh, this ball is rolling on its own, basically. But yeah, him noticing that shoulder is really good, and it does— another piece of what this show does really well is, like, it's constantly showing you people noticing things, [laughs quietly] which is, like, such a weird...it's just a weird thing for a show to do well, especially this kind of show. I don't really think...a lot of shows in this genre are, like, really really overexplains. It's kind of— wouldn't even call it a pitfall. It's just, like, a piece. It's just what comes with the territory. You get a lot of people explaining everything that they see and, like, what they're gonna do with it. And this show is so content to just, like, watch you watch Gon watch Hisoka.

Jack: Mm-hmm. Yeah. It's a real economy in visual storytelling, which is notable in a show that, yeah, just flings interesting pieces of visual storytelling at the camera pretty constantly.

Keith: My one other thing— this is really quick. Gittarackur can't even pick up his straw like a normal guy.

Dre: No, of course not.

Keith: [laughs] He, like, jitters over to it, and then he just, like, kind of punches into it. It's very funny.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Uh huh. [Keith laughs]

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: I mean, Leorio also can't draw a card like a normal guy.

Keith: [laughs] No, no, he walks over...

Dre: And he screams, "You gotta draw it like you mean it!"

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: [laughs] This is so funny.

Keith: Oh, in the— Dre, are you watching the dub?

Dre: Yeah, the English dub, yeah.

Keith: In the sub, it's very similar, but he goes, "If I'm gonna draw a card, I'm gonna draw it in style." [Dre and Jack laugh]

Dre: That makes more sense than "You gotta draw it like you mean it." [laughs]

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Uh...

Keith: I think it does make a little bit more sense, although I don't know necessarily that it's possible to draw a card in style.

Dre: No.

Keith: And he doesn't. He just draws it basically normally, but yeah. Now we're on the—

Sylvia: But he does draw it like he means it, so...

Dre: That's true.

Keith: That's true, yeah.

Jack: I don't want to move—

Sylvia: Think about it.

Keith: It might be easier to draw it like you mean it, even though it is a sillier thing to say.

Sylvia: Yes.

Keith: Uh, we're on the boat.

Jack: I'm gonna move past my— oh, sorry, my favorite Leorio line here. I don't know when he says this. I think it's around the drawing. It might be just after he's drawn it, and I've just written down, quote, "I have no idea what's going on, but I sure don't want to lose." —Leorio." [Keith and Jack laugh] This is something that—

Sylvia: His whole fucking character summed up in one sentence, huh?

Keith: Yeah. Yes, yeah. From beginning to end, really, that's the Leorio story. We're on the boat. Not much happens on the boat. We get two quick scenes with the two pairs, both kind of assuring each other that they don't have each other as targets.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: The two pairs being Killua and Leorio, and Killua— wait, Kurapika and Leorio, and Killua and Gon.

Keith: Right, yes, yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: There's this very funny moment where Killua's like, "Tell me who you got," and Gon is like, "Tell me who *you* got," and Killua's like, "No, I wouldn't do that. I was trying to trick you," but then is too excited to not show, so they work out a deal where they show each other at the same time, and it's very funny that Killua's pretending to be a jerk, basically. [Dre laughs]

Jack: Well, I mean, I think Killua is a jerk. Killua is, like, a closed-off hard-hearted damaged weirdo, but in the face of being given— I don't know. I feel like this is...I feel like this is the character relationship in a lot of ways, so I have to imagine we'll have more to say about this, but given the opportunity to feel curiosity and excitement and love of the world that he sees in Gon, [**Keith:** Yeah.] allows himself to be playful and, you know, feel that playfulness. Gon brings out of Killua, like, "Oh, what if I was a 12-year-old boy who loved the world?"

Keith: [laughs quietly] For some reason, I reference this guy all the time. I don't know why. This comes up on Run Button. It comes up on Friends at the Table. I've referenced different parts of this character for different things, but the, like, the evil snow wizard from the Rankin and Bass *Santa Claus is Comin' to Town* stop motion movie.

Jack: [laughs] What the fuck are you talking about?

Keith: Do they not have those over there? The Rankin and Bass Christmas movies?

Jack: No. I'm searching "Rankin and Bass evil snow wizard"?

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Oh, the Snow Miser?

Keith: No, not the Snow Miser. That's from *The Year Without a Santa Claus*. This is the Winter Warlock is his name, actually, the Winter Warlock.

Jack: Oh, wow!

Keith: From *Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town*.

Jack: Oh, he looks fucking great!

Keith: I know. He's great. It's such a good— this is the best one of those movies by far, and if you Google Image Search, you'll see his evil version and this other version, but

there's just a very cartoony sort of scene where his, like, icy heart is melting because Santa Claus does a dance with him. [Jack and Keith laugh] Early, you know, young red-haired Kris Kringle does a dance with the Winter Warlock, and it melts his icy heart, and that is sort of Killua to me is this, like, very stop motion goofy, you know, ice literally melting off of the skin of this guy, and he's like, "Huh, the world is fun."

Jack: Yeah, "I can hang out with my friend, Gon!" Absolutely.

Keith: Yeah. Gon's the Santa Claus of Whale Island.

Jack: Oh, you know that— do you think Santa—? Well, no, we mustn't get sidetracked.

Keith: Okay. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Killua can't tell if— so, there's a little conversation here where Killua says— sorry, where Gon says, "I have to get Hisoka," and they both sort of, like, "Well, that's— you've got your work cut out for you, buddy. He is a monster." And Killua can't tell if Gon is excited or scared and asks him, and Gon says he feels both, and I feel like moments in which Gon is able to identify and talk about conflicted emotions that he is feeling is pretty central to this character. We've had scenes of this before, specifically with excitement and fear and Gon kind of conflating the two into this sort of urge towards action. I think it's notable that it comes up again here in, you know, a very similar conversation of like, "Are you excited, or are you scared?" and Gon is now able to say, "Well, I think I'm feeling both," but sort of leaves it at that.

Keith: I could be wrong, but it struck me, as Killua sort of walks away from Gon after this conversation, that we haven't had the, like, very much of the camera following Killua, like, looking at things through his perspective the way that we have for several other characters, including Hisoka, including Tonpa, but especially Kurapika and also Leorio.

Jack: I agree. I think that's true.

Keith: Yeah, just kind of surprising with how central of a character he's been that we, like, haven't been kind of in his head yet in that same way.

Jack: It keeps him at a remove, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: You know, I feel like in the early episodes, or rather in the last maybe 10 episodes or so, a lot of Killua's character has been this person has frightening and violent capabilities beyond the audience's understanding, and I think that by not getting that internal view, that interiority...yes, you're right, it is notable the way that, in a show that generally has a pretty drifting camera of interiority, we are regularly denied Killua's viewpoint, and I think that it's a deliberately distancing maneuver.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, it definitely, like, he...it's, I think, even notable that we've spent more time with Hisoka from his perspective than we have even with Killua, who is, like, kind of, at this point, sharing screentime with the main character more than anyone else.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: We get off the boat, unless anyone has anymore boat thoughts?

Sylvia: No, I know our show. I think we should get off the boat as soon as possible.

Keith: Okay. [Keith and Jack laugh]

Dre: Uh, I will say, when they get off the boat, there's just a lot of good lines in the English dub in these few episodes, but Killua tells Gon, "Don't die, 'kay?" and then Gon says, "Yeah, same to you!" [laughter]

Keith: I think that's— that's actually, I think, pretty much also in the sub, which is really good, yeah, the like, "Don't die!" [laughs] It's very funny.

Jack: I would like very quickly, before we get off the boat, and we can kind of blend this into actually the battle royale starting. This is, I believe, the first of the Hunter trials where contingent on success is: yeah, you might just kill other contestants.

[0:30:12]

Keith: Right.

Jack: We've had running.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: We've had cooking a big meal, fighting pigs. We've had Trick Tower, which we can sort of assume was tricks and fighting the prisoners. And there is something that's sort of a mask-off moment here.

Keith: Yeah, there's like, there's been this passive competition and hostility between the members of this test the whole time, and we've talked a lot about how, like, other contestants have served as kind of de facto exams for each other to try to get themselves over on competition, but this is the first time that it's like, okay, you are all now versus each other.

Jack: Yep. Totally.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Also, we didn't mention it: this is the penultimate phase. We have been told, unless there are tricks and traps and lies, which this is the Hunter Exam, I would believe that. [Sylvia laughs quietly] As far as the examiners are telling us, we have this, the battle royale on Zevil Island, and then we have one more, and then the exam is over, which is interesting.

Keith: Little does Jack know, the last phase of the exam is the chimera ant arc. [Jack and Keith laugh]

Jack: I feel like it's the— it could very easily be the...uh, what's his name? James Acaster infinite wishes genie joke.

Keith: Oh, yeah.

Jack: Where James Acaster says, you know, everyone always wishes for infinite wishes, but what if they don't allow you that? And the answer is, "I'll wish for infinite genies," and I feel like—

Keith: So you're saying there's infinite Hunter Exams.

Jack: There might be the— the final Hunter Exam might be 40 further tests. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Sure.

Jack: [laughs] Contained within it. But yeah, battle royale begins. Lovely camera work as they leave the boat. We get this shot almost at water level, looking up at the gangplank as people are walking, and I posted in the Media Club Plus channel, "Everybody say 'good luck Killua'," next to a little image of Killua walking off the boat with his skateboard.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm. And he does great.

Keith: Insulting his shoes.

Jack: I did insult his shoes, but I don't want to put that on microphone. [Keith laughs] It's like talking about how you might not like Taylor Swift, and people will just come down on you and fight you. I won't do this. [laughs quietly]

Keith: The battle royale starts kind of funny, because we really do get a ton of this sort of, like, Gon training by himself montage kind of upfront.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Is there anything before that that we want to mention?

Jack: Yes.

Keith: We see him— okay, sure. Go ahead.

Jack: We briefly see the best bit of battle royale video games that comes out of battle royale movies as well, which is watching other people who aren't you fighting. That is one of the most exciting bits on *PUBG* or in *Fortnite* or in battle royale is contestants seeing other contestants fighting off in the distance and having to make a decision about whether they want to intervene or when they want to intervene. So, we get to see Gon back in his classic habitat, relaxing in a tree, wondering about what to do.

Keith: Oh, when he, like, spins upside down while thinking is so funny.

Jack: He spins upside down.

Dre: Oh, yeah, no, it's so good.

Keith: It's great.

Jack: And he notices two people hunting each other in a field. He notices the person who has arrows shoots an arrow at somebody, and the arrow has, like, a paralytic agent on, and that person keels over, and the archer goes and takes the badge, and Gon is like, "Hmm, interesting." But then, yes, Gon is like, "Well, I'm gonna have to get it with a fishing rod."

Keith: Yeah. They actually do a pretty good job of like— and I know that we just talked about how they don't explain things. They show you what Gon notices, and then they go back to explain, like, the thing exactly, which is an anime concept that doesn't get, like...it doesn't get expositioned here, they just use it a few times, but Gon notices that Pokkle, the guy with the arrows, was, like, suppressing his presence. He was, like, hiding his presence until right before he fired his arrow.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Which he then used to his advantage, because the guy dodges out of the way in order to not get hit, and so he, like, intentionally didn't kill this guy, even though he was aiming to kill, because he knew he would get out of the way and get hit by the poison. It's a little bit Sherlock Holmes sort of math on the screen, but [Dre and Keith laugh] this is sort of the way that the genre thinks sometimes. So, just in this order of operations

that Gon is gonna go through, his like series of Dr. Houseian revelations—something happens in front of him and he gets an idea—that this first idea of hiding his presence is, like, very important.

Jack: Yeah, and then he knows he can't beat Hisoka in a straight fight, so he's like, "I'm gonna snatch the badge from Hisoka's chest." Hisoka, in a classic Hisoka move, is like, "Oh, the badge? They're gonna take it? I should hide it? Absolutely not. This is where the badge lives."

Keith: Maybe the only character that doesn't hide the badge.

Jack: Nope. That's not true.

Keith: Oh.

Jack: There are some others. We'll get to them in a second.

Keith: Okay, great.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm!

Jack: But it's really fun. So, Gon is like, "Well, I have to get it by tricking," and he immediately starts trying to...what he wants to do is work on his fishing rod technique on a moving object, so he starts trying to catch birds with his fishing rod, and it doesn't go well, until he notices that the birds are trying to catch fish, like snatch them out of the river, and so we get this really just lovely piece of, again, visual storytelling of seeing a fly on the surface of the water that is then hunted by a fish, and then the fish is hunted by a bird, and then Gon flings his fishing rod and catches the bird, you know, out of the air.

Sylvia: It's so well done.

Keith: It's really, really good.

Sylvia: It's really...it's really, like, just a lovely bit of animation work. I don't—I haven't—

Keith: It is, like, more expensive looking than a lot of the stuff [Keith and Sylvia laugh quietly] that is, like, in between fight scenes in the show. Like, the backgrounds are always nice, but characters, you can really get a lot of mileage out of a kind of shitty looking version of these characters. [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: But they do a very good job with this.

Sylvia: I think...I think, like, the thing that makes it stand out to me is because it is something that doesn't seem like a sequence that they'd put the time and effort and probably money into [Keith: Right.] with a shonen anime. They give this the sort of care that, like— I mean, I'm not gonna compare it to a fight scene in terms of, like, actual visuals and anything, but the amount of detail and the, I don't know, quality of it definitely feels like they were, like, yeah.

Keith: Just the level of detail on the birds is kind of surprising.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: I love how the birds look.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: I love how they are just normal-ass birds.

Keith: And they're very cute.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: They're really cute-looking sort of, like, blue jay type birds. I love that he puts little rubber bits on the hooks of the...the hooks of the hook to not, like, stab the birds.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah!

Keith: To protect the bird.

Sylvia: He's a good boy.

Keith: Yeah, and then we see, when he does finally catch a bird, and it's like wrapped up in the thing, we do see him make sure that the bird is okay before letting it fly off.

Jack: It's so sweet.

Keith: Very cute.

Jack: And I think that there is...well, it's very funny that Gon sort of establishes this plan of, like, the right moment to strike is when your target is also just about to strike. This is kind of the thing that he has learned. He has completely neglected the other lesson here, which is that everybody is in a chain of being hunted.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And that he is also part of that chain. There is not—

Keith: This is Gon's Mistake.

Jack: [laughs] This is Gon's Mistake, once again. Getting so excited about learning one thing and then being like, "Ah, shit, wait. I am actually involved in this." But it did make me wonder, and I think that I was probably clued into this as well, because of what you talked about, Sylvi, about how lovingly this sequence is animated.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: I wonder if this sequence is, on some level, acting as a broader thesis statement for what it means to be a Hunter. You know, watching our protagonist Hunter hunt their way through a chain of targets to predict how they're going to move. A person or a thing is targeting a person or a thing is targeting a person or a thing. You know, the natural world is just an interconnected web of people planning and waiting to strike, and if you

can see that chain clearly enough, if you can sort of see what people want and how they are going to get it, you can manipulate it to your own advantage, and I don't know if the show is trying to tell us something about Hunters. You know, this is the "What is a Hunter?" minute again of our show.

Keith: It is. We're ringing the bell, because Gon literally says it. It's actually the first time that Gon puts forward his own idea of what a Hunter is, during all of this stuff when he's thinking about, like, this is a little bit before the birds, but he's thinking about, like, having to follow Hisoka and how he's gonna do it. [Sylvia laughs quietly] He says, "This is how you hunt"!

Jack: [laughs quietly] Yeah. Are we seeing a sort of, at least maybe Gon's grand unified theory of Hunting being sort of spoken to us in one way? An interconnected web of predator and prey or actor and counteractor that can be sort of seen by someone in the know and manipulated. I don't know, but it's interesting.

Keith: It's not that grand and unified of a theory yet, because while he's— while we're watching him do this, we're also watching someone else watching him do this.

Jack: Yeah. It's great. It's really good. It's the bit in any sort of sci-fi thing. It's in one of the *Star Wars* movies, right, where it's like— and it's in all kinds of things. The creature that's threatening our heroes is eaten by a bigger creature who is then in turn eaten by a bigger creature.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: I like that a lot.

Keith: There's always a bigger fish.

Jack: There is always a bigger fish, yeah.

Keith: Thank you, Qui-Gon.

Jack: Who is Qui-Gon? That's Liam Neeson.

Keith: Yes.

Dre: That is Liam Neeson.

Sylvia: I believe that is Liam Neeson, yeah.

Jack: Right.

Keith: Uh, Geretta. Geretta is the one that we see stalking Gon as he trains and is kind of, I'll say, bemused. He's sort of, like, kind of impressed and satisfied at Gon's hard work and his ability to be able to master hunting in such a short amount of time while also being kind of, um...I don't know. Is he disappointed? Is he sort of, like, just kind of "I lucked out," that he's like, "Oh, very clearly [**Jack:** Yeah.] this kid is not watching his back at all."

Dre: Mm.

Keith: It never comes up. Gon never takes a single precaution to make sure he's not being hunted.

Jack: Yeah. I don't know. Especially because, in comparison to...there is a kind of being impressed thing going on, and that comes back later. You know, Geretta is clearly like, "Wow, this person's putting in work," there is that kind of disappointment, but there is none of the sort of electric radiating malice that we get when we see Hisoka watching Gon.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Not necessarily in this episode, but, you know, later in these episodes, but in the past where we have seen the way Hisoka talks about kind of cultivating not just Gon but Kurapika and Leorio as well as, like, worthy opponents and worthy components. There's this sort of magnetic pseudo-sexual malicious electric voyeurism going on that we don't get any of really with Geretta just watching here and sort of going like, "Huh, wow. I'm biding my time. Gon's sure trying to catch birds with a fishing rod."

Keith: Sorry, Jack, I lost my place reading my notes while you were finishing what you were saying. [Dre laughs] I'm sorry.

Jack: No, no, it's totally okay. Did you have something there, Sylvi? I heard you take a breath.

Sylvia: I just was sort of giggling at, once again, the mental image of this dude just sort of sitting there watching this kid flail around with a fishing rod. [laughs]

Keith: For two days.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: For two full days.

Keith: For two days. There is a sort of— there is almost— you know, we're bringing Piccolo up again. This is not Piccolo guy, but like, this does sort of remind me of in *Dragon Ball Z*, where Goku is dead. You know, this is, like, the very first 15 episodes of *Dragon Ball Z*. [Dre laughs] Goku's dead.

Sylvia: And he never comes back!

Keith: And he never comes back.

Dre: And he never comes back. [Jack laughs]

Keith: He basically entrusts his son to Piccolo to train, and Piccolo's version of training is I'm gonna sit this four-year-old boy on this platform surrounded by dinosaurs and watch him from three miles away and see what he does. [Jack laughs] And there is, like, there's weirdly this sort of kind of silent mentor thing going on. Like, he's not helping. He's not hurting. He eventually plans to hurt him, but he, like, does seem like he's like, "Well, he's on the right track. Let him at least learn how to do this before I teach him the very painful lesson of you should also be watching your six while this is happening."

Dre: Hmm.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. And that's kind of the end of the episode there.

Episode 15 [0:44:38]

Jack: We move onto episode 15. Isn't it delightful? I wrote down, "Gon is exactly the sort of person who would get surrounded by butterflies." The episode begins, and lovely unproblematic pink butterflies [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] surround Gon. And then I wrote, "Oh, they're blood butterflies," because these butterflies hunt blood?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And are looking at the sort of, like, wear and tear on Gon's hand from where he was throwing the fishing rod so many times that he sort of scraped his hand, and these blood-hunting butterflies show up that become kind of the visual...become a key part of the visual language and plot, the way we cut from scene to scene, kind of from this point on. These butterflies are incredible, and I'm sure we're going to end up talking about them a lot, but is there anything we want to hit, as far as their introduction is concerned?

Keith: I might be going one scene too far, but I just gotta say: butterflies on strings.

Jack: Right! Gon—

Dre: Uh huh?

Sylvia: Aw, he has his little guys on their little strings, and he's walking around with them taped to his hands. [Keith laughs] It's so cute.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's great. Gon builds a blood-hunting butterfly machine, because Gon—

Keith: Yeah, this is where that shoulder comes into play. He notices that the butterflies are following the blood. He sort of tests it by waving his hand back and forth, and he goes, "Hmm, Hisoka's shoulder is bloody. There's probably not much blood here on Blood Island besides that." [quiet laughter]

Jack: Did you call it Blood Island?

Keith: Yeah, I did. [laughter] It's a big fighting arena, and it's got so much blood that a species of blood butterflies evolved here.

Jack: Oh my god. Yeah.

Keith: But he does have this idea of: let me follow the butterflies, but let me make sure that I can follow them really really well, so I'm gonna tie a string around them. [laughs quietly]

Jack: Gon is fucking great. Watching this— doing this project is really fun, because I get to see a show that has meant a lot to my friends [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] that they've known about for a lot longer than I have. Keith, you play Gon or bits of Gon in almost every character you make.

Keith: That's funny, because really, I don't think...I'm thinking of which characters postdate me watching *Hunter × Hunter*, and probably it's, uh...I'm gonna say that it's Lyke. Maybe, *maybe* Leap forward, but definitely Lyke forward.

Jack: There's a kind of openness to the world that I think— that I associate very much with Keith characters on *Friends at the Table*.

Keith: I think this might be, like, also the threads that tie Gon to, like, shonen protagonists at large.

Jack: Hmm. Yeah. Speaking of threads that tie—not just the threads that tie the butterflies to Gon—there's a really great moment where we see the butterflies feeding on Gon's bloody hand, and then we cut through the butterflies to the butterflies feeding on Hisoka's shoulder as Hisoka sits against a tree kind of thinking about his plan.

Keith: Oh, it was a great, like, immediate sort of confirmation that the plan would work.

Jack: Right. Yes. And not just that. You're right, it is this mechanical confirmation of like, oh, this is working, but you know, this show is so interested in ways that Hisoka and

Gon are kind of linked, are sort of linked entities, and cutting through, like, a butterfly, like an animal with a very particular trait...a butterfly is feeding on Gon's wound, and then we cut from that to a butterfly feeding on Hisoka's wound, and that being the linking moment between these two characters through this kind of, like, weird natural connection, almost like fate, you know, like the natural world itself connects these two people, I thought was just lovely. Hisoka as well. Hisoka's such a weird cool character. Just sitting there, perfectly chill, wound on my shoulder, five or six butterflies feeding on it. Takes a telephone call from Gittarackur, who I always forget has a walkie talkie. There's some scheme that is going on there. Remember earlier?

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: They were talking to each other on a walkie talkie? They are doing something in this Hunter game that is not taking the foreground right now, but the show takes little moments to remind us that they are in cahoots, as it were, frighteningly.

Keith: Maybe they're just friends.

Jack: Maybe they are just friends. Do I think that—

Sylvia: [suggestively] Or more.

Jack: Or— [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: Sorry. I had to be me. [Keith laughs]

Dre: No, that's a good point.

Jack: Oh.

Dre: That's a good point.

Jack: Whoa. We get a little thing that, at this point, in episode 15, I thought was very unsettling, was a very unsettling reveal about Gittarackur. Little baby that I was did not realize what was gonna happen in, I think, the next episode or maybe later in this episode? [Sylvia laughs] We see Gittarackur holding one of the pins that seems to hold

him together, and it's like a sharpened acupuncture pin almost?

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It has a plastic, a yellow plastic or ceramic point— er, sorry, um...

Sylvia: Bulb?

Jack: Cap, bulb.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And then comes to a sharp metal point. And he's just holding it in his hand, as though he's taken it out of himself, which was weird, because yeah, it's been— if you're not watching the show, it might have been a while since we've kind of described Gittarackur, who we described early on as Rattly Pin Man. Gittarackur is a tall almost toy-like purple figure with a mohawk, right? Gittarackur has cool hair. I don't remember what it is.

Keith: Yeah, he's got a mohawk, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And hundreds of quite large yellow pins protruding from all over his body. He moves jerkily when he walks. He rattles.

Keith: Including his face. There's tons in his face, yeah.

Jack: Oh, including— yeah, yeah, yeah.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: He kind of looks like Pinhead if— oh, I know what he looks like. [laughs quietly]

Keith: He looks like if Pinhead was Jesse “the Body” Ventura.

Jack: I don't know who that is. What I was gonna say was: you know—

Keith: He's the governor of Minnesota. [Jack laughs]

Sylvia: God.

Dre: He was.

Keith: He was the— oh, he will be— he is in my heart.

Dre: He will be again. [Sylvia laughs] The once and future Governor of Minnesota. [Dre, Keith, and Sylvia laugh]

Jack: Oh shit, there's a prophecy happening here?

Dre: Probably. Who knows?

Keith: Oh yeah, there's tons of prophecies about Jesse Ventura.

Jack: And is it Minnesota prophecies too, or is it just Jesse Ventura prophecies?

Keith: Minnesota.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Okay.

Keith: Federal, even.

Dre: Forever intertwined.

Jack: So, here's what Gittarackur feels like to me. You know sometimes they make kids' versions of, like, kitchen tools, like kitchen tools that the adults use, like, for example, this espresso maker. I'm putting it in the Media Club Plus chat. This is an espresso

maker made of wood. It's got nice colors.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It's got nice simple shapes. Kids use them. To me, Gittarackur is like if you made Pinhead from *Hellraiser* into one of these.

Sylvia: He's Fisher Price Pinhead.

Jack: He's Fisher Price Pinhead.

Sylvia: Okay.

Jack: Yeah, and—

Keith: Not because he's less dangerous but because he looks like a toy.

Jack: Yes.

Sylvia: Because he's made out of that sort of plastic, yeah.

Keith: He looks like— he moves like a windup soldier.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Yeah. I'm gonna put a picture of Pinhead in. Can someone put a picture of Gittarackur in? Because I don't— I try not to search these characters.

Dre: Yeah, I'll find one.

Jack: I just want to compare them side by side. I want to look at them, and if you're looking at home, you can join in with this game too. [laughs]

Dre: Playing the fun game of how—

Jack: He really does.

Keith: Oh, I got it. I got it. I got it.

Dre: What's the first vowels in Gittarackur's name?

Jack: [laughs] It's an I. Yes, there is Fisher Price Pinhead. He does look like that.

Dre: Yeah, he does. He really does.

Jack: He's got pins coming out of his ears. Anyway, he's chatting with Hisoka on the phone. They're sort of planning things out. Hisoka doesn't know who his target is, [Jack and Dre laugh] and so he has a fun plan, which is: well, I'm just gonna target— I have my own badge, and I am under no risk of losing it, which is worth three points— four points. And then I'm just gonna—

Sylvia: Uh, no, three points.

Jack: Three points. And then I'm just gonna target three random people [laughs] to make up a six point total. This is very Hisoka.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: Hisoka loves to make a little game out of things within the game. Hisoka looks at the game that he's been asked to play and goes, "I can make another fun little sub-game for me."

Keith: Well, if you—

Jack: Which is just get three guys.

Keith: [laughs] If you think about—

Sylvia: Hisoka's the type of— oh, go ahead.

Keith: If you think about, like, okay, my personality is to, like, not really care about the stuff that's going on around me very much, and then all of a sudden I've got this game where I can either try really hard to find one specific guy out of 24 or attack three people? For him, that's so much easier.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: That is, like, totally the easy route.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely. Especially because he is so confident in his own abilities, and, based on what we have seen in the show, he's right.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Gon is on his little blood-hunting butterfly tour. [imitates theme] And it gives him a little violence tour, because these butterflies don't go straight to Hisoka as planned. Instead, we find some bones. We find a body. Then we come back to the guy who got hit by the arrow, who is still—

Keith: I love the way he deals with this.

Jack: Yeah. So, what happens here? The butterflies lead him back to the man who we saw earlier get paralyzed, kind of right near the middle of episode one. Do you want to talk about how he deals with it, Keith?

Keith: Oh, sure, yeah. So, he finds the purple shirt purple nose guy, [Sylvia laughs quietly] and he's got that slice on his arm, and in order— you know, I think that you can read this as Gon being, you know, a good little boy, if you wanted to. I think that that is...is not untrue about what he does, but in order to, like, not register more false positives on his blood butterflies, he props the guy up by a tree, bandages his wound, and then goes like, "Good luck next year! Bye!"

Sylvia: It's so cute!

Jack: Oh, it's so sweet. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Good luck next year. Oh, quick note we don't need to talk through: the remaining contestants have been told that, by reaching this point, they gain free entry to the competition next year. That's something that they get told on the boat on the way in.

Keith: The kind of stone-faced reaction to this news, because obviously no one wants

to put up with doing this again.

Jack: Yeah. [laughs]

Keith: The people—

Jack: Or admit that they might lose.

Keith: Yeah, the people who are talented enough to be able to pass it, if for some reason they don't pass it this year, are annoyed at having to go through it all again. And the people who are here by luck are like, "If I try to do this again, I'm gonna die." So everyone is, like, not happy about this sort of half-kindness, which is when we get really the only bit of characterization from Klara who has about two sentences—or Khara, I think it is—where she's very happy and smiley and then gets no reaction from this and, like, inside of her head, does a big grimace and is like, "[groans] They're all so upset!" I can't remember what she says, but it's very funny.

Jack: "No reaction!" or something, yeah. It's great. And then, as Gon is kind of doing this trail, we get some more shots of the person hunting him, whose name is Garrett? What's this person's name?

Sylvia: Geretta, I believe?

Keith: Geretta.

Jack: Geretta.

Dre: Geretta, yeah.

Jack: And there's— I love this so much, because—

Sylvia: Garrett is way funnier.

Jack: [laughs] Just Garrett.

Sylvia: Just Garrett.

Jack: It is so...we know how this is going to go, you know? Or at least we can sort of anticipate how this is going to go. You know, when Gon...Gon is going to strike at Hisoka as Hisoka strikes at his target, and then Geretta is going to strike at Gon. And we got this information from Gon. Gon has gotten, you know, two thirds of this piece.

Dre: Yeah, that's true.

Jack: But he hasn't put it together yet, and something about the way that— it's not just dramatic irony. It's like dramatic irony but you have done a bit of math that the character hasn't done yet, you know? We have been let into Gon's plan, but we can see the runway that he can't.

Keith: Right. Gon thinks that he's Gon with the fishing rod, but he's actually the bird.

Jack: Yeah, fully. Yeah, that's absolutely what it is.

Keith: Right.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And having that come from Gon is so great, because we could just as easily have gotten— the show has done this before. We could have, had they set the characters up differently, had Kurapika go, "Hmm, Gon believes that he is Gon with the fishing rod, but he's actually the bird," or whatever. But, you know, having the victim of this scheme be the one who actually lays it out for us [**Keith:** Yeah.] with a flaw. It's really nice.

Keith: And there's another mistaken identity in this chain. It is a mix of metaphors. I think the show, in being, you know, this is basically 70 minutes of television, these three episodes, so it gets a little bit more time to, like, not mix these. But Gon thinks that he's Gon, but he's actually the bird, and he thinks that he's catching the fly, but he's actually catching a spider, [Jack chuckles] which is a great little metaphor that they use throughout that last episode.

Jack: Oh, yeah. Absolutely.

Keith: Like, I'm actually outside this chain. Hisoka's not in the— not a part of the fly/fish/bird/fisherman-who-fishes-birds sort of dynamic.

Jack: Yes, yeah. You have misunderstood your opponent, Gon. Yeah, totally. And then we move into— we cut to Leorio.

Keith: Oh, Leorio.

Jack: But I've talked a lot, so I want to take a backseat in this next section.

[1:00:00]

Keith: Who wants to talk about Leorio?

Sylvia: I...I can talk about Leorio. [Dre laughs]

Keith: You sounded sad to do that.

Sylvia: No, it's just, I was—

Keith: We can force Dre to do it.

Dre: No, please don't. [Keith and Jack laugh]

Sylvia: So, I like the Leorio bit, so I'll do it. I just also don't have, like, very comprehensive notes for it, because I watched these a little further back than the most recent episode we did, or the—

Keith: That's fine. We can fill. We can fill you in.

Sylvia: Yeah, I think I've got most of it. We get Leorio sort of, like, looking through the...I always want to call it a jungle. It's just a forest, but Leorio's off being the king of the jungle [quiet laughter] and sort of wondering how you track anybody down. I believe that's sort of his main complaint.

Keith: We see him two days in for the first time, and the first thing we hear him say is, "Where is everyone? I haven't seen anybody in two days." [Dre and Jack laugh]

Sylvia: Fucking...he's not very good at this.

Keith: Neither has Gon, but he's been busy.

Jack: Yeah. You ever play a match of *PUBG* or *Fortnite* or something and it just does not...not only does it not go the way you anticipated, you spend most of the match going, "Somebody out here is playing a battle royale game, but it is not me."

Dre: It's not me.

Jack: "I'm on a hillside."

Keith: Yeah, I'm playing a game of going from house to house collecting things for 25 minutes.

Sylvia: I'm playing *Street Fighter*, because I don't like those games. [Jack laughs]

Keith: Yeah, I also don't like those games.

Sylvia: So, while Leorio's sort of wandering around trying to figure out how the heck do you even do this thing, [Dre laughs quietly] he runs into our good friend Tonpa. Right? This is the part we're talking about, correct?

Dre: Yes.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. The part where Tonpa's got diarrhea?

Dre: Uh huh.

Sylvia: Yeah, the part where Tonpa's got poopy pants. This is his only bit. This dude's only bit is saying— [Keith laughs] is being the contrarian and IBS. These are his two—

Keith: Yeah, most of his scams are diarrhea-based.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah. [Jack laughs quietly]

Dre: Either he is diarrhea or he's giving someone else the diarrhea.

Jack: That's it.

Dre: That's it.

Keith: His opening pitch is: I found you, because I need medicine, because I'm going to shit myself.

Jack: You're a doctor.

Keith: And you're a doctor. Leorio says, "I have—" I think that he says that he has all kinds— yeah, "I have all kinds of anti-diarrhea and stomach medicine," which is kind of funny, because his briefcase isn't that big, so like, I'm just thinking of half of this briefcase that he's got [Jack laughs] is for diarrhea and upset stomach. [laughs]

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: His pepto case, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: I believe—

Keith: No ulterior motive?

Sylvia: Mm, well...

Dre: None. Not according to fucking Leorio, [**Sylvia:** Well—] who hates this man to death.

Sylvia: Well, what happens is Tonpa shows him a card that is the, like, "here's your number" card, and it's not Leorio's number on the target card that he has. Right? I hope

I'm...

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's right.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: And that is evidence enough for Leorio—

Sylvia: For Leorio, yeah.

Keith: That Tonpa's not tricking him. Unfortunately, Tonpa is tricking him.

Sylvia: Tonpa is tricking him. [Keith laughs] I do like this bit for Leorio, because it is— it does kind of keep with Leorio's consistent, like, personality of being kind of a shithead when he speaks, but in his actions he does try to help people.

Keith: Right.

Sylvia: Which I think is a good little moment.

Keith: And Tonpa's trend of, like, while he's tricking you, giving you actually useful and actionable information, because Leorio's able to get the identity of his target, who is...

Sylvia: Yeah. There should be more than six fics about these two. [Keith laughs] When you put it like that? There should be more.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Hey, listeners. Fill up the leorpa tag.

Keith: Considering how many there are for other characters, I'm sure. I mean, this is a show I'm sure there's thousands.

Sylvia: I'm gonna just do some comparisons.

Dre: Oh.

Keith: The...he's able to find out Ponzu is his target. He didn't know that before. Ponzu,

you might recognize her as the only girl. He learns what her abilities are—she uses, like, poisons and stuff like that—and that she's, like, laying in wait for her target to just pass by, and so, like, she's not moving, so he can find her but be aware that she's, like, got traps set up. And so this is all, like, good information that we learn, before it's revealed that actually Tonpa's working with the monkey and the monkey's pet human.
[all laugh]

Dre: That's the right way to put it, yeah.

Keith: And that's why Tonpa had someone else's badge, or a different target, because he swapped in order to do this trick. Pretty good trick, honestly.

Jack: Yeah, not a bad trick.

Sylvia: Yeah, you know, like, the plan works great for them. I will, like, give them that.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Tonpa and monkey boy, they...

Dre: I don't know if that's proof that it's a great plan because it works on Leorio, though.

Sylvia: You know what? It's got a 100% success rate on the show.

Dre: That's true.

Keith: That's true. Yeah. Actually, it didn't quite succeed.

Sylvia: Well, it's got a 0% success— so, it succeeds for a min— I'm gonna give them part marks.

Keith: If Kurapika didn't show up and solve the problem for Leorio, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] then it would have succeeded.

Dre: Uh huh.

Sylvia: Which is unfortunately what happens to our monkey protagonist. [Keith laughs]

Jack: Yes.

Sylvia: Who gets caught by Kurapika and held at wooden swordpoint.

Keith: [laughs] That was so funny. It's not the first time that he's held the wooden sword to someone's throat like it could cut them.

Sylvia: It's great.

Jack: Yeah, two really nice moments. Kurapika arrives properly for the first time in this arc. This has been a very Kurapika-light arc, and he arrives in a really cool way. He appears out of nowhere and kicks, I think, Tonpa in the head?

Dre: Tonpa. Yes.

Keith: Yeah, he kicks Tonpa in, like, the head slash throat.

Jack: And then immediately tells us that lying is wrong.

Keith: Yeah. [laughs]

Dre: He's right.

Jack: Morally.

Keith: "It's not good to trick people," yeah. It's so funny.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: It is such a Kurapika move to lay low for basically most of the arc, arrive, kick someone in the head, and then deliver a brief lecture on morality.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Then they have a little chase through the trees after the monkey, and yeah, this is just pre- holding the monkey at knifepoint, [Dre laughs] but there's a really cute moment where Kurapika has taken the monkey, except it is not revealed to us yet. The way that

the show chooses to reveal this to us is we continue to get the shot of the monkey's man kind of jumping through the trees, and then we get a little, like, *bing!*, like, little line of arrows around where the monkey used to be, but there isn't a monkey in there anymore. It's like a little circle where a monkey used to be.

Sylvia: It's great.

Jack: And then we cut to Kurapika holding the—

Keith: Yeah, he immediately starts fearing for his boss, and he looks back to see that the monkey has been caught.

Jack: No, my boss!

Keith: My boss!

Jack: No, my monkey boss!

Dre: My son.

Jack: My monkey boss! He's smaller than me but much stronger. [laughs quietly]

Keith: [laughs] Well, that's why he's always got his penis out. It's a display of dominance. It's a primitive display of dominance.

Dre: What?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: This monkey's got his little penis out the whole time, yep.

Sylvia: Damn.

Keith: The whole time, [**Dre:** Okay.] and it's to keep the man in his place.

Sylvia: He's Crazy Frogging, you know?

Jack: It's sort of Crazy Frog.

Sylvia: It's the same way that Crazy Frog sort of dominated our society for a good few years by having his little pecker out there.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: So has this monkey dominated this man's life.

Jack: Until we did that pact and sealed him beneath the earth.

Sylvia: Yeah, well, the ritual of 2010 was fantastic.

Keith: But he came back in 2020, when we were weakest.

Jack: When we were weakest.

Sylvia: When the hellmouth opened and we just heard in the distance, "brrring, brrring."

Jack: They're working on the hole now, great earth-moving devices day and night. Hole deeper than a skyscraper, the pit to return Crazy Frog to. [Sylvia laughs] So, yes, it turns out that Kurapika's target was Tonpa. It's extremely funny that that's the case, and we end up with the Leorio/Kurapika team teaming up, working together, and they have a spare point badge.

Keith: They do.

Jack: They have one point, one spare point badge, and at this point, I made—

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: From the monkey, I believe. Right?

Dre: Yes.

Jack: I think from the monkey.

Keith: Right, the monkey's badge, yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I made a prediction that I...I keep trying to predict what is gonna happen in this show, and usually what happens is that they...that I'm right but in completely the wrong direction. Usually what I think is going to happen does happen but with a different combination of characters, which is really interesting. My prediction was: they're gonna give this point badge to Gon to tip him over to six points.

Sylvia: Ooh.

Jack: It is going to be, like, a plot critical [Dre: Hmm.] last-minute gift to get someone over the finish line, to be like, all they need is one extra point, and Kurapika and Leorio are gonna come through.

Keith: Instead, very cool actually what does happen.

Jack: Now, what ends up happening is very different, but we will get there. But you see what I mean about, like, kind of sideways being right about the prediction?

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Uh huh.

Keith: That's a good— that's, I think, the sign of a good show, to me, is like—

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, totally.

Keith: When you're doing a lot of guesswork and things— a show that prompts you to do a lot of guesswork, I think, already you're halfway there. And then, like, sometimes being right but in weird ways is, like, I think, key.

Jack: Yeah. Night falls, and the...I think this is the point at which this little arc of episodes really turned for me. I was enjoying them fine. I thought we spent a lot of time with the fishing rod in the early part, but like...

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Night falls, and these episodes just suddenly get really good as night falls here. The whole color palette changes. We deepen into this incredible, like, purple and blue, as we cut to Killua. This is a visual trick the show has done before is matching Killua's vibe and outfit to the environment. We saw this last on the airship when he was looking out on the blue landscape below, but Killua is now in this purple and blue forest. Keith, Killua has not bothered to hide his badge.

Dre: No.

Keith: Beautiful. Love it.

Jack: Doesn't give a shit.

Keith: I genuinely did not pick up on that.

Jack: Killua is walking through the woods, completely unbothered, wearing his badge. I wrote in my notes, "What poor fuck has to fight Killua?" because I believe, and I wrote this when the rules of this game were being set up, I don't think...I think Killua might be as powerful as Hisoka. I think that if— maybe— I don't think that Killua could take out Hisoka, but I think that if Killua set his mind to killing anybody, he could do it effortlessly, which is a really interesting character, because when you remove the stakes of "what if they lose this fight?" you know, if you say, "well, that's not gonna be an option," how do you construct stakes around those characters? And that is really cool.

Keith: Did we lose someone?

Jack: We lost Sylvi very briefly.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: She is just back.

Sylvia: Very briefly. I'm back.

Keith: Hello.

Sylvia: Hi. I think either Discord or my internet connection is being a little wonky tonight.

Dre: Ah.

Jack: But I don't think Killua can die.

Sylvia: I also don't think Killua can die. I missed the last little bit of this conversation, but I just want to firmly say: Killua will never die.

Keith: Killua can't die.

Sylvia: No, Killua's immortal. Killua will live forever.

Jack: Uh oh. Fear. One fear.

Sylvia: No— [Jack and Dre laugh] I'm not doing a bit, Jack.

Jack: Okay, good.

Sylvia: He's just my favorite.

Jack: And we find— just as I thought, "What poor fuck has to hunt Killua?" we get our answer, and I believe it's one of the Blowjob Brothers, right?

Sylvia: It is one of the Blowjob Brothers, yes.

Keith: [laughs] It is one of the Blowjob Brothers, yeah.

Jack: Deeply unfortunately.

Keith: One of the esteemed Blowjob Brothers.

Jack: [laughs] Now, when I say Killua can't die, I think these fucks can and will die

regularly. Maybe not in this situation, but when I look at someone and I see a vulnerable idiot, it's those three. So, I have no worries about Killua whatsoever, which is a nice thing. You know, the show knows how scary it is for Gon to have to be hunting Hisoka, and I appreciate that they kind of threw us a bone by being like, "Don't worry about Killua. Killua's going to be absolutely fine."

Keith: Yeah. He's up against people who have lost the Hunter Exam three times. Or more?

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Six times? They've done it a lot.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: So they're not helpless, but they are...they can't win the Hunter Exam.

Jack: No. No. Gon creeps up on Hisoka. It's nighttime. We're still in this, like, hyper sort of really heightened color palette. And to Gon's horror, Hisoka stands up and says, "I can see you." You know, "Come out of there." And Gon is getting ready to stand up—

Sylvia: It's so fucking good.

Jack: And then, someone else stands up! It's one of these great scenes! I've seen them in other stuff, the "you think you've been found, but actually someone else has been found." It is a man with the quarter staff and a mustache, I believe. Does this fellow have a mustache? He does.

Keith: He does. He does have a mustache, yeah. Big eyebrows big mustache guy.

Jack: And what happens is very scary and sad. Would someone like to describe what happens?

Sylvia: This is the guy who challenges Hisoka, right?

Jack: Yes, he does.

Keith: Yeah, he whips out his staff and cuts the top of Gon's hair off.

Sylvia: Yes!

Jack: It's really funny. [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: He does with his sort of, like, it's kind of like a naginata type thing, right? The sort of, like...

Jack: I think so, yeah.

Sylvia: Polearm with a little blade at the end. And they get into this, like—

Keith: I thought what you were gonna say was it's kind of— it's a little *Looney Tunes* is what I thought you were gonna say, because it is *Looney Tunes*.

Sylvia: I mean, there's a lot of *Looney Tunes* moments in this. Like, we've mentioned a few of them. There is the bit with the monkey and the little, like, outline. There was, like...honestly, there's some stuff with...ooh, I almost said a— there's some stuff with Rattly Pin Man later that feels very *Looney Tunes* to me in this episode.

Keith: [laughs quietly] Yep.

Sylvia: Like, the *Looney Tunes* vibes are here, and I love that. I think more shows should be like Mel Blanc productions, et cetera.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: I don't know if he's, like, a bad person or anything. I just know he does voices in those. What I was saying is that they get in this fight where Hisoka just dodges the entire time, very deliberately is not fighting back against this guy, and at a certain point, we see...

Keith: Gon's kind of freaking out about it too, by the way.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Because he's, like, waiting for a moment where Hisoka's gonna strike specifically.

Dre: Oh.

Sylvia: Yeah, because that was his strategy, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Like, hit him when he's— yeah. And he just doesn't swing at any point, and then you see there are a bunch of butterflies gathering around the...

Jack: Oh, it's such a great reveal.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: It's, like, at the side, sort of like kidney level I guess would be where I'd say.

Keith: Yeah.

[1:15:04]

Sylvia: And Hisoka points out that, uh...is this guy Bodoro? Is that his name?

Dre: Yes.

Sylvia: Yes. Hisoka points out that Bodoro's, like, dead already is basically the way he says it and that like, you're just—

Keith: Yeah, he says, "You're already dead. It's in your eyes."

Sylvia: Yeah, and this guy just wants to go out fighting as opposed to, like, bleeding out.

Jack: He's, like, begging for it. It's really sad.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah. I think, actually, I think this is Goz?

Sylvia: Okay. Yes, Bodoro's later.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Bodoro is a different older looking guy. Bodoro is older. Goz is the guy who has brown hair and the big mustache.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: And Bodoro's the sort of gray-haired gentleman with a similar look. Yeah, so, that sort of continues for a bit, until a...right, I'm not missing anything? And then the needle sort of comes out and gets that guy right in the neck.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Correct?

Keith: Yep, yep.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: In a great conversation between Gittarackur and...

Jack: But not just one needle, right?

Dre: A whole lot of needles.

Keith: No, it's one needle at first in the throat, and then a sort of barrage of needles in the chest.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: It's fucking horrible looking.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: This guy getting—

Keith: Oh, and the face, maybe? Yeah, face too, yeah.

Jack: Yeah, he gets a bunch of needles in his face. It is— it's a really weird gross kill.

Sylvia: He gets pincushioned.

Jack: He gets pincushioned. Absolutely.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Pincushion, of course, is the person who comes and hunts you from cushion hell.

[Keith laughs]

Dre: Sure.

Jack: When you open the cushion Lament Configuration. Yeah, and Gittarackur and Hisoka have a little conversation. I don't know what these guys' relationship is, but I love it. If I were in a room with Hisoka, I would be fucking terrified. I would be terrified. Even if Hisoka did not appear to be wanting to kill me, I would be like, "This could turn at any moment. Anything I say might be turned into this weird sexualized game that he plays. I don't feel good about this." [Sylvia laughs quietly] Gittarackur and Hisoka can hang. They just hang out.

Sylvia: Yep.

Keith: They just hang out.

Jack: And I don't know if there's an—

Keith: Yeah, they have, like, a very normal conversation. It's kind of like a Tarantino conversation is what they have. [Jack laughs] They have, like, this very sort of buddy-buddy casual conversation about the merits and situations in which you might spare someone instead of murder them.

Jack: I tell you what this actually felt a lot like for me. This felt a lot—

Keith: This is Tarantino in content, not in tone, I should say. [Dre and Sylvia laugh]

Jack: Yes. This felt a lot like a Gon and Killua conversation, actually.

Sylvia: Hmm.

Jack: Not in terms of the killing but in terms of talking about ways in which they are similar and different from each other and using a conversation to be like, not like we're on different sides of the same coin but to, like, we see this a lot as well in all of the pairs, really. This is Kurapika and Leorio in the earlier episodes as well, of like, what does being a Hunter mean to you?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: You know, we have these, like, duologues with a character representing one worldview and someone else presenting another.

Keith: Who is who in this conversation to you?

Jack: [thoughtful sigh] I don't know that I could map them one-to-one. I think it's less 'it's Gon and Killua' and more the kind of the narrative framing, the way they frame these scenes between...

Keith: It's just the kind of sort of opposing forces that they do.

Sylvia: Hmm.

Jack: Yeah. Hisoka says— also, this guy is Gittarackur's target, so Gittarackur now has the badge. Hisoka says—

Keith: Right, so that is who wounded Goz and then let him get away. This is part of their conversation is Hisoka being like, "You let him get away on purpose."

Jack: Yeah. Yeah.

Keith: [laughs quietly] "So that he would come find me, and then..." I don't know. I don't know what Gittarackur was expecting Hisoka to do.

Jack: Oh, kill him, right?

Dre: Kill him, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Gittarackur would know fully that...they're—

Keith: But he didn't kill him.

Jack: Oh, yeah, you're right.

Keith: Yeah. So, I think that's the thing.

Jack: Oh, no, well—

Keith: I think it was to see, like, oh, will Hisoka kill him or not kill him? Because then he kind of gives him— he gives him shit for— they give each other shit for the ways in which they spare people's lives. He's like, "You spare people's lives on a whim. I spare people's lives in a way that's meaningful to me."

Jack: Right. Yeah.

Keith: To me. That's, you know, that's the important part. He's not...he's like, when people are useful. I think the line he says is like, "I only—" this is from Hisoka. "I only spare those whose deaths would go to waste," is how he puts it.

Dre: Yes.

Keith: Versus Gittarackur, Hisoka kind of implies that he does it on a whim, and it didn't seem like a very permanent whim either.

Jack: Right. But— and I'm gonna ask the question, and then I'm gonna say, "three, two, one," and we're going to answer it.

Sylvia: Okay.

Jack: Who is more evil, Gittarackur or Hisoka? Three, two, one.

Keith: I can't do it. I can't do that.

Dre: Gittarackur. [Jack laughs]

Sylvia: Um, Hisoka?

Keith: I can't do that. It is Gittarackur, I think.

Jack: Wow. That's really interesting.

Sylvia: I answered just based on what we've seen on this show, so.

Dre: Me too.

Sylvia: Okay.

Jack: God. That's really exciting. That's— I think Gittarackur is fantastic, because then something fucking bananas happens. [raucous laughter]

Keith: Yeah! Yes!

Sylvia: Jack, please take us through this.

Jack: And Keith—

Keith: Please, Jack. The floor is yours for this.

Sylvia: Yeah, absolutely.

Jack: Do you remember earlier when Keith said, "We get a reveal about a mystery, [Sylvia laughs] comma, which is Gittarackur"? Keith, this doesn't reveal shit!

Dre: Sure it does.

Keith: Well, it introduces many questions.

Jack: It does.

Keith: But it does reveal: hey, what's up with the clickety clackety Pinhead man?

Jack: Well, sort of, because what happens is Gittarackur does some more clicking and

clacking than usual, you know.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And it was great, because these episodes have been fairly conventional, in terms of information revealed to you. Really the wildest thing I think has been the blood butterflies, which is very *Hunter × Hunter*, has been very cool, but we haven't had any of the just, like, massive *Hunter × Hunter* swings. And then, as this started happening, I was like, "Well, shit, here we go," because Gittarackur starts clicking and clacking and sort of contorting, and he starts removing pins from his face, and his face sort of bulges and shifts and changes. His hair changes color, and he becomes a slim pale-faced person with long dark hair and a new or different face. He's— does he still have pins in his face, at this point?

Keith: No pins in his face, no.

Sylvia: Nope.

Jack: He is just a new different-looking person.

Keith: Totally different-looking person in the face, yeah.

Jack: And Hisoka says, "I never get tired of seeing that." Okay.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And then he says, "Well, I'd better go to sleep," and starts digging a hole with his hands like a machine. [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: He's the best.

Keith: That is the best scene in the whole episode. It's so funny.

Jack: And then—

Dre: It's so good!

Sylvia: That is the Looney Tunes episode thing I mentioned.

Jack: He keeps digging the hole so deep that when he climbs into it, only the top of his head is peeking out, and then he covers himself in dirt.

Dre: Yeah, goes to sleepies.

Keith: And says, "I'm gonna stay here until the time's up."

Dre: I'ma sleepies.

Jack: Yeah. What the fuck is happening? [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: [feigning ignorance] What's wrong? What are you confused about?

Dre: [feigning ignorance] Yeah, what's weird?

Sylvia: Do you mind, just...

Jack: Yeah, all right.

Sylvia: Everything you've said just sounds regular to me.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Okay. Okay, okay. Question one: [sighs] what is Gittarackur? Question two: has the rattly pin man been a form Gittarackur takes, or is it his true form? Three: why has Gittarackur chosen this quiet moment with Hisoka to reveal this secondary-slash-primary form? Four: why does Gittarackur dig a hole in the ground with his hands, [laughs] cover himself in dirt, and go to sleep?

Sylvia: Okay. So, uh...oh, damn, I had an answer for the first few, and then I got distracted trying to answer that last one.

Jack: Why does he look like this?! I've just seen this picture. So, this is the second time I've seen this, because when it happened, I was like, "Well, I just have to keep watching. You know, don't roll that back." He also has huge eyes?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Sure.

Sylvia: I love how his eyes look. No pupil— like, all pupil or no pupil and, like, kind of catlike.

Jack: Really scary and weird.

Dre: Looking at this picture, it does look like there is, like, a slightly different shade of black within the circle.

Sylvia: It's just...yeah.

Jack: That's really cool.

Keith: His eyes change depending on the scene. Sometimes they're all black. Sometimes there's, like, a black to gray gradient. The original— like, the first second of the reveal, his eyes are very purple-looking.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: It's such a deeply strange moment.

Dre: Hey, how do you think he made his eyes be red when he had the pins in his head?

Jack: I don't know. Are the pins magical, or is he magical?

Dre: Probably.

Jack: I don't know.

Sylvia: I haven't done enough studying into acupuncture, I'm afraid.

Dre: That's, yeah.

Jack: I— okay, two legitimate questions here, because...firstly: does Gittarackur have consistent pronouns throughout, or are we doing a sort of body shapeshifting thing

going on here where pronouns change?

Sylvia: I believe consistently he/him.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: Okay. Cool.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: That's sort of just, like, a bit of business.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: The second thing is, if you are not watching along, listener, I really would take the opportunity to google what Gittarackur looks like in both these forms, because that they are the same character is really striking, and I was going to ask the people who have seen this show: what are some nice google terms that would produce these different kinds of characters?

Dre: Can't...

Keith: I cannot tell you.

Sylvia: We can't.

Keith: You can't google this if you're sensitive to spoilers.

Dre: You can't. You cannot.

Sylvia: Straight up.

Dre: I was gonna suggest: can we just put links to, like, pictures in the show notes for this episode.

Keith: Yes, yes.

Sylvia: Oh, yeah, one of the reasons I was very careful about what I put in our Discord

is there are a lot of file names that have spoilers in them with this character.

Jack: Oh, wow!

Dre: Oh.

Sylvia: Well, just—

Jack: That's really interesting.

Sylvia: You know, just be careful googling things, because...

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: No, totally.

Sylvia: Very easy to spoil stuff.

Jack: Gittarackur is fascinating.

Sylvia: I'm very glad that you like— I mean, they're hard to miss, but I am glad that they sort of held your attention so immediately, because this is one of my, like, favorite little bits of the Hunter Exam is this mystery and, like, what his deal is.

Jack: Yeah. Really, really super cool character. And then we're sort of done with this episode. We get this wonderful image of Hisoka sort of— Hisoka now— hmm. Hisoka needs to pick his guys, [laughs quietly] the guys that he will hunt.

Dre: Yeah. Uh huh.

Jack: So he stands on top of this mountain and makes— ah, the shot choices are so cool. We get this beautiful shot as though we are looking through Hisoka's fingers, finger and thumb coming together to make an O like a spyglass, and we are looking through that, and then we get the reverse shot of Hisoka with his hand held up to his face looking through his finger and thumb. Really cool. And he notices Kurapika and

Leorio and goes, “Ohoho, I’ll get ‘em.”

Keith: Dun dun.

Jack: This is the point at the episode of Media Club Plus where a little episode bumper shows up showing the word “Media Club Plus” in the *Hunter × Hunter* script. [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: Oh.

Jack: And then the three of us are standing there. Then you watch some commercials, then it comes back, and the three of us go, “Oh,” and we point at it, and it says “Media Club Plus” in katakana.

Keith: And then we sort of look. We just sort of smile at it.

Jack: Yeah. Because this is an episode break. We are—

Keith: Right.

Jack: Unless we are Hisoka, in which case we throw a joker through the screen.

Keith: That’s so cool. I love that.

Jack: It’s so cool. Can we take five minutes before we move onto episode 16?

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

[cut]

Sylvia: So, before we move onto the next one, I did remember a thing that sort of happens. I mostly remember it after the Tonpa and monkey fight, but I believe it also— it first starts with the guy that Gon bandages up, which he leaves on, like, a tree stump, if I’m remembering right.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: And then a bunch of sort of forest critters are looking at it.

Keith: Oh, yeah.

Dre: Oh, yeah. [laughs]

Sylvia: And then, later, when Tonpa and monkey man get added to that little pile, there are just more—

Keith: And man monkey.

Sylvia: And man monkey, of course. My bad.

Dre: Sure.

Sylvia: There are just more of these little critters looking at them, and that was another moment that I was just like, “Oh, this show’s silly. I forgot how silly this show can be.”

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: There was, like, 30 little woodland creatures looking at the Tonpa monkey man crew.

Sylvia: Yeah. [Dre laughs]

Jack: And someone had to draw all of those.

Dre: Uh huh.

Jack: And they were right to do this. They were confident enough in this joke that they were like—

Sylvia: Oh, it’s a good joke.

Jack: “We need 30 small little critters.”

Dre: Great joke.

Jack: They also leave a sign.

Keith: Yeah, cutting back to them, like, three times to see that there's steadily increasing numbers of them is very funny.

Jack: It's great. Really, really good.

Episode 16 [1:28:35]

Jack: Speaking of animals, are we ready to start talking about episode 16? Because episode 16 begins with just the most doom-laden establishing shot that, two episodes ago, would have meant nothing to us, which is—

Keith: Sure, yeah. What is that shot?

Jack: We begin on blood butterflies. First shot of the episode, just looking at blood butterflies. I think we have a couple of shots of blood butterflies flying, resting on things, resting on a leaf.

Keith: Right.

Jack: And it is—

Keith: They've come out from wherever they presumably hibernate between Hunter Exams. [laughs quietly]

Jack: Yeah. It speaks to kind of the way this show works, where it is like, we're gonna teach you how— we're gonna teach you a thing about how the world works that you would not have established, and then we're gonna use that to power the visual language of the show, because the way these butterflies now just, like, presage specifically bloody violence, not just violence but violence that is gory or is bloody, is great. It's almost like seeing vultures circling in a western.

Dre: Uh huh.

Jack: Except it is almost even more pure visual language, in the sense that when we see vultures circling in a movie, we come at them with so many, you know, references and associations and memories of all the possible different things that that could mean. When we see these blood butterflies, because we were introduced to them so recently, we are like, “Oh, I know what these mean. Someone is about to bleed.” It’s a very Mountain Goats-ass character to be introduced. [Jack, Sylvia, and Dre laugh] Yeah.

Keith: “Someone is about to bleed” is a good line.

Jack: Mm.

Keith: So, I have here first for 16...this is where we come in on Hisoka watching Kurapika and Leorio, and then we get a quick flashback to their last meeting, and...

Jack: Mm-hmm. Didn't go well.

Keith: It did not go— well, I don't know. I think they both got away alive, and actually, Leorio got away with a piggyback ride.

Jack: Yeah, that's true.

Dre: Mm-hmm, that's true.

Jack: One of the more fun things to do in the world.

Keith: [laughs quietly] Yeah. From Hisoka, a very dangerous kind of person to get a piggyback ride from, a very surprising kind of person to get a piggyback ride. And so we are not just getting this flashback, but Hisoka is also getting this flashback of these two people and being like, “Oh yeah, it's them,” and I think is already approving of their growth. I think he says, “They've grown so much, I hardly recognize them.”

Jack: Yep.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: It goes back to the judgements that Hisoka is constantly sort of doling out to people. I think that something that we see from him a lot is that he kind of sees people as these judgements that he makes. Like, whatever he's seeing, it is, like, it feels very real to him. Like, he is seeing something literal about people.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Because I know that Kurapika and Leorio look exactly the same [Keith and Dre laugh] as they did, you know, a week and a half ago with the last time they saw each other. Maybe it's longer than that, but.

Jack: But this is very much, like, powerful people are able to set the rules of a world, right? I wonder if part of the way Hisoka has developed this ideology is the knowledge that he can kill anybody and anything. You know, he is making that sort of mistake of, like, I have physical power over you, therefore I get to set the terms of the way you exist in the world. My, you've grown so much over the last few days or whatever.

Keith: He's a little bit of a—

Jack: Well, I have no idea what he meant by that.

Keith: He's a little bit of an Anton Chigurh in that way.

Jack: Oh, yes, he fully is.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Anton Chigurh is the villain and sort of secondary protagonist in Cormac McCarthy's *No Country for Old Men* played by Javier Bardem in the movie, and if you are not familiar, Chigurh has a very similar sort of, like, deeply nihilistic— I don't know that Hisoka's nihilistic. We'll get to that, I suppose.

Keith: They don't have the same sort of nihilism. I think that, like, in the way that Chigurh wants to, like, offload his sort of, like, psychological— his psychology and his

violence onto fate and the flipping of his coin. I think that Hisoka's, like, more in reality than that, but he does have— they do have this— they share this same sort of, like, gamification of violence that— and like—

Jack: And trust that they are the top dog.

Keith: And judgment [**Dre:** Yeah.] of the people that are around them. Like, Chigurh is using the coin to judge, and it's like, it's not him that's judging, it's fate that's judging. Hisoka's like, "No, it's me that's judging, and I'm judging you by my metrics, and we're playing my game," so they do— but there is a sort of similar kind of thing between them, I think.

Jack: What do we think Hisoka meant when he says, "They've grown so much, in just a few days," which is the actual line?

Keith: Um...so, I'm trying— I know, obviously, more about Hisoka, Jack, and I don't want to—

Jack: Okay.

Keith: I don't want to spoil anything. I do want to admit that I think that he is pretty realistic in his judgements. Like, I don't see...I think that we'll be introduced to more complications of this game as he continues to play it [**Jack:** Right.] that will reveal more things about, like, what he's using to judge people by, but I do think that he's, like, sensing their raw talent or their potential in some way.

Jack: Because there's a scene that we're kind of eliding here that I think is actually worth digging into, because it is really super interesting. Leorio and Kurapika run into Hisoka, and Leorio has the great line, "I always meet someone I don't want to meet at all," which is... [Jack and Keith laugh] which is extremely Leorio. And Hisoka basically says, "Give me your badges, or I will kill you," and after a lot of very tense negotiation—

Keith: I love the negotiation.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah, yeah. You want to talk about how this goes?

Keith: So, Kurapika knows that they have an extra badge, and so he—

Jack: That they got from the monkey man.

Keith: The monkey man and the man monkey. Sommy is his name, I learned, and I don't know which one is named that. I just— [Jack and Keith laugh] So, they have this extra badge from Sommy. Killua I think correctly senses that he has to explain the rules of the game— Kurapika has to explain the rules of the game to Hisoka.

Jack: Because Hisoka just simply is in his own space.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Without the rules being explained.

Keith: Yeah, he's just kind of in his own world.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: I think Kurapika's—

Dre: Hisoka does not have to care about the rules of the game in order to win the game.

Jack: Right, totally.

Keith: Right. And I think that Kurapika is already kind of an explain-things-minded person—

Dre: Oh my god, yeah.

Keith: But I think he also is kind of aware of this thing of, like, "Well, why is he stopping us? We're not his targets, we think." Or maybe Hisoka says something to let them know that they're not his targets, probably just saying, "Hey, give me both of your badges." And so he explains the rules to Hisoka and says, "We're not your targets, probably. We have this extra badge. If you let us go, you can just have it, and if you don't let us go,

then we will have to fight you,” and they both get ready for the fight. Leorio does his little knife flips, his knife skills that he has. [Jack and Dre laugh]

Sylvia: It’s great.

Jack: It’s really good. Click click click click click.

Sylvia: Not even a type of knife you can actually flip, but somehow.

Jack: [laughs] He goes for it. It’s his one skill.

Keith: It is a folding knife. It’s a folding knife.

Sylvia: Is it a—?

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: It does fold, yeah.

Sylvia: It’s a folding knife, but it’s not a— it’s not—

Dre: It’s not like a butterfly knife.

Sylvia: I was thinking a butterfly knife, so.

Keith: Yeah, yeah. He does—

Sylvia: You know.

Keith: I don’t remember the exact mechanics of it. Maybe it is kind of goofy.

Sylvia: Yeah, no, he flicks it out, but it also—

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: The move— he does move it a little, and it just— it seemed funny to me.

Keith: He does, like, a twirl, almost like you’d twirl a drumstick if you’re cool and in a band.

Sylvia: Yeah. Yeah! That's a good way to put it.

Dre: If Leorio had a butterfly knife, he would cut his hand open constantly trying to do this. [Keith laughs]

Keith: Does anyone want to field how...how Hisoka reacts to this proposition? Because it is a losing— and Kurapika knows this is a losing game. Like, there is no real reason why Hisoka would have to accept this.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: [sighs] God. Why does Hisoka accept it? He laughs, right?

Keith: He laughs at them, yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: He— oh, it's really cool animation. He puts his palm over his face. It's not like he's putting his head in his hands. It's like he covers his face with his palm, and his shoulders are shaking, because he's laughing so much, and I had no idea what he was gonna do here. My guess was that he was going to accept it and then kill them— or not kill them; they're the protagonists; attack them. You know.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: That's where the episode was going. But Kurapika puts the little— Hisoka says, "Yeah, let's do it. Let's go for it," and Kurapika puts the badge in a little tree, and Hisoka says— and Kurapika says, "I'm gonna leave now," and Hisoka says, "Okay. I'm just gonna stand here for the time being [Dre: Mm-hmm.] so you know I'm not going to make a move." It is deeply strange.

Keith: He says— and this becomes important. He says, "I'm gonna be standing here for a long time anyway."

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. Really, really weird. And on some level, this is just Hisoka's game, right? Hisoka's game is very much— he's like a farmer. He's cultivating these people until **[Dre: Mm-hmm.]** he sees them as a worthy opponent to be cut down.

Keith: Yeah. He accepts the—

Dre: And right now, "they are still unripe fruit," **[Jack: Yeah.]** is the dub language he uses.

Jack: No, I think that's what he says too.

Keith: Oh, that is the same thing, yeah, in the sub, yeah. The...the...I guess the answer to, like, "why does he accept it?" is that he likes them, and that is—

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: This is, like, his version of liking people. He likes them, he doesn't want to kill them, and so he accepts the deal that is good enough for him. You know, it's not gonna be that hard for me to find another person; I don't want to kill them. But very— we see that it takes a lot out of him to not kill them, **[Jack: Yes.]** because he spends presumably the entire night and into the morning sort of—to Gon's intense fear, hiding in the bushes nearby—like, oozing—

Jack: Radiating murderous intent.

Keith: Radiating bloodlust is the word they use.

Jack: It's really weird.

Keith: And—

Dre: Well, I mean, and it implies it took that much effort for him to, like, not kill Kurapika and Leorio.

Keith: Right.

Dre: Like, his natural instinct, his natural bloodlust is so overwhelming, and it goes so against, like, his desire to see, like Jack said, to cultivate, strengthen these people, that he has to, like, meditate all night basically until he can trust himself again.

Jack: Yeah. So, well, so some interesting stuff happens here after they leave and before he begins his death meditation. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: It's also extremely, like, this is like the most kind of psychosexual violent man we've seen Hisoka be.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Keith: This is like...uh, this is, like, I can't move—

Dre: He's the strengths pervert.

Keith: Yeah, he's the strength pervert. He's like...this is, you know, "I can't move; I have an erection," kind of, like... [Jack and Sylvia laugh] This is really what this is.

Dre: Oh, okay. Okay, all right. Sure. [Sylvia continues laughing]

Keith: I really can't read it any other way, is like, "I've gotta stay here. I've pitched a tent. I have to stay and not..."

Sylvia: [laughing] Oh my god.

Dre: [laughs] Man. Yeah. Hisoka just went six to midnight from midnight to six.

Keith: Yeah. [laughs loudly]

Sylvia: God. Jesus fucking christ. Jesus. Fucking. Christ! Okay. [Jack sighs] And y'all say I'm bad.

Jack: Okay, he—

Dre: No, you're more clever. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: He crushes a butterfly in his hand. So, a blood butterfly sits on his hand. This is before he begins his sex death meditation, [Sylvia laughs quietly] and he crushes it in his hand.

Sylvia: He just like me. [Dre laughs quietly]

Jack: And then he opens his hand and, like, 10 butterflies fly out, and I have no idea how to read this. I don't know if this is an abstraction.

Dre: He's a magician.

Jack: He is a magician. Is this a trick Hisoka is doing? Is this something that Hisoka is imagining about the world? Like, you know, I can kill something. I can cause this death, and in that death, there will be this kind of, like, rush of rebirth? Or is this a property of the butterflies, that when they die, 10 of them are born? It's a really cool moment.

Keith: If you can let me reach for a moment. I referenced earlier the sort of mixing of metaphors that the show is able to, like, kind of skate the line on between these two visual metaphors. There's the bug, the fish, the bird, and the fisherman. The bird fisherman, in this case.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: The birderman.

Keith: The birderman. [Jack laughs quietly] And then there's this other metaphor of the butterfly and the...the blood, the butterfly, and the spider.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yes. The spider stuff comes up a lot in this episode in particular.

Keith: This episode is very heavy on the spider, because Hisoka's the spider.

Jack: Well, there is actually no spider.

Keith: Oh, it's the web.

Jack: We only ever see the spider's web.

Keith: Right, we only see the spider's web.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: But yes, you're right. Hisoka is the spider. I think it is notable that that vacuum is there to be filled [**Dre:** Yeah.] by the viewer going, "Oh, Hisoka's the spider."

Keith: Right.

Dre: Well, and it's also interesting, because, I guess this is getting towards the end of the episode, but it's implied— I mean, at first we think that, uh...fuck, I forget his name. Blowdart man.

Keith: Uh, Geretta.

Jack: Garrett.

Dre: Is the spider. Is the spider for Gon.

Keith: Right, yes.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. They swap— they do the role swap of, like, no, actually, it's Hisoka's the spider.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: But I think that Gon remains the butterfly, and I do think it's trying to say something about, like, Hisoka's a spider, and he's got all these butterflies. Like, he's spinning the web, and he's catching his, you know, unripe fruits in his net.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

[1:45:00]

Jack: Yeah. Yeah, definitely. And then he just stands there by this tree. Gon has been watching him, because Gon has been shadowing Hisoka sort of for this whole episode, which is a nice little storytelling trick that lets us blend Gon and Hisoka's sort of perspective as characters. You know, we can get them onscreen at the same time. They can mirror each other there. And Hisoka stands there all night as visible murderous intent radiates from him. I thought he was—

Keith: The way this is drawn is crazy. It is very cool and scary.

Sylvia: Has anybody seen the manga version of this face?

Dre: No. Please show me.

Jack: So, what happens is he stands there, and then, like he is casting a spell...

Sylvia: You can check the chat now for comparison.

Jack: His face gets cross— oh, wow!

Dre: Oh, wow! Eep!

Jack: That's a really accurate translation.

Sylvia: Also my favorite Discord emoji that I haven't been able to use in here [Dre laughs] because of spoiler reasons.

Jack: Holy shit. He looks terrifying. So, what happens is we're in this, like, purple light of the night. The purple and the blue are the kind of key colors at night. We get this closeup of Hisoka, and he has been crosshatched. He's been drawn in [Sylvia: Yeah.] extremely high detail crosshatched, and he's got his hands out like he's casting a spell, and yeah, the grass ripples. This purple magic sort of pours off him as he enters this kind of, like, murderous trance, and he says— he's narrating it as well. He says, [imitating] "It sucks to be around here right now," as he— [Jack and Sylvia laugh] as he

does this, which is really funny. [Keith laughs] I would not have put that line in the mouth of a character who is doing, like, an unbelievably evil spell.

Keith: [laughs] I don't remember him doing that.

Jack: [laughs] But yeah, he says, "It sucks to be around here right now." We get animals reacting in fear, which is always nice. I mean, I don't mean that that's fun.

Keith: Now, Jack, you've called this purple magic. You've said that it's like a spell. Can you sort of expand on that? Can you tell me, like, what you think that he's doing, what makes you think it's a spell? [laughs quietly]

Jack: Yes, absolutely.

Keith: [laughs] His face is so crazy. [Dre laughs]

Jack: Oh, we get this face. This face is later.

Sylvia: The bloodlust faces are fantastic.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Also, I want to be clear: when I said seeing animals in fear is always good, what I mean to say is, [Sylvia laughs quietly] as you will know if you've recently listened to PALISADE, I think that it's always really fun when you, like, draw out the natural metaphor of, like, oh, the animals are responding to the things that humans are doing. You know, you get to see—

Keith: I'm gonna cut that out just so that you still just say, "I think it's really fun." [Jack and Keith laugh]

Jack: You know, you get to see the rabbits sort of being like, "Oh, what's happened in the eclipse," the solar eclipse or whatever, et cetera.

Keith: Yeah, all the animals can sense the murderous intent and want to—

Jack: The malice, yeah.

Keith: And run away, yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Like from a forest fire.

Keith: So what is this spell? You keep calling it a spell and purple magic. I want to hear more about that.

Jack: I saw Gittarackur do the thing earlier in the episode, so I have been primed to be like, this pair of characters have a sort of limitless well. We also know that Hisoka is a magician, and I thought that he was summoning some sort of dark energy. I thought he was going to transform, honestly, or summon some sort of horrible dark energy that would allow him to hunt the remaining people he needs to hunt. You know, he was sort of getting serious. That is what I thought was happening, and so it was especially cool when it just snap cuts to morning and reveals that he has been standing there in the same posture all night.

Keith: Right.

Jack: And he is completely drained.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: He is like—

Keith: It's so funny, because he wasn't summoning. He was suppressing.

Jack: Yes!

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yes. He just takes off hunting. He has this incredible, like, slumped posture. He's, like, leaning forward and leading with his shoulders—

Keith: Yeah. He ambles.

Jack: Or leading with his hands. His mouth is open. His eyes are kind of hollow. He has sort of...he has become possessed by the need to sort of hunt and kill here. It's bizarre. I wrote down here, "What is Hisoka?" More to the point, I don't know...I mean, Green Green Jellybean Man exists in this world. I don't know that it's super helpful to be like, "All these people are human," but this was kind of like a real moment where I went, "Oh, I don't think Hisoka and Gon are the same thing," and I don't know what to do with that, because off goes Hisoka.

Keith: That's a— that is a—

Dre: And off goes Gon after him.

Keith: That's definitely a sort of— that is a definitive statement of the kind that we should keep in mind for if it gets affirmed or refuted.

Jack: Uh, what's the definitive statement?

Keith: "I don't think Gon and Hisoka are the same thing."

Jack: Yes, yes. And I say "same thing" in the same way that I am not the same thing as my cat Virginia.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: I want to briefly say that, unlike a lot of other battle royale settings, this battle royale doesn't have a characteristic that I associate with a lot of them, which is claustrophobia. This does not feel like a very claustrophobic space or claustrophobic episode, and in fact it is kind of scary because of its breadth, because characters are kind of just ping-ponging around in this big wide space.

Keith: Yeah, it's really 24 people on a massive [**Jack:** Yeah.] double island. It's really two islands connected by, like, a thing land bridge.

Jack: Yeah. Nobody is being drawn together by a mechanic of the game. There are lots

of these wide shots of the forest and the sky. You know, we occasionally get this massive overhead shot of the island, which you would think would feel isolating and claustrophobic in the sense of they're trapped on this island, but what it actually ended up doing for me was being like, there's this massive space that they are in, and they are just bouncing off each other. And we get this as Gon climbs a tree to try and figure out where Hisoka is going, because he reasons that if he can— this is his moment. Hisoka is going to go and kill someone, and if he can get in the way, that's when he gets the badge.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: There's a little bit of panic here, because he's, like, realizing Hisoka's now not fought two people in a row. He only needs one more badge now. He might not fight this third person either. It's so normal to just give up, like, in the face of Hisoka—

Jack: I would.

Keith: That Gon is now, like, I might miss my chance entirely, if my chance is built around waiting for him to attack.

Jack: Yeah. He says, "Why didn't I think of this?" You know, I've been an idiot. Why didn't I think of this?

Keith: But then he notices the bloodlust zombie walk and I think is put— this is where he builds this plan of, like, oh, actually, he's about to go kill someone right now.

Jack: Yeah, and we learn that Hisoka is going after, um...da-da-da. Going after Studio Ghibli grandmother. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: Yeah, this does look a little bit like, uh...

Jack: Old Sophie from...

Keith: Old Sophie. Yeah, I was trying to think of the name Sophie. Yeah, old Sophie.

Jack: *Howl's Moving Castle*, yeah. Yeah. And we get this lovely, lovely, lovely shot of

the three of them walking together, just— it's an abstract shot. They are isolated in blue against a black background, and we get to see them walking towards each other. It's really, really cool.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: So, they have— Gon's got his plan set up. Hisoka finally sees old Sophie and just absolutely makes a break for it, goes from ambling to, I don't know, how fast is he going?

Jack: It's fucking terrifying.

Keith: Way faster than a non-*Hunter* × *Hunter* universe person can run. You know, so fast that, like, it creates wind, you know?

Jack: He also charges directly at the camera. This is a sort of pseudo jump scare that we have here.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: We have these great shots of Hisoka, mouth wide open, eyes bloodshot, huge black void of a smile on his face, charging the viewer.

Keith: And we actually don't see— we see the strike. We see he, like, slashes at old Sophie with a card. I don't think we actually see, like, what happens? But I'm gonna go ahead and chock this up to— Dre, I know that we've got your, like, People Killed by Hisoka list. I'm going to now—

Dre: Oh, yeah, I forgot to add one.

Keith: I'm gonna now officially add this as the first murder. This is a murder.

Dre: Yeah, no, yeah.

Jack: I believe he cuts their throat. We see them in the background. We see him in the background. We're calling this person old Sophie, but he uses he/him pronouns.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: We get, like, a jet of blood from this person's throat as they fall in the background.

Keith: This is Agon, by the way. Agon.

Jack: Oh, huh.

Keith: [reading] Agon had bushy eyebrows and a large crooked nose. He kept his hair in a ponytail. His outfit consisted of a lilac cloak covering his upper body and a matching dress underneath it.

Jack: Shoutout to Agon Ortlights from the Company of the Spade. [Keith laughs] Yep. Hisoka has done it, but in the moment of the attack, Gon makes his play, and it works.

Keith: It works perfectly, and then the little— he holds it up!

Jack: Beautiful.

Keith: It's so cute!

Dre: Yep. And then they both kind of, like, look at each other like, "Wait, did this just happen?" [laughs]

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, Hisoka, like, is kind of shocked, which is not a normal thing for him, I don't think.

Dre: No. And I was wondering as we watched these two episodes whether or not Gon actually was successfully hiding from Hisoka or if Hisoka knew that Gon was there the whole time and just was like—

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Like, yeah, that's my favorite boy. I'll let him tail me around for a while.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: But in this moment, I mean, it seems to confirm that, no, Gon did this.

Keith: He was doing it, yeah. And he has some help. I don't know that we want to get there right away. Maybe we'll double back to that, what I was about to say, and go more chronologically, but this was the moment where, you know, the...you know, Gon thinks he's Gon, but he's the bird. Geretta shows up.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Or doesn't even show up. All of a sudden, Gon is, like, just falling.

Dre: Falls over.

Keith: Yeah. And we see Geretta sort of chiding him, being like...was it 7,000 times is the number that he—?

Jack: Yep.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: He says— he's like, "Do you know what that number represents? It's the amount of times I could have killed you. It's also the amount of times that you cast your fishing rod."

Dre: Your fishing rod. Yeah.

Keith: Does he say anything else? I mean, he says like, "Hey, better luck next time." You know.

Jack: Yeah, it is not— you get the impression that, unlike some people, Geretta is not an evil person.

Keith: Right.

Dre: No.

Jack: Geretta is just— Geretta is in their own anime and has just taken out Gon.

Keith: Right. An anime that is about to reach its finale.

Jack: Because Gon lies there paralyzed and sees a spider— Jesus. Sees a butterfly fly into a spider's web, tangle itself up in the web by trying to escape, and the sound of the butterfly struggling crossfades into this dragging sound that I was like, "What is happening?" as we cut out to reveal that Hisoka has killed Gon's attacker, has killed Geretta as a reward for how Gon worked hard to hunt him.

Keith: And just by luck, that was the guy that Hisoka was meant to hunt the whole time.

Dre: Yep.

Keith: So he doesn't need his own badge anymore, so he gives that to Gon, and then he keeps the Hunter's— he keeps Geretta's badge and all the other badges that he collected various ways.

Jack: No, doesn't he give his badge and another badge? No, Hisoka only has—

Dre: Well, he gives Gon's badge back.

Keith: Gon's badge back and also [**Jack:** Right.] his number 44 badge.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Right.

Keith: And Gon is, like, mad about this. [laughs]

Dre: Oh, he's furious.

Keith: He's like, "No, I want to do it for real."

Jack: Well, first—

Keith: "This doesn't count. Take it back."

Jack: Hisoka says— and this is just such a good—

Keith: Okay.

Jack: This is a good shonen anime moment, I feel. Hisoka says, “It takes 10 days to recover. You have three. I think you'll make it.” Like, this real moment of confidence in Gon's abilities.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's sort of the closest you might get to a compliment from Hisoka. And then Hisoka turns, and Gon is already standing. It's so good.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: So good.

Keith: Oh, and before that, he's, like, sort of complimenting him. He's, like, telling him why he's giving him the badge back, saying how impressed he was that he was able to take it in the first place, and he notes the hiding presence thing as if this is a difficult skill to learn. We just saw Gon sort of master it kind of on his own [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] with no teacher in a couple days, and he's like, “You just learned it naturally like a wild animal,” and this is a sort of thing that, like, ties into the other kind of superpowers that Gon sort of shows up with, things we haven't referenced in a long time.

Dre: That's true. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Like his super smeller, [Sylvia laughs quietly] his ability to pick out differences between wild animals.

Dre: [quietly] Super smeller.

Keith: He, like...he is in touch with animals in a way I think that sort of lets him adopt something that an animal can innately do that a human cannot, at least as far as Hisoka explains it.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And that, like, this was the crucial part of this plan is that Gon did genuinely execute perfectly the suppressing his presence things, whatever that means.

[2:00:04]

Jack: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Whatever the mechanics of that are in this universe. Like, we know that that's not a thing in real life, so whatever that means in *Hunter × Hunter* land, that's what Gon was able to do.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. But Gon...Hisoka keeps Gon in his debt, until you can become a worthy opponent. You know, classic old-school manipulation here, and Gon responds to this by trying to punch him in the face. Hisoka dodges the punch and punches Gon in the face, knocks him through the sky and, you know, backwards, and then says basically, "If you can punch me in the face, I'll clear the debt." You know, when you are able to land that punch, I will consider us square. There's something interesting to me that I'm curious how it's gonna get played with about, like, violence as a way of settling debts, not in the sense of erasing the debtor or the debtee but in the sense of, like, paying back violence **[Keith: Yeah.]** is a way that you settle a debt.

Keith: And it's, weirdly, it's like a reverse debt also, because Gon has this badge that he doesn't want, **[Dre: Mm-hmm.]** and the version of settling the debt is giving it back to Hisoka, but the way to give it back to him is to successfully hurt him.

Jack: Yeah. And now we have—

Keith: Very weird mechanic. Like, it's just odd.

Jack: Yeah. We have set up something great now, just good storytelling. Gon has the 44 badge, and, you know...I have demonstrated that I cannot accurately predict the way *Hunter × Hunter* goes, but I can sort of predict the way it goes, and I love that, you know, when can I give the badge back? Under what— you know, what does it mean **[Keith: Yeah.]** to carry this badge with me? I think that that's just good storytelling, and I

am sure that the show is gonna get some mileage out of it.

Keith: It's been— we've seen Gon, like, being someone already who's, like, doesn't want to be... [laughs] He doesn't want to be, like, helped the way that Leorio is helped.

Jack: Oh, yeah, totally.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Like, he wants to feel like he did it and did it right, and so, like, I mean, the last shot of the episode is, like, a zoom in. He's, like, sitting under a leaf or something with his knees tucked up to his chest.

Jack: He's sitting in a hollow tree.

Keith: Yeah. Knees tucked up to his chest, hugging his legs, his scowling eyes peering over his knees, and the only other detail of his face that you can see is his, like, big swollen cheek from getting punched in the face. Just, like, furious that he has to carry this, like, this sort of symbol of him not actually passing the Hunter Exam if he passes it.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Like, this is...

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: This means I didn't do it.

Jack: And it coming from Hisoka as well, this kind of, like, magnetically unpleasant malicious entity. You know, it would be different if it was Geretta in this situation or something.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: We match cut from Gon lying on the—

Dre: I don't—

Jack: Oh, go on.

Dre: I don't think it would be different for Gon if it was Geretta, though.

Jack: Huh.

Dre: Like, I think if Geretta, like, came up to Gon after the exam and said, like, "Hey, I could have got you 7,000 times, but I thought you were doing such a good job that I didn't," I think Gon would be, like, equally pissed.

Keith: I think that's probably true. I think the difference would maybe be the terms. Like, Geretta's terms might be different from...

Dre: Oh, sure, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: And I think the way that we, as viewer, experience it is absolutely different.

Jack: Yes, yeah. Definitely. I think that you're right. I think I was probably thinking of it in terms of the, like, the...

Keith: The implication?

Jack: That is an object of power.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: Hisoka's 44 badge is an object of power in the way that Geretta's 12 badge or whatever isn't.

Keith: Right. We've been, like, looking— we've been afraid of number 44 since the first moment the badges were introduced.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: But no, I think you're right as to speaking to Gon's character there, Dre. Yes, I

think Gon would be— I think Gon would feel that way if it was Kurapika or Leorio, you know?

Dre: Oh, absolutely. Yeah.

Jack: Of course, it wouldn't be Killua, because Killua would beat Gon handily in any fight on the planet and walk away. We match cut from Gon lying on the floor to the blood butterfly in the web, in the least subtle match cut I have seen in a long time. I don't think that it is...I mean, you know. It is what it is. Tell us what you really mean, show. Cutting from a character who's being caught in a metaphorical spider's web to a bug caught in a literal spider's web.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: That's a bit like the rat in *The Departed*. I don't know. [Dre and Keith laugh] But you know, it is what it is. I think that there is maybe another level to that image that is interesting, which is that this isn't a butterfly; it's a butterfly that feeds on blood. You know, there is something about, [**Dre:** Sure.] like, your violence has brought you into this trap, your own bloodlust. And I was getting—

Keith: It's too— that's the way that the butterfly is the same as the spider.

Jack: Oh, yeah. Yep. Sure is. Gon and Hisoka, again. And I was getting mad about that being very unsubtle, and then that was replaced, because they played Gon's theme in the minor key. [all laugh]

Keith: Oh, I missed that. I didn't notice that.

Jack: [laughing] Which I hated so much.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: The music in this show is so good, is so good.

Dre: It's so good.

Jack: And I— I don't know. Maybe it's just a personal thing. I find playing the character's theme in the minor key to be the least interesting decision you can make in any possible moment, and such a demonstration of— I don't know. I can't speak for how the music supervisors used it, but whenever I—

Keith: I just have to say, I think that this is a...at some point, you've gotta be like, "How do we save \$10,000 on this episode?"

Jack: [laughs quietly] And is it—

Keith: And it's by not writing a new song for this moment.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: Well, but the problem is it is a new song, Keith. It actually turns into this really interesting little piano sort of, like, nocturne, this melancholy little nocturne. The problem is that the—

Keith: Oh, have they not used it before? Have they not, like, already played this?

Jack: No, this is brand new.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: The first 16 or 18 measures are Gon's theme in the minor key.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And, you know, whenever I feel the temptation to do that...as a composer, you have to trust everybody else that is working on the thing with you to pull the feeling out. You know, it feels like such a demonstration of lack of trust in the people that you're working with to be like, "I really need to hammer this home. I gotta play Gon's theme in the minor key to let us know we're feeling really sad." No, the writers and the animators and the performers and the concept artists and everything are communicating that just fine. If you'd just done this beautiful weird sad little piano nocturne, but instead, it was just a real clunky moment at the end of an episode that I thought was really good **[Dre:**

Mm.] and that this moment is really good, because, you know, the narrator says— ah, I love this. This is such a good *Hunter × Hunter* narrator thing to say. The narrator basically says, “What do you think Gon is feeling right now?” which is wonderful.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: To have a narrator say, “Try and figure out this character’s emotions,” [laughs quietly] I thought is really, really good.

Keith: I don’t remember him saying that. I also don’t remember the, uh— maybe— is it possible that I didn’t see, like, the last minute of this episode? Because I don’t remember the match cut, I don’t remember the minor key, and I don’t remember the...

Jack: I want to find the exact subtitle line for you, because I was— I wrote down, “What do I think Gon is feeling right now?” and then the narrator said the same thing, and I was like, “Oh.”

Keith: [laughs] Me and the narrator are on the same page.

Jack: Oh.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: *I’m* the viewer. [Jack, Keith, and Dre laugh] Let’s see. Uh, okay.

Keith: Here, I’ve got the episode up on my thing. Let me...I can cut around all this.

Jack: Oh, and a blood butterfly lands on his hand. That’s really, really cool.

Keith: “Gon was completely helpless against Hisoka, who knocked him out with a single blow. What must he be thinking, alone in the darkness?”

Jack: Isn’t that nice?

Keith: It is nice.

Jack: “What must he be thinking?”

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Having a narrator say that about, you know, their character, [laughs quietly] if the narrator is the author. I actually had a question here, you know, as we come to the end of this little chunk. What does the defeat of a protagonist— how does defeat work in shonen anime generally? When we see a protagonist take a fall like this, what does it—

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Where does it generally fit in the narrative structure? How is it sort of portrayed? In what ways is this indicative or different from the way shonen protagonists' defeat is generally shown?

Keith: Um...that's a good question. I'm...I immediately thought of three different shows. The first thing that I thought of was *Dragon Ball Z*.

Dre: Yeah, me too.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Where there's, like, not a lot of defeat. The stakes are always so high. Like, individual characters get defeated. Goku is such a powerhouse in that show that they—that a lot of, like, a lot of the meat of the show ends up being keeping him away from the main fight for long enough to have other characters, like, not be able to handle things, then to have Goku show up. And there's a couple exceptions.

Dre: I think that is true in Z. I think that gets different in Super.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Because Goku in Super, I think, is very— is much more prone to losing and then, like, doing the thing that Goku always does where it's like moments of adversity are where he becomes— you know, he gets his next level up or whatever.

Keith: Right. That is the thing. That is, like, the real shonen thing, is like, losing actually happens three quarters of the way through a fight.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: And then that losing makes you sort of outrageously strong [Jack laughs] because of your desire [Dre: Yeah.] to not lose or your feelings of friendship or whatever.

Dre: I think—

Sylvia: It sort of just— I have two things here.

Keith: Okay.

Sylvia: One is that in *Dragon Ball*, I believe it eventually gets literally written into the script—

Dre: It is codified, yes. I was literally going to say that.

Sylvia: That Saiyans become stronger when they get beaten up more.

Keith: Yes.

Sylvia: And also, a lot of the stuff you're talking about, that's just wrestling.

Jack: Mm. Yeah.

Dre: That is also wrestling.

Sylvia: It is very much paced in a lot of ways where it's like, you gotta make sure— like, the bad guy has to get his stuff in, gotta make you doubt that the hero can really do it, and then everyone cheers [Dre: Sure.] when the hero does their triumphant super move.

Dre: Or maybe the hero, like, even loses, like, two or three matches before they finally beat the bad guy.

Sylvia: Yeah. But it is very much that sort of pacing especially, I find.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Sure.

Keith: So, the other show that I was thinking of was *Pokémon* where the conclusion of every— [laughs quietly]

Dre: Oh.

Keith: Okay, first of all, Ash is losing all the time.

Dre: All the time.

Jack: Is that a thing that happens a lot in the *Pokémon* anime?

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Oh god, Ash is always getting his ass kicked.

Keith: Ash is always getting— he's, like, constantly beating the idiots that follow him around everywhere trying to steal Pikachu, but he's always losing— he's, like, usually beating, like, the bad guy of the, like, the sort of bad guy of the week style person, but whenever there's, like, a test of skill, a test of like, "Hey, Ash, this is about testing your ability as a Pokémon trainer," he's constantly losing those, because if he was winning them, then he'd be on his— he'd be eventually the Pokémon master that the show can't let him be, because then the show would be over. So like, not only is he constantly losing to, like— you know, one of my favorite early episodes, the guy with the unofficial gym that has the Sandshrew. [Jack laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: To guys like that, who's like, "Oh, wow, there's people out there who really know what they're doing, and I'm an idiot." But every season ends with him making it to the Pokémon league and losing.

Jack: Mm.

Keith: Literally every season except the very last season, he loses in the finale. And how does he deal with that? He moves to a new country is how he deals with it.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: [laughs] What, every time?

Keith: Every time! Every time!

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: [laughs] Ah, god. But there is something to be said, right, for the fact that there is no fucking way Gon can beat Hisoka. That's the premise that we started this arc on.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: You know? You cannot beat Hisoka, so you're gonna have to be clever about it, and we still end with an even more humiliating...

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: He's won, but it's deeply humiliating. He's got a black eye.

Keith: It's a very unique kind of loss, I think, in shonen. Maybe I'm, like, my focus is too narrow or I'm thinking too broad or just something isn't occurring to me, but I'm trying to think of someone who's, like, just kind of stewing in having to take their lumps, you know?

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Like, I've lost, and I've been humiliated, and I've just kind of gotta be in that.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: I'm struggling to think of, like, a good analog.

Jack: That's okay. We can come back to this. I'm sure that this isn't gonna be the last time Gon loses a fight.

Keith: Hey, maybe it is.

Dre: You never know.

Keith: Maybe it's all W's from here on out.

Sylvia: That'd be crazy.

Jack: [laughs] It's all W's.

Sylvia: Hunter W Hunter. [Keith, Dre, and Jack laugh]

Final Thoughts [2:14:30]

Jack: All right. Closing credits music. Wait, is there anything else we want to say? I don't think I have anything else on my notes for this arc.

Dre: Oh, I do have a question.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: I have a question for everyone. If Leorio never made friends with Gon, Kurapika, and Killua, how far would he have made it through the Hunter Exam?

Jack: Oh my god. Great question.

Sylvia: So—

Keith: He would not have had the strength to keep running through the first tunnel.

Sylvia: I have...I talked with a friend about Leorio when I was visiting the west coast last, and she pointed out to me, as a manga reader, that a lot of Leorio's— people, like, hyping up Leorio is just, "Leorio did this really cool thing just offscreen. You guys missed it though." [Dre and Jack laugh] Apparently it's not as much in the anime, so...

Keith: That is true.

Sylvia: Anime Leorio, I don't know.

Keith: We talked a little bit about this, not from the manga, but in the 1999 anime, in the first episode where I watched a bit of that, Leorio was depicted as much more competent.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Hmm.

Keith: But as far as, like, the anime goes, I think that he gets his second wind because he made some friends, and he doesn't want to be outdone. He, like, literally gets— he's about to flunk out, and he gets, like, stared down by Gon.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: And I think that that is the moment that, if he's not with Gon, he loses.

Sylvia: He's coming back next year.

Dre: Jack, what do you think?

Jack: [thoughtful sigh] Okay. [Sylvia laughs] I think that Keith is right. I think that if he doesn't get stared down by Gon— I'd forgotten that moment. That was such a great moment, Gon looking over his shoulder at Leorio. But I will say this: [laughs quietly] he has the— I'm gonna give him the benefit of the doubt, because he gets that second wind. He gets through the run. The man-faced monkey fake examiner shows up and says, "Satotz is fake. Everybody come with me." Leorio's like, "Oh my god! He's right!" goes with him and is immediately killed by a man-faced monkey. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: That's where he fails.

Dre: These are all interesting answers. I think you're all wrong, though.

Keith: I have one more— I have a counterpoint to my own point.

Dre: Yeah, please, go ahead.

Keith: Leorio's superpower is being the reluctant outsider of a friend group that, [**Dre:** Mm.] for some reason, really values him and his company, and— [Sylvia laughs]

Dre: God. Maybe the more fun answer is: if it's not, you know, the three friends that he has, who does Leorio become friends with?

Keith: Right.

Sylvia: He becomes the fourth Blowjob Brother!

Dre: Is he the fourth Blowjob Brother? Yeah!

Keith: He becomes the fourth Blowjob Brother. [laughter] This is exactly where I was going, so thank you for that. Yes, he becomes the fourth Blowjob Brother.

Dre: Or he becomes Tonpa's accomplice for the whole exam, until the very end when Tonpa fucks him over.

Sylvia: Evil Leorio teaming up with Tonpa would be pretty good. Also just like, he could hang out with the monkey man, maybe.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: The other funny friend group he could fall into is Hisoka and Gittarackur. That would be pretty funny. [Keith laughs]

Dre: It's true. Yeah, like, one of them, like, sprains their ankle early on, and Leorio's like, [Jack laughs] "Oh, I got an ace bandage in here. I could just tape your ankle up."

Keith: Please. You know Gittarackur is doing literally this whole thing on a sprained ankle without even flinching.

Dre: Mm.

Sylvia: It's why he moves like that.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: I don't think Gittarackur has ankles. I think Gittarackur has—

Sylvia: [laughs] Oh!

Dre: That's true.

Keith: I think he has two ankles per leg.

Sylvia: Oh.

Jack: Per leg.

Keith: He has double ankles.

Dre: Sure, and whatever pin he puts in it is which ankle he gets to use.

Keith: Right.

Jack: Oh.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: He can switch between high mobility and high strength ankles.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Oh my god. [Sylvia laughs]

Dre: Leorio wouldn't have made it to the Hunter Exam, because he wanted to take the bus and called everyone stupid for not wanting to take the bus.

Jack: Oh yeah! [laughs] I hadn't even thought about that. Yeah, doesn't even make it to the exam. Absolutely.

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] Leorio wouldn't have made it to the exam, because if he didn't

meet Gon, he would have done a hate crime against Kurapika and gotten kicked out.
[others laugh]

Jack: Ah. Uh, hey—

Keith: Oh yeah, he would have just been thrown overboard by Kurapika.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Drowned. [laughs] Kurapika would have just— yeah. Uh, I had a fucked up thought. What if Gittarackur is the pins? [Keith laughs]

Dre: Ooh. That's fun.

Keith: That is fun.

Jack: We were doing a— Ali and Janine and I are playing a game called *Grandpa's Farm* at the moment for Live at the Table, and an idea that I thought— I had to choose kind of what farmer I was gonna be in this sort of *Stardew Valley* type game, and an idea that I had but didn't end up going with, because it didn't work out, was—

Keith: Grandpa is pins?

Jack: Grandpa is pins.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: No, was that I play as all the plants on an ill-tended farm trying to persuade a farmer to bring the farm back to— basically, like, what if you play as the plants who have possessed a guy? And I think maybe that might be the pins and Gittarackur. Gittarackur might be 500 acupuncture pins that have possessed a man.

Dre: Hmm.

Keith: I couldn't tell from the description. *Grandpa's Farm* is a tabletop game.

Jack: Yes, yeah.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: It's by Tyler Crumrine. It's from Possible Worlds.

Keith: Oh, okay.

Jack: Same guy who made *Scene Thieves*, the Marielda game.

Keith: Yeah. Is there any last thoughts? We've gone— we have intentionally turned the train off the tracks to just explore the sort of side of the tracks area. It's fun over there.

Dre: Mm-hmm. [Jack laughs quietly]

Keith: Do we have anything else over here or maybe even back on the tracks before we close it down?

Sylvia: I think I'm—

Jack: Yes. Have you— oh.

Sylvia: Oh. No, go ahead.

Jack: Have you ever squashed a penny on the train tracks?

Keith: No.

Dre: No.

Jack: No.

Dre: Because I saw the episode of Pete & Pete where it taught me [**Jack:** Right.] that it would kill the train.

Jack: [laughs] I don't think it would kill the train.

Sylvia: Well, now I want to do it. What?

Jack: I'm sure it is extremely dangerous to do, and you shouldn't go near train tracks

really ever unless you are using the train.

Keith: Isn't this just what the Disney World squashed pennies thing is?

Jack: I suppose.

Dre: Sure, yeah.

Jack: Those are made with a penny squashing machine, but I know that historically pennies squashed by trains— I have Godspeed You! Black Emperor record that has a penny squashed by a train in it.

Dre: Oh.

Jack: I mean, it probably isn't squashed by a train. I know in the first run, they were squashed by a train, but I don't think Efrim's going out there and putting a bunch of pennies on train tracks. I don't know.

Keith: They have money, right? They could commission a train to roll over a thousand pennies real quick.

Jack: I don't know if Godspeed does have money. I think Godspeed might be in the category of musicians who you think— I think listeners sometimes do this about Friends at the Table. They're like, "Oh, that thing has listeners, so they have money, right?" and it's like, no. We're trying our best.

Keith: I've just been hearing about them since, like, I was in high school.

Jack: Does that account for money? I don't— I fear that it might not. I don't know.

Keith: It would be sad if it didn't.

Jack: I'm sure they're doing fine, is the thing.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: But I doubt that they are...I think that they're probably, like, Mountain Goats level

of fine.

Keith: I think it's just—

Dre: Sure.

Keith: I think it's just...I think it also might be cheaper than you'd think to commission, like, a shitty train to, like, run over some pennies for an hour.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Pickman's ears pricking up.

Dre: But you'd have to be going pretty fast though, is the thing.

Keith: I think it's just the weight of the train.

Dre: I guess.

Keith: Because the penny squashing machines are not going very fast.

Dre: That's true.

Jack: No, and you have to be five years old and turning them in Disneyland.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Lot of gears in there, but still, trains are very heavy.

Jack: Gears in the train or gears in the penny squashing machine?

Keith: Oh, there's a lot of gears in the penny squashing machine to make turning it easy. The train makes up for this by being very heavy.

Sylvia: So—

Keith: There are gears in the train, but they're not helping squash the penny at all.

Jack: Yes, Sylvi?

Sylvia: I'm enjoying this conversation. However, it's late.

Keith: This is all in.

Sylvia: I know it is. [Jack laughs] Should we wrap this up?

Jack: Great point. Great point.

Keith: That is a great point. Two episodes, I think, for next time.

Jack: Ooh.

Sylvia: Ooh. Short one.

Keith: Short one. Episode 17 and 18, I believe?

Jack: Exciting.

Dre: Sure, you're the boss.

Keith: Uh, let me just double check.

Sylvia: Yeah, we are...

Keith: That was the original plan.

Sylvia: "Trap × In The × Hole" and "Big × Time × Interview"?

Keith: Say again?

Jack: Wait, "Big × Time × Interview"?

Sylvia: "Trap × In The × Hole" and "Big × Time × Interview" are the...

Keith: Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, those are— yeah.

Jack: What the fuck is "Big × Time × Interview"?

Keith: Yeah, yeah. [laughs] Yep, that's it.

Dre: Who knows, Jack? Hey, Jack, who knows?

Keith: I mean, I know. I know what it is, yeah.

Dre: Wow, okay.

Keith: "Trap × In The × Hole" and "Big × Time × Interview". Part of me is like, maybe we should do more, but I think we shouldn't.

Sylvia: We could—

Jack: No, let's do two and get ourselves back on track, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Let's get back on track, and if we end up feeling, like, after we watch these, that we need to do another one, we can, like, append something to this or like...

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Sure.

Sylvia: You know. We can always go back and do that.

Dre: Editor Keith. [Sylvia laughs quietly]

Jack: So, two episodes next time. "Trap × In The × Hole" and— what's it called? The Big Interview or something?

Keith: "Big × Time × Interview".

Sylvia: "Big × Time × Interview".

Jack: The Big Time Interview. Excellent.

Dre: Big time.

Sylvia: Um...

Jack: You can— oh, go on.

Sylvia: No, I was just gonna say...I guess I didn't really need to give you this warning on air, but Jack, a little bit of a snake warning for the next couple episodes.

Jack: Oh, right!

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Someone online warned me about these snakes, and it was very sweet.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: They said, "You can skip these episodes," and I'm a professional. What I'm gonna do is I'm gonna be extremely brave, and then I'm gonna come on the recording and tell you about how brave I was. [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: Yeah!

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: You are, and I figured giving a little advance warning would help with it.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: No, thank you. I appreciate that. Thank you so much for your support if you have supported us at friendsatthetable.cash, which enables us to make this show. Obviously, this show is free, but if you like the kind of thing that we are doing and are interested in supporting us further, you can go to friendsatthetable.cash where we have a range of benefits available for you, including two full seasons of Friends at the Table that you might not have heard in a fictional Atlantic City called Bluff City that is some of the best work we've done.

Keith: Cannot recommend Bluff City highly enough.

Dre: It's great.

Keith: And it's got the exact opposite vibe of everything else we do, which is really really long and hard to get into.

Dre: [laughs] That's true.

Keith: It is super easy to get into. You could theoretically pop in wherever you wanted. I don't recommend that. [["The Boy in Green"](#) by Jack de Quidt begins playing] I say start from the beginning, but they're all little self-contained, you know, little mini arcs. Some people prefer that. Anything else? Any other plugs before we get out of here?

Jack: I don't think so.

Dre: I don't think so.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Okay. Well, that's it. Bye.

Sylvia: Bye.

Jack: Bye!

Dre: Toodles.

[song plays out]