

Noggin Lugging Tortoise - Hunter x Hunter ep. 4-6 : Media Club Plus S01E02

Transcriber: robotchangeling

Introduction	1
Episode Four [0:03:56]	4
[0:21:57]	21
[0:40:06]	33
Episode Five [0:58:29]	49
Break [1:20:22]	67
Break Ends [1:21:54]	68
[1:37:00]	81
Episode Six [1:51:04]	92
[2:09:00]	109
[2:27:00]	124

Introduction

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

Keith: Welcome to Media Club Plus, a podcast about diving into the media that interests us and the stories that excite us. As always, we are brought to you by Friends at the Table. This season, we're watching 2011's *Hunter x Hunter*, based on the manga by Yoshihiro Togashi. My name is Keith J. Carberry. You can find me on Twitter at [@KeithJCarberry](#). You can find me on Cohost at [@KeithJCarberry](#). You can find the let's plays that I do at youtube.com/runbutton. With me is Sylvi Bullet.

Sylvia: Hey, I'm Sylvi. You can find me everywhere at [@sylvibullet](#), including...I got on Bluesky, and I don't know what to post on there, so if you have suggestions...

Dre: Oh, you're on Bluesky?

Keith: Oh, Bluesky. [Jack sighs]

Sylvia: Yeah, I know.

Dre: Get me in there!

Sylvia: I'm one of the elite, and by that I mean I'm friends with e-girls.

Jack: Oh.

Sylvia: So I got an invite. [laughs quietly]

Dre: So, yeah, you're one of the elite.

Keith: Give me an invite, so I can also not post on there.

Sylvia: It's just I don't know what to do. Anyway, yeah.

Keith: Jack de Quidt?

Jack: Hi, I'm Jack. I'm not on Bluesky, and I won't be. [Sylvia laughs] You can find me on Cohost at [@jdc](#) and you can buy any of the music featured on the show, including the music for this podcast, at [notquitereal.bandcamp.com](#). I haven't written any of it yet. I've been working on other music, but it's out there somewhere.

Keith: In your brain. It's out there in the brain goo still.

Jack: It's out there in the brain goo. The closest thing that I have, in the way that it always is, is I do think that it's a very funny image at the end of the last episode when you say, "What is a Hunter? We have no idea," and then smash cut to, [Keith laughs] like, a loud *Hunter x Hunter*-esque outro music. That is the most idea that I have right now.

Keith: That's a great idea. I think that— I mean, that's a great outro in general. Maybe we'll say that later today, if the mood strikes me.

Jack: There is a...ah, god, I got some cool music stuff to talk about today, but I will say: I think the music use in this show is deliberately very funny.

Keith: Yes.

Jack: All right. That's me.

Keith: Okay. Andrew Lee Swan.

Dre: Hey. You can find me on the bad blue bird site. I don't really post there very often, but that's the last one that I'm using.

Keith: There's two bad blue bird sites now.

Dre: What's the other—? Is Bluesky—?

Keith: Bluesky.

Dre: Oh.

Sylvia: There's no bird.

Dre: Does it have a bird?

Sylvia: It's just the sky.

Keith: It doesn't have a bird, but it has Jack from Twitter.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Sylvia: That's true. He is on it.

Jack: The bird—

Sylvia: That's one of the reasons I don't want to use it as much.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Listen, the sky is a sort of bird.

Dre: That's fair.

Keith: The sky is a big bird that all of the other birds live in.

Dre: That's a *Hunter x Hunter*-ass description of the sky right there.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: I'm [@swandre3000](#) on there, and I'm also on our Twitch channel every Monday, [twitch.tv/friendsatthetable](#).

Keith: You should definitely go and subscribe to [twitch.tv/friendsatthetable](#). You should also find us on YouTube at [friendsatthetable](#). You can find the show on [Twitter](#) and [Cohost](#) at friends_table or friends-table for Cohost, and please if you could follow the [TikTok](#) account, friends_table. It's very important to me. No reason why.

Sylvia: Also, this show wouldn't exist without [friendsatthetable.cash](#), so go support us on Patreon.

Keith: Oh yeah, that's literally true.

Sylvia: Yeah. No, this was a stretch goal for our Patreon. thank you everybody who supported us. We mentioned it last time, but you know, worth saying thank you again.

Keith: Yeah, if you listen to this show or any of the other things that we do—not just the podcasts, but of course including Friends at the Table main show—go to [friendsatthetable.cash](#) and consider supporting us there. This is a good set of episodes, for me, I think.

Sylvia: This is a great set of episodes. [laughs quietly]

Episode Four [0:03:56]

Keith: The exam is officially underway. Phase one is to follow Satotz. He says “Follow me,” and they all follow him. This ends up being kind of a point of contention, people trying to keep up with his superhuman stride, and we see Killua with his extremely cool skateboard, which makes Leorio mad.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Which is really funny. We get a lot of character detail in this episode, lots of motivations, lots of, like, sort of getting a feel for different characters' endurance levels, and after a...what is it, grueling dozens and dozens of miles long—

Dre: 80 kilometers.

Keith: At least 80 kilometers.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Because then they go a lot more after 80 kilometers.

Dre: That's true. I guess 80 kilometers is just the tunnel, right?

Keith: It is just most of the tunnel, because he says— I think he says, "It's been 80 kilometers. Time to pick up the pace," and then they pick up the pace for an unknown amount of time, get to the end of the tunnel, and then there's more following, this time not through a tunnel but through a horribly deadly forest. [Sylvia laughs]

Dre: It's a—

Sylvia: I believe you mean Swindler's Swamp.

Dre: Yeah, it's Swindler's Swamp, please.

Keith: It's Swindler's Swamp, but it's also— it's a marshy forest, and they— so, they have to contend with this forest. They also have to contend with Hisoka for the first time. We sort of run head to head into Hisoka, the threatening clown man from the last [Sylvia laughs quietly] set of episodes who, I'll say, cut off, de-armed someone [**Dre:** Sure.] for an unknown offense. We know that he didn't—

Dre: Well, no, it was known. He bumped into Hisoka and didn't apologize.

Keith: Well, we know that he bumped into him and didn't say sorry.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: But we didn't actually see any of that interaction, so who knows, like, what the— was it just— was it nothing? Was it an insult? We don't know.

Dre: I feel like we saw him bump into Hisoka.

Keith: Uh, I—

Dre: I mean, it was very much like, hey, look, this person will just, like, cut off someone's arms—

Keith: Will just cut off someone's arm?

Dre: For almost no reason, but.

Keith: Yeah, I think that the vibe is that it's for almost no reason.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Definitely not a justified armcapitation. And then, what else do we have in the forest? Just a lot of tricks, a lot of tricky— a lot of very funny-named animals. Then we get to phase two, which is Iron Chef: Hunter Edition. [Sylvia laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: When the second phase examiners, Menchi and Buhara, choose to fail everyone. We get a closer peek behind the veil of the now named, I think? I don't think we ever [**Dre:** Yes.] actually got the name Hunter Association. The now named Hunter Association and another chance for people to be impressed by Gon and then immediately again another chance for people to be impressed by Gon. [Sylvia laughs] Should I say how many people remain after this second phase?

Jack: I think that's a great idea.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: After the— so, the last time we were here, there were 405, right?

Sylvia: Yes.

Jack: Uh, there were 404. Arm man got...

Keith: 404, right, because the one-armed man, yes.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Right, yes.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: After these... [Sylvia laughs] After the end of the second, 42. Many, many left passed out on the side of the road; many, many dead.

Dre: Dead.

Keith: Dead.

Dre: Just dead.

Jack: Many, many, many dead.

Keith: Many dead.

Jack: Many dead! Well, the game continues! [Keith laughs] Jesus fucking christ.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: All right. I would like to—

Sylvia: Yeah. It's very funny, Jack, last time you mentioned *Squid Game*, [Dre laughs] and no one had died yet. [laughs quietly]

Jack: No. No.

Sylvia: Except for arm guy, presumably.

Jack: Although we do get told early— so, early on, and I— maybe this is the— I want to talk about death in this episode.

Sylvia: Let's go.

Keith: Cracks knuckles. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: The way this show is thinking about death.

Keith: Roll up my sleeves, but I have no sleeves, so it's just the skin on my arm, and it's a *Spongebob* episode. [Dre chuckles]

Sylvia: Sit down, kids.

Jack: But yeah, no, I think the way into this is to talk about how, you know, in the...the first time we all, we three assembled here plus Austin, we talked about how Gon and Kurapika and Leorio were warned that the Hunter Exam is very dangerous. You know, I think that either the sea captain—yeah, I think it was the sea captain, maybe one of the navigators—was like, “You know, the Hunter Exam is pretty dangerous. You gotta be really careful,” and at the time, I sort of thought, “Well, you know, it's, um...I know that there's a low rate of winning. It might be that you get hurt. Maybe there are a couple of deaths every year.” The death seems to be the point, to a certain extent. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Episode four begins with the narrator— it's such a good opening. It begins just with these shots of them in the dark running, exactly where we left off, and I want to, like, you know...I love the way that by and large each episode begins exactly where the previous episode ended, often with a little bit of overlap.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: You know, we go back about 30 seconds to see what happened, and it gives this great sensation of, like, an ongoing trial that they're in, and in fact, you know, where this kind of run of episodes began to kind of fall apart a bit for me was when they sort of

broke that feeling. But we see them running in the dark, and the narrator says, “It has been two hours.” What a great cut. The end of episode three: them setting off running. Episode four begins: it has been two hours of them running in the dark. It’s just fantastic.

Keith: We get a lot of narrator in this show. Certain arcs have more narration than other arcs.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: There is points in the show, just as— I don’t think this is a spoiler, but this is things to look forward to. When this starts happening—for you, Jack, and for anybody who’s following along watching the show—there’s points where we are deep in the interiority of different characters, and the show sort of, like, in the same way as we sort of talked about different episodes being from different perspectives, like episode two is really, like, from Kurapika’s perspective. Episode three is really from Tonpa’s perspective. There’s episodes that we are basically the narrator. Like, we are...

Jack: That’s wild.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Yeah, we are, like, watching the narrator talk about the interiority of, like, a bunch of people in a row, and it’s kind of bizarre. It’s really weird. Like, I can’t think of a single other show that approaches this show, in terms of willingness to lean on narration for things.

Jack: *Arrested Development*. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: Yes! [laughs]

Dre: All right, yeah.

Sylvia: A little bit, yeah.

Keith: Yeah, a little bit. Like, what if there was an episode where Ron Howard had, like, you know, four times as many lines as usual.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: And spent a whole scene just, like, [Dre laughs] oh, uh, Gob— [pronounced with hard G]

Jack: [imitating] “Gob”?

Keith: Gob Bluth.

Dre: Listen, I've said “Gob.”

Keith: Sorry, I got into the head of other people in that show trying to say Gob's name. Gob Bluth, you know, sitting at a table doing something while the narrator just explains what Gob is thinking, and then we cut away, and he never has a line. That is sort of a place with this.

Jack: So curious to get to that.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Really interesting.

Keith: It's fun that you noticed right away the, I think, sort of integral narration.

Jack: Well, he speaks with such authority.

Keith: You're watching the dub?

Jack: Uh, I'm watching the sub.

Keith: The sub. Okay, yeah. The dub I think is even more authority from the narrator.

Dre: Yeah. I'm watching the dub, because the first time I watched it, I watched the sub, [Keith: Yeah.] so I wanted to do something different this time.

Keith: I think they're both great, but yeah, there's a lot of authority and a lot of presence to the narrator. Like, literally presence. He's always around.

Jack: Yeah. I mean, I said that we should talk about death, and I still want to talk about death, but I think probably the best place to talk about that is the death episode, is episode, **[Keith: Two.]** uh, five.

Keith: Or, sorry, the second episode from today.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Dre: Yeah, so five.

Jack: In which, if you're not following along, I cannot stress this enough: people fucking die left and right. It's like watching— I tell you what it's like watching. You ever see a supercut of, like, those, like, Kaizo Mario levels, where you see all the attempts played at once.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: You get to see, like, a thousands Marios pull out of the start gate and then, like, four fall in lava and one gets crushed by the thing, and then a bunch of them get taken out by a jump. That is what episode five feels like. But what I do actually want to talk about is how this really is an episode about running and talking. Episode four, not a lot happens.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And what happens mostly is they run in a straight line and then they run up some steps, and during that time, they just talk.

Keith: Not a lot happens, yet it's the one I have the most notes about.

Jack: Yeah. Where do we want to start here?

Keith: I want to start at the very beginning, because it ties up with something that we

mentioned a bit last time in two different ways with Nicholas. Nicholas?

Dre: Yes.

Sylvia: Nicholas, yeah.

Keith: The nerd with the laptop.

Jack: The Little Wolfgang fuck? Yeah.

Keith: Yes.

Sylvia: Yeah, that is Nicholas.

Keith: The one who outs Tonpa as the Rookie Crusher and makes Tonpa all mad at him about it.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Because— so, the last episode ends with a really smart insight from Kurapika. Get used to it. [all laugh] Where he recognizes that this is not just a test of endurance. It's also a test of, like, mental fortitude, where we don't know how many kilometers this test is going to be, and it turns out it's probably way more than anyone would have ever guessed.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: The only person who we see make a guess as to how long the test is going to be is Nicholas, who at the beginning of the episode guesses that it's gonna be about a 40 kilometer run, and sets up—

Jack: Wrong.

Keith: Wrong. Very wrong. Sets up this expectation for himself and then is— I mean, we see how tired he looks after that 40 kilometer mark, where he was wrong and the test continues on.

Dre: Oh boy.

Keith: But I think it's really— this was really like, oh, he set up an expectation for himself and now is, like, mentally defeated by this test that is, at this point, well less than half over, I think; maybe a third over.

Sylvia: Nicholas is gonna log on and talk about how it's hard to be, like, a former gifted kid [Keith laughs] because of his experience in the Hunter Exam. [Dre sighs]

Keith: Yeah, being in accelerated classes made him think that he could be a Hunter when he wasn't ready, [Sylvia: Yeah.] and then he gets bullied by three brothers. [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: The brothers three come in and get him. [laughs]

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Paid off by Tonpa.

Sylvia: I love those guys, by the way. We see them a little bit more, but I love the—

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: I love the Blowjob Brothers, as I've been calling them. [Sylvia and Jack laugh]

Dre: Huh?!

Keith: Who are they blowing, do you think?

Dre: Yeah?

Sylvia: Nothing. It's just based on a tweet where it's—

Jack: Is it a drill? Is it drill?

Sylvia: Sees two guys dressed the same, and "Well well well, if it isn't the Blowjob

Brothers.” [laughs]

Jack: [laughs quietly] It’s like...

Dre: Oh, now there’s a third one.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Sorry, what—?

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Sorry. [laughs quietly]

Jack: And I don’t think that we need to, like, belabor this unless folks specifically have stuff to say. I think the way the camera kind of treats Nicholas’s body in this scene is pretty gross.

Dre: Yes.

Jack: You know.

Sylvia: There’s a bit of that in these episodes, yeah.

Jack: There is, and we can talk about that a bit later as well. Nicholas is a fat guy, and there is a lot of this, like, really luxuriating in his discomfort and in the struggle that he is having in this moment. I think the show is being kind of cruel about it.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: I mean, we’re in a moment where I think if we said people in this scene are being cruel to Nicholas it would not be a misread. I think, you know, on a certain level, this is a cruel scene.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: That's basically the point of the scene is showing...

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: But—

Sylvia: Anyway, go ahead.

Jack: There's a distinction between the blowjob brothers being cruel and... [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: The camera of the show being cruel.

Jack: And the camera.

Dre: The camera being cruel.

Jack: Right. Yeah.

Sylvia: Yes.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: But yeah, so Nicholas sort of falls out.

Keith: To reiterate also that Nicholas is also a child, so they're like, the show and the characters are really luxuriating in the fact that this child is taking a test that he's not ready for and is, like, you know, totally flaming out.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah. After he's run a marathon.

Keith: [laughs] Oh, yeah.

Sylvia: To be fair.

Dre: A literal marathon.

Keith: He's run a literal marathon, yeah.

Sylvia: They have let— there's a precedent for letting 12-year-olds compete in the the Hunter Exam.

Jack: Jesus Christ.

Sylvia: So maybe they don't really care about the wellbeing of children.

Jack: Save it for the death episode, Sylvi. [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: Well, it does get mentioned in this episode. Gon does mention that his dad did it when he was 12 as well, and I forgot that.

Jack: He does!

Sylvia: Yeah, Ging did this when he was 12.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It's extraordinary. And then they have to start running up steps, and Killua has kind of prepped for this. Killua is on his little skateboard, and Leorio has— god, I fucking love Leorio.

Keith: Same. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Leorio has the response that I think any normal human—again, [Keith: Yes.] Leorio is just a guy—would have.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Which is like, "Oh, come on! You're on a fucking skateboard. Don't— stop it!"

Keith: I love this, because— sorry, go ahead. You can tell what happens here, for sure.

Jack: Well, and so, Killua just goes like, "Huh, yeah, okay. Well, guess I better walk!"

[Dre laughs]

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And jumps off his skateboard and just starts running, and this sets him—

Keith: Well, the first thing that happens is that, you know, Leorio is like, “You’re cheating!” and Gon from behind goes like, “No, he’s not.”

Jack: Yes! [laughs quietly]

Keith: And he’s like, “This is a test of endurance.”

Jack: It’s so funny.

Keith: And Gon is like, “No, Satotz just said, ‘follow me.’ We’re just supposed to follow him.”

Sylvia: It’s so good.

Keith: And I think that Kurapika agrees with Gon, but then during this, Killua just notices, “Oh, hey, another kid,” and slows down a little bit to keep pace with Gon and then goes, “I’m just gonna run beside this kid. I think I kind of like this kid.” Does a very cool flip off his skateboard.

Sylvia: He’s trying so hard. [laughs quietly]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Leorio is even more upset that he’s sort of being shown up by this cool trick, even though he gets exactly what he wants which is Killua starts running with the rest of them.

Jack: But it doesn’t bother Killua at all.

Keith: No, not at all.

Jack: And very shortly afterwards, they have to start going up...this is a fucking nightmare. So, they're in, like, basically like a large wide underground tunnel, and past a certain point where Satotz has already sped up, they now start running up a series of, like, steps in this tunnel.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Curling steps and hills. It is— it looks like a fucking Dr. Seuss landscape. It's wild. Underground.

Keith: It really is, like, kind of a hall of mirrors sort of layout to the steps, yeah. It's very odd. What is this place? What is this tunnel?

Sylvia: It's a Mario 64 staircase.

Jack: It really is.

Keith: Not to belabor this, like, first kind of set of scenes that we have, but I do want to rewind to talk about Leorio running.

Jack: Mm.

Keith: Because sort of at the same time as Nicholas is flaming out, we also are seeing Leorio start to flame out.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And I think this is a very important bit for Leorio's character, because like, okay, he's just some guy, but the other thing is, like, you know, I'm gonna just say: Leorio makes it to the end of this tunnel.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: He does the 80 to 100-something kilometers. Leorio is a monster.

Jack: Yeah. [laughs] He is.

Keith: You know, as much as, like, he is, you know, outclassed physically by Kurapika who is also outclassed physically by Gon and Killua, [**Dre:** Yeah.] Leorio is, like...I think, like, looking at realistically what he is capable of, kind of outrageous.

Dre: Uh huh.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: But we see him sort of, like, almost fail and then double down and get his second wind and then race up past Gon and Killua. There's this really, really cute scene of Leorio about to burn out, and Gon pauses and looks back just being like, "I know you can do it! I'm waiting!"

Sylvia: I love that scene.

Dre: Come on, bro.

Jack: It's great.

Keith: Come on, bro!

Jack: Silent, right?

Sylvia: Well, it...

Keith: Silent, yeah.

Sylvia: Did you read it like that? Because I read it it as him being kind of disappointed.
[laughs quietly]

Keith: No, I totally read it as Gon, like, waiting for Leorio.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Being like, "I'm gonna wait. I think you can do it."

Dre: I think it was in a, like, pushing you.

Sylvia: Like, yeah.

Dre: Like the coach who's an asshole, but he can be an asshole because you know he cares.

Sylvia: "I know you can do this" type of way.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: It was also— it was maybe slightly pitying, but I think it was pitying like— because you see then, Gon is so excited to use his awesome [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] fishing rod to [Sylvia laughs] pull Leorio's dropped suitcase up to him and carry it for Leorio, which he then carries for the rest of phase one.

Jack: Yep.

Keith: He carries Leorio's suitcase for him.

Jack: It's great.

Sylvia: It's really good.

Jack: I thought— and they, like, meet up again. You know, there would have been moments when he could have given that suitcase back.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Nope. It is Gon's suitcase, briefly.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I want to talk about kind of the first of the...let me see in my notes here. Yeah, we have— so, at this point, the episode kind of becomes about two conversations.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: The first is a conversation between Kurapika and Leorio, and the second is a conversation between Gon and Killua [**Keith:** Yeah.] sort of getting to know each other, because it is worth saying that, prior to this point, Killua is sort of— he really only had one appearance when Tonpa was talking about all the people.

Sylvia: [laughs] When he drank the poop juice.

Jack: When he drank the poop juice.

Dre: He drank like 15 of the poop juice.

Jack: Yeah, and then said, “[smacks lips] Ah, you can't poison me, buddy!” Killua is great.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: But this first conversation, Kurapika and Leorio get back to their favorite topic: why have you become a Hunter? Why do you want to become a Hunter? And I think that they're gonna be talking about this forever. [Keith and Jack laugh] This is my suspicion.

Keith: Yeah, we don't get any new information. The bell is unrung for now. We don't get any new information about what a Hunter is from Kurapika, but we do get a bunch of other stuff.

[0:21:57]

Jack: Yeah, so, the first thing we learn is— and this was one of those moments that's such a bizarre piece of evocative storytelling in terms of what it says about the world that I just sat bolt upright in my chair.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: We learn why the Phantom Troupe targeted or why Kurapika believes the Phantom Troupe targeted the Kurta Clan, and this is because the Kurta Clan have a

trait. Members of the Kurta Clan have a trait called, I believe, Scarlet Eyes.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: When they feel very strong emotions, their eyes turn ruby red. So far, so interesting. You know, that's anime. That's all kinds of stories, you know?

Sylvia: Described as one of the seven most beautiful colors in the world.

Jack: Yeah, the sub describes them outright as one of the seven wonders of the world, [Sylvia: Mm-hmm.] the Scarlet Eyes of the Kurta Clan. However, these eyes are very valuable on the black market, these human eyes, [Keith: Yeah.] because they are so beautiful. So, the implication is: black marketeers, bounty hunters, the Phantom Troupe will descend on the Kurta Clan, slaughtering them to both cause Scarlet Eyes, you know, in an intensity of emotion, and then harvest these red eyes for sale on the black market. This is fucking extraordinary. Do you recall how this played—

Keith: Yeah, Jack likes this. Thumbs up. [Sylvia and Keith laugh]

Jack: —the first time you saw it? Yeah. [laughs quietly]

Keith: I wish I lived in a world where I could get some eyes.

Jack: Well, okay, I hate that this is the case.

Keith: No, no, I'm just kidding. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: I want to— I'm gonna say, morally...

Keith: I take it back. I'm just kidding. I just thought it was funny.

Sylvia: I think that both of the conversations that we have—both sides of this conversation, I mean—are, like, probably my favorite part of this run of episodes.

Keith: You're saying Kurapika's stuff and then also Leorio's stuff?

Sylvia: Also Leorio's stuff.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: I really like it both. I think it, like, really helps put— I don't know. To me, when I was first watching this, it crystalized a lot of stuff about who those guys are. Like, Leorio...Kurapika calls out Leorio for, like— we get into the specifics of it, but like, we know that Kurapika's out for revenge. We don't know the specifics of, like, how bad it was [Dre: Mm-hmm.] and how, like...I don't know. I guess what I mean is we're kind of getting to the point, for the three of our four main characters now, we kind of know what the key trauma that led them to look towards being a Hunter was, and I think it's handled really well, and I think it's, like...I don't know. You feel the enormity of what happened to Kurapika, and like...

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: All of Leorio's just, like, boundless determination [Dre: Mm-hmm.] clicks into place in a lot of ways. It's like what lets him— because a lot of his stuff is just pure willpower, and you're like, "Well, what keeps this guy running?" and it's—

Jack: Yeah, we haven't said it.

Sylvia: This motherfucker runs on spite.

Jack: Yeah, we haven't said what is powering Leorio.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Jack: Do you want to talk about this, Sylvi? I want to get back to eyes briefly, but I think we should talk about both.

Sylvia: Let's finish up talking about Kurapika, and then we can get into Leorio.

Jack: Okay. Sounds good.

Sylvia: Sorry to get distracted by, uh...

Jack: No, no, no, you make a really good point. I think that the reason that this eyes

stuff works so well for me is that this show is very deliberate about what information it gives you about the world.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Sometimes it gives you what feels like an absolute deluge of information about vaguely meaningless things—as we get into the next episode, we’re gonna get given so many named animals and their weird powers—and it also, you know, withholds a lot of really interesting stuff until key moments. Again, we don’t really know what Hunters are, the core premise of the show.

Keith: Right.

Jack: And so the moment that they choose to basically say, you know, we are in a world in which there are these people who perform tasks or perform adventurous lives, and that is sort of made an institution in some way. These are called Hunters. And then, at the same time, we have this situation where you have what initially seems like poaching animals for rare parts. You know, getting, like, elephant ivory or, you know, getting bones of rare animals like happens with poachers on Earth, except this is happening to human body parts. This is, you know. And it doesn’t seem like what they were talking about was like organ trafficking, you know, in the sense of like, “Well, these things are good for people’s health.”

Dre: Mm.

Jack: The implication was: you hunt these eyes, because the eyes are beautiful and fetch a high price on the black market. There’s something about—

Dre: They’re one of the three most beautiful colors in the world or something like that.

Jack: It’s wild. Yeah. There’s something about the way these two sort of things sit together. You know, this is a world in which there are these things called Hunters, and people are incentivized to think in terms of whatever Hunters do, and then at the same time, you have people being hunted for their beautiful eyes. It’s such a good moment of, like, what the fuck is going on in this world?

Keith: Yeah. Especially, like, with the Hunter thing, it's sort of like...it's interesting how different of a takeaway, and we've talked about this constantly over the first episode and now this episode, how Leorio and Kurapika end up in such different places about what a Hunter is, because the thing that happens to Kurapika is horrible, but there's nothing about that story that suggests why he feels like Hunters— why he feels so positively about Hunters and their mission.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: When it seems like it would be almost the other way around, right?

Keith: Right, right, which is what happens to Leorio. Leorio has a very sort of realist interpretation of the world, where, you know, the terrible thing that happens to him that animates his desire to become a Hunter sort of gives him, like, a pretty clear look about, like, oh, why do I want money? Well, just look at the world and what money can do for you, you know? It can get you eyes. It can do all of these things.

Jack: Right.

Sylvia: He says it can buy you, like, lives and dreams. Like, money can get you anything.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: I need to find the specific quote, because it's really good. I wish I had written it down.

Keith: And while you find that, I'll just say— and then, Sylvi, if you wanted to get into Leorio's story, we can do that also, but Leorio...oh, did I lose my train of thought?

Sylvia: Oh, my apologies. [laughs quietly]

Keith: Oh, Kurapika sort of misinterprets what Leorio is saying as him insulting the Kurtas again—which he, you know, has already done [laughs] and apologized for, [**Dre:**

Yeah.] but you know, who knows—when he says that you can buy lives by being a Hunter, and Kurapika— oh, and this all sort of comes up, because like, they've spent time together. Like, they are the sort of mirror to...they will become sort of the mirror to Gon and Killua in a way, where like, they're a set of four, but it's also two sets of two, [Jack: Yeah.] and you see sort of Gon and Killua acting, and you see sort of Leorio and Kurapika acting, and Kurapika is like, "I've spent enough time with you. You don't seem like the sort of guy who is greedy. Like, you don't seem like someone who is motivated by money," and that is the thing that I like so much about Leorio's, you know, finally relenting, sort of basically refusing to relent and to say why he actually wants to become a Hunter, where money is the sort of secondary motivator.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: But you really get the sense of, like, why Leorio spends so much time kind of guarding himself and coming across like an asshole, when...

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Well, even...

Keith: Go ahead.

Sylvia: Well, even the money thing itself is one of those barriers he's putting up, right?

Keith: Right.

Sylvia: Like, he can't say, "I'm doing this to honor the memory of my friend." He's—

Jack: Yeah, let's talk about what it is, [Sylvia: Yeah.] and then we can start kind of pulling it apart further.

Keith: Did you find the quote?

Sylvia: I found the quote.

Keith: Okay, great.

Sylvia: And it actually— it transitions really well into this. It's pretty much what he says right before getting into it, and it's also what Kurapika thinks is insulting him. He says, "For the right price, you can buy not only treasures but dreams, hearts, and even people's lives," and Kurapika thinks he's talking about how, like, the Phantom Troupe killed the Kurta for money, but what he's actually talking about is that when he was young, he had a friend who had a curable— a treatable disease is how he describes it, but his parents couldn't afford the operation, and his friend died, even though it was something that could, like, be taken care of, and from then on, he decided he wants to cure kids who have that same disease so that he can— hold on. I'm gonna rewind. He wants to become a doctor so he can cure this disease for free, because he wants to make up for the death of his friend, but the way he puts it is, "but it turns out the world runs on money, and becoming a doctor is really expensive, so that's why I'm becoming a Hunter, so I have access to these resources." I think he might even specifically mention that Hunters don't have to pay for school?

Dre: Yeah, something like that.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: They don't have to pay for, like, travel, entry into countries, et cetera, et cetera.

Sylvia: Yeah. So, he basically wants to become, like, a Doctors Without Borders by himself, in a lot of ways.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Right. Yeah.

Jack: It's so interesting, and we get—

Keith: Kurapika, by the way, is very satisfied with this and does the thing that we see over and over again, which is like, being mad at Leorio and then learning, like, "Oh, this is actually fine. I like Leorio. Leorio's a good guy."

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Kurapika's very reasonable.

Keith: Yes, very reasonable.

Jack: We get a little cutaway as Leorio is describing— oh, and it's worth saying that this is all happening as they're running. All of this is in motion.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: It produces this really weird effect, where it feels like the whole episode is going somewhere.

Dre: I think even at some point Leorio, like, yells at Kurapika for, like, why do you want to talk this much while we are running forever? [laughs]

Sylvia: Yes, talking wastes energy.

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: But we get a tiny cutaway to just some silent shots of—or, you know, with his narration over the top—of Leorio as a kid and this other kid, first playing and then the other kid kind of succumbing to this disease. We see them in this sort of, like, dusty sun-bleached town with houses with corrugated iron roofs and things. I think they're playing, like, soccer. And there's this just really beautifully framed shot with this cicada right up close to the camera in the foreground on a pole or something.

Sylvia: It's got that, like, golden hour lighting to it.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah. The cicada's little wings are trembling, as in the background, we can see kid Leorio and his friend playing together, and there is something so... [sighs] On some level, I would love to talk about whether this is a hallmark of the shonen genre. There is something so compelling about the contrast between these two scenes put together: "the people in my clan were hunted for their Scarlet Eyes which are worth a lot of money on the black market," and "a friend of mine died of a treatable disease, and we were just

playing soccer, and he passed away, and now I want to become a doctor.” Something about the gulf between the sort of, the two modes of those scenes [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] is so interesting and sits together so well.

Keith: It also, I think, you know, you...this is not addressed directly, but it does answer some questions about, like, what we talked about last episode was sort of a chicken and egg question of, like, what is a world that has Hunters— what does a world that has Hunters in it become? slash, also, like, what is the sort of world that creates a thing like the Hunters, whatever they are? It doesn't seem that great!

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: I wrote down in my notes: operations cost a lot of money in this world, [**Keith:** Yeah.] and becoming a doctor costs a lot of money. We are not in a world where...and, you know, earlier, when I said that the world of Hunters is one that also produces people's eyes getting hunted for the black market, I'm not necessarily saying directly that Hunters are out there doing that, but you know, we know this is a world in which— it's like the opening title sequence says.

Dre: Well—

Jack: You know, like, great treasures, fearsome monsters, et cetera.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah, I guess we don't know that Hunters aren't doing that either.

Keith: Right.

Jack: Yeah, true.

Keith: Well, there is one thing that we know, which is that Hunters didn't stop it and Hunters didn't arrest the Phantom Troupe or whatever.

Jack: Yep, and Hunters can go into doctor school for free and can travel for free, but impoverished kids and their families can't get the operations they need to, you know, save each other. It's wild. And then we just get a weird joke at the end of this scene— I say weird joke. It plays really well, where Leorio is like—

Sylvia: The joke is really good. [laughs]

Keith: He's already mad.

Jack: How does it play out exactly?

Keith: He's already mad about having to tell his backstory. He sort of— i think he resents having to make himself vulnerable in this way [**Dre:** Sure.] but is incapable of resisting Kurapika's questioning, basically, has to answer finally.

Sylvia: Yeah. I mean, like, he's got tears in his eyes and stuff, talking about it.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: He is very vulnerable in this scene.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: It's great.

Keith: And then, Sylvi, what happens?

Sylvia: I love Leorio, because he just wears his heart on his sleeve. He's a live nerve all the time. And, of course, what happens is Gon and Killua catch up and are running by. Gon very politely says, "See you later!"

Keith: Because they're in a race. They've decided to race to the end.

Jack: Oh, they have.

Sylvia: Yeah, which, it's great.

Dre: God, the nightmare children.

Sylvia: Gon very nicely says, "See you later, Kurapika!" and then Killua says, like, "Eat our dust, old man," or something like that? [all laugh] He calls him an old geezer.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: And then, Leorio very angrily says, "I'm a teenager, just like you guys!"

Jack: Hard cut. Scene cuts. [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: And everyone is stunned. [Dre laughs]

Jack: It's great. It's such a good joke, and I feel like a less good show— we're gonna come back to this, but a less good show, in that moment, would have had a reaction or they'd have had a line, you know? The "you're not a teenager!" or, you know, being specific about an age or something. I don't know. The fact that he just says, "I'm a teenager," and we just get everybody's shocked faces and then cut hard out of the scene. [Dre laughs]

Keith: Right.

Jack: Really good.

Keith: Because there's a wide gulf of what being a teenager means.

Jack: Yeah. There truly is.

Keith: And we still don't know how old actually he is.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, very very funny, of everyone being like, "Uh, we didn't know!" It's very

good.

Jack: Do we want to talk about conversation two? I think I have a bit less. This is the Killua and Gon conversation. The main thing I would like to talk about here is that we learn—

Keith: I have one visual, and no—

Jack: Oh, yeah, go on.

Keith: Not a ton about the actual conversation but just an amazing visual of, while this conversation happens, it is a sort of, like, behind the back, almost top-down shot of them looking at each other, running forward, and synchronized sort of floating left or right to avoid the tremendous amount of bodies of passed out contenders that they are passing by.

Jack: [laughs] Yes.

Keith: They are just, like, sort of wordlessly shifting to the left and the right to avoid people. Sorry to cut you off, but.

Jack: It's really funny. No, no, no. We learn why— you know, this is the ongoing segment: why are people being Hunters? We know why Killua is doing this exam, and it is for the funniest possible reason: he thinks it's very easy and wanted to see what it would be like.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: He doesn't really care about being a Hunter.

Keith: He thought it was gonna be harder than it was, and he was bored.

Jack: It's so weird. I love Killua.

Dre: Yeah, man.

Jack: What is this guy's deal?

Sylvia: It's weird, but also, it kind of sets Killua up as a— and I can get into this when we talk about the next episode a bit. There's, like, something going on here where Killua and Hisoka have, like, similar motivations, in a way?

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: And I think the way they set that up and the way that they are both drawn to Gon is interesting.

Keith: Yeah, and there— they really do highlight that Killua is drawn to Gon for some reason.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: I mean, we've seen a lot of characters be drawn to Gon, so it's not surprising that Killua is drawn to Gon.

Jack: Yeah, because he's fucking great.

Keith: But we see Killua be drawn to Gon in a way that suggests that he's drawn to Gon in a way that is not typical for him.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: He's, like, noticing Gon doing things, and the show is so good at communicating these little bits of feeling, of like, oh, we're seeing Killua notice this and approve. He's just constantly silently approving or being interested and then being slightly surprised by being interested. Like, we see, you know— and Gon is the only person he's interested in. Like, we see multiple times Gon not— or Killua not caring about what the other two members of this group are doing. The first time is Gon stops— sorry, Killua stops with

Gon to wait for Leorio but is also actively being like, “Come on, just leave him. Whatever.” [Jack and Sylvia laugh] And we get other moments like that through these three episodes where Killua is like, is sort of interested in Gon, finds him curious, but also finds Gon’s attachment to his other two friends kind of annoying.

[0:40:06]

Jack: Yeah. Really interesting, and Killua’s affect is...I don’t know what he’s— I’d be curious to know what he is like in the dub, because in the sub, the performance is really good. I think that they’re trying to get him coming across as bored.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: So he says everything very flatly and at a very low volume, you know, but the side effect is that there is something dreamlike about him.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And there’s something kind of dreamlike about his animation as well. You know, he has this white hair and this sort of baggy white shirt, and he’s on this skateboard. He has a sort of, like, placid trot to his walk. You get the impression that Killua is kind of dreaming his way through all this stuff. Do you also get that sensation in the dub?

Keith: Uh, yes.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: I think Killua’s performance in the dub is maybe the best performance in the dub.

Sylvia: It’s fantastic.

Keith: It’s really, really great.

Sylvia: I’m watching the sub this time through, but I love dub Killua.

Keith: Yeah. Dub Killua is phenomenal, and it's also fun hearing Killua show up in a lot of different things. For a long time, my *Genshin Impact* party had two Killuas in it. [others laugh]

Jack: Who are they?

Keith: Uh, Xingqui who's, like, a sort of bookish rich boy, and Bennett, who is a sort of disaster unlucky adventurer.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: It's great. But we don't know really anything about Killua. We don't really get—

Keith: We don't get anything, yeah.

Jack: He's like a deep pool of— not even necessarily mystery, just like, we don't know what this guy's deal is.

Sylvia: Yeah, there's, like—

Jack: We don't know what he likes, other than Gon and skateboarding. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: I mean, there's things you can kind of, like...they do a good job at, like, gesturing at things, where it's like— or at least things that make you start questioning things, where it's like, "What is this kid's deal?" becomes more and more of a big question mark, [Keith: Right.] I feel like, throughout these episodes, especially, like, when he basically says, "I'm doing this to test my abilities," it's like, okay. What's up, kid?

Keith: It's curious enough that Gon can do the things that Gon does, but we sort of get enough of a peek behind that curtain for it to be reality to us. You know, he has this super impressive father. He's motivated to sort of match his dad, [Sylvia: Mm-hmm.] so that he can go out and experience the things that his dad had experienced. So like, and he's like, he lives in the woods, and he's being encouraged by his aunt to go catch this

monster fish that lives in the lake called the—

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: In the— they call him the Master of the Lake in the 2011 thing. I think they call him, in the manga, I think that he's called...

Sylvia: The Master of the Swamp?

Keith: He's called the Guardian of the Lake.

Sylvia: Okay.

Keith: He's basically like a forest demigod. [laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yep.

Keith: And so it sort of all makes sense. We're exposed to his prowess kind of slowly: the smelling things, the talking to animals, the athleticism. Killua is just a kid who shows up who also can run 100 miles.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah, there's two of them now.

Keith: Yeah, now there's two of them, and one of them seems like he's looking down on the other one.

Jack: Yes.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Killua seems like he's superior— he's like, "I'm curious about this kid that I know I'm better than, but it is interesting that he's also able to do these things."

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: There's a real, like, Killua's the kid on the playground whose parents, like, don't give a shit that he has a lighter, and Gon is the kid who brings him things to set fire on. [others laugh] I don't know how to describe it, but they have that dynamic to them.

Keith: That's great, yeah.

Jack: No, that's truly the vibe.

Dre: And Gon brings him, like, something that the kid with the lighter is like, "Hey, man. I can't fucking light that on fire. It'll explode and, like, hurt us," [Jack laughs] and Gon's like, "I don't know, that sounds fun."

Jack: Let's give it a go! Yeah, I have—

Sylvia: Axe body spray that his dad left before he ran away. [laughs]

Dre: Yes, yeah.

Jack: Oh, speaking of: I have a timeline question that I think I've just misunderstood something.

Keith: Sure.

Jack: Ging took the Hunter Exam at age 12.

Keith: Correct.

Jack: And then abandoned his son. Presumably, he had a son...when did he have Gon?

Keith: He was not 12 with a son. He comes back. I think— this is revealed later. I don't think it's a spoiler.

Jack: No, no, no.

Sylvia: I think it's mentioned.

Keith: He comes back with a baby, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] and then leaves again.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Oh, interesting. Okay.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Cool. I just...I knew that it wasn't, like, "oh, Ging has a son at 12," but I was also like, "I don't understand how the timeline here matches up."

Sylvia: Yeah, no. The detail that he leaves for years and then comes back just with a kid and then disappears again is so firmly burned into my brain as, like, a defining thing about Mito.

Jack: Sure. It is. Yeah, poor Mito.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Ugh.

Jack: Are we gonna get more Mito?

Sylvia: [ambivalent noise]

Keith: There's something in the '99 anime that I'm very curious to see how it matches up with the manga, because we get a lot more Mito and some other stuff that I think is kind of a spoiler for 2011 that I won't talk about.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Actually, I won't even talk about this, but I will say, for anybody who's read the manga or watched the '99 series, there is some Mito detail that—

Jack: Metail.

Keith: Yeah, there's some metail that is never brought up in the 2011 series, and I

would really like to know if it's, like, manga canon or if it's one of the things that '99 added, which there was a lot of that apparently.

Sylvia: Oh.

Dre: Hmm.

Keith: So yeah, I don't know— I'm very curious. I'm gonna go back. Next time we record, if it's interesting, you'll hear me bring up again what happens in the beginning of the manga [Sylvia and Jack laugh] and if it's canon to the thing [**Sylvia:** Oh.] or if it's just something that I have in my head because of the '99.

Sylvia: Keith, message me afterwards, because I'm curious about what thing you're talking about.

Keith: Okay. Yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Because I've read the—

Keith: There's two things. One of them I know is canon manga.

Sylvia: Yes.

Keith: And then there's another thing that is— that I'm curious about with Mito and Ging and that stuff.

Sylvia: Okay. Because I've been meaning to try and, not necessarily— I don't think it's feasible to read along, but if I have a moment, I like to check in at the stuff that we've watched in the manga.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah. Do we want to cut to the end of the tunnel, slash, can I say—

Jack: I was gonna ask.

Keith: —one of my favorite things that happens in these run of episodes?

Sylvia: Please.

Keith: [laughs quietly] Okay, so, we get some internal monologue from Satotz, who is like, sort of thinking about the first phase of the exam and how we're coming to the end of the tunnel. The first phase isn't over, but he's like, "Time to check and see how many we lost," and as he begins to turn around, we see the outcome of the race, which is he's like halfway turned, when he notices, wooom, right past him, Gon and Killua, both claiming that they have won this race.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: They both yell "Goal!" as they simultaneously pass Satotz, who is kind of taken aback, I think by the fact that someone was so close behind him and he didn't realize and then also that it's these two fucking kids!

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: And they are thrilled. They are so happy.

Dre: The nightmare children. [Keith and Jack laugh]

Sylvia: The little conversation between the two of them, where he's, like, kind of still in shock but explaining, like, "No, you tied," is adorable. [Dre laughs]

Keith: Right.

Sylvia: I love it, especially—

Keith: So, they had bet dinner.

Sylvia: Yes, and Gon's solution being: okay, you buy me dinner, then I'll buy you dinner, and that's what you do in a draw.

Keith: It's very Gon.

Jack: It's so Gon.

Keith: Yeah. It's very Gon.

Sylvia: Is so cute.

Keith: It's very cute.

Jack: You know who this also is, Keith?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: This is milk bros from Bluff City Zoo.

Keith: Oh, yeah! Yes!

Jack: [laughing] This is climbing the ladder at the exact same time.

Keith: Yeah. [laughs] Yeah, that's what it is. Yeah, they're gonna be happily eating their free dinners for the rest of *Hunter x Hunter*.

Jack: Yeah. And yeah, we emerge—

Keith: That's canon.

Jack: [laughs quietly] The show is so good at big crowd shots, and there'll be a few moments in this run of episodes [**Keith:** Yeah.] where I will point out these great crowd shots, but—

Keith: Oh, real quick, just...

Jack: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Remembering the scene of them bursting out of the tunnel, both claiming to have won, reminded me of the sort of counterpoint to Killua's sort of dreamlike quality—as he sort of kind of not listlessly but unenthusiastically sort of puttering his way through this way-too-easy Hunter Exam—is the moments of, like, genuine childlike joy he has when he watches Gon do something that looks fun and goes, “Oh, I want to do that too.”

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: He is similar— as Gon was impressed by Killua's skateboard trick, Killua was impressed by Gon's fishing pole catching Leorio's thing, his little briefcase, and then the moment when they escape the thing, and then a few other times in this. Like, you get these moments of Killua sort of lighting up in a way that is otherwise uncharacteristic so far.

Sylvia: And it's always— it's just so cute, the moments where they get to, like, behave like kids. Killua's the kid who's trying really hard not to behave like a kid, [**Keith:** Right.] and when you get to see Killua behave like a kid, it's really, like...I don't know. It makes me light up, and that's not just because Killua's my favorite character in the show. [laughs quietly]

Keith: Yeah, it's great. It's really good, and there'll be more of that and more of why it's so interesting, also, to follow, I think.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Sorry, Jack, you were talking about the crowd scene.

Jack: Yeah, so they all emerge out of this tunnel into a field, like a soft green field with fog kind of moving over it, and you immediately get the impression that this is a sinister place, and yet all of the candidates are fucking exhausted. They're just, you know, like, leaning over, panting, leaning on each other, lying on the floor. You know, the ones who have made it this far are just wiped out, and they are standing like sitting ducks in the middle of this forest, this clearing.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: At which point, the next task, task 1.5 is revealed. Welcome to Swindler Swamp. Swamp of Swindlers? What's it called?

Dre: Swindler's Swamp.

Keith: Swindler's Swamp

Sylvia: Swindler's Swamp or the Numère Wetlands, I believe?

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And I thought that there was gonna be, like, people here who'd swindle you. No. Here, the animals will trick you, and you will die.

Keith: Well, here's something that I have...no. Uh, we'll save this. Sorry, Jack; go ahead.

Jack: Satotz explains that he is going to— following isn't over. They are gonna move on. They are gonna start heading through the swamp, and if you lose Satotz, you will be killed. This is the point at which the sort of imminent threat of death really starts rising in the crowd. And without a break, the first animal trick begins. There is no—

Keith: Correct.

Jack: We are told, "Watch out. Animals will trick you," and before he is finished speaking, we get—I don't think we need to spend too long on this, because it's a fairly straightforward trick—someone who comes out claiming that he is the actual examiner and that Satotz is in fact a man-faced ape who is planning on leading them into the dark and killing them.

Keith: Does he have any evidence for that?

Jack: Yes, indeed.

Sylvia: Yes. [laughs quietly]

Jack: He has brought a "dead"—I'm putting inverted commas around "dead"—man-faced ape with him, and: looks like Satotz.

Keith: It sure does, yeah. It looks like a slightly furry Satotz with no clothes on and sort of, you know, crossed out eyes and a big long tongue hanging out of his supposedly

dead face. [sarcastic] But surely nobody would be immediately tricked by this.

Dre: Keith. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Uh...hmm.

Keith: Dre?

Dre: Almost everyone is immediately tricked by this.

Keith: Anyone in particular?

Jack: Is it Gon?

Dre: Uh, Leorio and the ninja.

Keith: Leorio and the ninja are immediately— [laughs] immediately tricked by this! It's so funny!

Jack: There is no pause between "Watch out, you might get—" It would be like they came out and they said, "You've entered the forest where an anvil falls on your head. Watch out," and at that moment, an anvil just takes out one of the contestants. [laughter] It's great. Does this—?

Keith: And then two characters quickly rush over to the sign that says, "Anvils will fall from here."

Jack: [laughs] Yes. Does this situation get resolved in this episode, or is this how the next episode begins?

Sylvia: It's how the next episode starts, I believe.

Keith: Correct.

Dre: Oh, really? Okay.

Keith: Yes, the end of the last episode— we are now on episode two. The end of the

last episode was the “Goal!” That’s Gon and Killua yelling “Goal!” simultaneously.

Jack: Yeah. So, I would like to say: we do get a bit of Hunter Exam lore. I hate that word. We get a bit of an explanation about how Hunter Exams work here. We are told that...let me see if I can get this right. Examiners are high tier Hunters who are paid to act as examiners by the Hunters Association.

Sylvia: They are— hold on. They are not paid.

Keith: Oh, yes. They’re specifically not paid, yes.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Why are they not— why? What?

Keith: They’re volunteers.

Jack: Why would you be an examiner?

Sylvia: They’re not volunteers either.

Keith: Sorry, they’re— well, by being a Hunter, they have agreed to be volunteers.

Sylvia: It’s jury duty.

Keith: It’s jury duty.

Dre: Yeah, it is jury duty. [laughs]

Jack: It’s jury duty?

Keith: It’s jury duty. Yeah, it’s jury duty.

Sylvia: Yeah. That has always been my understanding of it, the way they talked about it in these episodes so far, is like...

Keith: Now—

Sylvia: They get selected, [**Keith:** Yeah.] and then they do this for free, and it's part of your, like, Hunter duties or like paying dues in some way.

Keith: Reading through, Dre, your notes on this...

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: I have a slightly different take on something that happens here. So, Dre, do you want to talk about why we know that Hunters are or that the exam proctors are highly trained Hunters who are selected to be in charge of Hunter Exam phases?

Dre: Sure, yeah. Hisoka throws, I guess...I don't know if they're extremely sharp cards or they're just regular cards. He throws a volley of cards at the person who claims to be the real examiner, [**Sylvia:** Uh...] and throws a volley of cards at the...oh, what's the examiner's name?

Sylvia: At Satotz.

Keith: Satotz.

Dre: Satotz.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: The cards thrown at the fake, the imposter, just impale its chest. It is dead, and it is revealed to be a man-ape, and Satotz very easily catches the cards, and Hisoka says, like, "Well, obviously if you are good enough to be a Hunter, then you could block that attack super easily."

Keith: And I bring this up, because we will return to something you have here, labeled "Ongoing Hisoka murder count."

Dre: Yeah. Uh huh. [Jack laughs]

Keith: You have counted—

Jack: This is currently one, right?

Keith: Well, we have 1.25.

Dre: Nah, 1.25.

Keith: Because—

Jack: Okay, okay. [laughs]

Keith: Again, Dre, sorry to steal your words.

Dre: Sure.

Keith: I think two arms count as a quarter murder. [laughs]

Sylvia: It's definitely, like, attempted murder, right?

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: It is, I think, something characteristic of Hisoka is that he doesn't care whether it's a murder or not.

Jack: Yes.

Keith: It is sort of— it is not an attempted murder, it's just nothing to him. It really isn't, like...I think that there's, like, sort of shockingly little ego that goes into...you know, like, let's go— let's travel really quickly to *Star Wars: A New Hope*, [Sylvia laughs] where they go into the bar to try and find a ship to get off of Tatooine, and there's the guy who is also maybe going to kill you for bumping into him. [Dre laughs] You know, that is a guy— that is a very sort of egotistical violence that's being shown by that guy, who then also gets his arms cut off, by the hero of the show, no less.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: So...you know, we bump into that— so, that guy, I think, like, is offended and disrespected by being bumped into. I think there's shockingly nothing there for Hisoka when he chooses to cut someone's arm off for bumping into him.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Keith: Like, it's attempted murder maybe by the law but not internally.

Jack: What law, Keith?

Keith: What law?

Jack: The law doesn't exist. We're in fucking Hunter world.

Keith: Right, sorry, our law; that's what I mean. Hunters can— you can cut off someone's arm in Hunter world.

Jack: Well, yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Okay. I think we should move onto episode five, the second episode here, but—

Keith: Oh, just real quick.

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Keith: I do want to interrogate if this counts as a murder, because that thing was a predator.

Dre: Yeah, I'm counting it as a— well, I guess— okay. Maybe I should change it to "kill count" not "murder count," then.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, I think so. I think so.

Dre: Okay.

Keith: Because I have—

Jack: It's less evocative, but it is more accurate.

Keith: It is less evocative, because I will have something to say about the next set of

murders also. [laughs quietly]

Dre: Sure.

Jack: Yep. They're coming. In terms of, you know, what we were talking about in the last episode, in terms of the way the Hunter organization invites you to think of the world as a game, I think that the jury duty thing is really interesting as well, in the sense that they don't have professional examiners. Instead, new kinds of the game open up when you are made into a Hunter, and sometimes one of those things is: okay, now you have to do Hunter trials. It's like a new set of tasks that you have to complete, rather than that being something that you sort of elect into.

Episode Five [0:58:29]

Jack: Episode five, "Hisoka x Is x Sneaky." That's the name of this episode, and we get it in the funniest title card gag. It's so good. Satotz says, "Look, if you try and kill me—" He basically says, "Look, if you try and kill me with cards again, [**Keith:** Yeah.] I will disqualify you."

Keith: He does thank him for the compliment.

Jack: Yes, of being like, "You're a good—you defended well." But if you raise a hand at me—

Keith: And sort of very obliquely is doing every other person there a massive favor [**Jack:** Yeah.] by very quickly solving this problem.

Jack: [chuckles] Yes.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: For everyone.

Jack: And Hisoka says, "I would do nothing of the sort. I only want to be above board. All good here." Smash cut to massive flamenco guitar. So, Hisoka's theme [Sylvia sighs]

is these, like, great flamenco guitar chords, flamenco picking and strumming.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: It's fucking impeccable.

Keith: Yeah, the Spanish guitar is so good.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's so beautiful. And so— it's such a stylish show. We have Hisoka say, "No, I won't do anything sinister." Big flurry of Spanish guitar. Smash cut to title card, "Hisoka x Is x Sneaky." Right back into the episode. It's just really well made.

Keith: It's really the closest to *Always Sunny In Philadelphia* that this show gets. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: It's great.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I mean, it's clearly a deliberate joke.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: You know, they clearly paced that out completely. And off they go. Off they go, into the woods.

Keith: Um, I was wrong. That stuff all is— that stuff is all in episode four. I take it back.

Jack: Oh, okay. Cool.

Dre: Oh, wow. Okay.

Keith: So, now we're— yeah.

Sylvia: I think it replays at the beginning of episode five.

Keith: Yeah, it does. Yeah, that's probably what—

Dre: Sure.

Keith: But yeah, I have here under episode four: Leorio and Hanzo, and then Hisoka does everyone a favor by killing the swamp predator.

Jack: I want to talk really broadly about this episode, and then we can kind of dial into specifics. From here to the end of the episode is wall-to-wall death and mutilation [Keith: Yeah.] at the hands of the tricky animals, [Dre: Mm-hmm.] punctuated by two interesting fights. First, Hisoka is fought by some people who try to kick him out of the Hunter Exam, basically. They say, like, "You're a fiend, and we're gonna get rid of you." And then, leading on from that, a fight— our first fight between Gon, Leorio, and is it Kurapika?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yes.

Jack: Fight Hisoka together, and then eventually they arrive outside of these big beautiful stone walls, [Sylvia laughs] getting ready for test number two.

Dre: Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa.

Sylvia: Kind of looks like Princess Peach's castle. Or a White Castle.

Dre: Jack.

Jack: Yes.

Dre: You skipped the part where fucking Leorio and Kurapika have to fight a creature that's named a Noggin Lugging Tortoise that has, like—

Jack: Oh, oh.

Sylvia: We need to just do a creature rundown for this episode, honestly.

Keith: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: I wanted to get, like, a...I wanted to just be like, "here is what happens in this episode, and now we can start digging in."

Keith: Yes.

Dre: Okay.

Jack: Because what we have to talk about is we have to talk—

Keith: I made sure to write down all the animal names in this.

Dre: Same.

Sylvia: Thank you so much.

Jack: Okay, everybody: who didn't write down all the animal names?

Sylvia: I'm looking at the list. If we're playing a game, I can't join in.

Jack: Okay. No, I was just saying: these animal names are so compelling, and the regularity with which the show just keeps introducing these murderous animals invites you to write the list. First murderous animal: now, listen, there's fog everywhere. Who's this coming out of the fog? [gasps] I go into my notes document, and I write down, "murderous strawberries?" question mark, question mark, question mark? [others laugh] And then, I strike it out, and I write something else! What do I write, Dre?

Dre: Noggin Lugging Tortoise.

Jack: What is a Noggin Lugging Tortoise, Dre?

Dre: Uh, it's a giant turtle that also has, like, strawberry— giant-looking strawberries sticking out of its shell.

Keith: And surely this—

Keith: I think very cutely being referred to as “noggins.”

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: It’s also in the intro.

Jack: It is in the intro!

Keith: It is in the intro. Yeah.

Dre: Oh!

Jack: [sarcastic] And now, correct me if I’m wrong, but this little thing just sort of blunders around. It doesn’t do anything monumentally and onscreen violent?

Sylvia: No, it eats people.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: It eats people. We see people in its mouth.

Keith: [sarcastic] You said giant tortoise at some point, so it’s like, what, four or five feet tall? [Sylvia laughs quietly]

Dre: No, it’s like a brontosaurus.

Keith: [laughs] Yeah, this thing is, like, 45 feet tall. [Dre laughs]

Jack: Oh, and there’s four of them, and it just lays into the Hunter candidates!

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: We mentioned last time how this is in conversation with other shonen series, and this is very *Dragon Ball* to me.

Keith: Very *Dragon Ball*.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: This is very much, like, [**Keith:** Yeah.] Gohan is training with Piccolo, and also there is just a T-rex there.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: You know?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Watch out! If I don't look at my feet where I'm walking carefully, what do I run into?

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] Why, that would be a [bleep] [bleep], Jack.

Keith: Oh, yes, the [bleep].

Sylvia: Oh, no, wait!

Dre: No, no.

Sylvia: Shit!

Jack: No, not yet, not yet.

Dre: Not yet.

Sylvia: I spoiled it. Man.

Dre: First, you have mushroom landmine.

Jack: Mushroom landmine!

Sylvia: Keith, can you bleep that? [laughs quietly]

Keith: Yes, I will bleep it.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Yeah.

Keith: I'll bleep it. [Dre laughs]

Jack: Mushroom landmines. They turn me into mushrooms, and they kill me!

Keith: Oh, my dub had— or, sorry, my sub had it called something different. They were called, uh, Claymore Mushrooms.

Jack: Oh, that's better.

Dre: Oh, that's even better.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: That's great. Well, Hypnosis Butterfly arrives. What does that do? Exactly what you expect.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Yep, you fly under it, and you lose the Hunter Exam, and then maybe you're passed out and someone eats you while you're passed out.

Jack: Penultimate animal, we hear in the distance. What do we hear, Dre?

Dre: Oh, I forget what exactly they're yelling. Oh, they're—

Keith: They're imitating someone.

Dre: They're mimicking the voice of the examiner being like, "I'm over here. Hurry up."

Keith: Yeah. Something, if you thought for a second, you'd go, "The examiner would never help me out that way." [Jack chuckles]

Dre: No.

Keith: The whole point is to not lose sight, but no, these people, it's their only hope to go follow that voice, and instead, what do they find?

Dre: Well, they fall off a cliff and land on a bunch of stakes.

Jack: They get impaled by spikes!

Dre: Uh huh.

Keith: They get impaled by spikes to their death. [Sylvia laughs] Curse you, Ruse Raven.

Sylvia: Ruse Raven's my favorite.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Ruse Raven's so good.

Jack: Ruse Raven's great.

Dre: And they have weird, like, snake—

Jack: We actually saw him earlier.

Dre: They have, like, a double tongue.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And this is just a bird flying overhead, and the bird is alternately saying, you know, like, "I'm over here!"

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And also just, like, "Aaah!"

Keith: The double tongue, I think, is a cute reference to myths about sort of trickster ravens who, if you cut a crow's tongue or a raven's tongue down the middle, they gain the ability to speak.

Jack: Oh, that's great.

Dre: Oh.

Jack: Don't do that, but that is a good myth.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I cannot tell you, dear listener, how in rapid succession these scenes and these deaths play. [quiet laughter]

Keith: This is nearly montage.

Sylvia: It's a montage, basically, yeah.

Keith: Yes, it's nearly a montage.

Dre: No, it's definitely a montage.

Jack: But it goes on forever. It is, like, five minutes of people getting fucking murdered by the animals. [laughs]

Keith: So, we know that between the start of phase one and the end of phase two, because I said at the very beginning we have 42 remaining, which means we lost over 350 contestants. Contestants, uh, mm, what are the—

Sylvia: Examinees?

Dre: Contestants. [laughs quietly]

Keith: Examinees? Yeah, contestants.

Jack: Candidates?

Keith: It's a game show.

Sylvia: Entrants, I think, is actually what they say.

Keith: Entrants, right. Yes, entrants, yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: How many of those do you think are deaths?

Sylvia: No, it's not; sorry. It's applicants.

Keith: Do we have a gut feeling on what is a death and what is just a...?

Sylvia: Well, the way...

Dre: Anyone in the swamp is dead.

Sylvia: Yeah. I think a lot of the people in the— I guess they don't specifically mention...there are a few people who just fall asleep, right, from the butterflies?

Keith: Right.

Jack: Yeah, but they're gonna get fucking eaten.

Dre: They're dead. They're gonna get eaten. Yeah.

Sylvia: They're gonna get eaten by man-faced apes. You're right. I think...yeah. But it's hard— what we'd have to do is eliminate the people who lost in the tunnel.

Keith: Oh, I actually have— I don't have the number of how many people made it out of the tunnel, but I do have the number of how many people— oh, I do. I do have that.

Sylvia: Okay, perfect. Okay.

Keith: It's 148. So, we lose 250. Is that correct? Yeah, we lose almost exactly 250 in the tunnel.

Sylvia: About, yeah. So...so!

Keith: So.

Sylvia: Hey, guys, less than 50% kill rate on the Hunter Exam guaranteed.

Dre: Sure.

Sylvia: We did it, everyone. It's a good year. [laughs quietly]

Jack: Okay.

Keith: I'm wrong. I'm wrong again. I'm sorry, everybody. I'm gonna cut that whole thing.

Sylvia: Okay. [laughs]

Keith: 148 is the number after the swamp.

Sylvia: Ohhh, okay.

Dre: Yeah, I thought it was, like, 200-something people died in the swamp.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, I think...

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] Nevermind. [Jack laughs]

Keith: I think it's it's probably— yeah, I think it's probably, like, 150 or 200 people died in the swamp.

Sylvia: We did it again, guys!

Jack: Sorry, Sylvi.

Sylvia: We killed half of them! [Jack laughs]

Keith: Oh no, we killed half of them.

Jack: Okay, look. I know how genre works. I am not...I don't think— if, for example, this was a piece of realist fiction, we would see all these deaths, and we would be treating them very differently than if we are in this situation, which is, you know, a shonen and is also, you know, like, a heightened piece of work.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: So I'm not out here claiming, like, "Oh, wow, we should take this—" I don't want to do the, like, CinemaSins thing of, like...you meet the piece of work where it stands, and this is a piece of work in which a bunch of people go get killed in a swamp by animals and it is played, understandably, often like a joke, with the Noggin Lugging Tortoise.

Keith: Ding! Deus ex empathy.

Jack: [laughs] What is deus ex empathy, Keith?

Keith: Uh, that's just a CinemaSins joke about, uh...

Jack: Oh, I see.

Sylvia: It's really good—

Keith: It's a really good CinemaSins joke.

Sylvia: —'cause I rolled my eyes immediately.

Keith: [laughs] That is the thing. That's what CinemaSins does.

Jack: But I do want to talk a bit about how 12-year-olds are doing this.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Well, to lead into that, what we should say, like, just to consider the composition of these people, just thinking about how many millions of people, [laughs quietly] according to the fiction, didn't make it to phase one, [**Jack:** Yep.] and then how many were cut out in the tunnel, which was relative— it seemed so grueling at the time, but then the swamp is like, oh my god. We really have whittled ourselves down to a really special kind of person that's taking this test and succeeding.

Jack: Yes. There's a kind of self selection happening here. I guess my question is: does

Gon know that in these trials you might get impaled on sticks?

Dre: Probably.

Keith: I think...I think so. I think that maybe not to the extent, but it's happening all around him, and he's just hanging out with Killua.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: And he's walking perfectly happily through the forest with Killua, with no dangers.

Keith: Again, in that first episode, in that episode four, you know, we saw him sort of happily chatting away with his new best friend, like, while stepping over crumpled bodies of people he had just met.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah.

Keith: So, I think there is a sort of...like, I guess you could say he does not understand the gravity of what's happening, or he does understand and totally accepts the reality of what's happening.

Jack: It's especially notable, because the character backstories in the last episode were specifically around traumatic death, you know?

Dre: Mm.

Jack: And we bought that. It was sold in such a way that I think it was effective. We bought it. You know, we bought that the Kurta Clan were all killed for their eyes. We learned that Leorio's friend was essentially killed by, like, societal negligence or state negligence.

Sylvia: Privatized medicine.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yep, privatized medicine. And those deaths are, within the fiction, treated very seriously. Or, not—I don't even want to say that the deaths in episode five aren't treated

seriously, they are just...they have no weight to them. They are moved past so effectively and efficiently [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] of just being like, okay, we're just whittling these numbers down. And there's something to be said for, oh, the deaths in episode four are relating to our protagonists, and the deaths in episode five are the background characters, but there's something really interesting to me, in terms of the way the show is wanting to talk about death by putting these two episodes back to back.

Keith: There is something, I think, that...in shonen, broadly, as a genre, that sort of explains at least parts of this, and I'm going to borrow a line from the next episode to help explain it. It is, uh...I thought I wrote it down, but I guess I didn't— oh, here it is. Yeah, yeah, yeah, I did write it down. "It takes courage to concede, too." That is something that basically ends this set of episodes. We'll get back to that and who says it and why later, but there is something in this genre that punishes people who, like, really drastically overestimate themselves. Shonen is very cruel to someone who, like, thinks that they have the strength of a protagonist but doesn't.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: We see that in the fight with Hisoka. We see a group of people who think they have this strength and don't, and they are extremely punished. We see it in, like, how many people passed out in this tunnel, because they thought that they could hack it. Meanwhile, the two 12-year-olds are, like, you know, not even panting. Kurapika's, like, panting a little bit. Leorio made it through on absolute iron willpower alone. This is, like, not a genre that, like...it also associates that sort of overestimating yourself with, like, cruelty a lot of the times. You'll see a character who thinks they're hot this but is, like, basically fodder tier, and they're usually very cruel.

Jack: Hmm. We get that a bit in the next episode, actually.

Keith: Yes, we do get that a bit in the next episode, and so I think that this sort of fits in broadly with shonen, of like, there's a...there's a complete kind of person who is very strong that the Hunter Exam is, like, kind of looking for. And this is, again, we talked a little bit about the *Yakuza* games. The *Yakuza* games do this a lot, where like, you have

this kind of strength that is, like, legitimate, and you have this kind of strength that is, like, illegitimate, [Jack: Mm.] and those people are usually, like, nasty and selfish and punished. Actually, it's kind of like the Kurapika lens. Like, there's a lot of people who the show— who a lot of shonen look at through Kurapika's lens, of like, you can't be truly strong unless you're, like, kind of completely strong in some way, and one facet of that completeness is, like, being a good or sympathetic or empathetic person.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And if you don't have that, then you will be— you'll have your arms cut off, or you'll be kind of sort of cosmically punished.

Sylvia: I mean, like, Nicholas is a good example of that, right?

Keith: Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah. He's kind of rude and, you know, like, they don't portray him very well at all, even though [Sylvia: No.] the only person we see him interact with is way worse. Tonpa is way worse of a person than Nicholas.

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] What the fuck? Tonpa's deal makes less and less sense, the more you think about it.

Keith: Yeah. While we're talking about this a little bit, Dre, [Dre: Mm-hmm?] do you want to talk a little bit about Tonpa? Because you have a lot of Tonpa stuff in your notes here.

Dre: Yeah, I just...because, again, I have seen all of *Hunter x Hunter*, but it has been so long since I watched these beginning episodes, I don't remember if we ever get more information behind Tonpa's whole deal, because...

Keith: Eh.

Dre: Don't tell me, right?

Keith: I won't. I won't.

Dre: But like...

Sylvia: Of course not.

Dre: Because at first, I was like, “Okay, he’s just a guy who likes to see the other people lose,” but then when we get that scene with Nicholas, it’s like, oh, he doesn’t just want to get people out of the exam. He wants them to be so, like, broken that they won’t even dare to take the exam again.

Keith: Well, when he pays the Blowjob Brothers... [all laugh]

Dre: Cannot call them that!

Keith: For bullying Nicholas out of the match, they’re like, “Wow, Rookie Crusher, you really love doing this.” He says, “I *live* for it.”

Sylvia: He—

Jack: It’s great.

Dre: Yeah, I think in the dub he says, “It’s what gets me out of bed every day.”

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: In it for the love of the game!

Keith: He’s really in it for the love of the game.

Dre: Right, but like—

Sylvia: All 364 days of the year before the Hunter Exam, [**Dre:** Yeah.] he is prepping for the Hunter Exam.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: So I’m wondering: do we ever get Tonpa’s origin story, right?

Keith: Well—

Dre: Does he want— does he think by making these people fall out that he has a better

chance of passing?

Jack: No. He just wants to crush the rookies.

Dre: Or does he even care? Yeah.

Sylvia: I think he's the Joker.

Dre: Yeah, I think he is the Joker.

Keith: He does not—

Sylvia: I literally wrote that in my notes.

Keith: I think that Tonpa could have passed, probably a handful of times if not more, if he wanted to.

Sylvia: There is— he is very much like...he feels— I wonder if, like, he's be— he feels like he's part of the exam itself, at this point.

Keith: Right, well—

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: The way people talk about him.

Keith: Yes, totally. I have this written down, because we talked about this a bit on the last episode about how, like, not-official-Hunter people and other players and Tonpa, like, act as sort of secondary Hunter Exams within the Hunter Exam. Like, that character who was gonna leave traps except they got the quiz question wrong, the brothers bullying Nicholas, Tonpa's whole deal; and leading up to, I think, the scene that we're about to talk about, which is Hisoka and Hisoka's would-be attackers and how they sort of, like, are...it's not just Leorio— we see a lot of Leorio and Kurapika talking [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] about what it means to be a Hunter, but we actually have, like, 400 people here who all kind of have an opinion on what it means to be a Hunter. Some of their opinions are that it doesn't mean anything to be a Hunter, I just want to be one.

Sylvia: I mean—

Keith: And some of them are like Kurapika, who have, like, this very sort of, like, you know, high-minded idea.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Like, an idealistic notion of what a Hunter should or shouldn't be. And yeah, they really sort of function as further filtering out people from— you know, kind of providing this sort of lifesaving service of, like, getting people out of there before the parts of the exam where they could die. Except in Hisoka's case, who did not filter anyone out. Filtered them out— [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: You know.

Keith: I guess maybe filtered them out in a much broader sense.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Was there anything else leading up to that scene that we want to talk about, or can— oh, sorry, is there more of this topic that we want to talk about? I sort of set it up and then moved past it. I didn't mean to do that.

Jack: I don't think so. Do we want to talk about the last monster, or should— let's talk about Hisoka first.

Dre: Yeah, let's talk about Hisoka.

Keith: Does the last monster happen after Hisoka? I thought it did.

Dre: Yeah, it does. It does.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: The last monster is the best joke in the episode. Fucking incredible joke.

Keith: It's so good. So, there's this great moment where we see the camera showing us

that something is gonna happen with Hisoka, and then it shows Killua, who didn't see that happen the way that we did, also just knowing that something is going to happen.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: He explains it to Gon as like he can smell it. Gon tries to literally smell it and is like, "I can't smell it," which means that it was not a literal smell. It's something else. But they very wisely sort of move up and away from Hisoka.

Jack: Yeah, we need to get away. There is trouble brewing.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Killua has got Hisoka's number really quickly, [**Keith:** Yes.] and he's right, [**Keith:** Yes.] because a gang of contestants in blue coats—like, they're almost wearing a uniform—have decided, as a unit, to kick Hisoka out of the game, and their reasoning is basically: you shouldn't be allowed to take the Hunter Exams, and we're gonna beat you up so bad that you don't come back.

Keith: There's another great joke here where they're like, "We won't beat you up if you promise not to take the exam again," and Hisoka says, "Well, I'm gonna pass this year, so I agree to your terms." [Keith and Dre laugh]

Sylvia: It's really good.

Keith: But yeah, great little joke.

Jack: There's a good implication here.

Sylvia: Um...

Jack: Oh, sorry, do you have something, Sylvi?

Sylvia: No, I was gonna ask if we could take a quick five?

Keith: Yeah. That's fine.

Jack: Oh my god, of course!

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, sounds good.

Break [1:20:22]

Keith: Hey, everyone. It's Keith. Just some housekeeping during the break. The first thing I wanted to note is that earlier I said I would check up on something in the manga and talk about it next episode. I forgot to do that, so when it doesn't show up, it's not that it wasn't interesting; it's because I forgot. Maybe I'll end up checking on that later.

The second thing is that now that the show is actually out and on your podcast platforms, it would be a huge help if people would go and rate and review the show five stars on iTunes. If you have another platform that accepts ratings, that's also fine, but I think iTunes is really the big and important one for us. And if you haven't rated and reviewed Friends at the Table, it would be a great opportunity to do both of those things. Again, it's a huge help. We hate having to say it, but it does...it's something that just doesn't occur to people to do unless you say it, so we gotta say it.

And then the last thing is that Friends at the Table opened a new merch storefront at friendsatthetable.shop. We've only got one design on there, as of right now, having to do with PALISADE episode 25 and on shirts, sweater, mug, stickers. If you're worried about spoilers, then I wouldn't go yet, but we won't sell out, because it's print to order. And I think that's everything. iTunes; friendsatthetable.shop; the manga I forgot, sorry. Okay, bye.

Break Ends [1:21:54]

Keith: All right, so, we left out— we went out talking about this proposition by this group of would-be Hunters who think Hisoka doesn't cut it. They sort of seem to be

Kurapika-minded in their sort of ideas of what a Hunter is.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Or maybe they're just like, "This guy's clearly evil." Maybe they're much lower on the scale than Kurapika is but just don't want an evil guy to be a Hunter and get access to Hunter things? But there's this great sort of undertone to this, where like, they have intentionally sort of forfeited their chance to become Hunters to trap Hisoka.

Jack: It's great.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And assume that this is true for Hisoka as well. Like, "Look, we can't get back to the examiner. We're done. This is it. We gave up to do this," and Hisoka's like, "I could get back." [Dre and Keith laugh]

Jack: I don't think that they gave up, Keith. I think that this was their whole thing. This is why they're all dressed the same. They have entered the Hunter Exam to take out Hisoka.

Keith: You think so?

Jack: Yeah, that's my read on this scene.

Keith: Oh, that's interesting.

Dre: Hmm.

Jack: Which makes it even...it makes it even...you know, that there is word on the— people know Hisoka is bad news, and there is something interesting to me about the idea of, like, entering the game with a different purpose in mind. You know, being like, "We don't want to become Hunters. We are here to get this guy out." I think that they have a line about, like— or maybe it's earlier. I don't know. I feel like there's a line around here where it's like, "A fiend like you shouldn't be a Hunter."

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Right. Yeah. Which is true. I wouldn't be surprised if a lot of people believed that. It is explicitly not what the Hunter rules say, [laughs quietly] but people seem to believe it anyway.

Jack: And it doesn't go well. Hisoka... [Dre laughs]

Keith: No.

Jack: Spanish guitar cue, this like, you know.

Keith: It doesn't even go.

Jack: No.

Dre: No. Yeah.

Jack: He produces a playing card, a four of clubs or something from his—? I wrote down, "He keeps using a four," but I didn't write down the suit, because Hisoka is also number 44. There's something about this number cropping up again and again with Hisoka. He produces this card, and we just get this beautiful shot from above. They're kind of surrounding him, and we get, like, a flash of a circle, pshhh, scored around them. Now...

Keith: Right.

Jack: This is a moment when I think the show is being cowardly, because they just—

Keith: Because they crumple?

Jack: They crumple. You know what I would like them to do, Keith?

Dre: Cut in half and explode.

Keith: Uh, Akira Kurosawa blood spurt?

Dre: Yeah!

Jack: I would like them to slide apart, like at the beginning of *Cube*. [laughs quietly] You know, I want them all to... [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: [thoughtfully] The beginning of *Cube*.

Jack: I want the top of their body and the bottom of their body to go in separate directions.

Sylvia: You want it to be like the laser grid in the *Resident Evil* movie.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly.

Dre: Yeah!

Jack: I think it's a laser grid in *Cube* too, right, Sylvi? At the very beginning?

Sylvia: I believe it is, yes.

Jack: Yeah, cut apart by a laser grid is what I want, but no. It was still a great scene, though. Top marks.

Keith: Yeah, yeah. So, yeah, it is like, not just a one hit KO. It's an eight time one hit KO. This whole group is down in one fluid movement.

Jack: One man remains.

Keith: [laughs quietly] Yes, he calls for help, but it's—

Jack: Does Hisoka throw cards into his brain and kill him?

Keith: Through the back of his skull and kills him, yeah.

Jack: And it makes a— the foley on it is horrible, of these razer playing cards.

Keith: It is bad. Now...

Dre: Hmm.

Keith: He might not have fallen to pieces, but I will say: not so cowardly in that moment.

Jack: No. No, that was great.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: What are these playing cards made of? Is this magic? I don't know.

Keith: You don't know. Yeah.

Jack: Frankly, I don't care. I think that the show is interesting either way. We know Hisoka can make that man's arms disintegrate.

Keith: I'll tell you that there's— I'll say that when I first saw these scenes, I assumed that these were normal playing cards and that the show says nothing about what they're made except that we see him shuffling them. It could be a misdirect, but we see him shuffling cards, and they seem like normal cards.

Jack: That's what he wants you to think.

Keith: Right.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: But it could be a misdirect. Who knows? I'm just saying. I'm just putting it out there that there isn't a— there's no suggestion except for "Hisoka x Is x Sneaky" that this is anything but a normal playing card.

Sylvia: You know, I listened to a little show called Homestuck Made This World, and they do talk about evil clown magic.

Jack: Oh, yeah, sure. [laughs]

Dre: Sure.

Sylvia: As sort of a nebulous thing, and I think for now we might have to accept that.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: I don't want to get too into the habit of bringing up the manga, because we are covering the 2011 show specifically.

Keith: Right. I think it's almost always interesting to compare to the other things, though.

Sylvia: I posted a couple screens of the way this fight looks in the manga specifically.

Jack: Oh, let's see.

Keith: Oh, great.

Sylvia: Because I think it's— I think it makes—

Jack: Can you describe what we're looking at here?

Sylvia: So...

Keith: Oh, wow.

Sylvia: I tried to put these in order, where it's the aftermath of Hisoka using his card to slash. There's a line where he talks about how he just needs one card to deal with this group, and we see **[Dre: Oof]** three guys in the top. One gets his eyes sliced through, one gets his head slashed in half, and the other's throat is cut. You see all the blood. There's a lot of just, like, Hisoka, like...they imply a lot of movement of the cards while showing just people actively bleeding out. **[Keith laughs]**

Jack: It's great. What a cool...

Sylvia: In the manga itself and just, like...

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: The end has Hisoka standing on this battleground, saying, “So many dropouts. Just you three left,” and pointing at Leorio and Kurapika.

Keith: Right.

Jack: There’s a thing happening here in the manga that we don’t get in the anime that’s lovely, which is when Hisoka speaks— also, this is a— the manga art— or, sorry, the anime art direction, Hisoka looks like a really faithful translation.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Sort of looks perfect.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: When Hisoka speaks, there are little playing card suits in his speech bubbles. In the first panel, he’s just kind of speaking a spade symbol into the air, and then in his last panel, in his last one, he says, yeah, “Just you three left,” and points, and there’s the little heart symbol below it, within the speech bubble.

Sylvia: I believe that keeps up throughout the entire manga, is like, one of these little details of— or at least long enough that it hasn’t stopped yet for where I am, like 80 chapters deep.

Jack: I’m sad that we don’t get that. Obviously, I understand why we can’t have it, but...

Sylvia: It’s hard to communicate.

Jack: Well, we do—

Sylvia: I will say, like, they do a lot of smart moves in adaptation when it comes to...like, they know when to add things. The entire bit with all the monsters is one page that’s been stretched out. The stuff with our lovely frog that we should talk about in a minute, [Dre chuckles] some of that’s new, the stuff— Gon and Killua interacting with it I don’t remember happening in what I read. So, like, they kind of— they have to, like, cut some of these sort of, like...some of this flair that Togashi has and find, like, different ways to

implement it, whether it's—

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: We get more visual stylization later in the show, if I'm remembering correctly. I think it is a stylized show in general, but like, they do more of this sort of, like...

Jack: There are some...yeah, there are some nice moments—

Sylvia: Uncanny stuff.

Jack: —with Hisoka specifically. I also noticed this. We get these little inset shots.

Keith: [laughs quietly] There's some not so nice moments too.

Jack: Yeah, there are. [Keith and Sylvia laugh]

Dre: Sure.

Jack: Look, morally, I have to say: I don't support...

Sylvia: Wow. Jack, very unscrupulous morals this episode. [Jack and Keith laugh]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah, with Hisoka, we get these unique shots of, like, his hands coming out of the screen towards the camera. We get a great shot of just burning red eyes and, I think, a smile. And that sort of seems like a compromise, to get these kind of stylized elements around Hisoka in.

Keith: Uh...

Jack: Keith?

Keith: Oh, sorry, you can finish. I was not—

Jack: Oh, no, no, no.

Keith: I didn't meant to interrupt.

Jack: I was gonna move onto the second fight.

Keith: Okay. Well, there's something important about this fight that we missed, which is Hisoka's framing of it. So, this is the...this is, what, is this nine total people that he kills here?

Dre: Yes. So we're up to ten and a quarter.

Sylvia: I believe so, yeah. [Jack laughs]

Keith: Right. So, we're at ten and a quarter kills.

Jack: Thanks, Dre.

Keith: I will say, again, this is...Hisoka is terrifying.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: I mean, in this fight and the next, Hisoka is, like, really kind of almost like a phantom. He is like—

Jack: Hmm, like a Phantom Troupe?

Keith: Like a— [Keith and Sylvia laugh] Very good, Jack, but I don't know. Uh, he's like a horrible ghost. I wasn't— I swear to god, I wasn't trying to do anything. Who is, like, floating and killing and just way better than you, and it is terrifying. You do not want to caught in Hisoka's gaze, but the thing about this is that these guys put themselves right in his gaze.

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Keith: They're like, "We're gonna attack you, Hisoka," and there is a very loose definition of self defense here.

Dre: Sure.

Keith: You know, Hisoka didn't have to kill these people to not be hurt by them. I'm trying to think of what would have to happen for them to be able to actually hurt him, and I don't know that there's an answer there. I don't think that these people were anything even approaching a threat to him. But there is this sort of, like, unstoppable force feeling to how they portray him, and while they're trying to judge him and say he's not worthy to be a Hunter, he is also judging them and saying, "No, it's you that are not worthy of being a Hunter," and this attitude he carries over into the next fight, which is where he sees Leorio and Kurapika standing terrified at the display here. Kurapika insists that they run, which they do, but then Leorio does something extremely stupid and surprising, if anyone wants to—

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] Also extremely him.

Keith: It's also extremely him.

Sylvia: We see him walk out of the fog with just, like, a stick, and he's like, "Running away isn't my style," and he has to fight— he wants to fight Hisoka after seeing him kill all these guys.

Keith: Yeah, he's like, "This isn't my fight, but I can't let you do this."

Sylvia: Yeah. Again speaking to his sort of, like...I don't know. They present Kurapika as having the one who has a very strong sense of, like, honor, but I feel like Leorio's the one who actually has [**Jack:** Yeah.] the, like, most rigid moral compass, in a lot of ways.

Keith: Yes.

Dre: Yeah, I think it's just that Kurapika's is, like, considered. Like, she has come to this code.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Whereas Leorio is just, like, "Uh, in this moment, my gut tells me if this is right or wrong."

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: He's very gut-based.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Kurapika is very cerebral. Leorio is extremely reactive, and that's why I think they play off each other so well, is because it's very intentional.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: You can tell how intentional it is. But yeah, Leorio charges at Hisoka, who we just saw easily murder nine people, and this is where— oh, does he get punched before—? Yeah, right before Gon shows up, who, like, finally actually did smell something was going to happen, after not being able to smell it earlier. Smells that something is going to happen; disappears from Killua's side, and—

Dre: I don't think he necessarily smelled that something was gonna happen. He was just worried and was like, "Why are Leorio and Kurapika not here?" and then he sniffed them out and went to go find them.

Keith: You think so? You don't think he smelled something? Like, maybe— I mean, even as surface level as, like, just smelled that Hisoka and Leorio were, like, in the same area.

Dre: Maybe.

Keith: Like, far away.

Dre: I mean, maybe.

Keith: Maybe. I don't know. We do see him smell the air. But Leorio gets absolutely clocked by Hisoka, [Sylvia chuckles] which is interesting, because he didn't clock anyone else. [Sylvia chuckles] He sliced them down with cards. So, he clocks Leorio, out in one punch, makes a passing remark about the look on Leorio's face as he's charging him, in a positive way.

Jack: Yeah, he sort of says, “You got the stuff,” you know.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: “But I’m sorry.”

Dre: Yeah, “I love that look.”

Keith: Yeah, he loves that look. [Sylvia sighs] Someone who loves a lot of looks.

Jack: Frog interlude?

Keith: Is it— frog after. Frog’s after.

Dre: Frog after.

Sylvia: Is it?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: No, frog is before.

Dre: Oh, you’re right.

Keith: Oh, no—

Dre: Frog before.

Keith: No, you’re right. Yeah, frog before. Sorry, Jack. Sorry for doubting you.

Sylvia: It has to be before, because it’s Gon and Killua together.

Keith: Yes, yeah.

Jack: Frog interlude.

Keith: Frog interlude.

Jack: Gon and Killua are walking. Suddenly, the ground beneath them falls down in a

perfect circle, almost as if they're falling into a trap, and I thought to myself, "They're falling into, like, a pit trap or something."

Keith: Right.

Sylvia: In a way.

Keith: In a way.

Dre: Sort of.

Jack: Huge frog mouth closes around them! Camera cuts to the top, so we see the frog from above. Immense frog has eaten Gon and Killua in one bite. Title card says, "Frog-In-Waiting."

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Unbelievable joke.

Keith: This thing is, like— this is, like, the size of a shed maybe.

Jack: And it just eats Gon and Killua.

Dre: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: It's also, like, a perfect sphere.

Keith: Right.

Sylvia: It's such a cute design for this thing.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Turns out, not a trap. Ground was a tongue.

Sylvia: Yep.

Jack: Ground was a tongue.

Keith: Ground was a tongue.

Jack: And the frog walks off, and I was like...uh... [Keith laughs] I don't know where we're going from here. I don't know what— you know, they're not dead. I don't understand what the next move is here, and it's just a perfect brick joke. The frog, without any warning, vomits them back up, and it is revealed that Tonpa's stupid laxative drink that...

Dre: Killua was carrying, yeah.

Jack: ...Killua had been stockpiling made the frog sick as well.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Just really good one-two punch joke, just good.

Keith: Yeah. Saved by Tonpa accidentally.

Jack: And yeah, the frog stuff.

Keith: Oh, do you remember, Jack, what Killua says after they use the drink to make the frog throw up?

Jack: Uh, no. What does he say?

Keith: Gon is like, "Oh, thank god you had that drink." Killua's like, "I could have gotten out on my own." [Jack and Sylvia laugh]

Sylvia: It's so good.

Keith: He just used the drink because it'd be fun.

Jack: Do you believe him when he says that?

[1:37:00]

Dre: I almost read it as that he didn't use the drink, that it was just, like, he had it in his

bag, and it, like, broke open and made the frog sick.

Keith: Oh. [laughs]

Jack: Oh, and he's now a little sad that he didn't.

Keith: I read it as intentional, because he had it in his hand, I think.

Dre: Sure.

Keith: Or maybe it was on the ground next to him.

Dre: Yeah, it, like, fell out. I just read that as it, like, popped open in his— like, out of his pocket or something.

Keith: Right, during the eating.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: It sprayed out. Yeah, that's totally possible, but regardless, Killua could have gotten out on his own, so he says.

Jack: So he says.

Keith: And cut back to this scene. Or, is there anything interesting that happens in between there? I don't think that I have...

Dre: I don't think so.

Keith: I don't think that I have anything written down here.

Sylvia: Mm, nothing's jumping out at me.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, so, Gon and Hisoka fight, and goes about as well as you would expect. Gon is able—

Keith: Well, what's the first hit there? Does anybody want to talk about that first...?

Jack: Gon launches himself from— Gon basically goes straight into an attack, and—

Keith: Yeah. Fishing rod attack.

Jack: Fishing rod whips the side of Hisoka's face, leaving a mark. You know, this is how you know it's serious. He's been able to leave a mark on Hisoka, who turn around in a kind of shock and admiration. And, correct me if I'm wrong: is that the only hit he manages to land in this fight?

Dre: Yes.

Keith: Yes.

Sylvia: Yes.

Jack: Great. [laughs quietly] Okay, bodes well.

Keith: Yeah. This is where the ghost thing that I said sort of really becomes apparent. He is, like, turning into mist as Gon is, like, trying to attack him.

Jack: Yeah, he can't be hit.

Keith: He can't be hit. He is, like, you know, disappearing in a cloud of smoke and then reappearing behind Gon. He can't really do anything to him. And then—

Jack: Until...

Keith: Until?

Jack: Hisoka grabs him by the throat.

Keith: Yep.

Jack: And is about to choke the life out of him, and then stops and is...I mean, he says it outright. I think it's very interesting. He sort of says, "You and Leorio— you and the

other one have got what it takes. Uh, you're doing good," basically, and drops him and leaves, right?

Sylvia: Leaves with Leorio.

Keith: Leaves with— carries Leorio to the end of the exam.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: He says, "Don't worry. I'm not gonna kill your friend. He passes too."

Jack: Yeah, he passes too!

Keith: He passes too. And—

Jack: At which point, I wrote a note: "Is Hisoka an examiner?"

[pause]

Keith: Well, I—

Sylvia: [laughs] To Hisoka, he is.

Keith: Yes, right, yes. To Hisoka, Hisoka is an examiner. I think that...you know, I think that we'll see a lot of Hisoka examining in the show.

Sylvia: This...I like this, because it does two things. One, it really establishes the sort of, like...I don't know how quite to describe it, but the sort of, like, food chain mentality that Hisoka has towards, like, [**Keith:** Yeah.] people and strength and, like, the potential within them to become strong.

Keith: Right.

Sylvia: And also this, like, baked-in sense of superiority that, [**Keith:** Yes.] like, everyone is becoming strong so they can entertain me.

Keith: And the first suggestions of, um...

Sylvia: [laughs] Yeah?

Keith: Hisoka being a sort of sexual freak.

Sylvia: There's...yeah, there's some uncomfortable undertones, I think is a way we can put it.

Keith: There is definitely a kind of surprisingly gross look in his eye when he's, like...when he is deciding that people are passing his test, he likes it. This will not be the last time we talk about this. But he does say to Gon, when he puts him down, he says, "Grow up and become a fine Hunter," which is surprising, and then the second thing he says is even more surprising, which is, "It's always good to have friends."

Jack: Yeah, I didn't feel good about this. This was concerning to me.

Keith: Tell me why. Tell me what you think about that.

Jack: Well, I can't help but notice what you still have pinned at the top of this document, Keith. [Keith laughs] As of last time, I think it's worth coming back to. Keith has pinned, "I feel like it would be exhausting but extremely valuable to have a Gon in your life," which is what I said to Keith after having seen only one episode.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Uh, my sense of foreboding only grew when he speaks into a little walkie talkie and is— I don't know what he says. He's like, "We're moving onto phase two," or something. You know, basically being like, "I'm gonna come and move on."

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And then we get to see who he's on the phone to, and he's on the phone to the rattly pin man!

Keith: Yes.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Jack: The other really frightening looking dude [**Keith:** Yes.] that we encountered in the last episode.

Keith: The horrible clockwork man who ticks and tocks around very weirdly, who is...

Sylvia: [quietly] It's so good.

Keith: Who is, I think, according to Tonpa, so scary that he cannot approach him.

Jack: Yes.

Keith: Doesn't say, "I won't go near that guy." He says, "I can't even approach him," is what he says.

Jack: So, at this point, I'm wondering: is Hisoka recruiting, like, an evil gang of Hunters? [Keith laughs quietly] Is Hisoka trying to make evil Hunters? Which we know exist. You know, rogue Hunters have been talked about. There is this idea that you have to prevent bad people from becoming Hunters, otherwise you essentially create a very powerful sort of social entity.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: So, you know, that's a possibility. My current working model is he's got his own villainous crew [Sylvia laughs] of Hunter folks.

Keith: I want to earmark...you know, I want us to just remember that line, because I do think we will come back to, like, wondering about that together.

Jack: Okay.

Keith: "It's always good to have friends." There's a lot— this is not just a Hisoka thing either. Like, I think that that line will mean a lot of things to a lot of different people as we meet them.

Jack: And that's a shonen thing, to a certain extent, right?

Keith: It is. It really— yes, the power of friendship is maybe the epitome of genre trope

for shonen.

Jack: And also shoujo.

Keith: And you know that a show like *Hunter x Hunter* is not gonna just leave that on the table.

Jack: Yeah. Totally.

Keith: Sorry, Jack, I cut you off there.

Jack: Oh, also shoujo as well, right?

Keith: Right.

Jack: That is also— like, the magical girl, you know, being sustained by the power of my friends and my capacity for love for my friends is like...

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: That's the engine that powers *Sailor Moon*.

Keith: Is there— I don't think there's anything else about this fight, except we do quickly see Killua being like, "Where'd Gon go?"

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: "I thought that he was following me because of how cool I am." [laughs quietly]

Jack: Is Dre back? Are you back, Dre? I know that you stepped away for a second, and I want to...

Keith: Oh, Dre's still muted, so maybe not.

Jack: Okay.

Keith: We can wait.

Dre: Oh, I'm back!

Keith: Okay. Hi, Dre.

Jack: Hi.

Keith: Dre, did you have anything to say that you maybe didn't say because we were recording? I mean, because you were muted?

Dre: Yeah. I mean, I think the only thing I would say about, like, the idea of "Is Hisoka an examiner?" is I think, like, he really does seem to think that this test is just a formality. I mean...

Keith: Right.

Dre: I think in the first three episodes, we learn that he basically was gonna pass last year, and then he just attacked the last examiner and was failed because of that?

Keith: Right, yes, they decided to fail him for attacking an examiner.

Sylvia: Was it attacking or killing?

Keith: Almost killing.

Dre: Almost killing. Yes.

Sylvia: Almost killing. Right. [Dre laughs]

Keith: And I think that, by now, though, we have illustrated, by Hisoka himself, what it would mean to be able to almost kill an examiner.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: And, um...let's see.

Dre: Yeah, I think Hisoka thinks himself as an examiner whose standards are even

loftier than that of the Hunter Exam.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Because those nine people could have passed the Hunter Exam, maybe.

Keith: Mm-hmm. Uh, this is the first—

Sylvia: He's kind of Tonpa-esque with it.

Jack: Hmm.

Sylvia: The only time anyone would ever compare Hisoka and Tonpa. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Yeah, he just will cut you in half [Sylvia: Yeah.] with a card instead of make you shit your brains out.

Keith: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: This is gonna be a terrible— I'm sorry for this, but in KOTOR 1, [Sylvia laughs] Star Wars: Knights of the Republic 1...

Dre: Oh, fuck yeah, dude. Let's go.

Keith: There's a bounty hunter, an unequivocally bad guy named Calo Nord. Calo Nord has an obvious shtick. Spend five minutes with Calo Nord, and he will reveal his schtick to you, which is that he doesn't want you to talk to him. Every time you talk to him, he will count. When he gets to three, that's when he decides that you do not get to be alive anymore, and he kills you. This happens several times, and you the player can also choose to take part in being murdered by Calo Nord. If you talk to him three times, he'll count to three and then kill you.

Jack: Will he kill you guaranteed, or will you enter into combat with him?

Keith: At the point where you can do this, he will kill you guaranteed.

Jack: Okay.

Keith: Technically, like...I don't know what would happen. I wouldn't doubt that there's some way to cheese the fight, but like, he is so much higher leveled than you that you are meant [Dre: Mm-hmm.] to die instantly in this fight. And Hisoka's interesting, because he sort of gives off this vibe of like, "I'm on my path. Don't get in my way, or I will have to clear my way," but also this, like, sort of judge/jury/executioner thing at the same time? It's a very interesting kind of combo that I can't think of a lot of direct comparisons to.

Jack: Yeah. It is. It's very strange.

Keith: Yeah. There is a conversation about this. Kurapika does a little analysis of Hisoka when Gon catches back up with the rest of them. Kurapika ran away from this fight and never looked back. Thank you, Kurapika.

Dre: Mm-hmm. [Keith laughs]

Jack: Again, very reasonable.

Dre: Smart.

Keith: Very reasonable. Yeah, we do get, like, more of Kurapika's sort of ideological definition of what being a Hunter is, but he also sort of answers Gon's question, which is Gon is also confused why he passed and why Leorio passed. He's like, "He said that we both passed. Like, why did he say that?" and Kurapika's answer was, I have quoted here, "It's quite common that those possessing special talents are drawn to others with unique gifts. Killing you would have been a waste," and then he sort of embarrassingly— or he's sort of embarrassed. He's like, "Oh, was that, like, weirdly mean to say out loud?" and Gon's like, "No, that's fine," and then says something, I would say, kind of concerning for a 12-year-old to say. The narrator calls what Gon experienced "mortal fear for the first time," but in Gon's words, [Jack: Yeah.] he says, "I was so scared. I wanted to run away, but I couldn't. At the same time, I was excited."

Isn't that strange?" Uh, yes, Gon, it is strange. You are 12.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: What are you doing? [Dre laughs quietly]

Jack: It is really— this is kind of the last thing I want to talk about in this episode is this specific moment of Gon and then the narrator and then Kurapika [Dre: Mm-hmm.] talking about their emotions together, because we get some really interesting stuff. Yeah, the narrator says, "It was the first time he had been close to death," and the show— this is the first time the show played that kind of to the hilt, right? The stakes in that fight were very explicit. We saw kind of the danger and the terror played out very directly. And then, yeah, Gon kind of conflates excitement and fear in that sense. You know, "I was excited and I was afraid at the same time."

Keith: Interesting that he's also, like, Gon is constantly in a state of, like, searching for the meaning of Hunter, which is the same thing that we're doing.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Because he's trying to relate to his dad, and so, like, everything that he's feeling, he must be going like, "Is this it? Is this the feeling? Is this the feeling that I'm looking for [Jack: Right.] that makes you leave your son?" [Sylvia laughs loudly]

Jack: That's a really good way of thinking about it, because yeah, this fits with the narrator...oh, it's kind of sad.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: The narrator says—

Keith: It's kind of sad.

Sylvia: Oh, it is, but it's really funny when you put it like that, though! [Keith laughs] It's

so funny when you phrase it that way!

Jack: The narrator says, “Gon is confused.” Gon does not describe himself as confused. He describes himself as excited, and that is so...

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: That is wild. You know, the thing that Gon is outputting with his mouth, the thing he is saying, does not suggest confusion. I mean, he says, “I felt excited and afraid. Is that strange?”

Keith: Right.

Jack: You know, he’s being pretty, like...he’s making a declaration, a pretty clear declaration about how he’s feeling, and then for the narrator to step in and say, “No, he’s confused. What he’s feeling is he had a near-death experience, and he is confused.”

Keith: Right.

Jack: And sitting that alongside him asking himself, “Is this the feeling powerful enough to make my dad leave me?” It’s great. It’s really good writing about characters having intense experiences and then feeling things.

Keith: And I think, as viewers of the show, that is something that we should, like, be wondering with Gon, is like, is this the— could this be what it was? And I think this is, like, really the first time that it happens, [Dre: Mm-hmm.] where Gon feels the feeling of what being a Hunter is like and has to contend with: is this the answer already to my question? Did I already find it? And more of this will come up, and you know, we’ll try to tag them as they arise. And that’s episode five.

Episode Six [1:51:04]

Jack: Yeah. We should move onto episode six, the final episode for this episode.

Keith: You asked a question, Jack, in episode one. I believe you verbatim said, “Can a girl be a Hunter?” [Jack laughs] We have our definitive answer: yes. Girls can be Hunters. Also, chefs can be Hunters?

Jack: Yeah. Yeah, because trial— what I believed right up until recording here was trial three, but is in fact trial two—

Keith: Trial two, yeah.

Jack: The swamp that kills you was just a bonus trick at the end of trial one.

Dre: It was trial 1.5.

Keith: Yeah, trial 1.5, yeah.

Jack: Yeah, yeah.

Keith: They do say it. They to briefly say, like, after they get out of the tunnel, like, “Is this phase two?” and he’s like, “No, we have a way to go still.”

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: But it’s very quick.

Jack: Yeah, I want to kind of work through what this trial is [**Keith:** Yeah.] pretty quickly, so we can kind of dig into what the episode is.

Keith: Yeah. Oh, there is one—

Jack: This is a cooking trial.

Keith: There is one more thing, real quick, right at the beginning. I’m sorry for introducing it like we can jump to it and then doubling back, but: really odd, really strange moment before we see the two proctors of the next exam, where Kurapika and Gon show up to the start of phase two, and they’re looking for Leorio, find Hisoka, and Hisoka almost sort of sweetly pointing over to the passed out— [laughs]

Jack: Yeah. It's great.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: The passed out Leorio, over leaning up against a stump. Like, "Look, he's over there." Very odd moment after the last episode. I mean, what a strange way to start off.

Jack: We talked about Tonpa as the Joker, but you know... [Keith laughs] There's something about this kind of lightness mixed with—

Keith: It's two different Jokers.

Jack: It is.

Sylvia: Oh.

Jack: Yeah, it's two different Jokers.

Dre: Sure.

Keith: Yeah, Tonpa's the Joker like—

Dre: Is he Ledger Joker versus Mark Hamill Joker?

Keith: Oh, I was gonna say it's Joker like Joker's trick, like "I'm the Joker now."

Dre: Oh.

Sylvia: Joker, baby.

Keith: Versus any other version of Joker, really, I think is Hisoka.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: I guess Mark— I guess, yes, Mark Hamill. Unless you were gonna say that it was Tonpa that was Mark Hamill's Joker, because I think Hisoka might be Mark Hamill's Joker.

Dre: Yeah, fair. I don't know. It's been a long— I was just thinking about two different Jokers.

Keith: He's very cartoony. Maybe that's really what it is.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: I think Tonpa is Heath Ledger, because he's like a dog chasing a car. He doesn't know what he's gonna do when he catches it. [Keith laughs]

Jack: Yeah. Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Sylvia: Thank you.

Keith: We're flipping the script here on Media Club Plus.

Dre: Yeah, he's like Heath Ledger's Joker, because he asks, [voice] "Where's the Italian? I need to feed him soda that'll make him poop his pants."

Jack: That'll make him shit! Yeah.

Keith: I very briefly thought you said Keith Ledger.

Dre: [laughs] I might have.

Keith: Keith Ledger's Joker.

Jack: Trial two is a cooking trial. You need to prepare food. It's sort of *The Great British Bake Off*, or it's *Iron Chef*, or it's *Chopped*.

Keith: It's *Iron Chef*. Yeah, talking about—

Sylvia: It's very *Iron Chef*.

Keith: Talking about it as a game, they literally— this is, like, literally a game show. They're like, this is your required ingredient. It's pork.

Jack: And we meet Menchi, who is the sort of lead examiner here.

Keith: Yep.

Jack: She has extremely cool blue hair. She's wearing a sheer top and a black bra. She, as we learn later, wields, like, nine chef's knives as a weapon?

Dre: It's a lot of knives.

Keith: [laughs] It's so cool.

Jack: It's very cool.

Keith: It's very cool.

Jack: And she is partnered up with Buhara, who is a huge guy. He's a fat guy, but he's also, like, a giant.

Keith: 15 feet tall, maybe.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: 12 feet tall, something like that.

Jack: And he is very hungry.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And what you've got to do is you've got to go out, and you gotta get pigs, and you gotta bring 'em back, and you gotta cook the pigs. And we go pretty much straightaway into, like, a broad slapstick sequence, as it turns out that these are, [**Keith:** Yeah.] quote, "the world's most aggressive pigs," and we get a little—

Keith: Uh, anybody remember what they're called?

Jack: Oh, god. Did I write it down?

Keith: I wrote this one down, because it's so quick, and it's almost hard to even realize this is the name of them.

Jack: Oh! Are they called the Great Stamp?

Keith: The Great Stamp.

Jack: Yeah. The Great Stamp, the world's most aggressive pigs. What we get here is basically a reprise of the trick swamp. We get a bunch of people getting killed by carnivorous pigs.

Keith: Yeah. Well, how do this group of sort of grizzled tough guys feel about having to do a chef game?

Sylvia: Not happy.

Keith: No, they're not happy. They're laughing at— when these people are revealed— oh, I'm ringing the bell! Sorry, everybody, I'm ringing the bell. When they're revealed to be Gourmet Hunters...

Jack: Bing bing bing bing bing! New type of Hunter.

Keith: They are laughed at. So...

Jack: Yeah. Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: What is a Gourmet Hunter?

Jack: Uh, you wrote something down here, Dre. You wanted to talk about how Gourmet Hunters have been introduced.

Dre: Yeah. Let me pull up those notes again. Duh duh duh dum...

Keith: Actually, yeah, you have two things about this, I think.

Jack: Good. Great.

Keith: Because you also have the heading— we'll talk about this maybe after the first part of this exam, maybe.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: How long is this exam taking?

Dre: Yeah. Um...

Keith: Yeah, we'll get— [Dre sighs] Let's double back to that one, [**Dre:** Yeah.] once we get more into how long this one's gonna take.

Dre: Yeah, so, the Gourmet Hunters— I mean, they say this, like, after the test, but their whole thing is that they are so driven to tast the best food and find the rarest and best ingredients that they have to become, like, incredibly strong to brave the dangers that are required to get these ingredients.

Keith: Right. Yeah, the, like, every— when we learn about new kinds of Hunters, the underlying thing is always gonna be: they had to pass the same test everyone else did to become a Hunter.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And so, they must have needed to do that for some reason. [Keith and Jack laugh] Yeah.

Jack: Again, what does the existence of the Hunters guild tell us about the world and vice versa?

Keith: Yeah, and what does the— what is this— we now have our first evidence of, like, a very wide...not stratification, but like, nothing that we've learned about Hunters to this point would make you assume that there is something called a Gourmet Hunter.

Dre: No.

Jack: I don't know. I disagree.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: I think that a Hunter can be fucking anything. I would— you know, I would— I didn't know what this third trial was going to be, and when the doors opened and it was a cooking trial and all the contestants had, like, this shock reaction, I was just sort of like, “Well, yeah, of course.”

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: “Okay. This is about right.”

Keith: I will say, you are— this is a special case, because you are part of a show where we have spent the last, like, three months being like, “Ha ha, Jack, what is a Hunter? Isn't it weird that that's so hard to answer?” [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: That's true. Yes, that's true.

Keith: So, you are especially primed to not be surprised [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] when something like this shows up.

Jack: I think two things here. The first is that this is actually the closest we get to the traditional term, like, hunter. They have to go out and get pigs.

Keith: [laughs] Yeah, that is true!

Jack: Hunt the pigs. You know?

Keith: And it is, at this point, the weirdest thing that they have to do.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: To me, it is like, now that they're actually hunting an animal, it is, like, bizarre. [laughs]

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Because they've really shown you that that's not what they mean by Hunter [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] and then quickly reel it in, be like, "No, actually, sometimes it is."

Jack: Well, and then Buhara says—and we've talked about the Great Stamp being the world's most aggressive pig—he says, "Ah, jokes on them: there's only one type of pig that lives around here," and at this point, I wrote in my notes confidently, "an evil one," and then I was proven right, just, like, straightaway. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Eh, they're not evil.

Keith: [laughs] Well, they are very dangerous.

Sylvia: They're ki— hmm.

Dre: They're dangerous. They're not evil.

Keith: They're carnivores.

Jack: They kill more people. They kill more people. More people die here. And in fact, Satotz, who is watching in a tree, is like—

Keith: Uh, is that true? Does anyone die to these pigs?

Jack: Oh, that's true. I don't know. [sighs]

Keith: I actually think, because they—

Jack: They kick the shit out of a bunch of people.

Keith: They do kick the shit out of a bunch of people. Gon very sort of accidentally finds their weak spot, which is they get headaches really easy. [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: They have a soft forehead, specifically.

Keith: Right. Because they have a gigantic iron shovel for a face, the spot of their head

right behind that shovel is very weak. I think kind of a cute little biological evolutionary game that they play, [**Jack:** Yeah.] that Togashi's playing with how he, you know, created these guys.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's neat.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Then they get all the pigs, and then we just get— [laughs quietly] again, just all these group shots are so funny. We get two really great group shots back to back. The first is all these big beefy Hunters carrying pigs above their heads perfectly.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And then we get, wham, another overhead shot of all the little cooking stations, each of which has one pig on it, getting turned on the spits.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It's very funny.

Keith: [quietly] I wrote here...I was kind of sad. I wrote, "Why does each attempt need to be a whole pig?" [Keith, Jack, and Dre laugh]

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Well.

Keith: Which becomes kind of a joke.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Right.

Dre: I mean, it doesn't.

Keith: Right. Yes, and it shouldn't have, maybe.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Because what happens here? How does this play out?

Keith: Yeah, Dre, do you want to talk about this sort of gag that they do that takes, like, seven minutes?

Dre: Sure, yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: I mean, it's basically all of the Hunters, at first, the majority of Hunters just stick their pigs on a spitroast and just, like, say, "Eh, looks done."

Keith: [laughs] Yeah.

Dre: And then hand it over, and the big man eats the whole pig, and the lady is like, "No, this tastes like shit," or, "You burnt this to a crisp," or, "This is too tough," or, "You didn't season this."

Keith: I think she— right. Not actually taking a single bite of anyone's pig.

Dre: No, yeah.

Keith: But failing them out of principle, failing them without needing even to taste it.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: She's mad, because they laughed at the idea of a Gourmet Hunter at first, but she also is right. It is kind of insane that no one did anything?

Dre: Yeah, no one's trying.

Keith: No one tried even a little, until Kurapika tries.

Dre: Yeah, Kurapika's like, "Ah, I see the secret. The secret is that you have to also use the provided ingredients to go with the pig," and Kurapika makes, like...

Keith: A cake?

Dre: She makes, like...y'all remember the KFC Double Down? She makes a KFC Double Down out of this pig, where it's just, like, layers of pig with, like, lettuce in between it.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. Uh, just a reminder, Dre, that—

Dre: And what looks like pineapple.

Keith: Kurapika uses he/him pronouns.

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] I'm—

Dre: Oh, sorry. Yeah.

Sylvia: You know? I'm here for it.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Of course I'm here for it, but, you know.

Dre: Yeah. I don't know why. I mean, Kurapika looks very, um...what is the word I'm looking for?

Keith: Like a girl. [laughs]

Sylvia: [crosstalk] Is the word androgynous?

Dre: [crosstalk] Androgynous is the word I'm looking for.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Dre: Yeah, yeah. And so, I don't know, there's, like, a part of my brain that's just like, "Yeah, Kurapika's a girl. What's the deal?" [Sylvia laughs] Yeah, so, and then Kurapika gives that to the judges, and the judge is like, "No, you just threw all this shit together.

Like, you didn't think about why this would go together or, like, [**Keith:** Right.] what would taste good together. You just smashed it all together.”

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: And then I forget what Leorio gives.

Keith: Uh, just the roast.

Jack: Oh.

Keith: Just the pig. Just like everyone else, just gives the pig.

Jack: No, he gives...

Keith: Oh, there was a little flag in the top.

Sylvia: He put the flag on it.

Jack: He cooks the pig with a little flag on the top.

Keith: Yes, little flag in the top, yeah.

Dre: Yes. Yeah.

Keith: Fails.

Jack: And so—

Dre: And unfortunately, we don't get to see what Gon and Killua would have made, but Gon is wearing a very cute little apron.

Jack: Oh, no, we see— we see what Gon makes.

Sylvia: Gon puts a bow on his.

Jack: Gon makes a pig with a load of flowers on it.

Keith: Yes, yes!

Dre: Oh, that's right!

Keith: Yes, Gon makes a pig with a load of flowers. Killua does something else. Maybe he, like, puts an apple in its mouth or something? It's something similar [**Dre:** Yeah.] to the flowers.

Jack: But everybody fails.

Keith: Everybody fails, and that's important. She fails everybody. She fails everybody, and then says, "Nobody passes." You know, "Exam over. Sorry. Go home."

Sylvia: Can I jump in again quickly [**Keith:** Oh, yeah.] with Sylvi's Manga Minute? Where, so, this is actually a two-phase, like, test, the Gourmet Hunter bit in the manga. 70 people pass the portion of...the pig portion.

Keith: Oh.

Sylvia: Yeah, where most of it, just, Buhara eats it, and she says, like, "I didn't get a chance to taste it. You didn't even, like...Gourmet Hunters need to have a discerning palate." And then she gives them a second challenge, which is to make sushi, and none of them know what that is.

Jack: Huh.

Sylvia: Because it's— they specifically mention it comes from a little island that not a lot of people have heard of, but Hanzo knows what it is.

Jack: Huh.

Sylvia: And so there's just this really good bit of everyone being like, "Oh, this guy knows...this guy *knows*." Literally, I have the panel, where it's just a bunch of people being like, "That guy frickin' knows!"

Jack: Knows what sushi is.

Keith: That's funny, because they do have a moment like that in this episode, but it's

not with Hanzo.

Sylvia: It's with the way to beat the pigs, correct?

Keith: No. Well, oh, there is that too, but no, I'm thinking about when they're hanging in the ravine, which we'll get to.

Sylvia: Right, yes. And the main reason I bring this up—

Keith: [laughs] Literally, "That guy...he knows!! He so frickin' knows!!"

Sylvia: It's one of my favorite panels.

Keith: Oh my god, it's so funny! [laughs]

Sylvia: This is why I bring it up.

Keith: I thought you were joking, but no.

Sylvia: No, no.

Keith: It literally is a chorus of people going, "[gasps] He knows!" [Dre laughs]

Jack: He knows what sushi is. He knows!

Sylvia: Here's what they're given. They're given: rice is a major ingredient and that it's hand-molded. They don't even get told that there's fish until he lets it slip.

Keith: Oh, yeah, he looks upset with himself that he let it slip, in the middle here.

Sylvia: This is what Leorio makes.

Jack: Ha!

Keith: No.

Dre: Oh.

Jack: Okay, Leorio has made— I'll tell you what this looks like. You know in a cartoon

when characters fight and there's a big dust cloud, and you see, like, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] a hand come out of the dust cloud?

Dre: Uh huh?

Jack: This is that, with the cloud is rice and just like fish heads and tails and shrimp legs.

Keith: Living fish!

Jack: Oh, yeah, they are.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: They are alive. Yes.

Keith: They're alive.

Sylvia: Because they're raw.

Dre: Uh huh. "Twitch," "gawp."

Sylvia: This test does end up the same way, where she fails everybody for— Hanzo, like, eventually talks about, like, "It's like an oblong shape of rice that you put some fish on top of, and it all tastes the same," and then everyone does the exact same thing, and she does the whole, like, "None of you care about this," speech.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Which I think, like...

Keith: It's fair.

Sylvia: I think, yeah, I like Menchi as a character, because it makes, like, what the Hunter Exam is testing more than just, like...

Keith: Right, right.

Sylvia: Physical fortitude and willpower. It becomes, like, a...how much, like...how driven are you for one— like, how much emotion are you putting into this? How much, like, do you care [**Keith:** Yeah.] about the thing that you're doing?

Keith: How much are you interested by the world [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] and by the challenges that the world gives you?

Sylvia: And do you take pride in it too?

Keith: It's sort of like what we were talking about earlier, with like, shonen sort of testing your ability [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] to be, like, a full person, like in multiple ways, like more than just being physically strong. Like, the fact that we get to see everyone not just fail to be curious enough— I mean, and this is different. In the manga, it's different, but this seems like an impossible test. They have to make sushi, and none of them know what it is. That's rough. But in the anime, not only do they not care enough to think about what they should be doing for the test, they don't even change their tactic when they see 300 people in a row fail! [Keith and Jack laugh]

Jack: Yeah. Yeah, that's true.

Keith: For the same thing. Like, they all turn in the same thing. That's really the— no one does anything different until Kurapika, who then also fails.

Sylvia: Yeah. And when Kurapika tries, it's a very surface-level thing.

Keith: It is, yes. It's very surface-level.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: So, Satotz, who has been watching, is like, “[sighs] She's— this isn't fair.”

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Oh no.

Keith: “Back to her old— her old bad habits,” is what they could say.

Jack: Back to her old habits.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: This is interesting. So, he calls in help, [**Keith:** Yeah.] and we immediately get this great shot of an airship branded with the Hunter logo, and inside the airship is the green green jellybean man who we saw at the beginning. [Sylvia laughs] I was delighted to see him.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Yeah, I was excited. I was excited for you to see that the jellybean man shows back up.

Jack: Who is working as an aide to someone who we learn is called...what did I write down here? Chairman Netero, who is the head of the search committee, basically. He's in charge of the...of finding Hunters. And down comes this old man. He looks like a sort of— he looks like he's from *Avatar: The Last Airbender*. [quiet laughter] You know, he's got gauges in his ears. He's got white and blue robes. He's wearing clogs. He looks pretty cool, and [**Keith:** You—] he comes down and basically says— oh, yeah?

Keith: Oh, sorry. You hear his shoes before you can see them, and they're the...I think they're called geta sandals, the, like...

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: The open-toe wooden shoes that have the, like, wooden blocks that you balance on. And, to me, when I see a character that's wearing those shoes, I'm always like, [clicks tongue] they mean business.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Oh, yeah, totally.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: No one ever wears those unless they mean business.

Sylvia: A lot of stuff about Netero is like...they give enough visual cues that this guy means business, you know? Like, he has— his design is very clearly influenced by, like, depictions of the Buddha, with the way his ear shape is and stuff, and, like, the clothes he's wearing [**Jack:** Huh.] also kind of convey that, like... [laughs quietly] I don't know, just mysterious old man vibes?

Jack: Well, but—

[2:09:00]

Sylvia: And it's a really good introduction, because he just jumps down from a fucking blimp.

Jack: From an airship, right!

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: The blimp doesn't land.

Keith: No.

Jack: He just drops out of the sky.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Yeah, there's a very sort of, like, intense vibe around this guy.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Well, and even as he's talking, we get this shot where we just get, like, I think a POV shot of Menchi's chest as he's talking? I'm not sure what we're getting there.

Keith: Uh, he got caught. He got caught lookin'.

Jack: I was gonna say. Is this just—

Dre: Yeah, no, he's just looking at her boobs.

Jack: This is a lecherous old man?

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Yes, yeah, yeah. He has a lecherous moment here.

Jack: Okay. In the middle of being, uh...you know, we're telling you that this man means business, but he's also a dirty old man? Okay. Fine.

Dre: Also like *Dragon Ball*, I guess.

Jack: Menchi offers to step down. She says— he says, “Look, this isn't fair.” She says, “All right, you got me. I'll step down.”

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And he says, “No. You won't step down.”

Keith: Her whole vibe changes very quickly when Netero shows up.

Jack: Chairman Netero shows up, yeah.

Keith: Yeah. And goes from being, like, so mad at people not taking—

Jack: Oh, that she kicks them into the sky.

Keith: Oh, yeah, oh, actually, it's Buhara that kicks that guy, because he says, “If I didn't kick that guy, you were gonna kill him, right?” and she says, “Yes, I was going to kill him.”

Jack: Oh, right, yeah. Buhara kicks a man so hard that he goes flying into the sky and bounces off a tower, and when we see him later, he has suffered a nosebleed as a result. [Jack and Keith laugh]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: But yeah, Chairman Netero says, “Look, you should model a dish. You get to pick the dish. Show them what it means to cook, and then we’ll evaluate it again.” And it’s at this point that the episode kind of started to fall apart for me.

Keith: Oh, I felt the exact opposite.

Jack: I didn’t like this episode super much. This is, to me, the weakest of the ones we have watched, and this is sort of where that started becoming clear to me. Everybody gets into the airship, [**Keith:** Yep.] and we fly off to Split-in-Half Mountain, a huge mountain that has been split in half. It’s very cool, but something about the...the camera has been following these people pretty much uninterrupted from the moment they go down the elevator [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] to the moment that they flunk the test, and that has been really powerful, and I knew that we couldn’t do that forever, but midway through an episode, to be like, “All right, everybody into an airship, and we’re just gonna fly you to a second location,” felt like such a departure from the whole feeling of what had come before.

Keith: Uh, that’s interesting, because I feel like almost, like, mirror image of that, where the actual test that they have all failed, to me, that was, like, the slow and boring part of this episode. Like, it takes them a really long time—

Jack: It really does.

Keith: In human minutes, watching the show, [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] for them to get the pigs and then all individually fail. [laughs quietly] and it’s a lot of seeing the same thing happen, which is, like, sort of a montage of Menchi pass—

Jack: Pig failure?

Keith: Uh, sorry, failing everyone without even taking a bite. And then, they do get in the airship. There is this sort of break in, like, continuity for the first time, I do agree, but I actually really like what happens at Split-in-Half Mountain.

Jack: Should we talk— you want to talk about that, what goes on here?

Keith: Sure.

Jack: Yeah, should we just do a quick summary of right up until the end of the episode?

Keith: I think yes. Unless something comes up that we really want to talk about, I think that's the way to do it.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: They arrive at Split-in-Half Mountain and are introduced to Spider Eagles, previously unseen— we don't see them in this episode, but they build these cool web nests down in Split-in-Half Mountain. Menchi dives down, sort of jumps down in to get an egg and then continues to fall but rises up triumphantly on an updraft. Everybody's like, "Okay, sounds good," except a few people who drop out. Everybody jumps.

Keith: Right, including the really angry guy, who's been like...

Jack: Including the really angry guy, yeah.

Keith: Who's been very dismissive of the idea of Gourmet Hunters. I think he—

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Todo.

Keith: I don't remember his name, but he's a professional wrestler.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah. He's Todo.

Keith: Todo.

Sylvia: Todo.

Keith: Yes, yeah. But yeah, he drops out, [laughs] after seeing this, after seeing, like, what a Gourmet Hunter is and what they do and what they're about, is like, "Oh, that's too much for me, the guy who..."

Jack: That is actually too much.

Keith: The guy who caused all the problems here, probably.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah. So then everybody jumps in, and they're all hanging from the ropes. We have another really great group shot of all these people hanging from spiderwebs.

Keith: Yeah. There's a great shot of, uh, right as they jump. This is similar to the race in the first episode that we talked about today, where everyone is sort of deciding that they don't want to jump because of how dangerous it looks, and then we see our four friends—Gon and Killua, [**Jack:** Yep.] Kurapika, and Leorio—already have jumped.

Jack: Yes.

Keith: And the examiners are impressed. Netero notices. Everyone else is like, "Oh, well, I guess they jumped, so maybe we all should also jump."

Jack: When we talk about these big group scenes, I think part of what really sells it is that the costume design in this show is both very detailed and very varied.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And so when we talk about these group shots, what you're often looking at is between 20 and 50 people, all in wild outfits, doing some strange thing.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And then the ropes—

Keith: And the show benefits from the way that shows get made, which is like, they know who's going to be around the longest.

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Keith: And so, as people die or flunk out, you're getting a higher concentration of

people that they they knew were gonna be around, so that they have, like, more interesting things about them.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: They're trying to say more things about who they are as characters, because it's more relevant, and so, as these group shots happen, episode by episode by episode, we're getting a higher concentration of interesting people.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. It's great. The ropes begin to snap, and a bunch of people let go early, to kind of dive down, and fall to their deaths, because it turns out that the updraft is not consistent.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: This is another real *Squid Game* moment, of just like, [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] most of the people onscreen die in front of you.

Keith: The fascinating thing is Gon does not, at any point, look like he's even considered being concerned about this. He can smell when the wind is going to come, and everyone notices that he is...he seems to know when the wind is coming. You have all of these people that we're looking at watching Gon for the cue of when to jump, which I think is, like, a really fun moment of, like, Gon being very impressive and being, like, kind of a unique person.

Jack: Yeah, it's good.

Keith: Where it's like—

Sylvia: It's a really good shonen hero moment. Like, it's a really good, like, here is something that makes the protagonist, like, a little special [**Keith:** Yeah.] compared to everyone that they're surrounded by.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Yeah, and when people start to drop, it's because they, like, panic and, like, don't

think they can hold on any longer and are like, “I’ve just gotta go now.” Bad idea. Should have listened go Gon.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Gon said, “Don’t go yet.” And they all go together, and there’s this great shot of, like, one by one by one, everyone plucking an egg and being shot back up by the wind. It’s very fun.

Jack: And then they all make these eggs. They’re delicious. We get another little “Gon is a good person” moment, where he offers one of these eggs to Todo.

Sylvia: Oh, it’s so cute.

Keith: It’s very cute.

Jack: And Menchi notices this, and I was about to be like, “Oh, Menchi is noticing Gon’s goodness,” but what Menchi is actually noticing is, like, this is a moment to explain to Todo the value of a Gourmet Hunter.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: You know, she sort of steps in. I don’t think she says anything that we haven’t already gone over fucking a trillion times in this episode. We have the “I don’t respect Gourmet Hunters,” “Gourmet Hunters are important. Here’s why you should respect them,” conversation over and over and over again in this episode, but this is maybe my favorite version of it, with just like, they’re on this mountaintop at sunset, and they’re all eating eggs.

Keith: Yeah. And this is where they get that long shot of all the people who didn’t jump, and we get the line from Chairman Netero, or I think it’s— we get the first line from Menchi talking about, like, “Wow, they jumped. You know, that’s impressive; good for them,” and then Chairman Netero, referencing all the people who dropped out, being like, “It also takes courage to drop out,” which I think is, like, you know, looping back around, it’s one of the first things we talked about today, but like, that is what the Hunter

Exam expects of people who can't pass is to also know when to quit.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Like, this is sort of part of the— like, failing the Hunter Exam really means not knowing when to quit and then getting killed. Dropping out seems to be a perfectly reasonable thing. No one's mad at you for dropping out.

Sylvia: I think—

Keith: There's lots of people there who've tried again and again and again.

Sylvia: Todo even says that he's gonna try again next year, I think, right?

Keith: Yeah, yeah. Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: But I do think it's, like, you know, it's kind of like this wild thing, of like, we see so many people die in these three episodes. So many people! [Sylvia laughs] And there is, like, this kind of...there's this kind of, like, sense that they try to make out of, like, "Well, dropping out is actually good. You should, like, know your limits." But it is, like— it's so chaotic to be like, "And the punishment for not knowing your limits is that you die in the swamp." [laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah, you get impaled on a spear.

Dre: Or you fall to your death in a, like, bottomless chasm.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Oh, it's so crazy. It's wild!

Jack: Oh, no, Dre, I think there is a bottom to that chasm, and I think it is covered in skeletons. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Sure.

Sylvia: Oh, almost definitely.

Dre: And Spider Eagle feathers.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Oh, and their gross net or web goo.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Oh, god.

Sylvia: I'm so glad we didn't see what a Spider Eagle looks like.

Jack: Yeah, it was great.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Really, really good. Only their— and again, this is—

Keith: Only their dream eggs.

Jack: Yeah. This is the whole show! This is the game, right? Of like, what are these creatures? It remains a mystery for now, but if you want to find out why these— you know, what these creatures look like, you are aligned with the people who want to become Hunters, you know? People who will, like—

Sylvia: It's so well done. I love that part of the show.

Jack: I want to go out into the world and discover these things. But it turns out that that also has a bunch of, like, dependencies and connections that also get you to "it costs

too much money to have an operation” or “people hunt other people for their eyes” or what’s the—? Oh, “people kill each other or get killed by the environment in a massive game every year to become one of these people.” I did think that there was a big gap in this episode. There was a very notable absence. Did anyone think that there was a big notable absence in this episode?

Keith: Hmm.

Sylvia: Was it...there wasn't a lot of Hisoka content, but is that—?

Jack: There was no Hisoka content.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Keith: Yeah. Oh, yeah, he’s just behaving himself, trying to pass the exam.

Jack: No. He’s not even visible at all.

Keith: Oh, really?

Jack: I mean, he’s presumably doing it, but we barely see any Hisoka in this episode, and I was—

Sylvia: Yeah. I don't think we see needle man do this test either, but it—

Jack: You mean rattly pin man?

Sylvia: Rattly pin man, yes, sorry. [Jack laughs quietly] Rattly pin— I mean RPM.

Jack: RPM. [Keith laughs] Yeah. And I mean, is that because they’re there, or are they off doing some other stuff? I don't know. My guess is that they’re probably doing it, but I was really disappointed, because I wrote down, “Hey, how is Hisoka—brackets: a murderer—going to do here?” I love how the tests are all sort of agnostic. All the weaklings have to do trials for murderers, and all the murderers have to do cooking trials. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: This is gonna test all the frameworks.

Keith: Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: And that's kind of, you know, seems to be what Chairman Netero's whole deal is in this episode, but I was very disappointed to see no murderers. Well, you know, we saw some murderers. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: Right.

Jack: But I wanted to see Hisoka doing this.

Keith: We saw the murderers, they were just cooking.

Jack: Yes. Yes, exactly. So that was interesting.

Keith: I'm gonna look at the wide shot that we get and see if [Jack: Yeah.] they're down there or if we see them eating eggs or something. Um, let's see. Uh, there's...we see Leorio. We see— there's this guy who jumped too soon. Um, yeah. I'm not saying that they're not there, but they're definitely, like, not in the frame.

Jack: Yeah. It's a missed opportunity. You know, if a whole bunch of this episode's thrust is the violent or exploration— the Indiana Jones focused Hunters look down on cooking, I think it would have been really fun to challenge that directly by making the most violent, the most evil character [Keith: Yeah.] have to do that, in one way or another.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: And you know, we get dividends any way you choose to shoot that.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: You know? You could shoot it with Hisoka is angry about it. That's interesting. It could be that Hisoka flunks out in the same way everyone flunks out, or it could be that

Hisoka actually takes this very seriously.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: We get good character stuff anyway you choose to play that, [**Keith:** Yeah.] so I was a bit sad that that was missing.

Keith: I agree. I mean, I have to imagine that he's there offscreen doing it. I do, like...I don't know. Does anyone have any strong thoughts about, if they had a frame of Hisoka cooking or doing the spider thing, what that reaction is?

Sylvia: Yeah, I don't...like, do we remember seeing him? Like, no, I didn't.

Keith: No, I mean, like, make up, in your mind: [**Sylvia:** Oh.] oh, there he is; look at him.

Sylvia: This is where, to lift another Ranged Touch thing, I am poisoned by knowledge, because I have, like, I know what Hisoka moves like and stuff in future things, and like, I can kind of picture...

Jack: Mm.

Keith: Here we go, here we go... [laughs quietly]

Jack: What is Keith talking—?

Sylvia: I don't know.

Keith: This is kind of fun. Look at that.

Jack: What is happening here?

Keith: That's the, uh...

Jack: Oh!

Sylvia: Oh, wait, look!

Jack: That's rattly pin man!

Sylvia: [laughs] RPM is there.

Keith: RPM is there.

Jack: RPM! RPM has—

Keith: And he's not hanging onto anything. He's just standing there.

Jack: Uh, RPM has dropped, I think, and has just dropped his arms to his sides, and is just—

Keith: Oh. Oh, maybe he has—

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Yeah, I guess he's dropped. Yeah, yeah, you're right.

Jack: There's a tiny shot of RPM.

Keith: Tiny shot.

Jack: There's also a...

Keith: Yep, just there doing it.

Dre: Blowjob boys are there. [Sylvia laughs quietly]

Jack: Oh yeah, there they are.

Keith: There they are. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: There's also face monkey man. I guess that the thing he's got there, given that we— this is the thing from episode four. That's probably a man-faced monkey child that he's got.

Keith: [laughs] Yeah, you think so?

Sylvia: Possibly, yeah.

Dre: Oh, maybe.

Keith: You think that guy was like, “I know exactly what’s up with this forest, this swamp.”

Jack: Yeah, uh...

Sylvia: Oh, I know what that is. That’s my pet’s dad.

Keith: Yeah, that’s my pet’s dad.

Jack: Yeah. You can see here another character. We have not mentioned her at all, because she barely comes up at all. You can see her in the top left of this corner. This is old granny with bushy eyebrows. [Keith laughs] I like her a lot.

Dre: Sure, yeah.

Jack: She looks like a Studio Ghibli grandmother.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: She’s got a sort of, like, Sophie from *Howl’s Moving Castle* thing going on. She has big bushy black eyebrows. [Sylvia laughs] I like her a lot.

Sylvia: [quietly] Um...oh, I forgot what I was gonna say about this. Nevermind. Nevermind.

Jack: I think all I have on this episode, uh...is this a two-parter? This is our first episode that hasn’t ended super cleanly in leading onto the next thing. Every episode prior to this has had a moment at the end where we’re like, [Keith: Yeah.] “And now we’ve hit a little break, and we’re moving onto the next one.”

Keith: Yes.

Jack: And I don’t know here. You know, they’ve made the eggs. I suppose this trial is over, but we haven’t had what we’ve had in the past, which is, like, a tiny little, “and here’s where we’re going next.”

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Do we get even, like, a number of people who passed yet?

Jack: Yes.

Sylvia: Like, I know how many—

Keith: Yes.

Sylvia: Okay.

Jack: There are 42 people remaining.

Keith: 42, yeah.

Sylvia: I didn't want to mention it, in case that was a spoiler that got revealed at the beginning of next time, but yeah.

Keith: I asked, but I revealed it during the intro, just in case people didn't want to say it yet, but we did mention at the very, very, very beginning: 42 remaining. I think it becomes much more clear why this episode ends the way that it does, Jack. I see getting used to the sort of way that we get, like, five extra minutes of the next thing in the [**Jack:** Right.] episode that we're watching. The next couple episodes, for me, are really really fun and really really good, and it makes a lot of sense what happens at the end of this one with how the next couple episodes take place.

Jack: Right.

Keith: There is one more thing that we should talk about, and this is one of Dre's topics here.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: How long is this exam? [Jack laughs] Dre, do you want to read off some of your

points that you have on your thing there?

Dre: Yeah, sure. So, 80 kilometers.

Keith: At least. It's probably something more like 100 or 120.

Dre: Probably more. Right?

Keith: Yeah.

[2:27:00]

Dre: So I looked up: okay, how long is a marathon? A marathon is a little bit under 40 kilometers, so I just rounded up here, and the world record holder for a marathon is about two hours.

Jack: Okay.

Dre: So, assuming that everybody taking the Hunter Exam that passed is a world class marathoner, which I think is fair to assume, they ran for about four hours. That's not including the swamp, right? So, let's just tag another, I don't know, four hours onto the swamp.

Jack: Okay, because that's—

Dre: Because they couldn't run, like, full speed, right? Because they had to, like, watch out and stuff.

Jack: And they kept getting lost.

Dre: Yeah, totally. Here's where things get interesting.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: If you cook a whole pig, which is a thing... [Jack and Keith laugh]

Jack: Oh, this is great. I did not realize we were gonna go there.

Sylvia: Oh, Dre, I'm so happy right now.

Dre: If you get a 150 pound pig, that thing takes 8 to 10 hours to cook over an open flame, if you're cooking at about 200, 225. These pigs are the biggest in the entire world, and to me, I saw that pig, and I was like, "That's like the size of a buffalo."

Keith: Yeah, I agree. Yeah, this is a 1500 pound pig or something.

Dre: A buffalo weighs 1000 to 2000 pounds.

Jack: This is why they give you the big bucks, Dre.

Keith: Yep. Yep.

Dre: Right, so if we are just extrapolating out, that would take, like, 50 hours. Now, I will say: the lady specifically points out that, like, the meat is too tough, and that is definitely a thing that can happen if you are cooking pork at too high of a temperature.

Keith: Right.

Dre: So let's say they're not doing it at 220, they're doing it at like 300. So let's knock it down to, like, I don't know, 40 hours. Right?

Keith: Well, I'll say this. I think the math gets a little bit easier. I think that the inside of these pigs are fully raw. [Keith and Jack laugh] They have cooked the outside.

Dre: Sure. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: But I do agree that this is hours and hours and hours of cooking that they're doing.

Dre: Yeah. And then, we have no idea for how far away that mountain is from this place or how fast that airship travels.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Dre: And, like, nobody has slept.

Keith: No.

Dre: Nobody's eaten anything, [**Keith:** No.] that we have seen.

Keith: A little rest on the airship.

Dre: Sure. And they got to, like, sit for a while between getting out of the tunnel and the start of the swamp and then the end of the swamp before phase two.

Keith: This is an unpleasant experience, even for the people who are finding this test stupid easy, like Hisoka and maybe Killua. Like, this is just not a pleasant thing to spend your time doing.

Dre: No, it looks like it sucks.

Keith: Yeah. Even—

Jack: And it kills you.

Keith: [laughs] Yes, and it— yeah, for everyone else, it can kill you.

Dre: Yeah, and it kills you. Yeah.

Keith: And for the best of them, for the strongest of them and the most capable of them, it seems long and boring at best.

Jack: Yes. Two thoughts that I have here. I've talked about *Squid Game* before. This is also Steven King's *The Long Walk*.

Keith: [crosstalk] *The Long Walk*? Yeah.

Jack: *The Long Walk* is a Steven King short story set in the, I think, future. Right, Keith? Not far in the future, but it's set in a not-now.

Keith: Uh, yeah, it is an alternate— it is, like, a not-here near future, I think.

Dre: Okay.

Keith: It's like an alternate history near future.

Jack: In which young men, basically boys, sign up to do a long walk, which is an uninterrupted walk from one coast to the other. It's a big event. If you win, you get anything you want for the rest of your life. If your pace drops below a certain point, you receive a warning. If you receive a certain amount of warnings, you are shot by soldiers who are riding along in, like, god, like little caterpillar track vehicles by the side. And it just becomes, like, an exploitation meets sort of the internal lives of these boys as they're walking and as they're talking about, [**Keith:** Yeah.] you know, what has brought them to this point. And that is fully what we have here in a different genre space, right? Of like, an unbelievable grueling trial that you put yourself into that very likely will kill you, but that the end goal is apparently very good. It's also very funny that it is still not tremendously clear what the end goal is, but you know.

Keith: Right.

Jack: He's been abandoned by his dad.

Keith: We know there's a Hunters Association.

Jack: We do now know that there's a Hunter Association, and they have a logo, and the logo is really interesting. I don't know how I would describe it. It's like two interlinked X's?

Keith: Um, yeah.

Jack: It's like a black and red...

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Yes, yeah, with like a red diamond where the X's meet.

Jack: Where the X's intersect. We see this at the beginning as well, when the narrator says, "These people are called Hunters." It's very interesting, because you know, I feel

like the iconic image for the, like, logo type of *Hunter x Hunter* is the orange and green logo with the big X in the middle, [Keith: Mm-hmm.] and so it is notable that the Hunter Association logo is this black, white, and red thing that is different to that. It's these interlinked X's.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: The second thing I wanted to say is: hey, are the Hunters the Girl Scouts or, like, the Boy Scouts? [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: In what way?

Jack: In the way that they are an institutional organization that is about providing for people a lot of different avenues of mastery and recognition. You know, you think about Girl Scout badges. They range everything from, like, rudimentary auto repair to knot tying to crocheting to cooking to fishing.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: You know? And it's very gamified in that sense too, and you have, you know, scout troop leaders who are often— they were often previously scouts who have kind of graduated up through the thing. And scout troops are sort of set a series of tasks that they have to overcome to get badges, and it sort of encourages this way of thinking about the world as well, you know? Like a sort of breadth of experiences and a breadth of understanding. The Girl Scouts don't kill you and impale you on spikes.

Keith: No.

Dre: Sure.

Keith: To join? No.

Dre: Well, and the Hunters Association also isn't, like, openly homophobic, so there's that too going for the Hunters Association.

Keith: Yeah, it's—

Jack: Well, as far as we know. Yeah, that's true.

Dre: Yeah, that's fair.

Keith: Well, I mean...have you seen how many gay people are in this show?

Jack: Uh, so far—

Keith: They're everywhere.

Jack: Fucking loads of them.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: There's loads of them.

Jack: I don't think...now, let me think. Have I met a straight person in the show so far?
[Keith laughs quietly]

Dre: Leorio.

Jack: No...

Sylvia: Mm...

Dre: Mm...

Keith: No.

Dre: Okay.

Jack: Tonpa?

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Uh...

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: I don't know. You hangin' out with three guys we're calling the Blowjob Brothers? [Keith laughs]

Dre: That's— you know what? [Jack laughs]

Keith: Giving them money for something?

Dre: You know what?

Jack: He's hanging out with them in a straight way.

Sylvia: I'm just saying. [Keith laughs]

Dre: You make a compelling argument. [laughs quietly]

Keith: Covertly handing the Blowjob Brothers a stack of money. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Satotz is definitely gay. It's a fool's game to name the gay people.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: Because it's all of them.

Keith: Oh, we didn't say, but every time a character is introduced, there's a little popup underneath that says, "Gay. They're gay." [laughter]

Sylvia: Oh, yeah, we did forget to mention that.

Keith: Yeah, it's sort of, like—

Sylvia: Sometimes it's less nice about it, which is interesting, but...

Dre: Sure, yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, it's sort of like in the manga how Hisoka's got the suits of cards under everything he says. In the anime, it just says— reminds you that everyone's gay all the time.

Sylvia: It says “gay,” whenever Hisoka speaks. [all laugh]

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, at first, it's just when the main characters speak, and you're like, “This makes sense,” but then it starts spreading out to everybody else, and you're like, “Oh, okay, that— okay, sure. Interesting choice.”

Sylvia: Oh, green bean man too? Okay, sure.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Green green jellybean man?

Sylvia: Green green jellybean man. I really gotta keep up with the Jack naming conventions.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: My bad.

Jack: [laughs quietly] I love green green jellybean man. I think it speaks so much to the—

Keith: Well, he's interesting, because he has a t-shirt that just says “gay” on it. [Sylvia and Jack laugh]

Jack: I think the show is so...this is the gorilla who doesn't have a name again. You know, there is something that tickled me so much [**Keith:** Yeah.] during that screenshot stream where you introduced a gorilla man, and I asked, “Is that man important?” and you said, “No.”

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And I said, “Does he have a name?” and you said, “I don't know,” which is the

funniest possible answer, [Keith and Dre laugh] and you looked it up, and he doesn't. [Keith and Sylvia laugh] Green green jellybean man looks like nobody else in the show. He appeared briefly at the beginning of the run and then fucking disappeared again, and then for the show to be like, "Ah, we haven't forgotten about him."

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: He's up on the airship.

Keith: Yeah, he's still important.

Jack: And he appears for another one second [Keith: Yeah.] before disappearing again.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I love that little fucker.

Keith: He's only been in two seconds of the show, but don't worry, he is structurally important to this somehow.

Jack: [laughs] Yes.

Dre: Have we learned his name yet?

Keith: No.

Jack: No!

Keith: No, no, no.

Dre: Okay.

Jack: Oh, I'm so excited.

Keith: I did briefly consider— I ran out of time today. I got a late start. I almost canceled today, because I woke up with the absolute worst headache I've ever had in my life.

Jack: Oh no!

Sylvia: Aw.

Keith: But it went away. I was like, “Oh, should I cancel?” and then it just slowly disappeared, and I was like, “Okay, great. Now I can finish watching these episodes and write the recap thing,” and I was going to— because the names in this show are so good, but there’s a very fun section later in the show where we get a lot of people’s names all in a row, and I want to do that again but with characters that we haven’t— that we won’t get reveals later of their names, because the names are fantastic. So, maybe look forward to that, if I...

Jack: Oh, we won’t meet these people? Yeah, that’s gonna be great.

Keith: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Is there anything else we want to talk about today? I think I’ve hit— oh, I do really, really quickly want to say that the— I love the way that the show is unbelievably detailed and is regularly detailed when it doesn’t need to be. The two examples I can think of here is when the apples fall out of the tree onto the pig’s head earlier as Gon learns it.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: They’re not actually apples. They’re these weird, like, fruits that have, like, yellow stripes on them, and just that real *Hunter x Hunter*-esque feeling of, like, if you’re going to introduce something, make it strange and make it notable and interesting, even when it’s as small as apples falling on a pig’s head. The other thing here is when Menchi and Buhara are ranking the foods. Instead of just saying, like, yes or no, they both have these cute little, like, lollipop sticks— [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: With a X you’re out or a check mark you’re through symbol on. They didn’t need to do that.

Keith: Accompanied by a ding and a buzz.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: It's so good.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's great.

Sylvia: Menchi was on the "extremely loud incorrect buzzer noise" meme years before us.

Jack: [laughs] Yes. Yes. Season of the pig: extremely loud incorrect buzzer noise. Okay. I think that's it from me. Anybody else got anything they want to talk through?

Dre: I think I would like to ask a question of everyone.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Dre: If you could define what a Hunter is in one sentence from what we've seen so far, what would it be?

Jack: Ohh. Good question.

Keith: I'll have to edit my mind to do this.

Dre: Sure.

Keith: But I am willing to do that work.

Dre: My definition that I wrote down earlier was: a Hunter is someone who has a pathological aversion to ever feeling content.

Jack: Ooh.

Sylvia: That's a good...

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Mm.

Jack: Yeah, there's a kind of restlessness to it. Okay. A Hunter is...a Hunter is someone who lives for and ceaselessly pursues adventure and discovery.

Sylvia: See, okay, mine's slightly... [sighs] The Gourmet Hunters thing is what leads me to mine, which is like: a Hunter is someone who pursues, like, their hyperfixation, to no matter the ends. Like, because Menchi's doing all this—

Jack: Like, goes as far as they can.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Menchi's doing all this because she wants to have some fucking yummy flavors. Like, she's the ultimate foodie. [laughs quietly]

Jack: Yeah. Yeah.

Sylvia: And so, like, it's hard to just lump it all into, like, exploration and, like, bounty hunting. It is like—

Jack: Right.

Sylvia: They want to be— they want to forge— okay. I already broke the rules. I'm doing too many sentences. [Dre laughs] So.

Dre: You're just— you're editing out loud.

Sylvia: I'm editing. This is— listen. If you want to do a podcast with Sylvi Bullet, you gotta get ready for the rambling.

Dre: Yeah! [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Get a lot of good stuff out of it.

Sylvia: There's...they all have, like, a frontier that they're trying to explore, I guess is the way to put it, right?

Jack: Hmm.

Sylvia: But it doesn't necessarily have to be something like the Indiana Jones model that the opening intro sort of presents to you. It can also just be, like, I want to find the most, like, off-the-beaten-path ingredients and see how they work in food and, like, make these wonderful dishes.

Jack: You know, the most off-the-beaten-path ingredients: pig and egg.

Sylvia: Okay, the spider eggs— Spider Eagle eggs.

Jack: Oh, that is true. I take that back.

Sylvia: We have to give them credit on that one.

Jack: And the most aggressive pigs in the world. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Yeah. Like, they're not— you know.

Dre: With giant shields for noses.

Sylvia: Yeah, things that we saw basically killing dudes.

Keith: Ah, the Great Stamp?

Sylvia: Or at the very least flinging them like those dudes in Mario Sunshine do.

Jack: Oh, they do kind of do that, don't they? They also are like, uh...yeah, they're like those guys in Mario Sunshine.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: I realized I was thinking of something else, and it wasn't what I was thinking of.
[Sylvia laughs]

Keith: All right, I've got mine. Can I do mine in first person?

Jack: Ooh.

Sylvia: Yeah, please.

Jack: Okay.

Keith: As far back as I can remember, I always wanted to be a Hunter.

Sylvia: Ha!

Keith: To me, being a Hunter was better than being President of the United States.
[Sylvia laughs throughout] Even before I first wandered into the cabstand at an afterschool job, I knew I wanted to be part of them. I knew it was where I belonged. To me, it meant being somebody in a neighborhood that was full of nobodies. They weren't like anybody else. I mean, they did whatever they wanted! They double parked in front of a hydrant and nobody ever gave them a ticket. In the summer when they played cards all night, nobody ever called the cops!

Sylvia: [continues laughing] Well done. Well done, Keith.

Jack: Brilliant.

Keith: That's what I think it means to be a Hunter.

Jack: Excellent.

Keith: Thank you.

Jack: We should just go out on that. No, we should—

Dre: Yeah. [Sylvia and Jack laugh quietly]

Jack: We should rep Friends at the Table, probably.

Keith: Well, I mean...really, the answer—

Sylvia: RIP Ray Liotta. You would have been a great Hisoka.

Keith: Yes. So, just for everybody listening and following along, which you should be doing, because the show is really good.

Sylvia: It's fantastic.

Keith: The next episodes are episode seven, "Showdown x On x The Airship."

Jack: Oh no!

Keith: Episode eight, "Decision x By x Majority?" There's a question mark there. That's not my...that's not me adding that.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And then episode nine, "Beware x Of x Prisoners."

Dre: Hmm.

Keith: Hmm.

Jack: Huh.

Keith: Huh.

Jack: Yeah, I should not have put it past— *Hunter x Hunter* could not resist introducing an airship and then being like, "Well, we're done with that."

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: No!

Keith: No.

Jack: Showdowns only.

Keith: Yeah. Showdowns only on the airship. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: So, three episodes.

Keith: Yes. I cannot—I love episode seven. I love it.

Jack: I'm very excited.

Sylvia: Episode seven's really good. It's not my favorite of the arc, but I think it might be my second favorite of the arc? Like...

Keith: Yeah, I don't—I won't say for sure that it's my favorite, but I do love it.

Sylvia: It's definitely...it's up there.

Keith: As always, you can go to friendsatthetable.cash to support the show. That's very important. This show was born out of people supporting us on that website. It's very time-consuming to do all the stuff that we do, and we appreciate anybody who likes our stuff to consider supporting us if you can. We also have a lot of stuff going on on twitch.tv/friendsatthetable and youtube.com/friendsatthetable. That's where all the streams go after we're done streaming them. We also would appreciate you following us on Twitter at [@friends_table](https://twitter.com/friends_table), following us on Cohost at [@friends-table](https://cohost.org/friends-table), and following us on TikTok at [@friends_table](https://tiktok.com/@friends_table)—I really garbled that one—at [@friends_table](https://tiktok.com/@friends_table). Anything else? Anything that I'm missing?

Jack: Yeah. Two things: if you like hearing us talk about stuff, you might like listening to Friends at the Table itself, an actual play podcast in which we play through tabletop games and think critically about—what do we say? We say, “smart characterization, critical worldbuilding, and fun interaction between good friends.” There's all sorts of places that you could jump in, but the ones we think are the best for you are either a strange desert horror season called Sangfielle—you can start there—or you can listen to a story of a brewing revolution on a holy moon called PARTIZAN. That's very exciting. If you back us on Patreon, as Keith mentioned earlier, you get access to our secondary

show. It's called Bluff City. It is some of the best stuff we've ever made. It is the story of an outlandish, hyper-saturated, alternate universe Atlantic City and the bizarre cast of characters that live in there. It's great.

Keith: Speaking of Bluff City, season one is available for free, so you can find the audio of that on friendsatthetable.cash, and you can find videos of it being streamed every Sunday and then uploaded to youtube.com/friendsatthetable. There's a whole playlist of, at this point, I think it's like 15 episodes of Bluff City. Season one is great. Absolutely listen to that if you're, like, [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] not sure about Friends at the Table. That is another great place to start is the free season one of Bluff City. All right. Bye, everyone. Thanks for listening.

Jack: Goodbye!

Dre: Bye bye bye.

Jack: Bye!

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