

The Power of Gon's Mistake - Hunter x Hunter ep. 7-9: Media Club Plus S01E03

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Introduction

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

Keith: Welcome to Media Club Plus, a podcast about [Sylvia laughs quietly] 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. My name is Keith Carberry. With me, as always, is Jack de Quidt.

Jack: Hi, I'm Jack. Keith, you nailed it. That was a beautiful intro.

Keith: Thank you.

Jack: You can find me on Cohost at [@jdq](#) and you can buy any of the music featured on the show at notquitereal.bandcamp.com.

Keith: Andrew Lee Swan?

Dre: Hey, you can find me over on our Twitch channel, twitch.tv/friendsatthetable, most

Monday nights.

Keith: And Sylvi Bullet.

Sylvia: Hey, I'm Sylvi. You can find me everywhere at @sylvibullet, and you can check out everything that Friends at the Table do— does— man. Keith, you nailed it. I didn't. [Keith laughs] Everything Friends at the Table does is at our Linktree that Janine set up. That's linktr.ee/friendsatthetable. That'll take you to everything.

Keith: Some of the highlights from that Linktree of course are the Patreon, friendsatthetable.cash.

Jack: Mm-hmm.

Keith: The TikTok, [@friends_table](https://www.tiktok.com/@friends_table). And I personally, but also Friends at the Table as a whole, have been using Cohost more in the last week or two. I've had it for months and months and months, but I've only really started diving into, like, regularly wanting to post stuff to it in the last week. The Friends at the Table Cohost is [@friends-table](https://www.cohost.com/@friends-table). We're posting anything that you might normally find on Twitter but if you're not using Twitter wouldn't see, so streaming times, episode uploads, stuff like that. Re...what do we call it when you retweet something on there?

Jack: Chost. Chosting.

Keith: Rechosting?

Sylvia: Okay, sure.

Keith: We're doing all that.

Jack: Sylvi. [laughs]

Keith: [laughs] We're doing all that there.

Dre: Chostin' it up!

Keith: And we're still doing it on Twitter too, [@friends_table](https://www.tiktok.com/@friends_table), so. Also, you can find me

on YouTube at youtube.com/runbutton for the let's plays that I do. Three new episodes this week. How are we feeling?

Jack: Of *Hunter × Hunter*.

Keith: Of *Hunter × Hunter*.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: We're fucking in it.

Keith: We're in it.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: We're in it now.

Keith: We're getting into it. This is, I feel like...I don't want to be presumptuous, but I feel like these are the last episodes before we're in it.

Sylvia: I disagree because of—

Keith: There's some in it here too.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: There is some in it, but like, we are fully in it from here on out.

Jack: Until when? Until the end?

Keith: Until the end.

Dre: Until the end. [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah, pretty much.

Keith: There's some brief moments of not being in it, between now and the end, but they're very short.

Jack: Interesting.

Keith: Yeah.

Summary [0:03:17]

Jack: Do you want to do the top level summary, Keith, so we can start digging into it?

Keith: I would love to do the top level summary. So, the first thing that happens is we get back on the airship that Jack was so worried about last week, [Jack laughs] and we spend basically a whole episode there. It's everyone's first break, literally days and days with maybe no food or water or rest at all. Brief moments maybe of those things. But yeah, we see Kurapika and Leorio immediately take the opportunity to sleep. Gon and Killua decide to train. Oh, Killua, by the way, who we briefly learn is a child assassin. No big deal. They decide to spend their time training with newly introduced Chairman of the Selection Committee, Netero. They play a really fun get-the-ball game, and we see Gon and Killua's sort of temperaments clashing, not for the first time, not for the last time. It's not super...like, they don't make a big deal of it, but we are seeing more and more how different these two characters are. And then they make it to their first— or their next trial, Trick Tower, and immediately are confronted with three challenges. One: Tonpa's on their team. [Sylvia laughs] Two: they have to deal with a voting system. And three: a gang of prisoners-turned-examiners in a sick mental game, where they have to win best of five against a group of life-in-prison, um...freaks? They're all freaks.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Who are incentivized to take things as slow as possible, because every hour they delay the gang from proceeding is a year off of their sentences. Their sentences, which, I've written down, are extremely long, so we'll get to that when we get to that episode. Anything I missed? Anything that we want to, like, fill in right off the bat?

Sylvia: Uh...no, I think we can get into the specifics of anything major there.

Jack: [crosstalk] I don't...

Keith: Okay.

Sylvia: Like, we're gonna talk a lot about Killua.

Keith: Yes. Yes.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: And I feel like that's just its own conversation, you know?

Keith: I have double the amount of notes for episode seven as I do for the other two episodes.

Sylvia: I think it is kind of the...like, I don't know, characterization-wise, it's like the load-bearing one?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: There's some really good moments in eight and nine. Don't get me wrong.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, those are great episodes, but from only watching nine episodes and taking notes on nine episodes, it really feels like the episodes that have a lot of character in them [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] are the ones that I'm, like, furiously quoting and taking notes and stuff.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: How did you feel, Jack, after coming off of the last episode feeling like it was the first kind of break in the action in a negative way and a slow down in a way that kind of threw you?

Jack: Um...I really liked these three episodes. I really liked— out of the three of them, I would say nine was probably my favorite.

Keith: Okay.

Episode Seven [0:06:28]

Jack: I don't want to jump the gun and talk about that, but I think...I liked seven a lot and I liked the characterization of Killua, but I did really like the way that the show leaned hard into that feeling that I was having, of like, oh, [**Keith:** Yeah.] this is a break. We get Tonpa trying to— Tonpa, who has been sort of absent in the last few episodes, comes, you know, roaring back into the show with a classic Tonpa trick: make people think that there is a weird horrible trap on the airship, so you have to stay awake. But Kurapika and Leorio just do not fall for it.

Keith: [laughs] Yeah.

Jack: And they fall asleep.

Keith: No, they don't really even consider it.

Jack: No, they don't really consider it, perhaps in part—

Keith: You get a really good— oh, sorry, go ahead.

Jack: Oh, because they're protagonists and know that they will be able to overcome almost anything. [laughs]

Keith: Right, that is part of it.

Dre: Also, literally everyone else goes to sleep too, besides Gon and Killua. [laughs]

Keith: Right, yeah. The way— besides Gon and Killua, who stay up training and playing. The way that they characterize it is very good. You know, you have this, like, long scene of Kurapika walking down the hallway with Leorio, but you're, like, tight focused on Kurapika's face as he thinks to himself about what Tonpa said and how it doesn't really make any sense and how they would have— if they really should be paying attention, they would have said this or done this or it would have happened this way, and during that, they've sat down against the wall, and Kurapika's, like, looking over to tell Leorio, "Hey, I think it's okay for us to go to bed," and Leorio's fast asleep.

He's snoring.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's great.

Keith: And Kurapika gives his signature look at Leorio and smile sweetly. [Sylvia laughs quietly]

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Which is the main thing that he does in the show.

Jack: I, um...was it at the beginning of this? We are, what, three episodes into this project?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Nine episodes into the show.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I think in episode one, Keith, you said that you hadn't really thought about Leorio and Kurapika as a couple, but now it makes a lot of sense to you?

Keith: Yeah. It's something that I saw after— the, like, Leorio and Kurapika ship is something that I hadn't encountered— hadn't thought— it's just not how I watch television normally. I just don't ship ever.

Jack: No, and I think—

Keith: As a almost— not as a rule, it's just as a reflex. And so I encountered it after watching the show for the first time, and I was like, "What? That's such a weird way to watch this show is to decide that Leorio and Kurapika are in love," and then you watch it again, and you're like, "Oh, it's right there. It's all there." [Dre laughs]

Jack: Yeah, I also don't necessarily— I don't always have this shipping reflex. I think

that it's...it's just not the way I approach media.

Keith: Anyone who's heard Friends at the Table knows that it is not something that's part of how I process conversations and dialogue and story. [Jack laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: But it is just in the show.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: This, so far, is just...the relationship between Kurapika and Leorio is fantastic, and I am so excited— I mean, you know, I think it's part of the way this story is structured. You know, you have these four protagonists, and you are playing essentially, like, a combinatrix game in terms of generating plots by being like, "Oh, who do we match with whom in these little 20 minute episodes?" and we get to see them all fire off against each other. And since we are early in the show, it makes sense for the show to be pairing Gon and Killua as these kind of, like...what's the word? Like, sprightly— I think the fact that one party goes to sleep and one party goes and trains with maybe the most powerful man on the planet tells you a lot. But I do think that just seeing Leorio and Kurapika in scene after scene after scene is brilliant. Their first scene together, Leorio does say that he is going to do genocide against Kurapika—

Keith: Right.

Jack: But, uh, having spent—

Sylvia: He was just joking, though.

Jack: I was gonna say.

Keith: And he takes it back so fast.

Sylvia: He just had an Xbox Live moment, you know?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's a girlies thing.

Sylvia: Heated gamer moment from Leorio. [Dre laughs]

Jack: It's, uh...that's just how they hang out.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Actually, how do Kurapika and Leorio hang out? The answer is, right, they bicker but they have a real foundation of, like, "this is the person that I am with and I am looking out for this person" pretty consistently.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: I don't think either of them feels like they are being threatened or brought down by the other person's flaw.

Keith: Right, yeah. And I think that they sort of— I think Leorio is sort of a Gon, in that, like, he's very reactive.

Jack: [laughs] Leorio is so good.

Keith: He's very—

Jack: Oh boy, is he.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Some Leorio stuff to talk about in episode eight, I think.

Keith: [laughs quietly] Yeah. He's very reactive and is, like, not super considerate, but he has a lot of luck, and he has a lot of charm, and I think that, like, that sort of...they balance each other out, because we've talked a lot about how Kurapika's very sort of internal and, you know, is very thinky, and it's just sort of, like, kind of two of those same relationships. It's sort of Gon and Killua have that sort of relationship, and then also

Leorio and Kurapika have that relationship in sort of a slightly different way, but it's sort of like two different— it's like two opposites sort of tempering each other.

Jack: Yeah. I was really— I had a moment when Tonpa was saying to them, you know, “There might be a trap on this,” where I realized that they don't know he's the Rookie Crusher, at this point.

Keith: Right. Yes.

Jack: And that was...that kind of caught me off guard, because we spent so much time in Tonpa's perspective during his introduction that I had sort of— I had made that classic mistake that the characters have the same information that the viewer does, and so when they were like, “Oh, we should actually think over what Tonpa is saying before disregarding it,” I was like, “Oh shit, they just— they think Tonpa is just another player, at this point.”

Keith: Right. Another player who happened to have bad juice.

Jack: Yeah, who— [laughter] Well, that juice helped me with the frog, so, you know.

Keith: Yeah, that's just the frog-helping juice.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Oh, wait.

Keith: Killua might have a little bit of extra information.

Jack: Killua knows.

Dre: Oh, Killua knows.

Keith: Killua is like, “This guy poisoned me.” But still, I don't even think that translates to “Tonpa's the Rookie Crusher.” I think it just sort of, like, “Hey, we're playing the game. You did an underhanded thing, but I beat you, so we're even.”

Jack: Yes. And I do suspect that the way Killua sees the world— and I have to imagine

that we are gonna talk about this a lot in this episode. I think the way Killua sees the world is probably fucked. [laughs quietly]

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I think that he is looking through a weird lens.

Keith: Let's rewind just a little bit to get to that chronologically, because there are a few things early on in the episode that I want to hit. Number one: Beans [**Sylvia:** Yeah!] is short for Mr. Green Jellybean Man.

Sylvia: Woo! [Dre laughs]

Jack: Green Green Jellybean Man.

Keith: Sorry, Green Green Jellybean Man.

Jack: I was so excited to learn that his name is the same name that I gave him, basically. [Dre and Sylvia laugh]

Keith: Yep. Yep. That's Beans.

Jack: And we know Netero's—

Sylvia: I fucking love Beans so much.

Jack: We know Netero's first name. Netero's first name is Isaac.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: The naming conventions in this show are all over the place. I love it. Isaac Netero. I am Isaac Netero, the Chairman of the Selection Committee, and this is my assistant, Beans.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: [laughs] It's so funny.

Jack: If you are not watching along, Netero, as we spoke before, looks like a sort of depiction of the Buddha. He's got a white beard that curls up. He's an old fellow. He's got big earrings. He's, like, a wiry old man. Beans is...now, then. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: A green green jellybean man.

Jack: He's a green green jellybean man.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: He is small. He's child-sized. He is wearing a fancy black suit. Is he wearing a tux? What is he wearing?

Keith: He's wearing a tuxedo with tails.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Yeah. And he's humanoid. He has human hands and legs, and his entire— he has no neck. His entire head is a large green jellybean. [laughs quietly]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: With eyes and a mouth. And what I—

Keith: Now, can I tell you what Green Green Jellybean Man looks like in the 1999 series?

Sylvia: Please.

Dre: Wait.

Jack: He looks different?

Keith: He looks different.

Dre: Wait, is he not green?

Sylvia: Is he not green?

Keith: He looks exactly the same except that he is flesh colored. Like, pink.

Dre: No.

Sylvia: Oh, I don't like that.

Dre: Get out of here.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Get out of here!

Jack: Wow, flesh flesh jellybean man. [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: Ugh. Ugh!

Dre: Get out of here.

Keith: It's really gross. It sucks!

Sylvia: That's one of the creatures in Swindler's Swamp.

Dre: Oh, I hate this!

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: [laughs] Yes, it really is. One of my favorite things about Beans— and Beans is an incredible character. [Sylvia laughs] I would watch— whoa!

Keith: [laughs] He looks like a baby!

Sylvia: Uh, he looks like a Kirby character.

Keith: He does look like a Kirby character.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: He does look like a Kirby character.

Sylvia: He looks like, um...I was trying to find the specific character. He reminds me of Lololo and Lalala from the Kirby games.

Jack: Let me look this up.

Sylvia: I'm attaching an image for you guys.

Jack: Yeah, let's see.

Sylvia: They're, like, the pink and blue bosses.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Sylvia: Their whole thing is that it's just, like, a...it's, like, a puzzle boss more than anything.

Keith: I think he looks just like Waddle Dee but without the, like, clothes on.

Sylvia: Also true. There is a real, like, [Jack laughs] Kirby design sensibility going on, specifically in the, like, eye shape and stuff. I hate this image, Dre. [Dre laughs] I hate buff Beans so much. Though... [Keith laughs]

Jack: Can we get a regular Beans in the chat, please? I would like to see him, and I am— I don't google *Hunter* × *Hunter* stuff, as a rule.

Sylvia: Yes, I'll...

Keith: Yeah, that's smart to do, yeah.

Sylvia: This image that Dre linked did give me...

Dre: Hold on, I got it.

Sylvia: Does kind of lead to one of my questions.

Jack: Nope!

Keith: [laughs] No!

Sylvia: Oh no. No.

Jack: Dre has posted photorealistic Beans. There we go!

Dre: There you go.

Sylvia: I've posted a lovely Beans.

Dre: Thank you, Sylvi. [laughs]

Sylvia: Oh, someone did put a comparison of them side by side. Wait, I'm gonna pop that. Is Beans a Hunter? Do you guys think Beans is a Hunter?

Dre: Yeah, totally.

Sylvia: Or does he just work for the Hunter Association?

Keith: I think Beans is a Hunter.

Sylvia: Cool.

Dre: I think Beans is a Hunter.

Sylvia: I also do.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I also think Beans is a Hunter...? That's a great question. I don't think...I think that the Hunter organization is so byzantine and stupid [Sylvia, Jack, and Dre laugh] that I don't think you could be Netero's manservant without being a Hunter.

Keith: Beanservant.

Jack: Beanservant.

Dre: Isaac Netero's mean bean manservant. Is this anything? [Jack and Keith laugh]

Jack: Is this anything? My favorite thing about Beans that I think is indicative of the show is that Beans does not have a silly voice. Beans speaks like a normal human.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: He is pleasant and reasonable.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: He's this green green jellybean man who shows up, and he's like, "Hi. Welcome to the airship. I'm Beans. Please take the time to rest." There is something so charming [Keith: Yeah.] about the way this show regularly throws complete visual curveballs at you and these characters present themselves. It's the gorilla. It's the unnamed gorilla playing volleyball. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: Right.

Jack: From the screenshot stream.

Keith: It's just what you said when we first saw Beans, was you were like, "I don't know if this guy's ever coming back." We saw, for one scene—

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: We saw a green green jellybean man.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And that might be it.

Jack: Yeah. This show would be so much worse if he showed up and he was like, [silly voice] "Woohoo, I'm Beans! I'm a kooky guy!" you know? [laughter] The fact that he's just like, "Hello. Welcome to the airship. I'm a green green jellybean man."

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And it leads to this...it results in this overwhelming sensation that you are

constantly going to be shown something that is surprising and outré, and you are going to be asked to take it seriously, and the show takes it seriously too. This is something Austin talks about a lot that I think is very important to the way we make Friends at the Table, which is we are not interested in deflating or underselling our own show. If, for example, we have a character show up with a weird name, and everybody is like, “Wow, do you mean to tell me this guy is really called Territory Jazz Jr.? Isn't that wacky?” or whatever, it means that if the show is not taking itself seriously, you the viewer are not gonna take it seriously either. And so, to have—

Keith: Oh, yeah, nobody second guesses Beans for one second.

Jack: Nobody second guesses Beans for one second, and it lets you do great things like this, right? To just keep introducing characters with interesting names or interesting personas or interesting looks and asks you to treat them like our protagonists or treat them like Gon and Killua. It's great. I love Beans, and I'm excited— will I see more Beans, or is Beans done now? [Sylvia laughs quietly]

Keith: Do you want us to tell you?

Sylvia: Yeah, do you want to know that?

Jack: No. No, I don't. I want to be surprised when Beans shows up.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: Although, I will say this: I don't want to see any bullshit fanart of Beans. Send me some nice Beans fanart, please, listeners. Thank you.

Sylvia: Once again, spoiler free.

Keith: What counts as bullshit fanart?

Dre: Uh, the things I've been posting.

Keith: Okay, sure, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, like, not Beans, like, ripped in a fucking speedo or whatever.

Keith: The ripped Beans. Send me the ripped Beans.

Dre: Okay! Hold on, Keith, I got you.

Keith: Don't send me the ripped Beans.

Dre: Nope, you—

Keith: I don't like that it looks like instead of skin he has green muscle.

Sylvia: That— well, wouldn't his skin be green?

Keith: Well, yeah, but it just— look at his face has skin, but the body is, like, looks like sinew, not like skin.

Sylvia: Yeah, no.

Jack: I love Beans.

Sylvia: Damn, Beans is hitting the gear again. [Dre and Jack laugh] We've gotta do some wellness testing for Beans.

Keith: [laughs] Oh my god. [sarcastic] Thank you, Dre.

Dre: Yeah, you're welcome.

Jack: Green Beans is— Green Green Jellybean Man is so much better than Flesh Flesh Jellybean Man, not just because he doesn't look frightening. I think that the character art is so much more expressive and fun.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Something worth also mentioning about Flesh Flesh Jellybean Man is at the time they didn't actually have the name for Beans when they made that anime, so he's

just unnamed bald guy in that.

Keith: Oh.

Jack: Really?

Dre: Oh, interesting.

Sylvia: Actually, I think there's a Japanese pun on...they gave him a name that's not canon.

Keith: Oh, okay.

Sylvia: I was looking this up the other day. It's like Maamen or something? Anyway.

Jack: I'm so glad I got Beans just from— I looked at that guy, and I said, "This man is Beans."

Keith: Yeah, and it's Beans.

Sylvia: That's good character design!

Jack: That is! That's great character design.

Keith: It's great character design. I knew right away that this was a bean man. [Keith and Jack laugh] I want to shift focus a little bit to Netero.

Sylvia: Yes.

Keith: Jack, you said something interesting. You said that Chairman Netero might be the strongest person in the world. Why would you say that? What are your— what is this guy giving off, the Chairman of the Selection Committee?

Jack: Well, it's interesting, right? Because we're not introduced to him as the Hunter boss, you know? He is not being intro— although, wait a second. There are...I don't know if I wrote a note about this. Did someone say that there are seven Hunter chairmen?

Sylvia: Oh.

Jack: Or am I completely making this up?

Keith: Mm...I don't think—

Sylvia: I don't remember that.

Keith: Yeah, I don't think someone would have said that.

Jack: [laughs] Maybe I dreamt it. I don't know.

Keith: Yeah, dreaming about *Hunter × Hunter*.

Jack: Yeah, but, you know, it is notable that he's not introduced as the Hunter boss. He is the Chairman of the Selection Committee, [**Keith:** Right.] which is clearly very important. I think what I'm getting at with "he is the most powerful man in the world" is he is a character archetype that I think you see a lot in, not just in anime, but stories— [laughs quietly] stories more broadly. I think he is sort of a character archetype that you see a lot, which is the wiry old man who reveals himself to not only wield a great deal of institutional power but have a kind of near supernatural strength.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And this is born out in this episode.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: There is a— [sighs] because of the, like, timeline of when this anime comes out and also when the manga came out, it is hard sometimes to nail down, like, what influenced which, but Netero's definitely in sort of the long line of that sort of, like, wacky older guy mentor for the main character. The two that I kind of immediately come to are, like, Master Roshi and Jiraiya from *Naruto*.

Keith: All perverts too.

Sylvia: Also all perverts. Yeah, no.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: I mean, Netero's, like, one of the first things we see him do is look at Menchi's boobs.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Like, they were very much playing in that space.

Keith: Yeah. If I'm right, it's really the only hint that we get that that's what they're doing.

Sylvia: Yes. That kind of gets dropped from him. He kind of just becomes more of a wacky grandpa in the next episode.

Keith: But they've gotta tell you right away: this guy's Roshi. You can tell, [**Sylvia:** Yes.] because he looked at Menchi's tits.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: And I think that's, like, a very specific decision, because also design-wise there are some similarities to Roshi. He's kind of, like...

Keith: And personality-wise.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: They're kooky old men. They're funny, and they hide how strong they are behind, like, being a goofball.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Being, like, a joker.

Sylvia: It's like a disarming quality for them, and I love that, honestly. I love that, like...

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, me too.

Sylvia: You get this shot in the first episode where we see Netero where he just drops

from the airship, and then we get to the game today, and you get to see, like, even more examples of the fact that this guy—like Jack said—is probably the strongest human in the world.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: And there's kind of a freak-like quality to him that we get hinted at early on. I mean, it takes a certain kind of person to jump out of an airship, even if you can do that.

Dre: Sure.

Keith: Then, when we get onto the ship and he's talking to Beans. I have the quote here. He's talking about, like, the slow trip to the next trial. He says, "There's nothing that I love more than this feeling of tension in the air." Why does he love that? I don't know, but then he just goes walking around the ship, looking for people to fuck with, and he finds Gon and Killua, who has just revealed that he's a child assassin to Gon.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Who likes this. Or, no, Gon doesn't like. Killua likes that Gon immediately believes him.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah. Before we move into Killua Hour, [Sylvia laughs] I want to sort of go at this in kind of, like, a slightly different order, where we—

Keith: Okay, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: He does something interesting in this scene. He sort of— he's creeping around the ship like a nasty person, looking for people to fuck with. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: Right, right.

Jack: And then he...it's not clear what happens. He either teleports or moves so quickly that only Killua can sort of figure out. Gon looks and is like, [**Sylvia:** Uh...] "Oh,

someone was there and is gone now.”

[0:25:03]

Keith: He looks where he was. He does something.

Sylvia: He says...

Keith: And they, like, notice him, and then he disappears.

Sylvia: I will push back on Gon not noticing, because Gon is the one who says to him, like, “Hey, weren't you over there a second ago?”

Jack: Oh, really? Huh.

Sylvia: Or he says something along those lines. I need to— I should look—

Dre: Yeah, or he says, “Did you see someone that was over there?” Something like that.

Sylvia: Right, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: And that...

Keith: But it's Killua going, like, “You're pretty fast.” Like, Killua's the one who knows it was Netero that was over there.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And Killua immediately takes a real violent dislike to this.

Keith: Yes.

Jack: Killua's whole affect changes immediately. You know, I talked in the past about Killua being dreamlike, but here, his eyes narrow. He glowers. He is not happy about—

and I think it's interesting, especially given this conversation that we talk about. It's not clear whether the thing that gets Killua here is being crept up on. You know, he doesn't like this kind of subterfuge.

Keith: Right. Maybe this is something—

Jack: Coming from an assassin family.

Keith: Right, exactly, yeah.

Jack: He could also be suspicious of the techniques that Netero is using, because we get some talk about assassin magic in these episodes going forward, [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] which is fascinating, and it could be that he sees, you know, like sees like here, and he is like, “There is something here that I don't care for,” because we go into the rest of this episode with rancid vibes between Killua and Netero, whereas Gon is having a great time.

Keith: Could I actually rewind for, uh...

Jack: Yeah, of course!

Keith: What was the words? “Like sees like,” or...

Jack: Like sees like? Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. There's another like sees like. In fact, there's a sort of like triangle here, if we're including Killua in this.

Sylvia: Uh oh.

Keith: Because we also do get a little bit more Hisoka at the beginning of this episode that I kind of forgot, but looking here in my notes—

Jack: Oh, we should talk about this, yeah.

Keith: Yes, we should talk about this.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: We have Menchi, Buhara, and Satotz talking about Hisoka.

Jack: I love this scene. It's great.

Keith: And it's kind of a long scene where they're talking about this. We get a reveal from Menchi that it's actually Hisoka's sort of violent bloodlust that they could feel palpably that is what put her on edge and had her sort of [Dre: Mm.] issue a too-difficult challenge that everybody failed.

Jack: Nearly failed the entire Hunter Exam.

Keith: Right. And then we get a really, really good monologue from Satotz who says—and I will ring the “What is a Hunter?” bell here [Jack laughs]—“We are birds of a feather with Hisoka.”

Dre: Uh huh.

Keith: “As Hunters, we are continually seeking out rivals. Ultimately, the Hunter Exam is but a place to find opponents worthy of encounter, someone who hits the floor running when we—” oh, sorry, I skipped a line. “Is but a place to find opponents worthy of respect, and every once in a while we encounter someone who hits the floor running when we try to slow things down, an oddball of sorts,” which I think is a really light way to describe Hisoka. [laughs]

Jack: A murderer.

Keith: We are just like him, except he's a little bit of an oddball.

Sylvia: I mean, I guess it's a—

Dre: He's just a big goober.

Sylvia: It's a perspective thing, right? Because when you've got Satotz and Menchi talking about this... [laughs]

Keith: Yeah. [laughs]

Sylvia: It's like, "Ah, yeah." Buhara seems chill. Buhara just seems like he wants to vibe out.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah, we don't need to go into this. I don't think there's much to say here, but I do think they were fucking cowards showing Satotz pushing some noodles around on a plate but not eating.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Satotz, in case you have forgotten, does not have a visible mouth. [Keith laughs]
Has a mustache and talks, and I—

Keith: I like that. I think they're teasing you. They're like—

Sylvia: Anime Pringles man. [Jack laughs]

Keith: It's like a big joke.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: It's great.

Jack: Yes.

Sylvia: I love Satotz's design.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: I love Satotz in general. I really like hearing which rookies each examiner has their eye on.

Keith: Right. Yeah.

Jack: Ah, it was great.

Sylvia: I believe Satotz is Killua. Menchi, was it— no, Buhara brought up Hisoka, and...

Keith: Someone said, uh...

Sylvia: Oh, someone said Hanzo.

Keith: Hanzo, right, yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: The ninja, yeah.

Keith: I think Menchi says Hanzo.

Sylvia: Actually, I might have been getting Hanzo and Killua mixed up. Anyway.

Jack: It has big teachers—

Keith: Satotz does say Killua, yeah.

Sylvia: Okay.

Jack: It has big “teachers in the teachers’ lounge talking about the kids” vibe, and I think it’s another great example of the drifting perspective in this show. You know, the four are ostensibly our protagonists, and they are the sort of pivot points around which the plot moves, but we do— the camera goes wandering off through this airship, and we do see a bunch of different people. I want to talk a bit about...so, during Satotz talking about this great “all Hunters want to find a rival” monologue, there is— it reveals to us that this isn’t the first time that someone as evil as Hisoka has showed up in the Hunter Exam. The implication is this just happens sometimes.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Mm.

Jack: The Hunter Exam will produce an individual who, beyond just being ambitious or motivated— they're not surprised to see someone like Hisoka in the Hunter Exam, which is interesting. This is—

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: I mean, Hisoka's been allowed to compete twice now, because remember last time—

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Right.

Sylvia: He killed someone.

Jack: He killed an exam— uh—

Keith: Almost killed an examiner.

Dre: Almost killed.

Sylvia: Almost killed, sorry.

Jack: Almost killed an examiner. Yeah. But it seems even beyond that. They're not just like, "Well, Hisoka has done this before." The Hunter Exam occasionally produces people like— well, I don't know. I don't know whether it's the Hunter Exam producing these people or the world in which Hunters exist producing these people, but this happens sometimes.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: And I think you've written down a note here, Dre. They describe Hisoka as having a "killer aura." Did you want to talk about this?

Dre: Oh, I just, I wasn't sure in that scene if they were specifically talking about Hisoka when they said someone had an aura or if that was, like, them alluding to someone else. But if you're saying that they specifically said that about Hisoka...

Sylvia: I feel like they specifically did.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: I think that was—

Keith: I think that was specifically about Hisoka, yeah.

Sylvia: During the little segment where they show him doing the house of cards thing.

Jack: Oh, it's so beautifully animated.

Dre: Oh, you're right. You're right, yeah.

Jack: While they're talking about Hisoka, and these are very Hisoka-light episodes, much like the cooking trial. They know we, the viewer, are interested in Hisoka, and they are very careful about how much Hisoka they give us. I would love to see Hisoka in these episodes, and we sort of don't really, but we do get this beautiful sequence where he...

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: He builds a house of cards and then sort of has, like, an orgasmic delight upon knocking down the house of cards at the end. [Dre laughs] Which is, you know, this is a pretty clear metaphorical writing.

Keith: Let's just tuck that note away.

Jack: Yeah, I don't think this is, uh...I don't think there's anything particularly subtle going on here. Watching someone build a house of cards and then delightedly knock it down. We sort of all know what's going on there, [Sylvia laughs quietly] but it's a really beautifully animated scene, and it's good Hisoka writing, I suppose.

Keith: And I think it's sort of, like, a tremendous perspective shift to, like, have what we have in episode, um...what is it, episode, like, six with Hisoka?

Jack: Oh, Hisoka's murder spree?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Yeah, the killings and the fight, the encounter with Gon.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Then to, like, not see him and, like, wonder what's going on. I mean, Jack, we had you last week being like, "What's going on? Where's Hisoka?" And then this episode, instead of giving us Hisoka directly, they have the examiners being like, "He's one of us. He's more like us than anyone else here is."

Jack: Ah, it's great.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Really, really good.

Keith: And it's sort of, like, just this very jarring moment, and I don't...I don't think that—you know, it's the clearest view from a character on what a Hunter actually is that we've gotten.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Like, no one that would know has said what they think a Hunter is until Satotz says, "As Hunters, we are continually seeking out rivals. Ultimately, the Hunter Exam is but a place to find opponents worthy of respect." That is, like, our first actual, like, primary source of what a Hunter is in the show.

Jack: And it's fucked. It is still opaque.

Keith: It's totally fucked.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: It is seen through a glass darkly, because it doesn't actually say a lot about the function Hunters serve. It's a very insular reading, right? It's like—

Keith: Well, but Jack, do we know that Hunters serve a function even? [Jack laughs]

Dre: Yeah. That's a good question.

Jack: Good fucking point.

Keith: We don't even know that they do!

Sylvia: I think the only thing we've mentioned— they talk— when Kurapika talked about getting their revenge, there was a mention of them taking on jobs [Keith: Yeah.] that would hurt their pride, but like, that isn't really that concrete about what they do there.

Keith: Right, and Kurapika also talks about, like, Hunters, like, protecting animals and stuff like that.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: But like, that's so vague and also such a not-expert opinion.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: This is, like, not...that's not even on the Hunter website. This is just, like...you know, we've spent a lot of time with Kurapika. I love Kurapika, but for all intents and purposes, he's just some guy.

Jack: Uh, yeah. Yeah, sort of.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yes. I mean, maybe the Hunter Exam is...I'm gonna...just repeated hour of us trying to guess what Hunters are. Is it just about producing murder kings that you then let loose into the world? [Keith and Jack laugh]

Dre: I mean, it's not not about that.

Sylvia: It's not not. The way I have been looking at a lot of the Hunter Exam so far, just from what we've got, is that it feels just like...we decided to make the most nightmarish

meritocracy and give them, like, a weird amount of power in this world.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Or, i mean, do they?

Jack: Because when we get to the prison— sorry?

Sylvia: Mm-hmm?

Dre: I mean, I guess we also don't— it has not been codified, again, what role Hunters play in society and how much power they may or may not have.

Jack: Right.

Keith: We do know that they have the ability to...like, they have freedom of travel, free use of resources.

Dre: Right.

Keith: So they do have at least, like, this freedom of movement and of information that is, like, you know...I'll say, you know, it at least sort of suggests, you know, like, a first class/second class citizen relationship.

Dre: Yeah. It definitely, like, confers a level of, like, prestige and privilege to be a Hunter.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Except we have never— no, we have seen the world without Hunters once.

Dre: True.

Keith: On Whale Island?

Jack: Well, no, sort of, because even that was all about fucking Hunters.

Keith: Right.

Jack: This is— the one scene that we have had is the cicada in the foreground on the left as kid Leorio plays soccer with another kid.

Sylvia: Yes.

Keith: Right. Yeah.

Jack: And then that kid dies, because he can't afford an operation. Everything else has been seen through— it's the fucking Hallmark movie ice sculpting shit. [Sylvia and Dre laugh] It's like all everybody does is talk about...

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: All everybody does is talk about ice sculpting. The entire world revolves around ice sculpting. All the questions are about ice sculpting. Nobody at any point says, "Wait a second. Uh, what is happening outside the ice sculpting world?"

Keith: Could I introduce a perspective from the manga and from the 1999 series?

Jack: Yeah, please.

Sylvia: Yeah, please.

Keith: Okay. So, I don't want to get into specifics, but I will say that the first chapter—casually using the word "chapter," not literally—of the manga and of the 1999 story have Gon on Whale Island not as a 12-year-old but as a slightly younger boy, not having heard of the Hunters and thinking that his father is dead.

Dre: Oh.

Jack: Interesting.

Keith: And eventually it is revealed to him what a Hunter is and that that's what his father became, and that's when his world becomes about becoming a Hunter, but there is a sort of Hunterless life on Whale Island that, you know, just to say something about the canonical, like, rarity of Hunters. At least, you know, you can live the first nine years

of your life on Whale Island as a woods boy and not know what a Hunter is.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Oh, what if it was Woods Boy x Woods Boy? [Keith laughs]

Jack: Woods boy.

Dre: Man.

Jack: Oh, wait a second. We need to take a sidebar.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: Sorry.

Dre: Okay?

Jack: What's the deal—

Sylvia: [laughs] This show is all sidebars.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It's all sidebars.

Dre: Fair.

Keith: Yeah, this is a— episode seven is a sidebar episode, and I'm fine with that.

Jack: We haven't talked about the X at all.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: And this is something I meant to talk about in episode one.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: And every episode that went by, and I think it's notable: I don't actually think it's

very important, but this show uses the letter X not only in its title. You know, it's Hunter Hunter rendered "Hunter x Hunter." We have these interlinked X's in the Hunter logo, and then every episode is— we've been calling them things like, you know, "Showdown on the Airship," except the episode titles—and in Japanese too—are all broken up with X's in the same way *Hunter × Hunter* is.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Keith, could you— I don't have any episode names. Could you read, like, what an episode name looks like?

Keith: Yeah, sure. "Hope x And x Ambition." "Hisoka x Is x Sneaky." [Dre laughs] "A x Surprising x Challenge."

Jack: So, this is just a stylistic move. I don't think that there is— I don't think that we can get a lot from reading it this way. I don't know, maybe we can. I am curious about what is going on here.

Keith: So, there's a quick answer, but I am not sure it really explains why it's there very much, and the quick answer is that it's not actually the letter X. It is the multiplication symbol.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Exponential Hunters.

Jack: That doesn't fucking help at all. [laughs]

Keith: Right.

Dre: No, it doesn't.

Keith: So, like, if you were really being a weirdo, maybe you'd say, "Hunter times Hunter." [laughs]

Sylvia: Oh, that might be my new bit. [Keith and Jack laugh]

Dre: Please, it's expressed "Hunter squared." [Keith and Jack laugh]

Sylvia: Okay.

Keith: I've definitely, like, heard people refer to it as, like, a cross, and not to say "Hunter cross Hunter," but like...

Sylvia: That's what it means.

Keith: But that's, like, what you might say?

Dre: Mm, Playstation controller style.

Jack: Oh. [laughs]

Keith: Yeah. [laughs]

Sylvia: Could I quickly be on my *Kingdom Hearts* shit for a minute?

[0:40:01]

Jack: Oh my god, absolutely.

Keith: Sure.

Dre: Please.

Sylvia: I have always sort of—

Dre: Hey, never stop once you start, please.

Sylvia: I don't. I don't, trust me. It's gonna come up so much during this show, and you guys don't even know. [Jack laughs] Not just because Gon and Killua have enough stylistic similarities to Sora and Riku, but that does help.

Dre: Oh, enormous.

Sylvia: The way I have read the *Hunter × Hunter* title is definitely flavored by the fact

that I am someone who knows, “Oh yeah, *Kingdom Hearts* 358 over 2 means 358 days experienced by two people.”

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Right.

Sylvia: That's just in my brain forever.

Jack: No, this is immediately useful, actually. What does this give you here?

Sylvia: And so, like, the way I always took it is, like, the “Hunters” in the title are Gon and Killua. Like, this is like...

Keith: Right.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Sylvia: How do these two sort of, like, affect each other? And with the multiplication, like, how do they make each other— like, what growth spurs from the two of these, like, prodigy Hunters, like...

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Totally. I totally agree.

Dre: And I feel like they really start to codify some of that in episode seven with how they respond to Netero's game.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Dre: If we're okay starting to talk about that.

Jack: Yeah, this is great.

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: Oh, do we want to talk about assassins first?

Keith: Sure, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, I'm dying to talk about Killua's stuff.

Keith: Let's briefly do the assassin stuff, because we did sort of dance around it, but we didn't actually get all the way into that.

Jack: Killua looking—

Keith: I have one quote from this.

Jack: Yeah, please.

Keith: It's a very sad quote. When, uh...uh, you know what? Jack, I think you were gonna start earlier than me, so why don't you say your piece, and then I'll give my quote.

Jack: Killua looking wistfully out of the window. It's romantic. You can see the lights of the...I don't know, cities. I don't know. I don't know what this world is outside of the Hunters.

Keith: Right.

Dre: Yeah, there's— I mean, it's—

Sylvia: I think we can assume cities.

Keith: There's gonna be a moment that's gonna be so funny in about 10 episodes.

[Jack laughs]

Sylvia: I mean, there was the city that they almost went to on the bus, remember, in the early episodes? Like, that was a city-ass city.

Jack: The trap bus! Yeah, that's true.

Keith: Right.

Sylvia: I believe they call it the Down With Cis bus, Jack. I don't think we can use that word.

Jack: Oh. [laughs]

Sylvia: Sorry.

Dre: God damnit! [Sylvia laughs] Oh, I was like, I had that joke in my head, and I was like, "I can't say anything like that."

Sylvia: Yeah, but that's why I'm here, baby!

Dre: Thank you, Sylvi. Yeah.

Jack: Ah, thanks, Sylvi. [Dre laughs] And what does he take this moment to say? He says, "I come from a family of assassins."

Sylvia: It's so good!

Jack: "My whole family are assassins," and I wrote down here, "Killua lore." Period. "His parents are assassins!" Exclamation point. I watched for 30 more seconds, and I wrote, "Maybe. He could be lying." But then, as we continue, we do learn that he is not lying.

Sylvia: I fucking love the little interaction they have where he says, "My mom and dad are both assassins," and Gon's reaction is, "Whoa! Both of them?" [Jack laughs] And he's like, "Oh, wow, everybody just thinks I'm bullshitting. Like, you're the only person who takes me at face value and can read me like that," and I think that is, like...

Keith: He says, "People only like me because they can't tell whether I'm serious."

Sylvia: And Gon can, though!

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: And I love that.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: And, like, there's a ways to read it where Gon's just, like, a naive boy who just trusts what his friends say, but I don't think that—

Keith: That's true, but we also know that he is supernaturally perceptive.

Dre: Yes.

Sylvia: That is the thing, yeah.

Keith: And that his version of coming across— when he comes across as careless and, like, going with his gut and not thinking things through, which is something— literally not thinking things through is going to come back up and how often appearing to not think things through really works out for him. He is just supernaturally perceptive.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: He just, like, picks up on bits of the world in a sort of, like, otherworldly kind of way. [laughs quietly]

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: A bit of a lateral thinker over here.

Keith: Yeah. [Sylvia laughs quietly]

Jack: Yeah. Beautiful color work in this. This show looks really good. I feel like we don't spend a lot of time talking necessarily just about the art.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: So, Killua has sort of pale lilac colored hair, almost white, slightly purple. He is wearing a gray shirt and, I think, blue shorts. And we get these beautiful shots of him looking out of the window into this blue night. We get some exterior shots of the blue of the airship, and the color palette on show here is gorgeous with, like, everything in this moment coming to match Killua's color palette as he talks about his past. It's just great.

His parents...I wrote down in my notes that they like him, but I think what I mean is that they...

Dre: Hmm?

Jack: They think he is a very capable assassin. They believe that he can be an assassin, and they think that he's the bees knees, but he doesn't want to be an assassin.

Keith: No.

Sylvia: Yeah. The way— he talks about it like they're putting— it's very much, like, you have to go into the family business. You have to be—

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: They have really high hopes for me.

Jack: An ice sculptor, yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: I want to be an ice sculptor, but I have to be an assassin.

Sylvia: Yeah. I think he even says something about wanting to find his own path in this little monologue or something like that. He does— my favorite line is when he talks about, "When I become a Hunter, I'm gonna capture my family and get their bounties."

Keith: Oh. Yep.

Dre: Uh huh.

Keith: There we go. Here we go.

Sylvia: I have the image ready.

Keith: Oh, you have it? Okay, great. [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: Just because it cuts to this completely different art style.

Keith: This, like, watercolor saccharine bullshit.

Sylvia: I wrote down in my notes, “shoujo Killua,” because this very much felt like one of those, like, very flowery romance cutaways in something like a...

Jack: I wrote down, “glossy Killua.”

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: They do— this is not unique to *Hunter × Hunter*, by any means, but they do a lot of really great work of, like, dramatically shifting art style to sort of emphasize how everyone in a room is feeling.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: They do it multiple times in this.

Jack: There’s a great moment of that later.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Yeah, there’s a great bit of that later. There’s actually several, and we’ve seen it already a couple times too, but this is the first one that isn’t the, like, everyone is dramatically underdrawn. This is, like, actually, he’s dramatically overdrawn.

Sylvia: Yeah, it’s a full-on art style change.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: As opposed to just, like, a simplification.

Jack: There’s a line— he says, “I was born to be an assassin, and my mother tried to persuade me with tears streaming down her face.” It’s a really interesting position to

take for a killer. You know, I do think we are— you know, we're saying this is like the "You have to go into the family business. You need to become a doctor. You need to do whatever."

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: But them being killers, you know, them being assassins.

Keith: Right.

Jack: And trying to persuade your 12-year-old son to follow in the assassin footsteps to such an extent that you are moved to tears is...

Keith: And what did he do to her?

Jack: He attacked his family and left, and I wrote down, [sarcastic] "This will have no consequences whatsoever."

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] I love this kid.

Dre: And he specifically says he stabbed his mom in the face or something like that?

Keith: In the face, and his brother in the side, yes.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Fucking...fuck it, we ball. Killua, I love you.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: It's great.

Keith: It's great.

Jack: It's great.

Keith: And he has a very proud—

Sylvia: I'm so glad we're getting into the core reasons of my Killua bias, all this bullshit.
[laughs quietly]

Keith: And he has such a proud little look on his face too, while he's saying this.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Because he just lives in another— he lives in another world than Gon does, just like almost literally lives in another world.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And Gon is like...I don't know. I read him as being slightly concerned about this, but he doesn't seem to hold it against him.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: No.

Keith: Like, this is kind of a startling thing to hear your new friend admit to.

Dre: Is it as startling as hearing that your dad also passed the Hunter Exam when he was 12, and you've now seen that the Hunter Exam kills literally hundreds of people every time?

Keith: But that's such a slow-rolling reveal.

Dre: True.

Keith: This is sort of an all-at-once...

Dre: But I mean, at this point, he has seen, like, how deadly the Hunter Exam can be.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: God, I was...I was a naive baby when I thought about what this exam was gonna

involve, [Sylvia and Dre laugh quietly] as they descended into that steak restaurant.

Keith: Can we talk about that? Can you say what you thought maybe it was gonna involve?

Jack: Yeah, I want to be brief. I think we should move onto playing squash with an old man in a second.

Keith: Oh, yeah.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: Yeah, what did I think the Hunter Exam was gonna involve? I thought it was gonna be like, um...I'll put it this way. You know the bit in *The Hunger Games* before they go into the Hunger Game itself? Where they just do that training to, like, get sponsors.

Dre: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Jack: And, you know, they're in that gym. They do some shooting. They do some, you know, "I'm the best at axes," "I'm the best at whatever." I thought it was gonna be that, except it was the Hunger Games. [laughs quietly] It was...

Keith: Right.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: I was expecting just, like— uh, tell you what I was actually expecting. I was expecting school. I thought that the scene of the screenshot that we saw where Gon makes the spirit appear in the glass, you know? I thought we were gonna go to little boy school.

Keith: Go to little boy, you know, fighting magic school?

Jack: I thought we were gonna do a little boy magic school arc.

Dre: Mm.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And instead, we got the fucking Squid Game. [Keith laughs] It's great. But we do get a little bit of magic boy school arc, as they begin to play a very simple game with Netero, and the simple game is this: I have a squash ball in my left hand. I'm zanging it all around my head. I'm spinning it on my finger. I can balance it on my nose.

Dre: I'm like a little seal. Bark, bark, bark.

Jack: I'm like a little— bark, bark, bark; clapping. You have to get this ball from me, and I'm gonna make it easy for you. You have nine human hours. Begin! And what all goes down?

Keith: This is, by the way, just to reiterate: this is the only time they've had to rest, not since the exam began, but since the mission to get to the exam began.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Oh, yes. Oh, and if you get this ball, he will make you a Hunter. I think that this is the privilege— this is jester's privilege from Netero.

Keith: [laughs quietly] Right.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: He is the Chairman of the Hunters' Committee. Now, yes, the Hunter Exam kills hundreds of people, and unbeknownst to these Hunters, you are about to make them play what is essentially *Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors* meets *Saw* in the next trial, but why don't we play squash? And if you win, you can become a Hunter. Yeah, how does this go down? What do we want to talk about here?

Keith: Killua's assassin move. This is one of the magickiest things that we've seen happen.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, what happens?

Keith: Uh, Dre?

Dre: Oh. Uh, Killua...I guess it is not that he moves so fast that there are copies of him, because I think Netero, when Gon asks, like, "Oh, how'd he do that?" Netero says that it's him moving, like, varying his speed at which he moves so much, going fast to slow and back and forth, that it appears that there's, like, shadow clones of Killua, like, circling Netero.

Keith: Right, he leaves—

Jack: And it's evil magic.

Keith: Yeah, afterimages, [**Dre:** Yeah.] like, *Dragon Ball* style.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And yeah, Netero immediately recognizes it as an assassin technique, which—

Dre: And I think says something of like, wow, it is very fucked up that a kid this young can do this this well.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: And I, I think, agree! I think I agree.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: I don't know what it takes to learn that, but I think probably yeah.

Jack: And the game begins.

Keith: The game begins. Oh, Killua does not get the ball. [laughs]

Dre: No.

Keith: It's a good first effort. Is this where he goes for the kick, or is that later?

Sylvia: Yes.

Dre: Yes.

Sylvia: I think he does pretty early.

Dre: No, that's where he goes for the kick and almost breaks his foot.

Keith: Right. He almost break— yeah, he almost breaks his leg trying to swipe Netero's leg out from under him. Netero, unflinching, doesn't move, nothing.

Jack: Yep. Completely unconcerned.

Keith: He's actually worried, I think, slightly, for Killua in that moment. And then Gon, proving himself to be a smart little boy once again, sort of has, like, a really effective couple feints that sort of— Netero vastly underestimates [Dre: Mm-hmm.] his ability to think on the fly and almost gets taken from above when Gon looks like he's coming straight ahead and then jumps, but he jumps too high and he hits his dome on the ceiling of the airship! [laughs quietly]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: It's so good.

Keith: And he genuinely might have gotten it, if only for the surprise factor of how quick the jump was and how little Netero was expecting.

Sylvia: It's great, too, Killua's reaction when he's yelling at— like, Netero doesn't even react—

Keith: He's coaching.

Sylvia: Netero's just, like— [laughs quietly] yeah, Killua's very grouchy about it, and Netero's just there, like, in awe of the speed of Gon, and he's like, "Yeah, no, he's right. I would've lost if he didn't hit his head."

Jack: Didn't bonk his head on the ceiling.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And eventually— oh, sorry, did you have something there?

Sylvia: Mm? No.

Dre: Mm-mm.

Jack: Eventually, Killua— I think this is great. Killua just gives up.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Killua is like, “No. No, I'll take my chances with the death game, please. This is not gonna work.”

Keith: Well, he realizes something that's been unsaid.

Jack: Oh, it's great.

Keith: Which is he's like, “Come on, Gon, don't you realize? He hasn't even used his left hand yet.”

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: He's just been—

Sylvia: His left hand, right leg.

Jack: [crosstalk] His right arm or left leg.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Right, right. So he'd been on one leg and using one hand.

Jack: It's wonderful. It's such a nice...it's such a nice low stakes twist. It doesn't really affect anything on the large scale, but it just makes the scene you have watched feel really good to be like, "Oh shit, you're right. He hasn't." And yeah, this is the most powerful man in the world.

Keith: Of course, Gon says, "Yeah, I know. I know."

Dre: Yeah. [Jack laughs]

Keith: "I was also here." Gon just doesn't care.

Jack: Gon is great.

Keith: He has said, "Yeah, I just decided that I was gonna force him to use his other hand. That's my new game."

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: "I'm not trying to get the ball anymore. I know that I can't."

Sylvia: I fucking...

Keith: "I want to make him use his other hand." And we get— I wrote it down, but we didn't talk about it. This is the second or maybe even third time this episode, but not the first time in the series, that Killua tries to boss Gon around a little bit and is like...

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: He does a lot of, like, "Come on, Gon!" and then Gon just is like, "No, I'm gonna do this!" Like, Gon has no...

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: He is incapable of being sort of peer pressured by Killua, which Killua finds simultaneously extremely frustrating and...

Dre: Endearing.

[0:55:05]

Keith: Endearing, yes. Interesting, at least.

Sylvia: They're boyfriends.

Dre: That's fair.

Sylvia: Cancel me.

Jack: What do we think is going on inside Gon's— what is Gon's interiority? At all times?

Dre: So—

Keith: Want, comma, get. [Jack laughs]

Sylvia: There's, like, a...

Dre: Well, to me, this really highlights, like, a huge difference, again, in how Gon and Killua, like, see the world. Like, Killua seems to be kind of a...not completely, but like an all-or-nothing or black-and-white thinker, and especially, like, with Netero, it's like, "I can't win, so I'm not gonna waste my time trying." And Gon is like, "Okay, yeah, I can't win, but what if I make him use his right arm? That's almost just as good for me."

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: So, like, Gon sees...Gon gets, like, joy from progress, even if it's not the endgame.

Jack: Gon gets joy from so much.

Dre: Sure, yeah. [laughs]

Jack: Yeah, no, I think you're right.

Dre: But like, to me, that is a very interesting big, big, big contrast between the two of them.

Keith: And I think that Gon also does have this goal of, like, becoming better in a way that Killua doesn't. Like, I think Killua's very confident [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] and, like, knows how much he outclasses most people around him and is sort of satisfied in that and in, you know, whatever training he's had to this point. But Gon is like, is coming off of years of trying to get to the Hunter Exam by the time that he's 12, something that Killua seems to have had no problem with, and is still in this mode of, like, "I need to learn more. I need to get better. I need to, like, improve," and sort of is taking opportunities as he sees them to, like, very quickly— you know, this is another trope of the genre, but like, rapidly training. Like, oh, just like, every minute I spend of training is like, you know, six months of normal people time training. I'm that—

Jack: But he's not severe about it, which is fascinating.

Keith: No, he's not severe about it. He's very happy and fun and having a good time.

Jack: He's constantly— in his head, he's constantly going [theme plays as Jack imitates it] [Keith and Dre laugh]

Sylvia: God. You know? There's a lot of songs in this soundtrack that just get stuck in my head like that.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: But most of the time it's, like, the battle theme. [imitates]

Jack: Oh, god. All the music. Yeah, with, like, the slap bass? It's so good.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Now, there is, like, a...Killua leaves, and these scenes split, and I would like to stick with— I would like to talk about this out of order, because what happens when these scenes split, especially with Killua, we are gonna have to talk about.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Jack: But I want to stick with Gon, so we don't go off piece and then come back to the game. Gon now has a new game, which is make him use his right arm.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And he is literally trying to fight this man with his head, at this point. We have the most...the metaphor of how Gon approaches the world—

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: Just played out as explicitly as possible. Gon just launches himself at Netero with, like, a flying headbutt.

Keith: And then when it doesn't work, what does he do?

Jack: He gets up and tries to do it again, exactly the same. [laughs quietly]

Keith: Yeah, and does anyone remember what Netero's internal monologue there is?

Dre: Yeah, he's like...

Keith: Or, Jack, is that what you're leading into?

Jack: No, I don't remember this.

Dre: Yeah, he's like, "Well, I can— if I don't unclench, and he hits me in my stomach, I will probably kill this kid, but also, if I do unclench, he could take me out with this headbutt."

Jack: So he jumps, and, using his right hand, kind of, like, guides...

Keith: It's so good!

Jack: It's such a good shot. Guides Gon directly into a wall, like one of those '90s boss fights where you have to make the monster run into the wall.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Gon realizes, and he's like, "Oh, you made— you used your right hand," and then—

Keith: Big smile.

Jack: Big smile and then passes out.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Uh huh.

Jack: And then they get—

Keith: And while this is happening, is Killua doing anything?

Jack: He is, but I would just like to say, real quick: we get a really cute Netero moment, just a real...

Keith: Oh, right, yeah.

Jack: The show has the capacity to be really warm, to have a real warmth to it. We don't see often, but when it shines through, it really does shine through. He telephones the captain, and he says, "This is Chairman Netero. How long is it going to be until we arrive at the next location?" and the captain says something, and he says, "Can we maybe slow down a bit?" and he's just trying to give Gon time to rest, which is lovely.

Keith: He earned it.

Jack: I think it's great. Yeah, it's great. And it could— you could just as easily play that as, like, oh, he's worried about— he's like, "Oh god, have I killed Gon?" and he does have a brief line where he's like, "Is he dead?" [Dre, Keith, and Jack laugh] The vocal delivery on Netero is great. It's just this, like, "This kid has earned a rest. Let's give them a little longer."

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Okay. Let's talk about Killua.

Keith: Yeah. Oh, just a quick shoutout to Gon's shoe gambit from when Killua was still around, the uh...

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Sylvia: Oh, that's so good!

Keith: Yeah, the—

Jack: I don't remember this.

Keith: So, he's...

Jack: Oh, I do remember this!

Keith: He has lulled Netero into a false sense of security with the distance that he has on his strikes with his short little arms and legs, but he goes in for, like, a final kick, but he's moved his shoe down off of his leg—because he wears these little boots—to give him, like, three or four more inches on his kick, and he just about nearly gets the ball, and Netero's, like, processing this, and is going, "Oh my god, he gave himself more room on his boot. That's crazy." While he's doing this, Gon has used his other boot to fling off of his leg at the ball, kicks it. They almost get it here together, teamwork style.

Jack: Oh, it's great.

Keith: It's so good. It's unbelievable, and that's where Killua— losing at that point, that is what triggers, like, the Killua sore loser moment.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: And it really is a sore loser moment.

Jack: Yeah, he's a real piece of shit about this.

Dre: Oh, it 100% is, yeah.

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: He's a very spoiled kid. Like, it's frequently mentioned, but this is, like, a good moment that it's shown onscreen.

Keith: He doesn't like Netero. He's suspicious of Netero, because I think he can tell that Netero is better than him, like, right away and is also, I think, mad at someone interrupting him and Gon, because Gon is really the only person that he's bonded with. He has not bonded with Leorio or Kurapika.

Jack: At all.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: At all.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And then is, like, forced to, like, confront, like, not only did I think that he was better than me, I then had it sort of shoved in my face violently. [laughs]

Jack: In the ball game, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It's, uh...

Keith: And so the aftermath of his sore loser...

Jack: He is walking down the corridor. He's taking his shirt off. It's like the Rocky has lost type scene. He's slouching back to presumably get some rest, and two or three guys, two guys?

Dre: Two.

Jack: Show up, and they just do some little bullying, I think. I don't remember the exact bullying, but it's not very serious, is it?

Dre: Uh, I mean, Killua, like, bumps into them, because he's in his own thoughts.

Jack: Oh, that's what it is.

Dre: And the two guys are like, [gruff voice] "Hey, kid, come back and apologize! If you're not gonna do it, we're gonna teach you a lesson!"

Keith: Oh, we know what happens when people bump into you without apologizing—

Dre: That's true!

Keith: Is that they try to cut off your arms.

Jack: You get your arms disintegrated, yeah.

Keith: Right? So, do these guys try to cut off Killua's arms or something?

Jack: Well, we get a great wide shot. We get a great wide shot of Killua turning and walking— so, I say a wide shot. We are outside the airship, looking in through one of its, like, corridor of windows, and Killua and these two guys are in silhouette. Killua turns, walks towards them, and then blood jets from the back of these two guys' heads, and they collapse. Killua turns and walks away. We cut inside to reveal that Killua's right hand— or is it both his hands?

Dre: I'm not sure. We probably— I think we only see one hand.

Keith: We only see one hand, yeah.

Jack: Have transformed into...I wrote down, "sharpened vampire hands."

Dre: Yeah, they're vampire hands.

Keith: [laughs] Yeah, they are sort of vampire hands.

Jack: His fingers have come to—

Sylvia: Instant manicure, come on. It's just...

Jack: Oh, yeah, it's beautiful.

Sylvia: Got some acrylics, like...

Jack: It's gorgeous. His fingers have come to...his finger shape has changed. His hand shape has changed. His fingers have come to points. He has long white claws on his fingers, [Sylvia laughs quietly] and his hand has got, like, raised white veins on it, and Killua just walks away. End scene! Cut back to Gon fighting. [laughs quietly]

Keith: Yep. [laughs quietly]

Jack: Now, so...

Keith: And— sorry, Jack, you go ahead.

Jack: Well, so, part of something that I try not to do when making a show like this is treating the response that the show wants me to have as a notable piece of insight that I have gained. My immediate reaction to this is, like, "Oh, this is incredible. What's going on here? What's Killua's deal?" But that's exactly what the— that is exactly the emotion the show wanted me to have, so I don't feel like I am...I feel like this is what everybody who watches *Hunter × Hunter* thinks at this point.

Keith: You're saying you're not impressed with yourself that you're excited by this.

Jack: I am not impressed with myself or really impressed with the show, because this is the show. This is just—

Keith: Sure.

Jack: This is the reaction that you're supposed to have.

Keith: It's another crazy thing in a line of crazy things.

Jack: Of crazy things. Where I do think it is interesting is that we spent the first part of this episode getting this real introspective moment from Killua being like, "I am an assassin. I am very powerful. I come from a family of assassins. I have specifically tried to step back and step away from my bloodline [Keith: Mm-hmm.] and my capabilities," and then for the rest of the episode, we see him deliberately do the things. First, he

does an assassin move to try and shake out Netero, and we are specifically told, “Oh, this is an assassin move that Killua has chosen to do.” He was not backed into this in a fight with Hisoka. He was playing squash with an old man.

Keith: Yeah. To his credit, it was a good technique for the moment.

Jack: Yes, but he wasn't...there is a way of playing this, right, where he is like, “I resist these actions, because they push me back towards the bloodline I want to avoid.” No. He is essentially playing, you know, like, pickup football or something, [**Keith:** Right.] and he's like, “I'm gonna do this.” And then, he goes even further. He summons his vampire arm and kills two men in the corridor, because they bumped into him.

Keith: There's something that I was doing intentionally in the first couple recordings when we were talking about Hisoka, which is like, really clarifying, you know, or at least asking, like, is what Hisoka was doing murdering people? Because I think that you have, like, a pretty— these are fraught situations with Hisoka and the group of people and with the guy whose arm he cuts off and maybe even with the man-ape, the man-faced ape, but there's definitely, like, a pretty easy route out of saying, like, these are murders versus, like, Hisoka's killing people. Killua murders these people.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: On the airship. Stone dead.

Keith: On the airship. Yes, stone dead.

Jack: Not even in the game. Yes. Notable, in the next episode, we— uh, let me see. I've written it down. Not that one. Yes, here we go. Someone serves a 199 year prison sentence for robbery and murder, so murder is something that is frowned upon in this world.

Keith: Right.

Jack: You shouldn't do that, and there will be consequences for it, but Killua does do that. I think it also looks us dead in the eyes and says, “This little kid told you he was a

murderer.” Uh, sorry. [laughs] Freudian slip. Told you he was an assassin, and Gon is like, “Wow, cool,” and we as an audience are kind of like, “Wow, cool, a story about assassins!” and then by the end of the episode, we have seen the violent transformation and cost of...

Keith: Right. Here’s what it means to be an assassin.

Jack: Yep. And he says, “I left, because I would have killed that old man. I wanted to kill that old man,” and you get the impression— and this is even grimmer. He might have just let that impulse out on these two people, you know? He wanted to get some murdering in, so he finds any excuse to do some murdering, and then he goes ahead and does it. It is fucking wild. And that’s all I have to say about that. [laughs]

Keith: What is your gut instinct on— is that true? Would Killua have ended up killing that old geezer? Or is this just the sort of sore loser sort of impotent rage?

Jack: I don’t know. It’s hard for me to say. I think that there is a massive difference between two shmucks in a airship corridor and Chairman Netero. He might’ve tried, and he might’ve been ejected from the Hunter Exam. We know that Hisoka got ejected for trying to kill an examiner.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: That might’ve been what would’ve happened, but I do think he probably would’ve tried, which is something.

Keith: Unless there’s anything else, this is where we approach Trick Tower.

Jack: Oh, I want to see if Sylvi and Dre have stuff to talk about, because I know that the three of you are big Killua fans.

Keith: Right.

Sylvia: Yeah. Probably my favorite character in the show?

Keith: Yeah, probably. I think mine, yeah.

Jack: Keith's favorite character too, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: We were talking about this yesterday. Dre?

Dre: He's up there.

Jack: Yeah. Did you have something there, Sylvi?

Sylvia: I'm just trying to think if we didn't— like, I feel like a lot of the stuff we, like, kind of covered for the most part, from like...

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Characterization of Killua.

Keith: There's a long discussion that I think will emerge over more episodes.

Sylvia: Yes.

Keith: Like, a lot of what I would have to say is, like, bringing up more things that happen in the show that we will just get to.

Sylvia: That is kind of the thing.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: There is, like, in the next couple episodes of this show that we are making, I feel like we'll have a lot more material to work with, when it comes to—

Jack: Okay. That sounds great.

Sylvia: Yeah. So, I don't want to...I'm more worried about just letting something slip by accident, [**Dre:** Sure.] as opposed to...

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Sylvia: Like, missing something here.

Keith: Same, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: We can always come back to it. Hey, guess what? This 140 episode show or whatever? [Jack laughs] There's a lot of Killua in it.

Jack: We are going to talk about—

Dre: Uh huh.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: But I wanted to get out that I did have the reaction that the show wanted me to have, [Keith: Right.] and it was a lot of fun.

Keith: Yes. It is a lot of fun. It's a fun moment. It's a "what the fuck" moment, and it's a great moment— I think it's a great thing to have your show be like, "Okay, we've shown you the cool skateboard kid. We've shown you how much fun he has with your favorite new guy Gon."

Jack: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: "Guess what? Here's him brutally murdering two people for no reason. Deal with it." [laughs]

Jack: Yes, and no gain. Just, it's catharsis for him, presumably.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Right, yeah, it's really just to— yeah, he's venting. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Two tiny things—

Sylvia: Some people murder to cope! It's fine!

Jack: [laughs] Yeah, two tiny things that I want to talk about here. I've said before that the way the show rolls out information about the world and about the characters will never not be charming to me. It doesn't have a consistent pace with which it unfolds information to you. Sometimes we will have characters will remain, essentially, sort of iconic broadly drawn versions of themselves. You know, here is the spoiled dreamlike kid, and then we learn a little more that he's an assassin, and then eventually someone just comes and hits us in the head with a hammer as we learn that he can transform his hands into sharpened vampire hands. That's always very funny. I did have a brief moment here where I was like, [conspiratorially] "Kurapika's family were all killed by assassins," but we learn pretty quickly that I don't think that these things are connected. I think that this might be a world in which there are multiple gangs of assassins. [Keith laughs] Okay. Before we move onto the next—

Keith: Well, that'll be an interesting thing to discover as we discover it, whether— how many gangs of assassins are they? How connected or not connected is Killua's family and the Phantom Troupe? What's going on with all— why are there so many roving bands of killers?

Jack: Because you fucked the world up, Hunters. [Keith laughs] You have poisoned the well of how a society works.

Keith: But we know Netero. Netero's cool!

Jack: Oh, uh, maybe—

Sylvia: [sarcastic] Yeah, no, totally.

Jack: Could we take five minutes between episode one and two?

Keith: Yeah, yeah. Sure.

Jack: All right. Sweet. I will be right back.

Keith: Grab something to drink. All right, bye.

Episode Eight [1:12:32]

Jack: Down comes the airship, on top of what I first thought was a large pole in the middle of a field, and this game was going to be about— it was a game about a large pillar. Wrong. The pillar is a skyscraper. [Jack and Dre laugh]

Keith: Right. You immediately fell for the trick of Trick Tower.

Jack: The first trick of Trick Tower was “how big is this?” And this is— the show is full of visual gags, and I think that this is a really good one. Showing you Trick Tower first with no scale reference in it and then landing the airship on top and everybody [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] getting out and being like, “Oh shit, we’re on top of this thing, and it’s gigantic?”

Keith: Yeah. And do we get a time limit from this point, or was it—? Yeah, we do.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: We do get a time limit immediately.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: All they say is: you're at the top of this gigantic thing. You know, like—

Jack: It's featureless. It is made of—

Keith: Basically can't see the bottom. Featureless up top.

Jack: Yeah, it's made of limestone panels, almost.

Keith: Get to the bottom. You have 72 hours.

Dre: Good luck. Bye!

Keith: Good luck. Bye.

Jack: Now, are they told it is called Trick Tower? Because if they are, what the—

Keith: Yes, they are.

Jack: They are. So, the first person who tries this makes an extremely stupid decision. He is a climber.

Keith: He leans very heavily on the fact that he's a pro rock climber and not heavily enough on the Hunter Exam's capacity to trick.

Jack: And the fact that it's called Trick Tower. This is our second tricking task. The swamp of swindlers, Swindler's Swamp, was...

Keith: The Swindler's Swamp. [laughs quietly]

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: And he climbs down the side. Now... [laughs quietly]

Dre: Now.

Jack: I don't know what I thought was gonna happen here.

Dre: Uh huh. [laughs quietly]

Jack: I think what I thought was that this Trick Tower— at this point, my guess was the Trick Tower...we've already talked about the film *Cube* on this podcast, haven't we?

Sylvia: [laughs] Yeah, it came up pretty early!

Jack: [laughs] I thought—

Keith: Remind me?

Jack: Uh, so, *Cube* is a Vincenzo Natali movie from the early 2000s. It is about a bunch of people who find themselves trapped in a series of identical cube-shaped rooms. Each

room contains within it basically a *Saw* trap. It'll melt you with acid; it'll swing lasers into you and chop you up; it will...I'm trying to think of another *Cube* trap. Burn you alive, something like that. You know. So I thought he was gonna—

Dre: The good stuff.

Jack: Yeah. I thought he was gonna climb down the side, and, like, a panel was gonna swing out, or he was gonna get, like, punched off the side of the tower by a machine. No. What happens?

Keith: Um, egg...

Sylvia: [laughs] How do we want to describe this thing?

Keith: Flying eggs with a baby's face come and chomp him up with their big sharp teeth.

Sylvia: Don't they also have butts?

Jack: And that's not even the trick!

Dre: They have butts, yeah.

Keith: Oh, and they have visible butts.

Jack: Oh, and they do have visible butts.

Keith: Yeah, they have big visible butts.

Jack: This is not even the trick of the Trick Tower!

Keith: No. [laughs] This is just a—

Jack: This is just a thing that happens.

Keith: Yeah, this is a tertiary reality of Trick Tower, [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] is that you can't climb down it, because the egg— they don't give these creatures a name. I looked out

for the name, right? I don't think they ever named them.

Jack: No, they don't. No.

Dre: They do if you look at the wiki. Do you want their name?

Jack: Please.

Keith: I would love their name, unless anybody wants to guess at the name before.

Sylvia: Um...uh...no, I don't. I was like, "Can I come up with a joke really quick?" and I shouldn't have said anything.

Jack: Flying baby monsters.

Dre: You're not far.

Sylvia: Chewy cherubs.

Jack: Ohh.

Keith: Chewy cherub is good.

Jack: Cherubs is good.

Sylvia: Thank you.

Dre: Yeah. In the wiki, they are called six-legged flying beast.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: Okay.

Keith: Six-legged flying beast.

Jack: Now, notably, the six-legged flying beasts bite and kill and bite this man to death onscreen.

Dre: Uh huh.

Jack: But they do not attack anybody on top of the tower. Are they collaborating with the Hunters?

Keith: I think they're protecting nests that are down below, and so they have a territory, and Trick Tower is intentionally built above their sort of danger zone to keep people from climbing down.

Sylvia: Well, so, we get into—

Dre: Sure, that makes sense.

Sylvia: The way I always thought of it was it's a security measure for what we find out are the— we've mentioned that there's prisoners in this episode in the tower itself, and it felt very much like this is, like, **[Keith: Right.]** a security measure for that.

Jack: Oh! Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: One first thought you might have if you don't know that this is a prison is—

Jack: And we don't, at this point.

Keith: We don't.

Sylvia: No, we don't. Yeah.

Keith: That's a lot of infrastructure for one year of the Hunter Exam. **[Dre and Keith laugh]**

Jack: It sure is! It sure is. I just want to read two notes that I wrote here. I thought this was— this is when they get bitten and eaten. "I thought that this was going to be like Saw traps, but it's also nightmare flying baby creatures?" question mark, and then I pause, and I write on a new line, wisely, **[wisely]** "There's got to be an inside to this tower, and that's where the Saw traps are." And I was right, because at this point, they notice that people are disappearing from the top of the tower more quickly than they

could be climbing down the side, I assume, and Gon...it is Gon, right? No, it's Killua. No, it's Kurapika and Leorio.

Dre: I think Killua and Gon.

Jack: No, because there's a great gag here with Gon. So, they discover that there are these rotating secret platforms on the tower. We get an amazing visual gag as the characters are talking. We get a guy just treading on a trapdoor and disappearing.
[laughs]

Dre: Yeah. [laughs]

Jack: Wham! Down into the tower. And they notice that there are these, but they only work for one person, and Gon, in great just sort of blithe Gon observantness—

Keith: Oh, I love this line.

Jack: Is just like, "Oh, there's five of them. There's one over there and one over there and one over there." He just points them out, and they realize that they're all [Keith: Yeah.] gonna go down into— oh, sorry, Keith.

Keith: Oh, sorry, just Kurapika and Leorio have been wandering around being like, "Hey, there's less people. What's going on?" Meanwhile, yeah, Gon and Killua have found, like, numerous trap doors that are still working, plus a bunch that people had already fallen through.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: While, I guess, Kurapika and Leorio are just chatting.

Jack: Yeah. They figure that they are all going to go into separate sort of, like, trap paths almost, which would have made for a really cool episode, and I think what we got was also cool, but I would have also watched this, right? Which is everybody gets sent down their own separated trap, and we all get to see how the characters would respond alone in different situations.

Keith: There's a very cute moment where Gon is like, "No hard feelings if one of us hits a trap!"

Jack: Yep.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: They all say goodbye. They all tread on the trapdoors, and they all fall down into the same room. Lovely joke. Beautiful. [Dre chuckles] Before this—

Keith: Yeah, very quickly executed and well done.

Jack: Leorio says, "Luck is a skill."

Keith: And he's proven it.

Jack: Uh, what does that mean?

Dre: Wow. Wow.

Jack: What does "Luck is a skill," mean?

Keith: Well, I think it's...I think that he— I think Leorio means it self evidently.

Jack: Like, you can train luck?

Dre: You gotta be good to get lucky.

Keith: I don't know if— I don't know if Leorio thinks you can train luck, but I think that he thinks that there's people who are lucky and people who aren't.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And that is a skill?

Keith: And I think that he's lucky. I think Leorio's a really lucky person.

Jack: Ah, Leorio's great. [laughs quietly] He's so good in this episode. They all fall

down, and they realize that the way this game works is that you are given *Zero Escape* bracelets to vote on the course of action.

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] It really is *Virtue's Last Reward*, like, all the way down.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: You cannot begin until five people arrive. I wondered who the fifth person was going to be. My guess was Hisoka, because that seems like the obvious one.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: But the actual obvious one, which is the much better decision, is Tonpa returns. Tonpa is the fifth person, and we are immediately put into just nice high stakes plotting where characters have to vote on things, and one member of the vote we know is a bad actor. They all chat, and the game begins.

Keith: We know.

Jack: We know. No, we know. Meanwhile, we are introduced to the master of this facility.

Sylvia: Ugh.

Jack: And we don't terribly know what is going on here. He is chomping away on graham crackers, and he seems to be watching a big bank of screens, and I thought that this was gonna be sort of a Jigsaw type thing, he watches what's going on, he governs it; but then he says, "Bring in the prisoners," and we get a really great terrifying shot, a group shot of these prisoners with their hands manacled in front of them. They're wearing these really distinctive cowls so you can't see really any detail. They are shuffled into the room and then sent out into the Trick Tower, because this is a prison.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Uh, ringing the bell. Hunters can be prison wardens.

Jack: [hesitantly] Yeah.

Dre: [grimly] Uh huh.

Keith: Sorry, Kurapika. [Dre and Jack laugh]

Jack: What is going on here? Is this a world in which there is a state that, uh, you know, arbitrates laws and imprisons people, and then those prisoners are essentially sort of farmed out to the Hunters Association? Because we know that by participating in this, they can have their sentence reduced. We've talked about that. So, is it that the state sends prisoners to the Hunters, or is it that Hunters are given contracts to run prisons and they turn them into the Hunter games, or—and this is the most terrifying answer—are the Hunters the state?

Keith: Are the Hunters deciding who the criminals are and who they should go out and hunt, and doing that, and then bringing them here and saying, “Uh, I don't know, 199 years”?

Jack: Yeah. Yep. Is that it? Uh, I don't know. I don't know, and I think this is deliberate. The show is so cagy about how Hunters fit into the world.

Keith: [laughs] It fucking won't tell you at all. They won't tell you anything.

Dre: Nope. Nope.

Jack: And it's— you know, something that it reminds me of a little is *Pokémon*. You know, *Pokémon* is a world in which all people talk about nonstop, day in, day out, is Pokémon. Other careers exist, but they only exist in reference to Pokémon. Except—

Keith: Right, it's a world set up to totally enable people's addiction to fighting Pokémon.

Jack: Yes, except Pokémon is whatever the opposite of cagy is about the Pokémon

organization, you know? They tell us fucking everything. Every piece of information you could want to know about Pokémon is revealed to you in some respect. This is like what if you were in the *Pokémon* world, except nobody wanted to tell you what Pokémon were.

Dre: [laughs] Yeah.

Keith: Professor Oak comes out, where normally next to him is a Pikachu, [Jack laughs] but the Pikachu is censored out, and it's like, "Now, look. Pokémon...uh, okay. So, hold on."

Sylvia: You'll figure it out.

Keith: "First thing's first. [Jack laughs] You've gotta take a test."

Jack: Well, no, he just shows up, and he says, "Would you like a beast?" [Keith laughs] and you're like, "Shit."

Dre: Is it gonna eat me? [makes "I don't know" sound]

Keith: Would you like a Frog-In-Waiting?

Jack: [laughs quietly] Yeah.

Keith: I have three beasts for you to choose from to take on your journey. A Ruse Raven, a Frog-In-Waiting, and a Hypnosis Butterfly. [Dre laughs] That's actually funny, because I think actually pretty much all of those things exist in *Pokémon*. There's definitely a Hypnosis Butterfly.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: There's definitely a Ruse Raven.

Jack: But then you go out into the world, and half the people in your town have been killed for some reason. [Keith and Jack laugh] and the other half of the people in your town have also all just been given a beast and are sent out into the world to...I don't

know. I don't know! I don't know what the beasts are for! Because of course we know that the Pokémon are for killing other Pokémon and also labor and also the Elite Four—

Keith: Housework.

Jack: Housework, jobs. We are given none of this shit about the Hunters, which means that this moment of the prison being introduced and not knowing how it dovetails with the Hunters is so compelling. It's like they know that Hunters are a mystery and they are testing us with the most frustrating exciting ways to explore that mystery. It's great. Is this— no, don't answer that. I was gonna say, “Do we know how the world works?” but I actually don't want to know.

[1:25:07]

Keith: And I think it's also, like, you know, maybe a benefit of doing this show that we were able to deliver— and who knows how it would have happened otherwise, but we were able to deliver that question to you, weeks, even months before starting watching the show, teasing the, like, “What is a Hunter?” question.

Jack: I was not prepared for how complicated the answer— it's not even a complicated answer. I would take a complicated answer.

Keith: [laughs] Who knows? We don't even know if it's a complicated answer or not. It's definitely they've made it complicated.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: But like, I think, watching the show, I definitely think that there's some feelings of “What is a Hunter?” anyway, but I wonder how much— because I can't remember. I can't put myself back there. I wonder how much it's on the mind of someone who's watching it without that question being sort of prodded at them [laughs] every week for three hours.

Jack: Yeah. I do feel a little self conscious.

Keith: But it is a really fun way to watch this first season. It's a really fun way to watch this first season.

Jack: It's great, and I am aware that something I don't want to do is come on this podcast every other week and say to you, the listener, "What is a Hunter? I still don't know." There are only so many times I can say this and it is interesting criticism, but I do need to stress to you that I have no idea what is going on.

Keith: Right.

Jack: And it is a lot of fun. Test one.

Keith: And maybe we'll test that hypothesis.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: What? You know, that the...

Keith: That there's only so many times that it will be fun. [Jack and Keith laugh]

Jack: Yeah. Uh, okay.

Keith: Okay, so we made it to the— we made it to "Hunters can be prison wardens." We now have fighting against prisoners, a sick mental game being played by this weird prison warden hunter, where—

Dre: With his awful bag of cookies.

Keith: With his awful bag of cookies, where he munches away. He's the first examiner thus far that has not introduced himself formally in person.

Jack: No, no.

Keith: He is behind a wall of monitors. We briefly went over the rules of this game, but should I hit those again?

Jack: Yeah, let's hit them again.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: And then I do want to talk briefly— this thing ultimately is about a prisoner fight. There are a couple of game beforehand that are not, I think, much worth talking about. But let's talk about the rules, and then I want to talk about Leorio briefly.

Keith: So, there's several games happening simultaneously. Number one: reach the bottom of the tower in 72 hours. Number two: the democracy game where everyone has to vote on what everyone does. Number three: there's a best of five tournament with these prisoners. And number, uh...

Jack: You can do it.

Keith: I lost count. How many was it?

Jack: Just pick a number. I'm not gonna tell you.

Keith: Okay, five. [Jack laughs quietly] There's an ulterior motive where the prisoners have one year shaved off their prison sentences for every hour that they delay the contestants.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: So if they delay you for the full 72 hours, they get 72 years off their sentences. If they delay you for five hours— win or lose, I believe.

Jack: Yep.

Dre: Yes.

Keith: They get five years off of their sentences. And so they want to beat you, they want to win, because that would, I guess— that's the full 72, if they win.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And then, but they also, even if they lose, want to make it take as long as possible.

Jack: Yes.

Keith: I think that's all the games happening simultaneously.

Jack: Yes. We—

Keith: Oh, there's another game. Sorry. Game number six: Tonpa's also trying to ruin it for the contestants.

Jack: [chuckles] Yes.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: That's the other game.

Jack: When we say everybody votes, it's worth being clear: it's not all the Hunters vote on all the other Hunters. You are put into teams of five, and you are trying to get a majority with these little *Virtue's Last Reward* bracelets. And we get an amazing joke right off the bat here. They need to vote to open the first door. It's just a test, you know? Vote to open the first door. They all vote yes, except Tonpa, who votes no, and it's at this point that we reveal that really this is a trial designed to make Leorio mad, the angriest person in the world.

Keith: Right.

Jack: Something about this makes Leorio— I wrote down, "Leorio is such a cantankerous hair-triggered individual, [Keith laughs quietly] already impatient after having to wait, presumably, 20 or 30 minutes for Tonpa to fall through the roof, that he is primed to be so angry at every possible version of this." He grabs Tonpa by his collar and screams, "How could you possibly confuse a zero with an X?" which I think is just such a funny line.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And yes, Leorio is angry the whole time. Tonpa offers to fight the first man who shows up. Who is this first guy?

Keith: This is Bendot.

Jack: Yes.

Keith: B-E-N-D-O-T, Bendot. He is a robber and a murderer, and his sentence is for 199 years.

Jack: So, he killed— presumably, he did some robberies. Then he killed some people, murdered them to death. Then he was caught. Then he was put in Trick Tower. I only mention this—

Keith: And then someone said, “Hey, I have a fun game that you might be interested in.”

Jack: A fun game for you to play. I only mention this because Killua did kill two guys on the airship.

Keith: Right.

Jack: Just worth mentioning.

Keith: Well, they were in the Hunter Exam, so even proximity to the Hunters, I guess, is some sort of license for certain kinds of violence.

Jack: Is it? Is the game killing you different to the Hunters killing each other?

Sylvia: I mean, Hisoka killed people.

Keith: I think the Hunters killing each other is the game killing you.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: I think it's part of it, right? Like, the whole thing in Swindler's Swamp was like...I don't know, there was very much, like, a “we're in a PVP zone now” situation. [Sylvia and Keith laugh]

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: You know, there's also a sense where, like, maybe it is, like, illegal in some sort of technical sense, but Killua's like, "What law is going to stop me? I'm part of an assassin family."

Jack: Doesn't make it better. That's still illegal.

Keith: Doesn't make it better. Still illegal.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: But I think that maybe he's just like, "I can deal with the consequences of this. This is not—" but again, I think that it's— I believe what I said at first, which is that, like, being even this proximity to Hunterdom is enough to get you...is enough to allow this sort of murder to sort of happen with only— with at worst sort of disappointment.

Jack: Yes. Yes. Yes, it's sort of an inconvenience.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Tonpa volunteers to go first to fight this guy, and everybody's like, "Whoa! He is so brave."

Sylvia: [laughs] This is so good. It's very good.

Keith: Leorio has shimmering anime eyes when he...when Tonpa talks about, like, sacrificing himself to be the guinea pig to see what they're up to. He's, like, about to cry.

Jack: Leorio genuinely respects Tonpa's bravery and seems to really respect bravery in general. We saw this when he was like, "I have to go and fight Hisoka, because I don't back down from a fight." This seems to be sort of core to Leorio's— well, I don't know. I think it's sad.

Keith: And it's sort of the mirror of the cantankerousness, because a thing that he gets so mad at is, like, someone refusing to act in the greater good, which is what—

Jack: Well, and also, you get the impression he's kind of pedantic and cranky. I think, for example, if I took too long putting my shoes on before leaving the house, [**Keith:** Yes.] Leorio would shout at me.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Keith: Yeah, there's also the— we have long since learned his backstory, but there was that period of, like, four episodes where, like, I think that he uses sort of being an unlikable crank as a shield for, like, not getting too close to people.

Jack: Yes, because he's deeply sad.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Because he's deeply sad, yeah.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Tonpa immediately forfeits.

Keith: It's very funny. He does a whole power up thing, where you're like, you know, Tonpa, I think, probably can fight pretty good.

Dre: Eh?

Keith: It takes a lot of skill [Jack laughs] to just not accidentally die during 30-something Hunter Exam attempts.

Dre: That's true.

Keith: You know?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: That speaks to a real ability that he has.

Sylvia: There's at very least, like, a baseline of competence with Tonpa.

Keith: Right.

Dre: Sure.

Sylvia: The fact that he's been doing this for multiple decades, right?

Keith: A baseline of competence in terms of Hunter Exam, not just— I mean he's way above a normal person, [**Dre:** Yeah.] by leaps and bounds. Like, we've seen bodybuilders and pro wrestlers and marathon runners and professional rock climbers, like, embarrassingly flame out, because just being a normal really strong powerful person isn't enough. That's not what it takes to be a Hunter.

Jack: Right.

Keith: So, like, it says something that he can do this, and I believe that he probably could pass the Hunter Exam almost any year that he wanted.

Jack: So, we get a lovingly rendered, like, powerup scene. They catch fire, both the murderer and Tonpa. You know, just do a powering up, and then Tonpa immediately surrenders, and we get a beautiful... [laughs quietly] It's so funny. We get this—

Keith: Instantly a worm. He turns into a worm instantly.

Jack: Yeah. "Please! I'm just a little guy, and it's my birthday!" [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: I think—

Jack: We get—

Sylvia: I just really quickly want to give, like, props to Madhouse and, um...oh, I had the director's name up just a second ago. The team animating this really killed it with the comedy of Tonpa's, like, getting ready to fight stance and whatever.

Keith: Yeah, it's so good. It's really good.

Sylvia: It is fantastic.

Keith: He has fire coming out of his eyes. The whole screen turns red.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: He looks like he's going Kaio-ken. [Dre laughs]

Jack: He really does. And when he surrenders, we cut back to the crew, and they have been drawn— [laughs] they've been drawn in a really funny way. It's like, um...how would I describe this? It's like all the linework has gotten much thicker on them. It's not quite the low detail shots that we've had before.

Dre: It's like they used crayons.

Jack: [laughs] Yeah, it's almost like they've used crayons. It's really good. I love it, just this one shot. They're all so mad. Leorio is furious, and this is one loss. And they come back, and we learn pretty quickly, Tonpa admits that he is the Rookie Crusher. Mask off Rookie Crusher Tonpa.

Keith: Shit-eating grin.

Dre: Yeah. "I don't care about passing at all ever. I just come here to ruin your day."

Sylvia: Me too, Tonpa. [Jack laughs] No, I fucking love this, like, [voice] "I'm just in this— I love this shit. I live for this!"

Dre: [voice] "I'm the Joker."

Sylvia: "The love of the game? That's what I need. For me? The rookie crushing is the juice." Like...

Jack: It is so good, and it is the most interesting moment for the mask to come off, because now they're stuck with him and they know. The fact that we have dispensed with the mystery of Tonpa's allegiances comparatively early in the trial is so much more interesting than [Keith: Yeah.] Tonpa trying to destabilize them and it constantly being this, like, will-they-won't-they find out. You can play with the stakes so much more explicitly if you reveal to the characters that he is evil and you can't do anything about it.

It's wonderful.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: It's during these episodes where they talk about sort of, like, the real hazard of the path of majority rule, as it's called, is, like, the inner group conflict, and...I think it's the ninth episode where they mention that, but I think that this, like, again, kind of just like—

Keith: Right.

Sylvia: Tonpa's got this shit down to a science. Like, he's like, "No, if I reveal this now, they know not to trust me, but now they're gonna stop trusting each other too."

Keith: But there's a counterbalance here to Tonpa's plan that Killua ends up noticing a couple minutes later, [Dre laughs] which is that actually—

Sylvia: Oh, I love this.

Keith: Tonpa maybe did the best case scenario. If he couldn't beat this guy, him giving up right away—after they both agreed to a deathmatch, actually—and Bendot granting him his surrender instead of insisting on killing him means that they lose, but they waste essentially no time, and Bendot would have slowly and agonizingly tortured him to death, maybe over the course of 72 hours.

Jack: This is extraordinary. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: This is extraordinary. The moment that the show takes— just like, it's like a window opens up, and it becomes, just, cold bleak horror for a minute.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Into the show, but also into Killua specifically that he's the one that notices.

Jack: Yes! Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: That he's the one that has the same idea that the 199 year murderer has.

Sylvia: Bendot, I believe is his name? B-N-D-O-T.

Keith: Yeah, Bendot, yeah.

Sylvia: B-E-N-D-O-T. Yeah.

Dre: Yeah, it's very much Killua being like, "Well, that would've been *my* plan."

Jack: Yeah. And they don't...I'm gonna say what they say, because it is worth— it's worth making explicit that the show takes this turn. They say that what the guy was planning on doing was taking out Tonpa's throat or tongue so he can't surrender and then torturing him for 72 hours.

Sylvia: I believe it's specifically crushing his larynx.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Jesus.

Keith: It could be a dub or sub difference maybe, but.

Jack: It's wonderful. It's just the most frightening pivot, and it's a brief pivot! It's not like the show takes this move and then is like, "And we are now this dark for the next episode." We just get this— and you're right, it's the fact that Killua spots this is so cool. I hadn't noticed that. The angle that we are looking at the show and looking at the characters and looking at the world in shifts just so slightly for a second and then shifts back. It's wonderful. And that's the end of the episode.

Keith: Yeah. We do briefly meet the next contestant.

Sylvia: Yes.

Keith: But we don't do anything with them yet.

Jack: Yes.

Sylvia: And we also know that Gon is gonna be the one challenging.

Keith: Right.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Sedokan, a serial bomber who is in for 149 years shows up and says, "Who will face me?" Sedokan is, like, a lanky long-haired person. And Gon puts up his hand and says, "Me! I'll do it!" [Keith and Jack laugh]

Sylvia: Little fucking bomber twink.

Keith: I know that he was sentenced for 149 years for serial bombings, but I did at first read this as the crime was committing 149 serial bombings. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Yes, I read that too. I actually had a...yes, I had a similar reaction.

Keith: Which is so many bombings to do.

Dre: It's a lot of bombings.

Keith: Yeah. Don't do that many bombings.

Episode Nine [1:40:49]

Jack: Episode nine begins. Now, I would like very briefly to say that when we finished the last episode, Keith said aloud, "The next episodes are called "Showdown on the Airship," "Majority Rules" or something, and then "Beware of the Prisoners," and I didn't understand what you were talking about, and I couldn't understand how we were going to get there. [Keith laughs] Didn't know what the prisoners were. I had no idea what it was going to be about. This is the point at which I remembered that this episode was called "Beware × Of × Prisoners," and I thought to myself, "Indeed, beware of them."

Keith: Indeed.

Jack: Lo! They come! Because it is revealed that, yes, multiple prisoners are now here. We begin with a great little conversation between Sedokan, this bomber, and Gon. The conversation goes like this: Sedokan says, “Look, I’m not very good at fighting and running around, but I am pretty good at thinking,” and Gon says, “Ha, buddy. I’m not very good at thinking, but I am very good at fighting and running around.” [Dre and Keith laugh]

Keith: Two honest actors being honest with each other and putting all their cards on the table.

Jack: Putting all their cards on the table.

Dre: Is this where Gon says something about, like, “Man, I’m sure glad there’s no written test during the Hunter Exam so far.” [Dre and Jack laugh]

Keith: Uh, I think that was in episode Netero.

Sylvia: He says that a lot.

Dre: Okay.

Keith: The Netero episode, yeah, but yeah.

Jack: No...again, [theme plays as Jack imitates it] [Keith and Jack laugh]

Keith: And we’re going to—

Jack: He’s having a great time.

Keith: Jack, I think the stuff you’re gonna talk about right now would categorize as I think what, in episode one, when we were discussing the second episode of the show, you called Gon’s Mistakes. [Jack laughs] I think he’s going to make another one of those, quote, unquote, [Dre laughs] very deeply quote unquote “mistakes” shortly, so go ahead.

Jack: Yes, the actual name is Gon's Mistake. It's like Joker's Trick. [Sylvia and Keith laugh]

Keith: Okay. He's about to commit Gon's Mistake.

Jack: Yes. So, we get into a trap, basically. This guy says, "I've got two candles." We basically are gonna play a game to see how long— who can keep their candle alight for longest, so I wrote down, "These candles are definitely bombs," and we learn that there's a trick. They have to choose: do you want the longer candle or the shorter candle? We get a sort of cute little scene of Kurapika and Leorio playing cards in Kurapika's mind palace as Kurapika talks us through the risks of this choice, which is basically, you know, do we know that he knows that we know that he knows which candle has been boobytrapped? [Sylvia laughs] It's like that kind of thing.

Keith: It's the Sicilian game in *Princess Bride*.

Sylvia: Yes.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: It's exactly this. But Gon, uh... [laughs]

Sylvia: The way they resolve this is so good.

Jack: It's so funny. What happens?

Keith: Gon very cutely asks them what he should do, because he's like, "I know this isn't my strong suit. I'll ask my friends." Kurapika, during his mind palace, decides: "There's actually no point in us trying to figure this out, because there is no real way to think our way out of this. I'll just let Gon decide, because I trust Gon."

Jack: [chuckles] But.

Keith: Killua, who does not really trust Gon in this way, is like—

Jack: But loves him, I think.

Keith: But loves him. Is like, “He doesn’t really think things through,” and actually, that is the trick. That is Gon’s trick, is that not thinking things through really really works out for him. [Jack laughs] Why does he pick the longest candle?

Jack: Oh, it’ll, uh, burn. It’ll take longer to burn.

Keith: It’ll take longer to burn. He picks the longer one, because it’s bigger, take longer to burn.

Sylvia: I love my special boy so much.

Jack: Take longer to burn. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm. I mean, he’s right.

Sylvia: I love my special bird-brained boy.

Dre: He’s right.

Jack: He’s right. It’ll, uh, it’ll take longer to burn. Yes, in this— if we are doing the Sicilian thing, Gon would pick whichever wine he thinks looks tastiest.

Keith: Right. [laughs] Whichever glass was more full.

Jack: Yeah. Not interested in that. In the same way that revealing Tonpa’s mask off moment was more interesting than holding it back later, this is so much more an interesting way to resolve this than the classic “can they figure out which one is trapped and pick the other.” This revelation that Gon is not very smart but you basically can’t trick him, because he will fall straight into your trap, go, “Oh, a trap!” and then overcome it.

Keith: Right, yes.

Jack: It’s great.

Keith: This is why I can’t help but think of Kiryu when I watch *Hunter × Hunter*, because Kiryu’s, like, a very similar kind of character that, like, will fall for every trick but can

punch his way out of every trick, so he doesn't even have to be on guard for tricks.

Jack: No. No. It works out fine.

Keith: Because he's like, "Well, tricks— I'm immune to tricks, [laughs quietly] so I can just do— I can just proceed forward earnestly."

Jack: It's fascinating, because it's like, "Oh, you mean immune to falling for tricks, right?" No, no, I fall for them.

Keith: No, no. Immune to the consequences of tricks. [laughs]

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah. [Jack laughs]

Keith: And speaking of tricks: Sylvi, do you want to explain what the actual trick of the candles are?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, what is going on here?

Sylvia: I love this. So, we get a— I think it starts off pretty standard, where they're both holding their candles. They're lit. There's a bit of a gust that makes Gon a little worried that it might go out at one point, and then, suddenly, right on cue, the flame on Gon's candle starts burning extremely bright and extremely powerfully, melting the candle very quickly, not all the way, but we get the sort of internal monologue from Sedokan about how...I believe it's just made of oil or coated in oil? I can't remember the specifics.

Jack: Yeah. I like this. It's great.

Sylvia: No, it is oil-soaked.

Jack: Kurapika guesses that it is gunpowder-soaked, but we get the confirmation that it's actually oil, and I like that there's [Dre: Mm.] just a little mismatch there.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: We also get the confirmation that, no matter what, Gon would have been given the oil-soaked candle—

Keith: Right, because it wasn't actually—

Sylvia: Because Sedokan had prepared four candles.

Keith: Yeah, it wasn't actually about thinking your way out of it. It was just about— it was a sleight of hand, and so the mismatch of the big candle and the small candle was, like, a disguise for the sleight of hand. It was the sleight part, I guess, of the sleight of hand.

Sylvia: And the way that Gon handles this is... [Jack laughs] Once again, I love the way this boy solves puzzles.

Keith: It's gorgeous in its simplicity.

Sylvia: It's great, because it's also just, like, oh yeah, of course you could do that, but you don't really jump to it. What Gon does is, now that the candle's burning strong enough, he just sets it down, runs as fast as he can to Sedokan, and blows Sedokan's candle out, because his candle's flame is strong enough that it can just be left on its own and not get blown out by the wind coming up from underneath this sort of, like, platform that they're on.

Jack: It's lovely. You can't trick him.

Sylvia: It's great.

Keith: The speed at which he figures this out. I mean, it's...we get, like, a long shot of the panic that I think is sort of, like, it's more to show everyone's reaction to what's happening than it is to illustrate an actual passage of time.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: But the, like, actual amount of time between the candle burning at a thousand times the rate that it should be and Gon just being like, "Oh. It's so strong, I can put it

down,” and then just going over. Like, I don't know if this is true, but I get, like, the mental image of Gon, like, standing on his toes and just, like, blowing out the candle [Jack: Yeah.] and being like, “Haha!”

Jack: It's shot really beautifully.

Keith: [laughs] It's so funny.

Jack: It's great.

Keith: It's really funny.

Jack: Ah, I love this show.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. And, uh...yep.

Sylvia: It's just a really good moment of showing Gon's, like...I think the thing that I always kind of classify the difference between Gon and Killua is that Killua's got a lot of things that he's learned about, like, the world and how to handle these things, and like—

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: You see it in stuff like the Netero fight and stuff, and Gon is just, like, so instinctual about everything.

Keith: Right. Yeah. Yeah, Killua's analytical and very cautious, and that's why he, like— and he's also— so, he's sure of himself, and he's like, at this point, he's such the center of his own world that he finds it difficult to respect Gon, even as he's sort of, like, magnetically drawn to him.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: In a way that a lot of people are magnetically drawn to Gon and we see it kind of

over and over.

Jack: Who wouldn't be?

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Right, but Killua's coming from a world where, like, he's never been magnetically drawn to anyone, and so to be magnetically drawn to Gon [**Dre:** Mm] is, like, fascinating, even in his resistance to sort of, like...to respect someone that he kind of considers to be beneath him. And so, I mean, it's so satisfying to watch Killua be like, "Mm, I wouldn't trust Gon with thinking about things!" [Dre laughs] and then to immediately be proven wrong again, after that really just happened on the airship too, coupled with Killua's sort of insistence that, like, he's really trying to make Gon be his sidekick.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: And it's not working. Gon is, like, not— he doesn't even notice that Killua's trying to do that.

Jack: But he's very pleasant about it.

Keith: He is pretty pleasant about it, yeah.

Jack: Uh, Gon is very pleasant about it. He likes Killua, clearly.

Keith: Oh, yeah, he likes him a lot.

Dre: Oh, yeah, he loves Killua.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: But you get the impression that Gon likes, uh, everybody.

Keith: Yeah. And you do not get that impression from Killua.

Jack: No. Not at all.

Dre: No.

Jack: And we haven't— we are about to enter Kurapika Hour, so I don't want to jump the gun here, but I do love that Kurapika has faith in Gon, [**Keith:** Yeah.] to such an extent that even after doing all this mind palace card game playing, he is like, “Of course Gon will figure this out.”

Keith: Right.

Jack: And I think Kurapika is very aware of Gon's Mistake, of the power of Gon's Mistake.

Keith: Right, the power of Gon's Mistake, yeah.

Jack: Accidentally leading to something wonderful, so is just sort of like, “Okay, look, this is gonna be okay.”

Keith: Do we have episode titles? We haven't edited an episode, so there's been no episode titles. I'm putting a mark here: “The Power of Gon's Mistake,” episode title.

Jack: Yeah, I'm—

Sylvia: Power x Of x Gon's Mistake.

Jack: Gon's Mistake. [Keith, Jack, and Dre laugh] Yeah, I'm starting—

Sylvia: Or should we do plus signs?

Keith: Ooh. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: One of my first pitches for the name of this show—that I discarded just because the SEO was so bad—was I wanted to call this show Hunter. Just one. [Keith and Jack laugh]

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Just to be like, we're dispensing with all this bullshit. This show's just called

Hunter.

Keith: What about Hunter Hunter Hunter Hunter?

Jack: I thought about that too.

Keith: Okay.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: That was another one that I thought and discarded. Same reason.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Saying the same word multiple times doesn't actually improve your SEO.

Keith: No, it doesn't.

Jack: Okay.

Keith: I love this next thing. This is the, like, the beautiful power of the, like, of the ability of the writer to, like, do the exact thing...to do the exact thing. You just, like, hey, what is the perfect guy for Kurapika to fight? We could just make that up. We could just totally feed him the absolute perfect opponent.

Jack: Yes. I would like to say, before we start talking about this, that I would like to update my favorite character. [Sylvia gasps]

Keith: Wow.

Jack: It's an emotional moment for me. My new favorite character is Kurapika.

Keith: From Gon?

Jack: From maybe Leorio.

Keith: Okay. [Dre laughs]

Jack: I think I am Gon, but I think Leorio was my favorite until now, and I think my new favorite character is Kurapika. Let us begin.

Keith: Okay. It is such an— it's just such an amazing ability to just be like...like, there's just no holding back here. They just serve this blue freak up on a delicious platter.

Jack: Let's describe the blue freak.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Okay. [Sylvia laughs] He has a green sort of, you know, Capuchin monk cut.

Jack: [laughs] He really does.

Sylvia: Oh.

Keith: He has blue, you know, sort of weirdly blue skin? Like, it's not blue like Killua's undershirt or like Kurapika's—

Jack: Almost like a Smurf.

Keith: Yeah, he's blue like a Smurf is blue. [Dre laughs] He has wires going from his, like, back into his head, like two wires. He's got, uh...I don't have an actual picture up, and this is a weak spot for me, so let's...

Sylvia: I have linked a picture in the chat, if you want to look, but...

Keith: Oh, okay, great. Sure, sure, sure. Oh, right! Great detail. Oh, he's got a metal egg on his ear or instead of an ear.

Jack: He's got a black eye or perhaps— they describe a wound on his face. This might be a wound around his eye. I don't know.

Keith: He's got sort of a Frankenstein face.

Sylvia: Yes, very much.

Keith: He has, like, bolts in his chin.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: He has missing teeth.

Sylvia: No nose.

Keith: He has scars, like, literally Frankenstein-style scars on his face.

Jack: He's missing a nose.

Keith: He's missing both eyelids, and he's missing all the...or he has no skin around one eye, and the other eye, the skin is, like, purple, like bruised.

Jack: And he has 19 hearts—

Keith: 19 hearts.

Jack: On his chest, like he has upgraded Link very single-mindedly in *Tears of the Kingdom*. [Dre laughs]

Keith: And there's one other detail that we'll save for a minute.

Jack: And he's fucking terrifying. We've seen this blue guy— so, the prisoners wear their cowls and shackles until they stand up to fight.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: So we know that one of these people is a huge blue man.

Keith: Right.

Jack: And the reveal is brilliant. He shows up and he says— he has a great line. He says, "I have killed 19 people, but I'm rather dissatisfied with that number." Being like— doing the sort of Undertaker bringing 19 coffins and one— [Keith laughs] You know, like the thing the Undertaker did, where he brought coffins to the ringside to be like, "And

you're the 50th person I'm gonna kill," or whatever. I don't remember exactly how it worked.

Keith: Does someone want to describe the ploy?

Jack: Well, oh, just before, the crew look at him and they say, "a serial hunter," and that's fascinating. This is a new type of Hunter that we have heard. We've heard about Gourmet Hunters.

Keith: Oh.

Dre: Oh, I thought—

Keith: In mine, they call them a serial killer.

Dre: Yeah, same.

Keith: They said, "Now we're dealing with serial killers."

Jack: Wow! In the— no, this is fascinating. In the subs, they call him a "serial hunter."

Keith: Oh, my sub called him a serial killer.

Sylvia: That could—

Dre: The dub called him a serial killer as well.

Jack: Did I misread this?

Sylvia: This might be a time mentioning that, like, this is on several different streaming services, [**Keith:** Right.] and subtitles can vary between them.

Keith: Yes, yeah, yeah, yeah. I briefly mentioned this before, but yeah, there is sub discrepancy sometimes.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: But yeah, my sub definitely called him a serial killer.

Jack: Wow.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Interesting.

Keith: I'm actually surprised to hear that there's a dub out there— er, a sub out there that calls him a serial hunter.

Sylvia: Yeah, that's a very interesting change.

Jack: Well, it made me sit up in my chair.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, I bet. Yeah. So—

Jack: What's the ploy here?

Keith: Okay.

Jack: Whose ploy are we talking about?

Keith: So, there's the blue man, by the way, whose name is Majtani, and he is— and this, I guess, is the beginning of the ploy here. He's in prison for 108 years for multiple crimes, including fraud and blackmail.

Jack: Very funny that we have this murderer.

Keith: And he says something else at the very beginning. They tip the hand here kind of right away, if you notice. When Sedokan comes back after his loss, he says, like, "Eh, cheap tricks, blah blah blah. Like, if you really want to fool someone, you've gotta make some sacrifice."

Sylvia: Ah, it's great.

Keith: And you're like, "What does that mean?" and what it means is this guy is a loser. He's nothing. He's a paper tiger. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: He is a paper tiger, and we get into— oh, sorry, Sylvi.

Sylvia: No, I was gonna say, I think... [sighs] I think they actually— do we get— do we find out— the serial killer thing, that's talking about...is that talking about him? Because I feel—

Keith: It's talking about him, because he said that he killed 19 people, and then they go, "Oh my god, a serial killer."

Dre: Right, and he's lying about it.

Keith: But he's lying about that. He just—

Sylvia: Do we find out what his actual crime is in this episode, or am I making that up?

Keith: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Dre: Like, blackmail and fraud.

Keith: It's blackmail and fraud.

Sylvia: Yeah, I want to just mention that, because I love that.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: That this guy's whole thing is just being a fucking...

Keith: Being a weird trickster.

Sylvia: Bullshit artist.

Keith: So, it's fun watching sort of— Leorio is scared, because Leorio does not have good analytical abilities, or at least not on par with Gon and Killua, both of whom are fine. Killua's like, "What are you talking about? Kurapika's totally got this," and then they

look over at Gon, and Gon's like, "Yep."

Jack: And Kurapika takes off his, like, sort of...god, how would I describe it? It's almost like an overshirt that Kurapika wears.

Keith: Frock?

Jack: Yeah, that has this symbol of the Kurta Clan on.

Sylvia: Tunic?

Keith: To reveal his pajamas for the second time.

Jack: To reveal his pajamas. I love this outfit.

Sylvia: So comfy looking.

Jack: It's great.

Keith: Yeah, I love his little pajamas.

Dre: They're nice PJs.

Jack: Good costume design is just a very simple one color outfit that looks great.

Keith: It's just so ornate when he's got the thing on. He looks so official, and then he takes off one piece, and it's like, he's ready for bed.

Jack: Pajamas.

Keith: He's got a pajama set on.

Jack: Yeah. Night night. And then he says this line, which was part of why I started to make him my favorite character. He says, "How shall we fight? There's nothing I can't do." Not as a brag, but as a, like, "look, I'm flexible." You know.

Keith: Yeah, dealer's choice.

Jack: Dealer's choice. It's the person saying, "What do you want to eat for dinner? I can make anything with the ingredients we have in the house. It'll be fine."

Keith: Immediately, we're inside Majtani's head, and he's like, "What?"

Jack: Drifting perspective again, yeah.

Keith: Like, we get this sort of increasing, like, cooperative cooperation from Kurapika, who's just like, "Yeah, anything you throw at me, it's fine. Like, we'll do things your way. Let's get this done," and Majtani's increasingly like, "Why isn't he afraid? Why isn't he afraid of me?"

Jack: He keeps adding rule after rule to the fight—it's really funny—to try and psych out Kurapika, except he just psychs himself out further and further with each new rule he adds and Kurapika comfortably is just like, "Oh, yeah, that's fine. We'll do a deathmatch, that's fine. And we'll try and make it really short." Oh, I can't remember what some of the other stipulations are.

Keith: Uh, no weapons. Yeah, he takes out his—

Dre: No weapons, yeah.

Keith: Yeah, he was like, "Maybe he has a concealed weapon. Ah, no weapons!" and then Kurapika's like, "Oh, okay, no weapons." Takes out his weapon, tosses it aside, and then Majtani's like, "Ah, he had a concealed weapon!" [Jack, Keith, and Dre laugh]

[2:00:00]

Jack: And then stuff gets real.

Keith: Well, not quite.

Jack: No?

Keith: Majtani— the fight starts, and Majtani does a big jump and a punch, and it appears that with his massive strength he has...

Jack: Punched a big hole in the floor.

Keith: Punched a hole in the floor, but it's yet another trick. He's actually installed special floor-breaking iron rods in his fists. [laughs]

Dre: Yeah, he's got steel implants.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: He's got steel implants in his hands.

Jack: It's great.

Keith: To do this. To psych people out by punching the ground.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: I don't even know what— why would you do that? I don't know!

Sylvia: It's, like—

Dre: To psych 'em out.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, the “oh, they surrender after seeing how strong I am” type thing, right?

Dre: Right.

Keith: Right, yeah.

Jack: Sure.

Sylvia: But it's like the fucking Hunter Exam.

Jack: It also only needs to fail once and you die.

Keith: Right. Yes.

Jack: You only need to meet someone like Kurapika, for example.

Keith: Right. This is where it gets real.

Jack: And I do briefly want to shout out...

Keith: Okay, sure.

Jack: Killua's pose during this. It's a pose that I've seen Killua do a few times, and I love it. He, like, puts his hands up behind his head, [**Keith:** Yeah.] like he's relaxing onto his hands, except he's standing.

Keith: Yeah, it's the Ash Ketchum for me.

Jack: It's great. He looks great. He turns around, and we see on his back a spider tattoo. [Jack and Keith gasp]

Dre: Dun dun dun.

Jack: Kurapika's eyes—

Keith: And we get the whole little thing about the spiders. We see a big silhouette of characters.

Jack: We see a big silhouette of, I would say, familiar characters.

Keith: [knowingly] Oh, maybe so.

Jack: Yes, because this is the sigil of the Phantom Troupe! A shot of the Phantom Troupe. They get the big silhouette, and I will say that there's a certain...you know, there might be, like, for example, someone who is a mummy there. There might be a man with long ears. There might be Chrollo Lucilfer, the man we know. There might be two small children. You know, I'm beginning to suspect that I might have seen these people already. And Kurapika's eyes turn red for the first time. This is so great. We've been told that—

Keith: Oh, second time.

Jack: Wait, really?

Keith: We see it very briefly on the ship in the first episode where he appears.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: [gasps] When he is fighting Leorio?

Keith: No, when he's describing why he wants to be a Hunter to the captain.

Jack: Oh, wow! That's so cool. Do they turn red before we learn...yes, we do, because we first learn about the "they're gonna take your eyes and sell them on the black market, and in fact they did that to your whole family" thing during the tunnel scene, so that's great.

Keith: Right. Right, so we learned about the Kurta and about how he was the last Kurta and how he wants to hunt the Phantom Troupe, but we didn't learn about the eyes, except seeing his eyes turn red.

Jack: Oh, it's wonderful.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: This is good writing. Tell the viewer that something cool happens to a character when they're in high emotional tension, then put them in situations of high emotional tension, but clearly it's not significant enough for them to turn their eyes red, and then have this moment. It lands so well. And then the fight begins.

Keith: And then it ends.

Jack: He just runs up and punches this guy in the— oh, well, I was like, "He's going to kill this man."

Keith: He chokes him out for a second.

Jack: “He is going to *kill* this man.”

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: He doesn't.

Keith: He doesn't. He nearly does.

Sylvia: He does punch him so hard that his entire body goes vertical with his head on the ground.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, it's not good.

Keith: Yeah, he is, for...as much as we know, he is passed out face down on the ground after a big punch, and then Kurapika says, “If you ever mention the Phantom Troupe again, I will kill you.”

Jack: Because we learn straightaway that— oh, so firstly, this guy claimed that he was one of the four kings of the Phantom Troupe.

Keith: Right.

Jack: That's interesting. Phantom Troupe has some sort of organization about four king— I mean, I don't know. I don't know if this is true. It probably is. And then we learn that Kurapika knew straightaway that this man was lying and was lying even about being a member of the Phantom Troupe.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: He even knew that he was lying before he saw the Phantom Troupe tattoo.

Sylvia: Because of the heart tattoos, the like, “lives I've taken” tattoos, I believe, right?

Jack: No—

Keith: Oh, well, so that was part of it. When he saw the tattoo, he was like, “A Phantom Troupe member would never keep track of how many lives they’ve taken, because they don’t care.”

Dre: They kill too many people to keep track of.

Keith: And they kill too many people, and it was also that they keep their number in the spider, so your tattoo is wrong. But he also tells Gon and Killua that he knew that he was not strong right away. Like, there was— he never thought that this guy was powerful, so. [laughs quietly]

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. It’s great. Really good.

Keith: But then he just went into a rage upon seeing the spider.

Jack: Yeah, and in fact, goes into a rage upon seeing spiders generally? [Keith laughs]

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Everyone looks nervous, even Killua.

Jack: Everyone looks really nervous, and in fact, Leorio is like— and this is just another good Leorio and Kurapika moment. Leorio is like, “Should we be worried about you killing us?” basically.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: He’s like, “Are we in danger from you?” and Kurapika is like, “No. Don’t worry about it.” Really good moment of Kurapika just, like, slumping down, sitting on the floor shaking. The, like, proximity of...even evoking the Phantom Troupe made Kurapika so angry that he might as well have been fighting the Phantom Troupe.

Keith: By the way, I’ve got here: Killua’s shocked face is really funny. [laughs]

Jack: [laughs] Okay. So, he’s still got his hands behind his head, but he just has a tiny little mouth open, like “Uh?” Meanwhile, Leorio is like, “Oh, god!” [Keith and Dre laugh]

Kurapika is not hurt at all. Oh, it's really sad, actually. So, Leorio— I can't remember, it might be Leorio or Gon says, "Are you okay?" Asking, you know, are you emotionally. How do you feel?

Keith: Right.

Jack: And Kurapika says, "There's no single wound on me," and, you know, "I'm fine."

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Just a—

Keith: What a weird way to say that, too.

Jack: Yeah, it's just like, buddy. Oh, dear.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: "There's no wound on me" after this is just good character writing.

Keith: And I think you read Gon's question right. That's really not what he meant, because obviously you didn't take a punch. Why would you be hurt, physically?

Jack: No, he's looking out for his friend.

Keith: Right.

Jack: And Kurapika is so, um...not warped but shaped by trauma that he's like, "I'm fine."

Keith: Right.

Jack: "I've not been hurt."

Keith: There's even—

Jack: “I can't even conceive of the mental and emotional trauma that has been done to me.”

Keith: There's even a line where Kurapika is, like, relieved that he has that rage still.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yes!

Keith: He's sitting on the ground.

Jack: Oh, it's so sad.

Keith: He's slumped over. It's a very sad position that he's in, but he says, “But this means that the rage in me remains as strong as ever. I suppose I should be happy.” And meanwhile, I mean, just look at this. This is pitiful. This is a pitiful face. Hold on. Just slumped over, shadow across his eyes, just like, looks like someone took out, like, half the bones from his body, just like totally exhausted.

Jack: What a great character.

Keith: Yeah. Love Kurapika.

Jack: What a great character.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: You could so—

Sylvia: Kurapika's fantastic.

Jack: You could so easily write this, like...it's such a beautiful shot. He's got his, like, elbows resting on his knees and his hands, like, hanging limp between his knees. You could so easily write this revenge character as being someone who is just so furiously powered by revenge at all times that they would almost resemble something more like Leorio. You know, they would be this hair-trigger character.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: But the fact that we have Kurapika— and I also think that the character who is mild mannered but reveals themselves to have a vengeful streak is another stock character you see a lot.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: But something about—

Keith: Not for nothing, but we've seen someone try to do the Kurapika character a second time, and I think it does not work out nearly as well. Your favorite version of Gon, Jack: Naruto. [Jack and Dre laugh] His famous Killua-style counterpart is Sasuke, whose plot is essentially lifted one-for-one from Kurapika openly. I mean, the— I can't remember his name right now.

Sylvia: Uh, Kishimoto, the author?

Keith: Yeah, yeah. He basically is like, "Yeah, I love *Hunter × Hunter*. I love Togashi."

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: "Sasuke is Kurapika." [laughs quietly]

Jack: Huh.

Sylvia: Except instead of the Phantom Troupe it's what if it was his big brother.

Keith: What if it was— well, so, they've got the special red eyes to give them powers.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: They've got the person that kills their entire clan. Someone has been taking the eyes out and selling them. I mean, it's just really a one-for-one sort of...

Sylvia: It is—

Keith: It's really funny.

Sylvia: It is wild, because I mean, like, I came to *Hunter × Hunter* after I had watched a lot of *Naruto* as a kid, and being like, "Oh, okay, sure."

Keith: Right. And I—

Sylvia: They got too— Sasuke is these two characters mushed together.

Keith: Right, he really is. Yeah, he is sort of a Kurapika with the sort of leanings of Killua. It's very funny. I love *Naruto*. I would never say a bad word about *Naruto*.

Sylvia: Gaara is also a bit of a Killua, now that I think about it, actually.

Keith: What's that?

Sylvia: Gaara is also a little bit of a Killua.

Keith: Gaara is also a Killua, yeah. It's sort of just they're both Killua-Kurapikas but with a different mixture.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Because Gaara ends up becoming a lot more Kurapika as the series goes on.

Sylvia: It's great.

Jack: The kind of—

Sylvia: I will say, did they say anything about the red eyes actually having—? I think they just change color. I don't think it gives power to Kurapika.

Keith: Uh—

Sylvia: It's just, like, an emotional state thing.

Keith: Well, okay, we did see him...we saw him, like, be really fast and do a big punch, but yeah.

Sylvia: I think Kurapika's just capable of that, though.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: I think is the implication we're supposed to take away from that, is like...

Keith: Sure.

Sylvia: Kurapika is capable of doing this sort of things but only feels the urge to when they're in this heightened emotional state? And I also think that's—

Keith: Yeah, I guess it's more of a battle rage.

Sylvia: Yeah, because there's—

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: There is something to be— like, a lot of Kurapika's character is a lot of just, like, simmering anger hidden underneath this very calm, very controlled, like, outward face.

Keith: I also love that when his eyes aren't red, they're gray.

Sylvia: Yes.

Keith: And he feels so gray.

Jack: Kurapika's so cool. God!

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: God, Kurapika's fucking great. And you just—

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah, Kurapika rules. [laughs]

Jack: You know that... [laughs] Guys, you know that Kurapika would just be, like, a

really cool friend to hang with, right?

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Keith: [laughs] I think they all would be.

Jack: Me, just abandoning any criticism here.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I'd like to hang out with Kurapika.

Keith: I'd like to be friends with all these guys.

Jack: [laughs] I do think that Kurapika would have fucking obliterated Leorio on the boat in episode one.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Keith: Oh, in an instant. I think that, like, okay, so, the '99 series—which means potentially also the manga—is much more willing to give you, like, a competent Leorio. But I think it's, like, really interesting how good of a job they do of saying, like, Leorio can hang but just barely.

Jack: [laughs] Yes.

Keith: And just because he's also really lucky. Like, he might be...but also, that makes him miles and miles better than just some guy, in a way that is, like, I would say, unfortunately under-demonstrated in the show. Like, I wish that they would show Leorio, like, coming up against a normal person. [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: And just dusting them?

Keith: Just to be like, "Look, wait, wait, he's not embarrassing. He's actually crazy."

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: You know? Like, he's beating out people who have trained for years and years and years to be Hunters, who have, like, died or flamed out, you know, in this exam and in exams past.

Jack: Right.

Sylvia: Yeah. Though, I do think we mentioned in the first few episodes how a lot of the strength of Leorio's character comes from him just being, like, the dude of the group.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Like, the regularest guy in the crew.

Keith: The regular dude. But at some point, you've gotta admit that he ran 100 kilometers.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, no, absolutely. I mean...ok. We can't get— I'm poisoned by knowledge, and I can't—

Keith: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: This is a conversation we should definitely come back to, though, because I do think Leorio gets more shine later, but he...

Keith: One of my all-time favorite moments in a show—in any show—is a Leorio moment.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, Leorio's got some fantastic stuff in this show.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: But I do definitely think he kind of gets the short end of the stick, when you compare him to the other three protagonists.

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: Who are superhumans. [laughs]

Sylvia: Who are literally just fucking superheroes, yeah.

Keith: Right.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: It's a shame, because it's like, it's kind of like, you know, Batman hanging out with Superman.

Jack: Uh, yes.

Keith: But they don't— but there's not—

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] Except Batman is chill this time.

Keith: But like, Leorio doesn't get his own comic with its own millions of fans, so you never get to see, like, the Leorio comic where Leorio's the star and is doing all the cool things on his own without Superman there to sort of, like, be the one that actually literally has superpowers.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah.

Keith: Anyway.

Jack: And then I think we're about there. We are immediately back into the kind of mode that I like this show in across episode breaks where we cut the episode with the implication that we're gonna pick up exactly where we left off, in the same room.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: You know, none of this pissing about on an airship. [Keith laughs] We...is this prisoner fight done?

Keith: You'll be glad to know that we're in this mode for quite a bit, I think.

Jack: It works really well for me. I mean, something that I love, especially in, like, longer form shows, like hour-long shows, is when an episode...when the episodes are generally quite separate and you hit a two-parter that feels like it is connected very strongly. I remember in the first season of *Succession*, the penultimate episode took place at a wedding and ended in a high tension place, and then the final episode just picked up exactly where you left off at the wedding, and that felt great, to be like, "Oh, we are in it. We are moving with the characters through this. There's no sort of abstraction of time." That feels really good.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: But are we done with this room of Trick Tower? We are, right?

Keith: No.

Dre: No.

Jack: All the prisoners have been beaten?

Keith: No.

Dre: No!

Jack: There's one more fight?

Keith: There's two more.

Sylvia: There's two more.

Dre: There's two more.

Jack: What the fuck? Shit!

Keith: Leorio...

Sylvia: Well, because right now the score is one to one. One to two, one to two.

Keith: Leorio hasn't gone, and yeah, well, we don't know how many fights are left, but Leorio hasn't gone and Killua hasn't gone.

Dre: Killua hasn't gone.

Jack: Oh, wow! Exciting.

Keith: And we know at the very end of this is Leorio goes, "It's my turn."

Sylvia: Yes.

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Dre: Yeah, so, uh, do we think Leorio's gonna win? [Jack laughs] That's my question.

Keith: I mean, I know.

Sylvia: I, yeah.

Keith: I know what happens.

Sylvia: Keith and I can't answer this question.

Dre: I don't remember.

Keith: You don't remember?

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Okay.

Jack: What do you think?

Dre: So I guess Jack and I get to vote.

Jack: Okay. Dre.

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] Next episode...

Dre: Oh, I don't know.

Keith: Dre, I remember in excruciating detail.

Sylvia: I remember so much about this that we will— the answer will be obvious why, next time we record. [laughs quietly]

Jack: My guess is that it is going to be a fucking, like, gargantuan trial. It's gonna be a trial of Hercules, and he is going to win, at great personal cost. Uh, no, not great personal cost in the sense of world-shattering stakes. It's gonna suck for him, but he's gonna win.

Keith: Yeah. Or I guess the mirror image of that is he's gonna lose but it's gonna be awesome for him.

Jack: Uh, we sort of got that a bit with— no, Hisoka wiped the floor with him. I was gonna say [laughs quietly] he had a real successful fight with Hisoka, even though he lost, but he didn't.

Dre: He passed.

Jack: He did. He passed.

Sylvia: He got a good moment, though.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: I still think that's probably one of the best Leorio moments we've had in our short run.

Keith: Which one? When he runs up on Hisoka?

Sylvia: When he challenges Hisoka again instead of running away.

Keith: Oh, sure. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Where he's like, "That's just not my style."

Jack: Yeah, that was great.

Sylvia: I love that shit.

Keith: Yeah. And then gets knocked out in one punch.

Jack: Ha!

Sylvia: Yeah, no. King.

Keith: One punch specifically designed not to kill him.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Incredible.

Final Thoughts [2:16:18]

Jack: Yeah. But I think that's us for today.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Is there anything else people want to talk about? Are there any questions or segments that we want to hit?

Keith: I just want to double up on saying that I love that airship episode. I love all of the different pieces of character stuff that we get from there. I love seeing the Bean again. I love getting some more Netero stuff. I love watching sort of the multiple modes of Gon and Killua of, like, Killua kind of being, you know, trying to be the boss of Gon and it not working, of them being like really playful kids and being friends and having fun, of Gon being really impressive, and of Kurapika and Leorio just sort of, like, hanging out and falling asleep because they're tired, [Jack laughs quietly] because they're not total freaks like Gon and Killua.

Dre: Yeah. [laughs]

Jack: Yeah. Oh, I'm having so much fun making this.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It's great.

Keith: Yeah, this is great. Anything else to say before we go?

Sylvia: No, I just think it's worth mention— one, actually. I didn't— because I mentioned the director earlier. Hiroshi Kôjina is the name.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: I looked it up, just so anyone who was listening and was like, "Sylvi didn't say the name of the guy!" That's his name. Obviously, any animated things aren't the work of one person. Animation teams are massive.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: But I wanted to point that out.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: And I guess the other thing is, like, should we talk about...I guess other people have closing comments too, but we're doing more episodes than three next week, correct? Or next time.

Jack: Ooh!

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Next time is our first four.

Keith: Hey, everyone. This is Keith, just hopping in to let you know that we actually are not doing a four-parter for the next episode. We only did three. So,

we're doing episodes 10, 11, and 12. Episode 13 is a recap episode, and episode 14 will not be included in the next set of episodes that we're watching. Everything else that we are about to say is accurate. Okay, bye.

Sylvia: Ooh.

Jack: Wow! Keith, can you please read the episode names?

Keith: Absolutely.

Jack: Because I did actually love hearing the episode names and not knowing what the fuck you were talking about. [Dre laughs]

Keith: Yes, I can read the episode names. We have episode 10, "Trick × To × The Trick."

Jack: Mm.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Episode 11, "Trouble × With × The Gamble."

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Episode 12, "Last Test × Of × Resolve!" and episode 14—

Jack: Wait.

Keith: "Hit × The × Target." Now, this— you gotta double check on this, because your streaming service or whatever may or may not even have an episode 13. Episode 13 is a recap episode.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Should we watch it?

Sylvia: I don't think it's a bad idea to watch it. Like, it's the—

Keith: Yeah, it's not a terrible— it really is just, like, a 20 minute recap of everything that's happened so far. You're free to— including the three episodes that you're about to watch.

Sylvia: There is, like, a slight framing to it that has a couple cute moments, but for the most part, it isn't a thing that you need to watch to keep up with the actual show.

Keith: [crosstalk] It does have a cute framing. Yeah, that's true.

Jack: I will say, none of these episodes are...there's no prisoners in the title of these episodes.

Keith: No.

Jack: They all sound fairly straightforward.

Keith: "Trick × To × The Trick," I don't even know what that means.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Well, it's about when you fight— it's like fighting fire with fire, but for tricks.

Dre: Oh, I see.

Sylvia: Oh.

Keith: Can I give a little bit of a warning? Maybe.

Jack: Yes.

Keith: Maybe this is unnecessary.

Jack: Go for it.

Keith: Do your best to avoid the episode thumbnails?

Jack: Ooh.

Sylvia: Oh, that's true, actually.

Jack: Okay.

Sylvia: I think it's 11 that has...

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Okay. I can do this.

Sylvia: A big spoiler on the thumbnail.

Jack: I can download those, uh, fucking Netflix extensions that, like, blur that shit.

Keith: Okay. Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Okay. Sounds good. Sounds good.

Keith: Yeah. As always, this show is made possible due to the outrageous generosity of the listeners of this podcast and the other things that we do. You can find that Patreon at [friendsatthetable.cash](https://www.patreon.com/friendsatthetable). Obviously, we all do Friends at the Table together. If you're not listening to that, you should give it a shot. It's a great show. We're deep in the middle of a season right now, but if you're new to the show, maybe check out the last season we did, sort of a standalone, currently, fantasy-ish horror-ish season called Sangfielle. Or the season before that—which is the prequel to the season we're on now—PARTIZAN. Those are both great. That's a sci-fi one.

Sylvia: Yeah, if you like mech anime, you should listen to PARTIZAN.

Keith: Oh, yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And it's really good. I mean, I just love PARTIZAN.

Sylvia: It's fantastic.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: It's so good. You should also check out our Twitch and follow us on there if you're not. We also upload all those videos on YouTube. Those are both friendsatthetable, youtube.com/friendsatthetable, twitch.tv/friendsatthetable. And we're on various social media at @friends_table on [Twitter](#) and [TikTok](#) and @friends-table on [Cohost](#). Any other personal plugs that people want to do?

Jack: No.

Dre: Mm, I think I'm good.

Jack: No. One thing that I do want to say before we finish is: I'm so curious to see where we are going, in the sense of what this show is about, and I know that, like, these long-running shonen anime is very much more about the journey than the destination, though the destinations can be, you know, distinct and interesting. But I am thinking about, you know, if I had only watched 10 episodes of *Sailor Moon*, I would have no idea where *Sailor Moon* was going, what the wider meta plot is, you know, what the—

Keith: That's me. I'm that.

Jack: [laughs quietly] What the broader themes that that show is interested in exploring is. And so, I am so excited to be at this kind of, like, precipice of understanding of this story, where I don't...I could take stabs at what I think this show's themes are and probably be correct, but I have no idea the broader plot moves that the show is interested in working through in order to get us there, and that's really exciting.

Keith: Are you telling me that *Sailor Moon* isn't just episode after episode of a new evil store coming to town?

Jack: Uh, well, so, Keith, the evil store comes to town, and then you get introduced one by one to all the evil shop owners who work in the evil store.

Keith: Right.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: Eventually, they vanquish the evil store, and they will bring in a bigger, more evil store. But no, there is a wider plot to *Sailor Moon*. There is stuff going on that develops.

Sylvia: Oh, absolutely.

Keith: Okay. That's good to know.

Sylvia: *Sailor Moon's* got a cool plot.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, put it this way: what a Sailor Guardian is is something that the show goes into, beyond just, like, "Oh, there are magical girls in the world."

Keith: Right. Yeah, I have no idea what that could be.

Jack: Put it this way: how many aliens do you think are in *Sailor Moon*, Keith?

Keith: Ooh, well, I think that some of the Guardians are aliens.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Interesting.

Sylvia: Okay.

Keith: And I think that there's enough for the whole solar system, and I think that there's probably, like, weird other planets that get brought in, or maybe there's, like, a weird alter-version of each planet.

Jack: Do you think that the Holy Grail, Jesus's Holy Grail is in there or not? [Dre laughs]

Keith: I didn't. I didn't think that until just now.

Dre: Now, that could be Jack trying to throw you off the trail, Keith.

[["The Boy in Green"](#) by Jack de Quidt begins playing]

Keith: Right. I hadn't considered that it was until you asked if it was there.

Jack: Ain't that the way. Well!

Keith: That is the way.

Dre: Uh huh.

Jack: Uh, yeah, I think that's it. I think that's all I've got.

Keith: Yeah. These next eight episodes are gonna be wild, so buckle in.

Jack: I'm very excited.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I might watch one today.