

# What is a Hunter? - Hunter x Hunter ep. 1-3 : Media Club Plus

## S01E01

Transcriber: robotchangeling

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## Introduction

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

**Keith:** Welcome to Media Club Plus, a podcast about diving into the media that interests us and the stories that excite us. For the first time, 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, and you can find me on [Twitter](#) and [Cohost](#) at @KeithJCarberry, and you can find the let's plays that I do at [youtube.com/runbutton](https://youtube.com/runbutton). With me today is Jack de Quidt.

**Jack:** Hi, I'm Jack. You can find me on Cohost at [@jdg](#) and buy the theme music for this show along with other music that I make for Friends at the Table at [notquitereal.bandcamp.com](https://notquitereal.bandcamp.com).

**Keith:** Sylvi Bullet.

**Sylvia:** Hey, I'm Sylvi Bullet. You can find me everywhere as @sylvibullet.

**Keith:** Andrew Lee Swan.

**Dre:** Hey. You can find me on Twitter at [@swandre3000](#), and you can find me every Monday night over on our Twitch channel at [twitch.tv/friendsatthetable](https://twitch.tv/friendsatthetable).

**Keith:** And today and who knows when else, we have Austin Walker.

**Austin:** Hi. I'm here. I'm here for today, also other times. Probably not every episode, but I'm gonna sneak in whenever my schedule lines up and I can join up to talk about this show that's super good.

**Keith:** All right. Today, we watched the first three episodes of *Hunter x Hunter*. I am extremely excited to talk about this. I've been looking forward for this for a while. I've been looking forward to rewatching *Hunter x Hunter*, even though I just did it.

**Sylvia:** [chuckles] Same, actually.

**Keith:** Yeah, it took me a long time to get through the last, uh, 40 episodes in my rewatch, just for no reason in particular.

**Austin:** [laughs] Oh yeah?

**Keith:** Don't— if you've watched *Hunter x Hunter* before, don't read into that. It really was for no reason in particular.

**Sylvia:** Actually, at the top, should we talk about, like, **[Keith: Yes.]** how exposed to *Hunter x Hunter* each of us are?

**Keith:** Yes. Yep, that's exactly what I was leading into. This is a show that is near and dear to me. I've watched it several times over the last, I don't know, probably seven years? I've probably seen it three times? Sylvi, I don't actually— I know how much you like *Hunter x Hunter*, but I don't actually know how much of it you've got in you.

**Sylvia:** So, I watched *Hunter x Hunter* for the first time— this version of *Hunter x Hunter*. So, I've only seen the 2011 one all the way through.

**Keith:** Right. Same.

**Sylvia:** But I watched this a couple years back during lockdown, basically, and marathoned it with my boyfriend, and...I just, like, it was one of those shows where, after it ended, I wanted to just keep going.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** And I was watching on Netflix, so that made it very easy to just— this isn't a plug, it's a discussion of mechanics. [Austin laughs] It autoplays constantly, so I, like, just marathoned it and then, a couple months later, watched it again. I think I watched it, like, two and a half times is how I'd count it? I also sort of— I think I had, like, 20 episodes left in the rewatch I was doing, but then we started talking about doing this, and I decided to wait. And I've also read some of the manga.

**Austin:** And now you have 170 episodes left or 100 and whatever.

**Sylvia:** And I cannot fucking wait.

**Keith:** 145 or something like that.

**Austin:** 140. Okay. That's like nothing. That's fine.

**Keith:** It's like nothing. Yeah, it's a breeze. Dre?

**Dre:** Yeah, I have watched all of the 2011 *Hunter x Hunter*. I have not read any of the manga, but I want to.

**Keith:** Same, yeah.

**Dre:** Since it picks up after where the anime ends. Actually, I watched the anime in a weird way. Like, I think I watched it in two chunks, and so the first chunk, like, I got really into it and just kind of mainlined it, and then I don't remember what happened, but I fell off of it and then, like, three years later was like, "Oh yeah, I should finish this show."

**Austin:** Ah. Did you jump right back in, or did you go back?

**Dre:** Yeah, I jumped right back in.

**Austin:** Interesting.

**Dre:** Because I think it split for me...uh, like, right at the end of one of the arcs. I don't want to say arc names.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Keith:** Yeah. Austin?

**Austin:** Yeah, a lot of people that I know, like the three of you, had been telling me for years how good it is.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Also, shoutouts to—

**Keith:** Oh, yeah, I forgot.

**Austin:** Yeah. What? You for— what?

**Sylvia:** [laughs quietly] How did you forget?

**Keith:** I forgot that that's when you watched it. [Dre laughs]

**Austin:** After— yeah, uh huh.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I only watched it, like, last year, I want to say.

**Keith:** Yeah. We've just been talking about it so much since then [**Austin:** Right.] that it just was easy to forget that you had only just watched it.

**Austin:** Yeah, I'm basically a newbie here. I watched it once. I've read a little bit of the manga, both at the very beginning and then also, like, a little past where the anime ends. It's an ongoing manga, it's worth saying, though also one that's being released very slowly at this point because of the help of the creator. But yeah, I watched the show. I read a little bit of the manga. I've watched, like, two episodes of the previous 1999 *Hunter x Hunter*, and that's about it. It's good. I like it a lot.

**Keith:** And Jack?

**Jack:** Uh, I have not seen any of *Hunter x Hunter*. Well, I've seen three episodes now.

**Keith:** Right. Until just now.

**Jack:** Until, yeah, until two days ago. And not only have I not seen it, I know essentially nothing about it. In fact, as we learned from the series available on YouTube, we did a stream in which Sylvi and Keith subjected me to some screenshots of *Hunter x Hunter*, and I had to interpret them sort of...

**Keith:** Had to.

**Jack:** Yes, I was impelled to interpret them. The first thing I knew about—

**Keith:** That's a great stream, by the way.

**Jack:** It's so much fun.

**Keith:** If anyone wants to take a listen to that, it's at [youtube.com/friendsatthetable](https://youtube.com/friendsatthetable).

**Jack:** It's great. At first, I thought that the primary character of *Hunter x Hunter* was Naruto.

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** This is the familiarity that I have with this.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** So, it's worth saying that going into watching these first episodes, I knew that there were characters called Killua. I think I knew that there was a character called Gon. I think I knew what they looked like. I know that there's a character called, I think, Chrollo Lucilfer, who is coming up.

**Sylvia:** You learned that on the stream, yes.

**Keith:** Right. Yeah, these are all things you learned in that stream, yeah.

**Jack:** Yes, this is what I'm saying. Prior to watching, [**Keith:** Right.] this was kind of the extent of my knowledge. I knew, and I think that this is worth mentioning, because this is sort of— I feel like so much of the conversation around the show, and I don't understand what people mean, but I can sort of pick up for context clues that it is consequential. Whenever people talk about *Hunter x Hunter*, they talk about a “chimera ant arc”; the chimera ant arc is the thing that makes the show or is such a really important part of the show. It's worth saying, off the bat: I don't know what that means. I don't know what that is, but I know that it represents a large amount of runtime and also represents a lot of, like, fan and viewer interest, and that's genuinely about it.

**Keith:** And for anyone listening, we're gonna keep it that way.

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** So, you know, be care— you know, talk about the show in any way that you want, except for: don't spoil Jack on anything.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, don't, like...

**Austin:** I'll come for you.

**Jack:** It's worth saying that, like, I...

**Austin:** I'll find you. I'll do it.

**Jack:** I have guides to take me through this process, and those guides are Dre and Sylvi and Keith and Austin and anybody else from Friends at the Table who comes on. I'm very excited that people are excited, but we're gonna come at this in our own way.

**Keith:** Of course, the show is brought to you by Friends at the Table. You can support the Friends at the Table Patreon at [friendsatthetable.cash](https://www.patreon.com/friendsatthetable). You can listen to our other show, Friends at the Table, by searching for it in your podcast app of choice. Anything else to plug off the bat?

**Austin:** I think just it's fun to say, like, thanks for supporting us, because we wouldn't be doing this without [Sylvia: Yeah!] the support of the patrons. Like, we had a goal to hit, and as always goes with these things, it's like, "Well, we'll set this goal. This seems kind of outlandish," and then people really came out to support it, and then the closer we got, the more, you know, momentum there was, the more it became clear that people were really excited for this. I'm really excited for it.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mostly because I get to listen to it most weeks.

**Keith:** And I think that all translates to people who, like, [Austin: Mm-hmm.] maybe want this show now and aren't 100% sure why they want this show about a show that they haven't watched yet or something.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I think it's— we have fun talking about stuff, [Keith: Mm-hmm.] and any opportunity for us to do that and to dive deep— also, we've done a number of podcasts about, like, movies we like, here and there.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Some of which are on the Patreon feed, and I think that helps a lot, so.

**Jack:** It's very exciting to me, as something that I don't...I signed up to do this show as early as we were talking about it, in part because I am so thrilled by— there is a piece of media that animates all of you so much and that is presumably windows into things you're excited about, that you say I will enjoy but I don't know anything about, and there was sort of something really interesting, and it's already proving rewarding to just be

like, “I’m gonna put my name down for this [Austin chuckles] and blunder straight into it and see what happens.”

**Keith:** And just a last note before we head into it: you’re sort of not just new to this show, but you’re new to this genre in a way that I hadn’t anticipated, and I think that’s kind of an interesting place to be in [**Austin:** Mm.] for this show in particular that is both so full of and also...it’s so full of anime is really what it is. [Sylvia laughs] It’s chock full of shonen, which is, like, a genre that it seems—illustrated by the Naruto snafu—that I didn’t know that you weren’t so familiar with, so I’m curious how, like, someone who’s kind of— who hasn’t seen— I grew up watching shonen, like, for my whole life, so.

**Austin:** Can you describe, for listeners—who also maybe this is their first dip into these pools—what shonen is in a broad way?

**Keith:** Uh, yeah. So, shonen is, extremely, extremely broadly, like, manga and anime for boys. It’s aimed at boys. That’s—

**Sylvia:** I believe it literally means “boys’ comics.”

**Keith:** Right. And that’s why I’m describing it that way, because that’s literally what it means. Of course, it’s really a whole mess of, you know, leanings and tropes and story types [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] and ways that things happen in shows. They tend to be actiony, and they tend to be a little funny and a little light. They are, a lot of times, about fighting?

**Sylvia:** There’s also a lot of, like— and this is present in *Hunter x Hunter*. There’s a lot of coming-of-age stories in shonen, just because the audience—

**Keith:** There’s a lot of coming-of-age stories.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Shonen as a genre, like, has its, like, sort of genre conventions and stuff, but at the same time, it’s sort of like...you can describe something as, like, a young adult novel, but also it’s like a sci-fi one [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] or like a mystery or crime one or all this.



**Keith:** Right.

**Sylvia:** Like, it is a— shonen is a very broad way to describe things.

**Keith:** Right, and they...

**Sylvia:** It's worth pointing out.

**Keith:** Yeah, they take place in all sorts of times and places. Like some of the biggest of the genre, this one kind of is anachronistic in weird ways. Like, it's kind of hard to tell sometimes when this takes place. Another show that I'm thinking of is *Dragon Ball*, [Sylvia: Yeah.] one of the most famous if not the most famous shonen that there is. You know, a show where there's boys living in the woods and talking to animals and living on his own and also spaceships and flying cars and dinosaurs.

**Sylvia:** [laughs quietly] It is a very good, like, archetype of the genre as a touchstone.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Both, like, the original *Dragon Ball* and *Dragon Ball Z* expanding on it.

**Keith:** Yeah. And yeah, that is, like, weirdly the breadth of the genre. It kind of shows, like, two ends of it in a way.

**Austin:** Well, and then there's, like, sports shonen [Keith: Right.] about people playing basketball and card game shonen and shonen about—

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Like, it's a huge space, right?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Right. Yeah, it's massive.

**Sylvia:** I mean, there's, like, a whole genre of, like, tournament arcs are like a convention within sports shonen manga.

**Austin:** Yep. Yep.

**Sylvia:** Like, they've all got their own things.

**Keith:** It's one of those things. The more specific we try to get, the more it will be impossible to say what a shonen is.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** But these are the sorts of things that you might find in a shonen. Teamwork, friendship.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** You know, stuff like that. That's, I think, how you really get in.

**Austin:** A burning heart towards justice or just, like, an innate sense of justice.

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** Now, now, hold on a second. This sounds like *Sailor Moon*.

[all sarcastic]

**Austin:** Now, listen, buddy. [Keith and Jack laugh]

**Dre:** Mm-hmm?

**Austin:** If you think you're gonna trick me into talking about gender on this show, you got another thing coming.

**Jack:** Mm. [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** I got five other podcasts I already do that on. [Jack laughs]

**Sylvia:** We will never talk—

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Mark my words, we will never talk about gender on this *Hunter x Hunter* podcast. [Austin laughs]

**Keith:** They got— nothing in *Hunter x Hunter* has anything to do with gender! [Austin laughs]

**Sylvia:** Whatsoever.

**Keith:** Yeah. Soup to nuts, no gender in this show.

**Dre:** Sure. [Jack and Austin laugh]

**Jack:** God.

**Austin:** Certainly not immediately.

## **Episode One [0:13:31]**

**Keith:** Yeah. [laughs] All right, but we do start off in this show with the Hunter Exam. Tens of thousands of people from around the world try out every year to be one of the few people accepted into the ranks of the Hunters, whatever that means. Among them is Gon Freecss—a strangely talented boy from a village on Whale Island—and his new friends, the misanthropic Leorio and the mysterious but good-hearted Kurapika. They endure trials, puzzles, cheats, and secret observation [Austin chuckles] to just barely cross a threshold to begin their exam in earnest. I want to hear, first, I think, from Jack. Jack, what did you think about this, broadly?

**Jack:** This was great. I described it to, I think, Keith, yesterday, as like getting hit on the head by a bottle and liking it. [Sylvia and Keith laugh]

**Austin:** Mm...

**Jack:** I started watching, and the intensity of what is happening was both, on the one hand, extremely straightforward. You know, we begin with, you know, word is getting

around town that Gon is going out to catch the Master of the Swamp, which is, like, a big fish that only his dad has been able to catch before, and apparently he's gonna go off and take the Hunter Exam, and then he catches the fish, and you know, all of this is pretty straightforward coming-of-age stuff that is easy to follow. And yet, at the same time, you are being bombarded [Austin chuckles] constantly—from frame one, actually; maybe this is the place to start talking about it—with things that you haven't seen before. The first frame of this show is a man's voice says something like, "Dangerous beasts," and then you see, like, the weirdest fucked up, like, [Austin and Dre laugh] tangerine and white Loch Ness Monster appear, and then he says, like, "Weird creatures!" and you see, like, a guy that looks like he's made out of a combination of scrunchies and hair pom poms walking around, and then he says, like, "Powerful treasure. Hidden places. These are the things that— people who search for these have a name, and we call them Hunters," and already I was like—

**Keith:** Uh, ringing a bell...

**Jack:** Mm?

**Keith:** You've ran into my segment. I'm introducing a segment, a surprise segment.  
[Austin laughs]

**Jack:** Oh, god!

**Sylvia:** Oh, lovely.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Keith:** What is a Hunter?

**Austin:** Mm! [Jack laughs]

**Keith:** What is a Hunter?

**Dre:** Mm.

**Jack:** Austin, wait.

**Austin:** You scroll down on our notes, I have this written down. What—

**Jack:** I'm looking at the show doc.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** What is a Hunter?

**Austin:** What is a Hunter?

**Keith:** Oh, you got that?

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** Oh, that's great.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** That's great, because that wasn't there.

**Jack:** Can you see what I've written as my first note?

**Keith:** Uh, yes. "What are Hunters?"

**Austin:** [laughs] Okay, good.

**Keith:** That's funny, because I have here: "Segment. It's not a big deal, so don't worry about it. What is a Hunter?"

**Austin:** Ah.

**Keith:** This is our first recurring segment on the show. [laughter] I have written here, in my notes, quote, "Strange beasts and monsters. [Austin laughs] Vast riches, hidden treasures, evil haunts, uncharted frontiers, the mysterious unknown. The people who are captivated by the magic in these words are called Hunters!"

**Jack:** Oh, it's so good.

**Austin:** There's an image of all these people reaching for an orb?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** [laughs] What's the orb?

**Jack:** Well, so, yes, if you haven't seen this, it's worth seeing this, because it doesn't take very long. When this man is saying— this narrator who shows up at the beginning and end of every episode. What we've got here...we've got ourselves a classic narrator.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** This guy shows up and says, "Will Gon do it?"

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** I don't know, buddy!

**Sylvia:** The narrator's fantastic.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I'm watching the sub. I don't know what anybody else is watching. I do want to particularly shout out the dub announcer. He is so good.

**Jack:** Oh, he's great.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah, so, every time he says one of these things—you know, weird monsters, magical places, beautiful treasures—we get to see the fucking platonic ideal of a weird monster [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] or of a magical treasure [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] or of an unknown place. You look at that, and you're like, "Yep, that's exactly right." So, to your

question, what is a Hunter? We can go around here, but I will say literally my first note that I wrote watching this show is: Hunting is like a sort of broad push towards adventure? Question mark, question mark, question mark?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** Monsters, treasure, strange places, except it's codified in society in some way? Question mark, question mark, question mark?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** In some way.

**Jack:** There's an exam you can take? Question mark, question mark? What does it—

**Austin:** Right, you can't just go do this.

**Jack:** Right, right, right.

**Dre:** Right.

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** What does it say about this—

**Austin:** Or the people— hmm. Hmm.

**Jack:** What does it say about this world that there is a sort of societal place or a societal role for those who feel the call to adventure? What does it say about adventure that we are saying, "You know, if you feel this way..."?

**Austin:** And it's not that they're getting...mm. They're not joining a hunters' guild, of which there are thousands across the world.

**Jack:** No. We'll get into this.

**Austin:** They're taking *the* Hunters' Exam.

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** Yes.

**Keith:** Yeah. And this is sort of an interesting little thing to add, I think, is that I watched not all of, because it's actually way longer than the 2011 series, but I watched some of the '99 series beginning, and one of the little plot points that they have in there that they don't have in this one: they run into a fake Hunter.

**Dre:** Oh.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Keith:** Yeah, they run into a person—

**Jack:** Uh, there was a mention of these.

**Keith:** Oh, there—

**Sylvia:** I don't think that even— does that happen in the manga?

**Austin:** It does.

**Jack:** Er, no, sorry, they mentioned rogue hunters.

**Austin:** It does happen— sorry.

**Sylvia:** It does? Okay.

**Keith:** Rogue hunters, yeah.

**Austin:** Sorry, sorry. If I'm thinking of the same thing, I believe it does happen in the manga. If I'm thinking of the character you're thinking of, Keith. Keith, you're describing...you're saying there's a character in the '99 in the beginning?



**Keith:** I'll tell you the scene. It's not a— I don't think it reveals anything too much about the show.

**Austin:** Yeah, sure.

**Keith:** There's a person who's, like, selling a chance to beat him in arm wrestling?

**Austin:** Okay. Interesting.

**Keith:** And Leorio slightly loses to this guy, because he's too hungry to properly compete.

**Austin:** That's so funny.

**Keith:** And they find out that this guy is a fake Hunter.

**Austin:** Okay, yeah. I'm thinking of something else. I'm thinking of...in the manga, there's, like, an entire— the manga— I mean, the manga literally does start by saying, [laughing] "Strange beasts and monsters, secret treasures," et cetera.

**Keith:** Wow.

**Dre:** Sick.

**Austin:** But then there's a different— it doesn't open with the fishing. It opens with a different experience of a younger Gon.

**Keith:** Yes. '99 also begins that way, yeah.

**Austin:** Okay. I see. Okay. Yes.

**Jack:** Yeah, I don't want to...

**Austin:** We're not gonna go into that stuff.

**Jack:** What do other people think is happening? To Keith's question: what are Hunters?

**Keith:** Well, it might be illegal for us to say. I know what's happening. I mean...

**Jack:** Oh, oh, I suppose you know what it is, yeah.

**Austin:** But based on what we see here.

**Keith:** Based on what we see here, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Uh, it's sort of like, uh, what if Indiana Jones was like...

**Austin:** Mm.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** A job?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Like, a common profession.

**Keith:** That is—

**Sylvia:** Or, like, somewhat of a common profession or common enough to be common knowledge.

**Keith:** That is a good way to, I think—

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Like, bring it into something that we can recognize.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Like, it seems like they get treasures and animals for money?

**Austin:** Well, we learn something— we learn some specific things.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Right? We do know that stuff, but we also know, from Leorio, who is—

**Keith:** Oh, I'm ringing the bell. [Jack laughs quietly]

**Austin:** Yep?

**Keith:** No, go ahead, go ahead, go ahead.

**Austin:** Uh, I didn't know if there was another—

**Sylvia:** Another segment?

**Austin:** A Leorio segment.

**Keith:** No, no, no.

**Dre:** Aw.

**Keith:** This is the second part to this first segment, because we do learn— we have, uh, opposing forces in here about what a Hunter is towards the end of the third episode.  
[Sylvia and Jack laugh quietly]

**Dre:** Sure.

**Austin:** Of the— is it the third episode? It might be even earlier. It might be—

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's the third episode.

**Sylvia:** They do—

**Austin:** It is. Okay.

**Sylvia:** Don't they kind of talk about it in the first?

**Jack:** Yeah, we get a bit of it on the boat.

**Dre:** No, it is the first.

**Austin:** Yeah, the thing I'm talking about is—

**Dre:** They talk about it in the first episode.

**Austin:** It's in the first episode on the boat where—

**Sylvia:** They talk about it on the boat, for sure.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Right? Where he's like—

**Keith:** Oh. He's like, "I want moneeey!"

**Austin:** "You could get moneeey!"

**Keith:** "You get money."

**Austin:** "I want moneeey!" I'm Leorio, I have glasses and a suit, and my reason is simple: it's moneeey! [Jack laughs]

**Keith:** It's money!

**Austin:** And he's like, "Think about all the things you can do! Hunters don't have to do this! Hunters don't have to pay for this!"

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I forget what the specifics are, but it's like...

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** He's like, "I can buy a bunch of expensive wine! I don't have to pay to go across bridges!" or whatever.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** And this is to Gon. Er, sorry, Gon is here. He's not saying—

**Austin:** Yes.

**Keith:** He's saying this to the boat captain who is sort of like their first trial in order to get— there's an exam just to get to the exam, and that is really what we see in these first three episodes.

**Sylvia:** A lot of people will say, "The Hunter Exam begins now."

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** Right. [laughs]

**Dre:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Throughout the, like...

**Jack:** All lying. They are all lying.

**Sylvia:** Or "This part of the exam has already begun," you know?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah, that happens a lot. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Because the ship itself that picks them up to take them to the exam is part of the exam.

**Keith:** But Gon is there watching Leorio say, "I want to be a Hunter for money." Meanwhile, Kurapika's saying, "I want to be a Hunter for revenge, because my whole [Sylvia: Mm-hmm.] clan was murdered, and I want to be a Hunter so that I can get revenge on these other people."

**Sylvia:** Specifically—

**Keith:** How those things are connected, who knows?

**Austin:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Well, no, I believe Kurapika does say that being a Hunter will give him access to

things.

**Keith:** That is true. Like, things...

**Dre:** Yeah, the best intel and...

**Sylvia:** Will provide resources.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** "Things" is very mysterious.

**Sylvia:** Yes, but there's some sort of "the resources of the Hunters Association" line.

**Keith:** But Gon is there, and Gon knows, I'll say, zero in the 2011 about what a Hunter is, except for that his dad was a Hunter and his dad left him on Whale Island to go be a Hunter, [**Jack:** Yes.] so it must be a pretty neat thing to do.

**Austin:** Ugh, bro.

**Dre:** Let me quote, because I wrote down exactly what Gon said.

**Keith:** [laughs] Great, great.

**Dre:** "It must be an awesome job in order to leave his kid."

**Keith:** What a positive attitude. [Dre laughs, Austin groans]

**Sylvia:** I'm gonna read my favorite tweet about *Hunter x Hunter*, which is: "*Hunter x Hunter* is the story about a young boy whose father left one day to buy cigarettes and never came back, [Jack laughs] and so now the boy is determined to head out on a grand quest, not to find his father, but to find out what's so awesome about cigarettes."  
[laughter]

**Dre:** Yeah. Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** That's by Twitter user...@upyogkrta? I don't know how to say that.

**Austin:** What's up yog krta with you? [Keith and Dre laugh]

**Sylvia:** Not much, dawg. Not much, yog.

**Jack:** It's so great. We don't want to— I don't want to get too ahead of ourselves, in terms of— I think we should, like, introduce the characters, but before that, I do want to talk a bit about this moment in episode one of...so, Gon is being raised by his aunt, I believe, a woman called...

**Sylvia:** Aunt Mito.

**Jack:** Mita. Mito? Mita?

**Keith:** Mito, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Mito. Yeah.

**Austin:** Mito.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Who has very mixed feelings about Gon following in the footsteps of his father, whose name is Ging, and they...she says outright, you know, "Your dad abandoned you to become a Hunter." Wham! Smash cut to his dad in a picture standing in front of a huge motorcycle. It's such a great cut, and then back to Gon who's having a great time. And she says, you know, "He left you here in my care." And yeah, he says basically, "I want to find out why it was so important to my dad. That's why I've got to do it," but he's not saying this in the sense of, like, it will help me understand my loss. It's more that, like, there is something that animated his father [**Keith:** Yeah.] and he aspires to be like his father, and he wants to be seized by the same animus.

**Keith:** He doesn't— he's not ascribing anything negative about Ging's motivations. It had to have been a genuine thing.

**Austin:** Okay, but I have a question, and this is not...like, I don't know the answer to this. I don't know what my thought is, having seen this whole show.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Do we think that this has always been motivated by an open curiosity or do you think, from just this scene, that there is, at some point, a deep-seated pain or absence?

**Jack:** I think there absolutely is.

**Austin:** Or do you think I'm projecting that, because I'm a regular person and I'm not Gon Freecss? [Sylvia laughs quietly]

**Jack:** No. I don't think you're projecting it at all.

**Keith:** No.

**Jack:** There's this moment when they do, like, a pinkie promise, [**Austin:** Mmmm.] and at that point, I switched over to the sub, because I wanted to see what the rhyme was that they used.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Jack:** For the, like, "stick a needle in my eye."

**Sylvia:** So cute!

**Keith:** Oh, it was so cute.

**Jack:** At which point, I never went back, and now I'm watching the sub. But there's this really sweet, really well executed moment of, like, Gon holding his, like, thumb to his aunt's for longer. They hover in this moment. He doesn't want to break the touch and let go, and I think that there is...

**Austin:** In the Japanese, does he extend the syllable of the final— of the rhyme?



**Keith:** Yeah, in the kiss, yeah.

**Austin:** Because, in the dub, he does. [Dre laughs quietly] The kiss, yeah, yeah, yeah. The chu.

**Keith:** Yeah, very long, like an extra 15 seconds.

**Austin:** Chuuuuu, is that what it is? Yeah, that makes sense.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, it's adorable.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** And something that I realized that I think speaks to this—

**Austin:** And he says “thank you,” right? He says “thank you” to her, [**Jack:** Yes.] in this way that's like, I'm not gonna not leave here without making it very clear to you that I understand what you've done as my, you know, [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] stand-in parent here.

**Jack:** Well, that's the thing. Mito has been abandoned twice now.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** First, she is abandoned by Ging, who leaves, leaving his son in her care, and then she sees the same process get worked on Gon and is abandoned by Gon in just the same way.

**Sylvia:** It's worth— it's also worth pointing out she's abandoned by Ging, like, twice in a way, because, like, he leaves to be a Hunter, [**Austin:** Uh huh.] he comes back, and then leaves again after leaving Gon in her care. Like, what a guy, you know?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** There's no way this sadness isn't— and, you know, obviously we can only read what is in the thing.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** But as I view this, I'm like, there is a deep sadness in this family that is going to have to have seeped through from one person to another, and I think that, you know, I do believe Gon when he says, you know, "I'm going off to have a good time," but I think he's aware of the sadness here.

**Keith:** I think that, you know, they...the thing about the sadness is, like, it's not a sadness I think born out of judging his dad, which is the...

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** The part that is, like, [Dre: Right.] striking about how he explains why he's going, because I think you...I'm getting visuals mixed up, [laughs quietly] because I watched both versions.

**Sylvia:** [laughs] Yeah, you gotta be careful.

**Keith:** But I don't— I think that there's— I don't think that they're trying to say he doesn't care about his dad, he's just curious; he's just a curious little kid who's, like...

**Austin:** Oh, no. Right.

**Keith:** Right.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Right. Right.

**Keith:** But I think that we can see this sort of, like...the sort of, like, nonjudgmental curiosity from Gon as a character.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Like, I think that's sort of a feature of him.

**Dre:** I mean, that was my biggest thing that I noticed, having watched the show and been so long since I've seen these first three episodes, is how quickly they start kind of introducing Gon's, like, unique take on the world and how some people see it as very,

like, naive and, like, ignorant, but then the people who are closer to Gon start seeing it as, like—I think you said it best, Keith—as, like, just a genuine curiosity and almost a genuine desire to just understand people.

**Keith:** A lot of those people also see his father in him.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Keith:** Like, this happens not just from the people who are close to him but random people who seemed to have also known his dad. You know, the captain on the ship is like, “Oh, is this— you don't know who I am, but I'm a captain, and I'm looking at this kid, [Jack: Yeah.] and I think this is Ging Freecss's son. Like, almost right away, I think that.”

**Jack:** I will say that at no point in the show are we told—at least at this point—that this kid's surname is Freecss, so I heard that for the first time and I had to stop myself from interrupting you during the summary, because it's very funny.

**Keith:** Oh, do they really not say it?

**Austin:** Do they not say?

**Jack:** Nope. [laughs quietly]

**Austin:** What?

**Jack:** I don't think so.

**Austin:** They must.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, no, I really— I was like, “Oh shit, I need to be careful about surnames.”

**Keith:** Oh. [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Because, like, for example, there is a character— like, I don't think we find out Leorio's last name until the last, like, ten episodes of the show.

**Austin:** Mr. Leorio.

**Dre:** Oh, wow.

**Keith:** And that one we will not spoil.

**Jack:** Mr. Leorio!

**Austin:** I don't remember it, so don't worry about it.

**Keith:** Oh, wow.

**Sylvia:** It's not even, like, that—

**Austin:** Oh, mm, I might have it.

**Sylvia:** But it is, like, a Togashi name.

**Austin:** Right, right, right.

**Jack:** Speaking of Leorio, Gon boards the ship.

**Dre:** Man.

**Jack:** And I wrote in my notes— oh, how naive I was when I wrote this. I wrote, “Oh, the Hunter Academy is elsewhere, question mark? Gotta go on a boat, question mark?”

[Sylvia and Keith laugh]

**Sylvia:** I love that you thought there was an academy. I love that you were like, “Oh, yeah, no, he's going to a school for this.”

**Jack:** Yeah, instead of playing the fucking Squid Game! We'll get to this in a second, but... [Keith, Austin, and Dre laugh] So, they board a boat, and we are immediately introduced to someone I wrote down in my notes as pirates, but they're just rough men on a boat.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** I love the sailors.

**Austin:** Yeah. They're great.

**Jack:** Very judgmental of the pirates.

**Austin:** They're good!

**Dre:** The crop top clad sailor crew.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Oh, they're so great.

**Keith:** The interesting thing about these guys and the reason why you look at them and you're like, "Oh, this is a rough crew of obviously pirates," is they've got to have been chosen specifically to be able to handle people who may be taking the Hunter Exam.

**Austin:** Right.

**Jack:** Yes!

**Keith:** So they've all gotta be better than your average Hunter hopeful.

**Jack:** Me, in my brain: what does an average Hunter hopeful look like? Let me tell you, we'll get to it in episode three. I was not prepared. [Keith and Dre laugh]

**Austin:** I mean, at this point—

**Sylvia:** Something I—

**Austin:** Go ahead. Go ahead.

**Sylvia:** Oh, go ahead? I just want to very quickly point something out about the ship that my girlfriend, who's very into, like, pirating and sailing, like, history stuff—

**Jack:** [laughs] Hell yeah.

**Sylvia:** —mentioned while watching this with me, which is that it's a sailboat but it has a modern, like, terminal.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** And, like...it has, like, a steamship, like, cockpit?

**Jack:** Weird.

**Sylvia:** What do you call it for a boat?

**Jack:** Uh...uh...

**Dre:** Bridge?

**Austin:** Pilot's cabin? I don't know.

**Keith:** The helm?

**Jack:** We should get to this, I feel.

**Sylvia:** Sure.

**Dre:** The bridge.

**Austin:** The helm!

**Sylvia:** Bridge! Bridge! That's it. Thank you.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Sure.

**Sylvia:** It has, like, a— yeah. Anyway, I thought it was very funny.

**Jack:** Yeah, that's great.

**Sylvia:** Because the mast becomes a point of drama in the first episode.

**Austin:** Right, sure. Well, also, like, there are— you said that they were pirates, and in your mind, Jack, when you first saw them, I get why you'd say that, because they look like cartoon pirates.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** The first shot of them, [**Jack:** Yeah.] they have on tunics and swords and scimitars.

**Jack:** Eating food with a big knife.

**Austin:** Now, listen.

**Dre:** They got the bandanas on their head.

**Austin:** Right, they got the— exactly. Now, does one of them have a mohawk? Yes, it's spiked up with gel, 100%. However, we eventually cut to Leorio. Truly, one of them has, like, the Buster Sword on. But we cut to Leorio, who is a man in a suit. [Jack laughs]

**Dre:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** Like, a button up suit.

**Jack:** Our first new character.

**Austin:** And is reading, like, at best, Maxim. You know, a sort of, like— [Sylvia laughs]

**Dre:** Nah, he's looking at porn.

**Austin:** He's fucking looking at porn! My man is on the pirate— the non-pirate ship.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Do you have the screenshot? Because I also, I assumed it was, like, he was reading Shonen Jump, [laughs quietly] to be real.

**Austin:** No! There's a naked lady on the cover!

**Dre:** No, there's, like, lady faces and stuff on there.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, he's reading porn, yeah.

**Sylvia:** There's a lady on the cover? Okay.

**Austin:** There's a *naked* lady on the cover. You don't see anything. It's...

**Jack:** He is lanky.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Jack:** He has a briefcase with a black and red diamond pattern on it.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** Yeah, he's wearing a thinly tailored suit, and he has little round glasses.

**Keith:** *Very* little round glasses.

**Sylvia:** I love his little glasses.

**Jack:** He is— I gotta apologize to Leorio, because I do remember seeing this man in one of the screenshots— [Sylvia laughs]

**Keith:** Mm.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm?

**Jack:** And identifying him confidently as—

**Austin:** [laughs quietly] I wasn't familiar with his game. [Sylvia laughs]

**Jack:** Yeah. [chuckles] Sorry to that man.

**Austin:** What did you identify him as?

**Jack:** A businessman.

**Keith:** As no one.

**Jack:** Just a normal— just no one.



**Austin:** Oh, a businessman.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You were like, “Oh, that’s not a guy.”

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** You have to understand that you subjected me to such a gauntlet.

**Keith:** I laid this trap out intentionally.

**Austin:** Mm, I see.

**Jack:** You showed me a gorilla man in the first screenshot [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] and then told me he was nobody.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And then—

**Sylvia:** Well...

**Keith:** No, no, no.

**Sylvia:** Jack, what you have to understand is that was when the Hunter exam began for you. [all laugh]

**Keith:** Right, the gorilla was nobody, and then the nobody was one of the main characters.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Yes. And we, then—

**Austin:** Okay, really quick—

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You can see a collar. She's not naked. [Sylvia laughs quietly] And there's an advertisement for some sort of...wow, Dre, you were in there like a second after me, [Dre: Uh huh.] but you didn't get the GIF. The GIF is clean.

**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah, no, nevermind. I forgot his expression.

**Austin:** His expression. [Dre laughs]

**Keith:** Right. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I was thinking of the shot when he's in the bunk.

**Austin:** [laughs quietly] Oh, okay.

**Sylvia:** When the ship is, like, rocky.

**Jack:** He's, like, glancing around nervously but at the same time with a kind of rapt lascivious attention on his magazine.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Right.

**Sylvia:** He's got, like, a Homer Simpson face going on, like...

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Ohh, yeah.

**Dre:** I don't know how to describe that smile, but it's...

**Sylvia:** Something about his smile. I don't know how to describe it.

**Dre:** It is definitely a man who's looking at a naked person.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Think about the Grinch, then think about the Grinch looking at porn. [Dre and

Keith laugh]

**Dre:** I won't, and you can't make me.

**Jack:** Oh god, is Leorio the Grinch? [Austin laughs] And Leorio must be—

**Austin:** Was Leorio there?

**Jack:** [laughs] I don't know how old Leorio is, but he is older than Gon.

**Keith:** We'll find out.

**Jack:** Yeah. [Sylvia laughs] Then we meet Kurapika, who looks like a— I wrote down in my notes, “fancy lad.”

**Austin:** Mm, mm-hmm. [Sylvia laughs]

**Jack:** Kurapika is wearing a sort of a tabard, like a colorful blue and red tabard with a sign or a symbol on it. And very quickly we determine that there is a sort of ideological difference, shall we say, between Leorio and Kurapika.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Say more.

**Keith:** In their Hunterward motivations?

**Jack:** Yes. As you mentioned earlier, Keith, Kurapika is the last surviving member of a clan. Do you have the name of this written down?

**Dre:** The Kurta.

**Sylvia:** Kurta Clan.

**Keith:** The Kurta Clan, yeah.

**Jack:** The Kurta Clan, who was murdered by the Phantom Troupe. In my notes, I just wrote down, “The Phantom Troupe...” dot dot dot dot dot.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** And we learn Kurapika is becoming a Hunter for revenge. At this point, I underlined “What is a Hunter?” It includes bounty hunting, question mark? [Sylvia laughs] But yeah, this was interesting, because, you know, I had already started to get a sense that being a Hunter was as much an infrastructural position or, like, a societal position as it was, like...it is so fascinating to me, and I think we’re gonna keep coming back to this. Sylvi said, oh, it’s like what if Indiana Jones was a job. Indiana Jones notably isn’t a job. He’s, like, a university professor [**Sylvia:** Yes.] who goes off to rob tombs and fight Nazis. But here we have, like, someone who— this person isn’t being a bounty hunter. They’re not choosing to be a bounty hunter; they’re choosing to be a Hunter, which maybe includes bounty hunting, includes stuff that gives you access to revenge stuff? Meanwhile, Leorio wants money and lots of it, and we get a very cute little money montage. We sort of drift into his magical headspace, where we just get to see him being like, “I want a mansion! I want fine wine! I want all that kind of shit.”

**Keith:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Dre:** A nice car.

**Keith:** Oh, yes, he does want a nice car. Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I do really love the, like, how they put you right up against Leorio immediately, just in his design who is so different from everyone else that we’ve seen in the show [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] by really looking like a guy.

**Austin:** He’s a fucking guy.

**Jack:** Just a fully normal guy.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** That's just a guy!

**Austin:** Full-on guy. Yeah. All-time guy.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Like, just, yeah. Just incredible, like, if I didn't know better, he was sucked into the TV and turned into a guy in the show [**Keith:** Yeah.] and he's just rolling with it, you know?

**Keith:** Like, next to Gon, who looks sort of like a *Dragon Quest* character.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Keith:** Who one of the first shots in the show, we see him dressed up in, like, leaf camo wizard clothes?

**Jack:** Yes.

**Austin:** Right, well, this is— that's the thing, right, is they all represent a different subgenre of shonen in some way, right? Where it's like, Gon is like, Gon Freeccs the wild boy.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And Kurapika is, like, you know Kurapika, last of the Kurta Clan, out for blood revenge. And then it's like, Mr. Leorio's wacky day in the office! [**Keith** laughs]

**Jack:** It's so good!

**Austin:** Like, that's the vibe. You know?

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Jack:** It's great.

**Austin:** Like, those are the three books it feels they're from.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** You know that very apt saying about how, you know, like, you are closer to having no money at all or closer to being unhoused than you are to being a billionaire?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Which is simply true. As much as I wish I were other characters in this, I think simply by being virtue of a human living on Earth—

**Austin:** A person? Yes. [laughs quietly]

**Dre:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** I am closer to Leorio than I am to any of these other characters. [Sylvia laughs]

**Dre:** In my— one of my notes for the second episode is literally just, “Leorio is the only normal person in this universe.” [Keith laughs]

**Jack:** Well. Well. I have a question about this.

**Austin:** Uh...

**Jack:** Because a storm whips up. You can't get onto a boat in really any fantasy work, as Ursula Le Guin teaches us, without a storm immediately testing the characters.

**Keith:** And we get Gon's two casual admissions of things. What are these things?

**Jack:** Oh, what are Gon's casual admissions? I don't—

**Keith:** Yeah, would you like to say, Jack, what he casually admits?

**Jack:** I don't know that I wrote this down. What does he casually admit, Keith?

**Keith:** Oh, he has two powers. He can talk to the birds, [**Austin:** Yeah.] and he can smell the storm.

**Austin:** Yep.

**Keith:** He says that in one sentence, and no one blinks.

**Austin:** Yep.

**Jack:** Yes.

**Keith:** Well, the—

**Austin:** The captain is like, “Oh, okay.”

**Keith:** The captain is impressed with him.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yes. This is very interesting that he does this, and he smells the storm in a lovingly rendered scene. Now, you might think we just need one shot of Gon smelling the storm. No. Four or five, intercut. [laughs quietly]

**Sylvia:** Mm-mm. [Austin laughs quietly]

**Jack:** The storm comes. Tensions rise. Everybody’s getting seasick, and Gon, along with a sort of inept sailor—called, I think, Katzo—are helping people out. Kurapika and Leorio intensify their ideological argument about what Hunting is for, up to the point where Leorio says, and I wrote this down, “Come outside,” basically, “and I will end the Kurta Clan bloodline once and for all.”

**Sylvia:** It’s. So. Fucked.

**Austin:** It’s fucked.

**Keith:** It’s it’s so fucked.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Can we talk about this?

**Austin:** He talks that shit.

**Sylvia:** Leorio makes a really bad first impression.

**Keith:** He really makes a bad first impression.

**Jack:** What is happening here?

**Austin:** I love Leorio.

**Keith:** I also love Leorio.

**Jack:** Yeah, I love Leorio.

**Austin:** [smacking hands for emphasis] Leorio's talking that shit!

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Leorio is from the streets. Like, Leorio is not like you. Leorio is outside!

**Sylvia:** You don't want to hear Leorio on Xbox Live.

**Austin:** That's what I'm saying. Yes. [Keith and Dre laugh]

**Jack:** But, so, Leorio feels his feelings strongly enough—

**Austin:** That is it.

**Jack:** That he looks at the last surviving member of the Kurta Clan, who has had a fairly small disagreement with him.

**Austin:** "I'll do a genocide." That's what he says.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Well, but the genocide is about someone saying, [calmly] "No, no, no, no, no, no. It's not all about spending money." "I will kill you and everybody—! [Austin and Dre laugh] I will wipe you off the face of the Earth!"



**Austin:** It's not good!

**Keith:** There is an angle of this that we are missing. The actual fight starts because Leorio introduces himself as Leorio, and then Kurapika refers to him as Leorio, and Leorio is like, "No. Like, you're not using the right honorific." In the dub—

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** In the sub— no, in the dub, sorry.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** In the English dub, he's like, "Call me Mr. Leorio. I'm older than you."

**Sylvia:** It's definitely one of those things that works better in the Japanese version, [Dre: Mm.] because of the way—

**Keith:** Uh, well...

**Sylvia:** Well, just because of the way honorifics work in Japanese.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I think it is a clearer gag. Like, I don't think it's, like, a bad joke or a bad writing in the dub.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I just think it's one of those things that, in translation, is a little clumsier.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Jack:** And it's worth saying— oh, sorry, go on, Keith.

**Keith:** Oh, well, just that, like, this final push of, like, feeling slightly disrespected by Kurapika calling him by his name and sort of ignoring him a couple times is the other

part of it, and this is how they get to outside, where Kurapika and Leorio both immediately are like, “Yep, we’ve got weapons, and we’re about to fight.”

**Austin:** Uh huh. [Jack laughs]

**Dre:** Just pulls out a switchblade, Leorio does. [laughs quietly]

**Jack:** It’s so good.

**Austin:** Well, and they all have their little weapon in this episode, right? Which is like...because Kurapika has, like, the wooden—

**Jack:** Nunchucks, almost?

**Austin:** Nunchucks, but they’re almost, like, sharp— they’re not literally sharp, but they’re kind of, like, they come to a point like they’re wooden swords, and they’re kind of connected, but they’re not connected sometimes. And then Gon has the fishing rod, obviously.

**Dre:** Uh huh.

**Keith:** Which is sick.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Oh, every time Gon uses the fishing rod, it’s so cool.

**Jack:** Uh, now, this might be because you’ve seen the rest of the show that you’re saying that it looks cool, and based on what we’ve seen him do, it’s definitely going to get to a point for me where it looks cool, [Sylvia laughs] but right now, it looks like he has gotten stuck with the fishing rod equipped in Animal Crossing.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Dre:** Now, Jack, did you forget the part where that fishing rod is so strong that it can wrap around a huge tree and catch a, like, 13 ton spider fish?

**Jack:** Smiling fish, shrimp fish?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah, that's true. I hear you there, and he's definitely put a lot of work into upgrading the fishing rod so that it matches his entire fucking color scheme. [Dre chuckles] I did not think that Gon was the protagonist of this when I saw him in the screenshots.

**Keith:** No.

**Jack:** He looked—

**Keith:** You thought it was the other person that you called the fancy lad.

**Jack:** I thought it was Killua, yeah.

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** The guy that I thought was— and so the fact that Killua basically didn't show up in this, and we can talk about when he does later, because he shows up in the funniest possible way [**Keith:** Yep!] if you believe he is the protagonist.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Yeah, so, but I will say...also, firstly, and I'll come back to this later, I really like a move that happens here—which I think is not just consistent with what I know about what I've seen of shonen, but it's also consistent with, like, any heightened mode of drama—is when a natural environment or a natural situation is matching our characters' impulses. Cutting between this big, you know, tempestuous storm coming to its climax at just the moment that Leorio and Kurapika are fighting on the deck, and these kind of, like, two threats being drawn together into one threat, culminating in, like, I think Katzo going overboard [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] and both people in that moment being like, “Oh no, we actually have to save him,” and reaching for him and failing and Gon coming diving in. And, you know, all this stuff matching up together is really nice.

**Keith:** It's such a great cut to the empty air and then Gon, like, **[Austin: Mm-hmm.]** showing up fully stretched out.

**Jack:** It's beautifully shot.

**Keith:** Oh, it's really good.

**Dre:** Just Superman diving off that ship.

**Austin:** Right, which is, like, classic this is who this character is. Leorio and Kurapika reach for the guy, but they're not leaping off the boat, **[Jack: Yeah.]** because they think, "I have to be on the boat to catch him."

**Keith:** Right. You'd think—

**Austin:** And that's not how Gon thinks.

**Keith:** No.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Gon says, "I'm going to grab him, no matter what it takes," and here we have the shonen protagonist.

**Keith:** And they really underscore this when it cuts back to, like, they're back on the boat. Leorio is like, "That was so reckless. Why did you do that? You would've fallen in," and he's like, "But I didn't. I didn't fall in." They really underline that.

**Sylvia:** I fucking love this kid. **[Dre and Austin chuckles]**

**Jack:** This was the moment that I fell in love with Gon.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** It is a piece of heroism so outlandish that you can't help but love him. I wrote,

“Gon’s great. No fear. Ready to go.”

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** I think this moment— there’s a moment in each episode that really, I feel like, just, like, oh, this is who Gon Freeccs is.

**Dre:** Yep.

**Keith:** I just want to put a sort of note next to something that Jack sent me, just to keep it. I want to keep it, and I want to have it. Here we go. I’m gonna drop it into the scratch thing right underneath the intro. “Gon’s great, isn’t he? Feels like it would be exhausting but extremely valuable to have a Gon in your life.”

**Austin:** Mm. Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Jack:** That’s what I said to Keith, and Keith said, “I’m gonna write this down.

**Keith:** I’m writing that down.

**Jack:** At which point, Branson Reese comic shirt: one fear.

**Austin:** [laughs] Ah.

**Jack:** And that kind of gets us to the end of episode one. Is there anything else we want to talk about on episode one?

**Dre:** Uh, Gon’s nose.

**Austin:** Say more.

**Sylvia:** [laughs quietly] What about it?

**Dre:** Gon can smell anything and everything, bro.

**Austin:** Oh, right.

**Keith:** Oh, right, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** We mentioned the storm.

**Austin:** Third power. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** He does also smell the soda in episode three.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Or the juice. The juice in episode three [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] that has a little something slipped in it. He doesn't recognize what it is, but he does go, "Hey, I think there's something—"

**Jack:** I'm so excited to get to the soda arc in about an hour. [Dre laughs quietly]

**Sylvia:** We should maybe— we should move to two.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Oh.

**Keith:** We'll move onto episode two. There's one big nose event in two, also.

**Sylvia:** Gon just having sort of, like, very heightened senses is gonna be just sort of a recurring thing.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** They're not quite getting into, like, Goku, like, super strength yet.

**Keith:** Who also has— Goku also has the super smeller.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Yeah, Goku's also— but, like, Goku's also, like, a little boy with a monkey tail. Gon is a human, you know?

**Jack:** No. Well...

**Austin:** If Gon popped a little monkey tail, that would be like, yeah, okay.

**Dre:** Yeah. No, that makes sense.

**Sylvia:** Oh, no, I wouldn't be shocked.

**Jack:** That wouldn't surprise me.

**Keith:** I—

**Jack:** Uh...

**Sylvia:** You know.

**Keith:** No, go ahead, Jack?

**Jack:** How old is Gon?

**Austin:** Who knows?

**Jack:** Okay.

**Keith:** I think they say he's 12.

**Austin:** Do they? Okay.

**Jack:** Okay.

**Keith:** Yeah, they say he's 12.

**Jack:** That's about what I was expecting.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I think the last thing I want to talk about is...if you're not watching along with us, there is no fucking way that you would know this, because we won't talk about it unless we do. At the commercial break points, we get these cute little bumpers.

**Austin:** Ah.

**Jack:** And in these bumpers, we have a character, one character an episode, standing next to their name written in the script of this world, which is like a Slavic alphabet. It looks like it's...yeah, it looks like it's a Slavic alphabet.

**Sylvia:** So—

**Jack:** And they sort of glance at it and go, “Huh?” and then presumably we cut to commercials and then we come back, and we see it translated into Japanese underneath. So, you know, we can match those things up, and the character looks at it and goes, “Huh, yeah.” It's so good.

**Sylvia:** It's worth pointing out that, like, it is partially based on, I think, I'm pretty sure the katakana.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** The, like, symbols that are shown there. You can kind of see where— I believe it's specifically the P syllable in Kurapika's name [**Austin:** Mm.] is the one where it was most obvious to me, where there's like a little accent mark that just becomes a circle in the *Hunter x Hunter* text.

**Jack:** Oh, that's great.

**Sylvia:** I want to find—

**Austin:** So it's like a fun variation on already extant katakana.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Because it is just— it's syllabic, right? Like, it's Japanese syllables but as this other script, right?

**Jack:** Rendered into something, you know, perhaps slightly intelligible to someone who can read Japanese but definitely off enough that [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] when you get the



thing revealed, it's great.

**Sylvia:** It's very fun.

**Jack:** It kind of serves a double purpose that I want to talk about the second purpose a bit later, but the first is that we're getting introduced to these people formally, and that feels really nice.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** You know, here are our characters. Here are their names.

**Austin:** One more thing this episode, before we move on, really quick, which is we have to resolve Kurapika and Leorio, [**Sylvia:** Yes.] which is there's this big, you know, the guy they saved says—

**Keith:** Oh, thank you.

**Austin:** "You saved— oh, thank you, you saved my life. You saved my life." And Gon is like, "It wasn't just me. These other two people helped us too," and he does a deep bow and says, "Thank you so much," and Kurapika's like, "No, that's all right." And Leorio kind of smiles and goes, "It's nothing," and like, "I'm glad you're safe," and he's blushing, and he has a big smile on, and Kurapika—

**Sylvia:** [enthusiastically] And they're so cute.

**Austin:** Uh huh. [Dre laughs] And Kurapika notices this and melts and is like, oh, okay, Leorio is a good guy. Leorio is actually, you know...Leorio's—

**Jack:** Forget the genocide. Leorio's a real one.

**Austin:** And he says, beyond that, and he goes, "I was being so rude. I apologize, Mr. Leorio," with a big smile.

**Sylvia:** I'm firing my fujoshi beam. [Austin and Dre laugh]

**Keith:** More blushing from Leorio, [**Austin:** Uh huh.] who then is like, "Eh, you don't have to call me Mr. Leorio. It's fine."

**Sylvia:** Leorio blushes a lot.

**Austin:** Oh yeah.

**Keith:** Leorio blushes a *lot*.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Real person.

**Sylvia:** Leorio is very flusterable.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** It's very good.

**Jack:** Leorio's great.

**Keith:** Well—

**Sylvia:** Dudes rock.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And Leorio apologizes. He's like, "I take back everything I said. I'm sorry."

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Very important to mention that.

**Austin:** And Gon is beaming, because Gon believes in friendship! Maybe he can't say that yet, but he believes in other people being cool!

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** We're all out here in the world on an adventure together! [Sylvia laughs quietly]

## Episode Two [0:49:45]

**Keith:** Something else he believes in is his— he never questions his judgment of other people.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** The judgments that he makes about people.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Keith:** He believes himself on those judgments, which is what we see at the very beginning of episode two, where the captain of the ship, who he now totally trusts, [Austin and Jack laugh] tells him, “Hey, you should go this way to get to the Hunter Exam,” and Gon’s like, “Okay, I’m gonna do that,” and everyone else is like, “Uh, Gon, what are you doing? The bus to go to the city is this way, and it’s going in the opposite direction of the tree that this guy sent you to.” And he’s like, “Yeah, but he told me to go here, so I’m gonna go. I’m just gonna go do it.”

**Jack:** Go up to this tall tree. Yes, I have noticed this in my— I’ve put this down in my notes as something that I have decided to call Gon’s Mistake, because I imagine it’s gonna happen several times, which is: Gon being amenable and genuine, receiving helpful secret information as a result, and then either acting on it or just blurting it straight out because he’s excited about it [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] or wants to confirm that he’s heard it right. I don’t think this is gonna be the last time we see Gon fall into this trap.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** Well, where, for you, is the trap?

**Austin:** That the world is harsh and cruel, and at some point...

**Jack:** That the world is— although... [sighs]

**Keith:** Oh. Oh, you’re saying it hasn’t shown itself to be a mistake yet?

**Jack:** Well, it sort of did from this— so, yes, the sea captain says, “Look. You want to climb the tree to that massive pine tree up on the hill out there, and that’ll show you the way to where the thing is.” And everybody else is, like, getting on buses and leaving. But then another man who’s listening in hears and says, “I’m going to go that way too.”

**Sylvia:** [laughs quietly] The sneaky motherfucker.

**Keith:** Well, also, there’s another character that overhears something, and it’s Leorio.

**Jack:** [gasps] It’s Leorio.

**Keith:** Who overhears—

**Sylvia:** Yeah, Leorio—

**Jack:** Because the Squid Game has begun. We’re in *Saw*.

**Keith:** Some snickering Hunter Exam hopefuls being like, “Those buses are traps. None of those people are getting to the Hunter Exam.

**Jack:** Yeah! The buses are traps.

**Keith:** Right, because anyone naive enough to take a bus to the Hunter Exam, [Austin laughs] like Leorio. [laughs]

**Jack:** Well, and not only that, Keith. They’re not just buses that are going somewhere else. It’s not like you’ve been told, you know, “get the bus,” but you’ve been given the wrong direction. No. These buses are specifically traps. They have laid them on with fucking signs on the front [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] saying, “We’re going to the city.” No. No such thing. Presumably, you get on that bus, it drives you a mile out of town, and then the conductor says, “Everybody off. You failed.”

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** It’s fucking wild.

**Keith:** It’s wild, yeah.

**Austin:** Well, and it's so funny, because Leorio is like, "He shouldn't trust people that simply," about Gon and the captain, when in fact, it's everybody else who is being trusting, right?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Everyone else is trusting—

**Keith:** They're being trusting of, like, this— of the Hunter Exam as, like, a structure that's gonna actually tell you how to get to it.

**Austin:** [laughs] Yes.

**Keith:** When the whole thing is that it's a big test just to get to the test.

**Sylvia:** First lesson of the Hunter Exam exam: [**Keith:** Right.] do not trust institutions.  
[Austin laughs]

**Keith:** Well, it was sort of funny, Jack, that you said, you know, "Gon's mistake," because I'm watching this being like, "Gon's a genius." Gon is, like, you know, he's like a savant at finding the right way, and even this time that he gets, you know, he sort of naively gives the directions to this guy that ends up following them. I think if that guy had asked, he would have told him the way anyway.

**Jack:** I think he would've done!

**Keith:** And then, two, the fact that that guy sneakily followed them is what allows them to pass the next test!

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Because they let this guy go first on this, like— it's like a pass/fail single test.

**Jack:** We gotta go back a scene.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I have the question if we—

**Dre:** Yeah, we gotta talk about the test.

**Keith:** Oh, yeah.

**Jack:** We gotta go back a step.

**Keith:** We're gonna talk about it. We're gonna talk about it. I was about to slow down.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Who wants to intro this?

**Jack:** So, before I—

**Sylvia:** We get to— okay, Jack, you go ahead. I would love— I want to make sure we're getting the first timer's experience as much as possible.

**Keith:** Yes, I feel the same.

**Jack:** Before we started this scene, after the trap buses were introduced, I started thinking about the way that the Hunters Exam has been obfuscated, first with, you know, survive the boat, get through the boat. Then, find the venue. Then, avoid the trap buses. And I was like, oh, this feels like what they're doing is they're buying into a big game.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** You know, even in something as codified as the Hunters' Academy, something that is pulling you forward here is a sort of...like an ARG, almost. You are being led from puzzle to puzzle that is being hidden within the world, and I thought, "Ah, that's really interesting, this idea of this—"

**Keith:** As a structure, it seems massively complicated.

**Jack:** It seems massively complicated and also deeply compelling to the kind of people who would feel this call, right? This is the looking for the game anywhere.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Jack:** This is—

**Austin:** Well, and it's not clear what some of these people's relationship to the Hunter Exam is, like the captain. Is the captain a Hunter? Is the captain a freelance contractor?

**Jack:** It's wonderful.

**Austin:** We don't know. We have no idea.

**Jack:** It feels like a cross between *The Truman Show*, the *Squid Game*, and the Michael Douglas game movie, [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] where you're like— Fincher's *The Game*.

**Sylvia:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Jack:** Where you are, like, walking through a world. This is the point at which I was, like, oh, this is so interesting to me. You are walking through a world that potentially...has the potential to have hidden relevant things or traps or blind alleys at any point. And then the next scene happens. Gon, Leorio, and Kurapika are walking through a very spooky looking abandoned village, and Leorio says something like, "There's no people here," and Gon, just blithely confident, says, "No, of course there are people here," and at that exact moment, [Dre laughs] a door opens, and a procession—this is such a striking image—of white-robed people in gas masks and brightly colored shaggy hair.

**Sylvia:** I love the way this all looks.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** This, like, western— this, like, broken-down, like, western frontier looking town in a lot of ways.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Or, like, kind of like an abandoned town in a JRPG as well.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** This is a place that has buses and skyscrapers, and then also you're in *Dragon Quest*.

**Keith:** Right.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Like was mentioned earlier.

**Jack:** Well, and then, out of it—

**Austin:** Which is like, there are parts of the world like that, to be clear. That is not a...you know, the world is varied.

**Sylvia:** Absolutely.

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Jack:** Well, it's not just that you're in *Dragon Quest* or in a western town, it's then that these people come out like attendants in a *Bloodborne* level.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. Well, and then what do they do?

**Sylvia:** Well, and also a little stage.

**Austin:** Yeah, they have a little stage.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And just to add a little bit of flavor to that, they come out like attendants in *Bloodborne*, but they also come out like they know about *Bloodborne* and they're acting.  
[Austin laughs]

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.



**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** One of them is holding a raven that is crowing rhythmically. One of them is holding, like, a tambourine.

**Sylvia:** There's a horn.

**Jack:** One of them's holding a horn.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** And they are carrying a little stage in the middle of which—

**Austin:** There's too many of them. There's not a—

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** There's too many of them.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** They can't all fit on the stage.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Some of them are standing off to the side.

**Jack:** Well, they can't all do stuff either.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Jack:** It's like there's not enough jobs.

**Sylvia:** Also, when we say "horn," it's like a bike horn.

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** Yes.

[someone imitates horn]

**Sylvia:** Where it's like you squeeze a little ball and a horn goes off.

**Keith:** One of my favorite—

**Sylvia:** Which this guy does great.

**Keith:** One of my favorite moments in the show is that this guy that squeezes the bike horn, like, they're trying to be spooky and weird and enigmatic and create a high tension moment for Hunters. It is a pass/fail, single question, yes or no quiz.

**Jack:** Quiz run by an old lady.

**Keith:** And the guy with the bike horn is just a little off on his cues, and you can tell.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Uh huh. [laughs quietly]

**Keith:** It comes in a little late, and you're like, uh...to me, I was like, "Oh, these are just guys. Like, they just live here." [laughs quietly]

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Or they live nearby or something.

**Austin:** Someone was like, "I'll give you 500 bucks if you come out with this bike horn."

**Jack:** This is the fucking—

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Oh yeah, these guys are all on, like, Hunter Exam payroll, for sure.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** These are the wait— this is the waiter in the *Existenz* Cronenberg movie [Austin laughs] going, “Is the game over? Am I still in the game?” You know, these are just these, like, low paid— I don't know, are they paid? It's like what Austin said. Do these people work for the Hunters? Who fucking knows?

**Keith:** Can I jump forward by five minutes, even though I know that we want to get to this thing?

**Jack:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Sylvia:** We can—

**Keith:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** We should be able to jump around, yeah.

**Keith:** The proctor of this exam, after it's over, tells Leorio, like, “Oh, I just love meeting people like you.”

**Austin:** Mm, mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Yeah!

**Keith:** Like, don't worry about the thing that you did that we're about to talk about. [Dre laughs] I just— I love meeting the Hunter Exam weirdos.

**Jack:** [laughs] It's so good.

**Austin:** That's, like, what I get out of this. This is a joy to me.

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay, does someone want to talk about this quiz and what we see about this?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I would love to. So, we get this sort of, like, old lady. She's the only one not wearing a mask there, and she asks— she says that it's a pass/fail quiz with one question, and the guy following them, who I checked, he's only named in the 1999 one. His name is Matthew. So, Matthew comes in. [Jack and Keith laugh]

**Austin:** Perfect.

**Sylvia:** And she asks— the question is: if you could only save your mother or your lover and the other would die, who do you save? And I believe it's one for your mother, two for your lover, or it could be reversed.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** The importance is that it's a binary choice. He selects his mother, because his logic is you can always find another lover, and then he— they point, they say, "You may pass," and he goes off.

**Keith:** I'm sorry if you already said this, Sylvi, [**Sylvia:** Yes.] but they also only give him five seconds to answer this.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Right, I did not mention that. There is a time limit.

**Keith:** Crucial question that is, again, pass/fail Hunter Exam.

**Austin:** And—

**Sylvia:** A crucial detail about the solution for this.

**Austin:** Right. And he thinks to himself, and we get to hear it, because we're the audience, "These idiots. I'm gonna get the first question right. I'm gonna move on in front of them, [**Jack:** Right.] and then I'm gonna set up traps behind me."

**Jack:** Because the Hunters' game is self-perpetuating.

**Austin:** Mm, mm.

**Jack:** This weird game that the— the game of being a Hunter or examining a Hunter doesn't even require, like, fully fledged Hunters to be involved.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** You know, he's essentially giving them— had he gone ahead to do this, he would've set up a sub-task for these people.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** The game is sort of making itself [**Austin:** Right.] out there in the world for the Hunters.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Right. Which we kind of see in the third episode too.

**Keith:** We do see that, yeah.

**Austin:** There is competition between them, between the Hunters in such a way that replicates that same sort of—

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** There's always— you always have to look over your shoulder. Someone's always trying to get one over on you.

**Keith:** A very common Hunter prospect mindset is, like, "Oh, the more people drop out the faster, the better for me," and we see that kind of all over the place.

**Austin:** Unclear if that's true or not, at this point.

**Keith:** Totally unclear if that's true, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. Anyway, what's his answer to this question? Or we said the answer. Sylvi, you said it.

**Keith:** Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Sylvia:** I did say his answer, but, so, he goes ahead, and then I believe it's revealed shortly after that he was wrong, correct?

**Austin:** No. It's not revealed.

**Keith:** They don't reveal that he was wrong until after they guess the second thing.

**Sylvia:** Right.

**Austin:** Right.

**Sylvia:** Okay. So, the way it—

**Keith:** So, Leorio is pissed. That's, like, the thing that's happening now.

**Sylvia:** Oh, Leorio is furious this entire time.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** So, when they're asked it, the timer starts, and he is, like...I believe what he does is he goes over to grab, like, a piece of wood, and he's about to hit the old woman, [Austin: Mm-hmm.] but Kurapika blocks it.

**Keith:** He starts violently swinging it in the air, sort of threateningly.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. [Jack laughs]

**Keith:** While the timer's ticking down, because he's like, this question is immoral.

**Sylvia:** This is bullshit.

**Keith:** Like, you can't answer this question.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Which is, you know, then you get realization on Kurapika's face. Like, it cuts to him being like, "[gasps] Oh, yeah."

**Dre:** Well, yeah—

**Sylvia:** Yeah, Kurapika—

**Dre:** And when Kurapika figures it out, the quiz lady is like, “Don't say anything. If you say anything, I will disqualify you.”

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Right, you're not allowed to talk about the question. You're not allowed to talk to each other anymore. All you're allowed to do is give an answer. One or two.

**Sylvia:** And the answer turns out to be silence.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** The correct answer to advance in the quiz is to not give an answer. This is what the, like, the way she reveals it. She mentions that she only said that that guy could pass, not that he's going the right way. We have this really— the moment that I really want to highlight here is when they notice that Gon's still thinking about it and he hadn't noticed that they'd passed already, because he was like, “Well, what would I do if I was in that situation?”

**Keith:** Oh, yeah, he's visibly upset about the idea that this could happen.

**Austin:** If there comes a day.

**Keith:** And he doesn't know what he would do.

**Jack:** I have a question about this.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And this is, and again, this is another moment of the real Hunter Exam, because the old woman is like, “This is actually why we ask this question.” [Austin laughs]

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Keith:** “Is to make people think about this.”

**Sylvia:** So, again, we have one per episode so far.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Jack?

**Jack:** I do really quickly— this isn't the question I'm about to ask. [laughs quietly] I really want to quickly call out one of my favorite Gon moments in this episode is as the terms of the quiz are being described. Oh, god, Netflix won't fucking let me screenshot this, will they?

**Austin:** You have to turn off, um...here's a little tip for everybody. Go into your settings in your browser.

**Jack:** What settings? In my browser?

**Austin:** In your browser, and turn off—

**Jack:** Oh, maybe Firefox will let me do it.

**Austin:** And you go ahead and turn off hardware acceleration. Do a little search for "hardware acceleration." You turn that bad boy off, you can screenshot whatever the hell you want. They can't stop you.

**Sylvia:** Ooh.

**Dre:** Ooh.

**Sylvia:** We're learning hacks.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Uh, hardware...

**Sylvia:** This is part of the Hunter Exam.

**Keith:** Yeah. [laughter] Very happy with my Plex this week.



**Austin:** Mm, mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Mm, mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Hunter Plex Hunter. [Keith laughs]

**Austin:** Jack, what are you looking to screenshot? What's your...?

**Jack:** Oh, uh, my timestamp is, uh...somewhere around 7:05.

**Austin:** Oh, early.

**Jack:** They're describing the [Austin: Mm-hmm.] structure of the quiz, and in the background, Gon is just grinning directly at the camera, presumably because he's excited that they're doing a quiz. It is such a cool moment of, like, Kurapika and Leorio are arguing or are stressed or whatever, and Gon is just motionless, delighted that there is... [Austin chuckles]

**Sylvia:** He's just excited. But I did look it up, and Jack, do you know what he says right after?

**Keith:** Yeah. I do, yep.

**Sylvia:** Like, the first thing he says after this.

**Jack:** What does he say?

**Sylvia:** Which is, "I'm no good at quizzes."

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. [Jack laughs]

**Keith:** Yeah, he's like, "You two have to take this one."

**Jack:** So just, like, head empty? What's going on? Is he excited to see them do the quiz? I don't...

**Keith:** I think yes, genuinely. Or, no. Oh, he's embarrassed!

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Oh, sure.

**Keith:** He's embarrassed about not being good at quizzes.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I have to feel that between the not being good at quizzes and feeling embarrassed and also just head empty grinning, I might be Gon. [others laugh]

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I don't know if I'll change this as I go, but...

**Austin:** Oof, mm-hmm.

**Jack:** I watched *Sailor Moon*, and out of all of the Sailor Scouts, I'm like, "Yeah, I'm Sailor Moon," and I feel like that transfers to Gon.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Keith:** Gon is a very...

**Sylvia:** I'm so glad we're gonna talk about which characters we're kinning.

**Jack:** [laughs quietly] Yes, exactly.

**Austin:** Jack, watching *Hunter x Hunter*, "He thinks he's me for real." [Jack laughs]

**Keith:** Gon's a very interesting character, because— so, this is interesting. I resisted watching this show for a really long time. I can't even...I cannot empathize with the version of me that thought this, [Austin laughs] I, like, am so far removed from it, but I, like, fully rejected the show based on Gon's character design.

**Sylvia:** Wow.

**Keith:** And I was like, "Who could like a show that that's the main character of?" [Sylvia

laughs]

**Jack:** Yes.

**Keith:** And I think that the reason was, like, well, he just looks like a knockoff Akira Toriyama *Dragon Quest* character, sort of Goku-ish in the face.

**Jack:** I could see that.

**Keith:** And sort of Akira Toriyama in every other part of him, including the clothes.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** But then, I'm watching the show, and I'm like, "Oh, that is because Gon is, in a lot of ways, literally Goku."

**Austin:** Yeah, I mean, that's...yeah. Right? I mean, this whole— you're gonna have to keep coming back to this every arc, to be like, "Hey, what's going on with this arc and shonen? Is this arc— what's this guy think about Goku?"

**Keith:** Right. Yes.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Like, what's this guy think about Yugioh? What's this guy think about blah blah blah? [Dre laughs quietly]]

**Keith:** And—

**Austin:** Is like a big— is, like, a common thing you're gonna come back to.

**Keith:** It is.

**Austin:** I don't think that's a spoiler, but like...

**Keith:** No. But the—

**Austin:** It's not a knockoff. It's in conversation, and that's how you get away with it. You

say, "Oh, I'm actually in conversation with Akira Toriyama."

**Keith:** Yes.

**Austin:** You know?

**Keith:** Well, it's not just...it's not just, uh...sorry, there's, like, a throughline for me, because I also think a lot about *Dragon Ball Z* or *Dragon Ball* specifically, actually.

**Austin:** Mm. Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** When I play *Yakuza* games.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Keith:** Because I think Kiryu is also, in a big way, [**Austin:** Mm.] like, very Goku-brained.

**Austin:** A Goku. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Absolutely.

**Keith:** And in, like, a...there's a bit in *Dragon Ball*, Jack, where...he can't fly yet. Flying comes in *Dragon Ball Z*. If you know that Goku is a flying character, you might be confused here.

**Jack:** I don't.

**Keith:** But he receives a cloud that, if he's pure of heart, he will be able to fly, given to him by his disgusting martial arts teacher [Dre laughs quietly] who of course cannot fly the Flying Nimbus.

**Dre:** He's too horny to be on the Nimbus.

**Keith:** He's too horny to fly the Flying Nimbus.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Goku, of course—

**Sylvia:** [laughs quietly] My horny ass could never pilot the Flying Nimbus. [others laugh]

**Keith:** Of course, Goku can instantly fly the Flying Nimbus, and it becomes sort of his, like, friend? It's kind of alive? It becomes his friend for a little bit?

**Austin:** It has a—

**Sylvia:** It's a little bit of a carpet from Aladdin vibes.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yes. Exactly.

**Dre:** Yes, 100%.

**Keith:** That's exactly it, yeah. There's this sort of, like, this thing that exists in...a lot of shows try it, but it's hard to pull off, of like, this sort of pure of heart sort of thing.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** I love that Kiryu has it, because any problem that he has, he can punch his way through, so he's, like, allowed by the fiction to trust anyone that he talks to, because if they lie to him, he can destroy their bodies [Sylvia laughs] and will do that.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** And Gon is— Goku's similar. Gon is sort of the same way, where it's sort of like...he's allowed to trust whoever he wants and put his faith into other people because of, like, this weird thing where, "Well, I'm just on the path that I'm on, and if this causes problems for me, I'll deal with it when we get to it."

**Austin:** Because I'm invincible, right?

**Keith:** Because— right.

**Austin:** When you're invincible...and I'm not saying that Gon is invincible, but that's, like, the way he sees him— that's the way he holds himself is like, "There isn't a

problem I won't be able to force my way through.”

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Push my way through, not force, which is part of why he’s—

**Keith:** Meanwhile being realistic about his abilities.

**Austin:** Right, and that’s why he— that’s why I think this question halts him is he faces this question of, like, [**Keith:** Yes.] “Oh, wait. What if I’m in a situation where literally I have to make a decision between two people?”

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** “And it’s not a thing I can just willpower my way through and save both of them? Shit, I hadn’t thought about a situation like that.” That does—

**Keith:** And there’s your conversation with Goku.

**Austin:** Right. Right, yes.

**Keith:** That’s where that brings us.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** And yeah, just, like, a first...kind of like a foreshadowing of some of the best flavors of the show, I think.

**Austin:** Mm, mm-hmm.

**Jack:** The manga is fully out by this point.

**Keith:** No.

**Austin:** No.

**Jack:** Uh, no, uh—

**Keith:** Only recently, there was some new stuff released.

**Jack:** How far ahead of the show was the manga at the time this episode was released? I guess here's what I'm saying.

**Keith:** Not very.

**Sylvia:** So...

**Jack:** This is a very loaded line.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Oh, sorry, wait, I'm...

**Jack:** "If there's a day where you have to choose between two important people, what will you do?" That, you know, it's a thought experiment for Gon, but it is also...there is a—

**Keith:** It's a Chekov's gun?

**Jack:** It is a Chekov's gun.

**Austin:** Yeah. Right.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And I am curious about whether this line was written to read differently to people who knew where this story was going to go.

**Austin:** I'm checking this as we speak, just so that...

**Keith:** So, I forgot about the...

**Austin:** You know off the top of your head?

**Keith:** Well, this was in the '96 show.

**Austin:** Right, but what Jack's asking is: how far ahead was the manga when this was in production?

**Dre:** Mm.

**Keith:** Oh, so—

**Sylvia:** So, this, I believe that—

**Austin:** I can tell you, but...

**Sylvia:** Oh, you have it? Okay.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, if you can tell, tell.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** If you have it exact, go ahead.

**Austin:** This episode comes out October 2, 2011, so it's in production in 2011, 2010-2011, probably 2011. And the 28th volume of *Hunter x Hunter* is coming out in 2011 in the summer. It comes out July 4, 2011, and that is in the middle of chimera ant.

**Keith:** That's very interesting.

**Dre:** Oh! Whoa!

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Keith:** It's very interesting.

**Austin:** I'm gonna send... [laughs]

**Keith:** God, good for them.



**Austin:** Haaa!

**Keith:** Good for Togashi.

**Austin:** I'm just gonna send a little DM really quick.

**Jack:** So, with this knowledge, the implication that I'm getting [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] is yes, this line does read differently if you know what is going to happen.

**Sylvia:** If you know more about the series, it reads differently. I think this...I feel like this might still be a line regardless of when— I'm gonna look. I'm gonna check the differences page, because each—

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** The people running the sort of Fandom wiki for it have done a very good job of listing differences between the manga and the anime, and there's none listed for this one, so I have to believe that that question— that that is still the, like, point of that, and that...

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** I don't know.

**Keith:** Wow.

**Sylvia:** Because of things that are cut at the beginning of—

**Austin:** Sorry, I sent them— I sent the rest of the crew where this came out.

**Sylvia:** Oh, wow! Okay.

**Austin:** Uh huh. Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** That's wild. That's wild. Good for Togashi.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. The...yeah, no, I can't. I can't.

**Austin:** We'll come back to it.

**Jack:** No, we can come back to this.

**Sylvia:** It's great. That's fantastic.

**Jack:** We're going to get there. But this is very interesting.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Then we move into kind of, like, the last act of this episode, in which they arrive at the pine tree and, uh, encounter—

**Austin:** Hmm. I do want to say something about what I just said about this, really quick, which is I already said it's the middle of chimera ant. Jack, you've already said you've heard people talk about the chimera ant arc. This show is very far away from talking about chimera ant, at this point. It's a later arc, and it's a very long arc in the show, and I think a thing worth thinking about, then, is: that's an arc that is in the middle— it's in the middle when this show is coming out, and so you have to think about what the show then is doing as a product, and what it's doing partially is funneling people to the ongoing comic, right? And so, yes, you have to think about the show as being in conversation with what is happening in the manga at the same time and being able to signal certain things as being important, which is what you started by— it's why you asked that question, right? But it's explicitly happening at the height of what would become and was already the longest arc in the book at that point, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So, I think that there is something happening there, and it's worth thinking about that, because that is, like— this is part of what you do, right? Is like, oh, the new anime is out. The new movie— the new Marvel movie is out. That means we're gonna

do a big run of— the new, you know, Miles Morales movie is out. Let's do some Spiderman stuff in the comics right now to try to, like, build off of that. Let's put these two things in relation. And like, yeah, that seems like it was happening, you know?

**Keith:** By the way, thinking of that funnel, I think, does a little bit to also explain stuff that was cut from **[Austin: Mm.]** the first anime and from the manga in order to really, really efficiently streamline the first—

**Austin:** This stuff?

**Keith:** This stuff, all this early stuff.

**Austin:** Interesting.

**Keith:** Like, I think it's great. I think they do such a great job. I've never had any issues with how this show starts except for Togashi's other anime, *Yu Yu Hakusho*, does have the best first three episodes I think of any show I've ever seen.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** But it is, like, so— there's so much more time given to each character in the '99 series.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Hmm.

**Keith:** Again, we're on— the stuff that we're covering now is episode four of the '99 series.

**Austin:** Okay. Cool.

**Keith:** And there's, like, a whole episode of just Leorio and Gon before they get on the boat.

**Austin:** Oh.

**Keith:** Hanging out at the docks of...

**Austin:** Interesting.

**Keith:** Hanging out at the docks of Whale Town.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Sorry, Whale Island, Whale Island. And there's, you know, and we referenced earlier the stuff that shows up at the very very beginning that isn't in the 2011, which is kind of a weird cut. Like, I kind of...I don't know how they could have fit it into the episode, like, without adding episodes. The couldn't have.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** So I see why they cut it, but I'm sort of like, ah, maybe you really should have that. That's, like, the one thing that I'm like...sorry I'm being so vague. I don't want to...

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. I get you.

**Keith:** But anyway, that's just very interesting how, like, it does sort of feel like we're getting to the stuff quick in this.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Getting to the mix.

**Jack:** I will say that I feel like I have a good handle on these characters at this point. Obviously, we're going to get more of them, but I don't feel like there are big sort of gaping misunderstandings about how these characters operate. I've been given lots of opportunities to see them in the world, you know, interacting with things.

**Keith:** The '99 series feels like *Zelda*. The whole time, I was like, "Wow, this is so much more *Legend of Zelda*." I never think about *Legend of Zelda* when I watch the 2011 series.

**Austin:** I think about it when the narrator says, “Untold treasures and wild monsters!”

**Keith:** [chuckles] Sure, yes. Okay, fair.

**Austin:** And they’re showing pictures of, like, big mushrooms that people could climb on, and I’m like, “They should make—” It is wild to me that we don’t have a really dope *Hunter x Hunter* JRPG.

**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I was gonna ask about this, actually. I was going to— after I finished episode one, I was like, “I want to play a video game of this.”

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Yeah, me too.

**Jack:** It doesn’t exist?

**Keith:** No.

**Austin:** Not really.

**Jack:** Huh.

**Keith:** I mean, you could play a fighting game. You want to play a fighting game?

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** No. We should talk about—

**Sylvia:** Actually, it is worth mentioning: there is a *Legend of Zelda* connection to this show in the English dub.

**Jack:** Oh, yeah?

**Keith:** Oh?

**Sylvia:** Which is Killua's voice actor is in *Tears of the Kingdom*.

**Austin:** Oh.

**Keith:** Ooh, yes! You're right!

**Sylvia:** And is basically just doing the same voice.

**Keith:** The same voice, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Which I've watched both the dub and the sub for this show, and I think the dub is pretty good, just to put that on the record for people.

**Keith:** I agree, and I do— I think, uh...sorry, say again, Austin?

**Sylvia:** I was just gonna— oh.

**Keith:** I thought Austin said something.

**Austin:** I didn't say anything.

**Keith:** Oh, okay. I thought—

**Austin:** Uh, I started to, but I stopped.

**Keith:** Oh, okay. Uh, is...I can't remember her name. Valenzuela, maybe?

**Sylvia:** Uh, yeah, Cristina Valenzuela.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Cristina Vee, kind of colloquially known, I guess?

**Keith:** Really great in the dub. I also really love Kurapika in the dub. I think they both do great jobs.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** And a character— my last shoutout. In the next episode, Tonpa is my— the dub for Tonpa is really good.

**Austin:** Mm. Uh, speaking of magical creatures, like in the *Legend of Zelda*.

**Jack:** Oh my god.

**Sylvia:** The Kiriko.

**Austin:** What happens in this— [chuckles] yeah. What happens in this forest? Who are the Kiriko?

**Keith:** Uh, more secret observation from the Hunter—

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** The pre-Hunter Exam exam. The crew shows up to what they are told is the navigators' house. There's "beware of magical beasts" signs? Is that what the signs say?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Everywhere. We only see, I think, one or two, but Leorio's like, "Ah, another one of these signs. 'Beware of magical beasts.' Yeah, right." Open the door to the navigators' house that it takes hours to get to, and there's a...ah. This thing is like a tall...a very oddly shaped wolf creature.

**Jack:** Sort of hyena? Yeah.

**Keith:** Hyena thing.

**Austin:** Would you say it's Renamon adjacent?

**Sylvia:** Little bit.

**Keith:** [thoughtfully] Renamon.

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Austin:** What do you—? Whoa.

**Sylvia:** There's definitely that sort of, like, fox-like face going on.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** There is, like, bunny ears. There's a bit of a kangaroo vibe to it with the way they spring around.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** It's got the long alligator snout of a cartoon wolf.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I mean, I guess it's worth... I mean, I guess it all kind of ties into the reveal later in the episode of, like, what their abilities are, right?

**Keith:** Right, yeah.

**Austin:** Well, they say that right away, oh, they're shapeshifters.

**Keith:** Right.

**Sylvia:** Okay, cool.

**Keith:** Kurapika knows that they're shapeshifters right away, because Kurapika is smart and knows stuff. That's sort of Kurapika's thing. [Sylvia laughs] Oh, by the way, just really quickly: we've talked a little bit about Gon's smelling and nature abilities. He's also super athletic, seems very very strong. Kurapika seems smart and very observant. We see a lot of Kurapika observing people.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** A lot of episode two is, like, looking at Kurapika sitting, sort of looking like he's



doing nothing, but actually he's watching and absorbing everything and, like, learning all of the things that we're learning. And Leorio is a guy. Leorio— [laughs]

**Austin:** Uh...

**Sylvia:** Uh...

**Austin:** People—

**Sylvia:** So, there is important stuff to what Leorio does here.

**Austin:** People like Leorio.

**Keith:** People like Leorio. Yes, that is totally Leorio's thing, yes. I was being...I was being, uh...

**Austin:** Yes.

**Keith:** Facetious, but yeah.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Keith:** That is, like, in the same way that Gon can smell, people like Leorio, even when he's actively giving them reasons not to.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And I do mean actively.

**Jack:** I want to talk about this quickly at the end of this episode, but we get into a big chase as everybody splits up, starts pursuing these shapeshifting creatures.

**Austin:** Gon does something really funny during this—

**Keith:** Oh my god, yeah.

**Austin:** —that reveals that he’s a little bloodthirsty? Like, not literally bloodthirsty. That’s wrong. That he...

**Sylvia:** He likes fighting.

**Austin:** He likes—

**Keith:** Violence is one of his tools.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Violence is one of his tools, and he’s comfortable with, like, instigating and, like, making fun in a way that will shake up the opponent and give him an opening.

**Keith:** Yeah. The thing here is that he learns that the Kiriko can talk, and he goes, “Great. This works perfectly.”

**Jack:** That’s interesting.

**Keith:** So he runs behind the Kiriko and just goes like, “Hey, Kiriko!” or I think he calls it a silly Kiriko.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And it looks back like, “Huh?” and then he smashes him on the head with his big fishing pole.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** And—

**Jack:** This monster being able to talk was a real moment for me. [Austin laughs quietly] You know, we’re gonna get there, so it’s worth saying that these monsters work for or are part of the Hunters’ guild, and so, you know. But I tumbled into an existence suddenly where these monsters that are being hunted presumably have speech and have cultures [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] and have societies, and I wrote down, “Ah, the monsters can talk. What is monster society?” and I’m so curious to see how we can

explore this. If the Kiriko can talk, are there other, quote, unquote, “evil” monsters out there who can talk? You know, again, what are Hunters? We get a beautiful shot of a Kiriko crouching on the tree against the moon. It looks really sick. They look like a fucking werewolf. And then Gon realizes that they’re actually dealing with two Kiriko, because he can tell them apart, and I think a good line— one of them says, “How can you tell us apart?” and Gon says, “Oh, it’s extremely obvious to me.” [Austin and Dre laugh]

**Keith:** Yes.

**Jack:** No, I can just tell instantly.

**Keith:** He’s stunned. The Kiriko is stunned. Like, literally bursts out laughing at this.

**Austin:** Yeah, like, calls off the thing. Right? They’re like, “All right, all right, it’s all—”

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

**Austin:** “Okay, everybody. It’s Ashton Kutcher here. The camera? Look right over there.”

**Keith:** Yeah. [Dre laughs]

**Austin:** “We got a camera right over there.”

**Keith:** I think— yeah, well, actually, they call it off, and they’re like, “This is Ashton Kutcher. [Austin laughs] Gon is punking us.”

**Austin:** Yes, exactly. [Dre and Keith laugh] Exactly.

**Jack:** And we learn that, you know, they are actually all Kiriko, two of them taking the form of humans and two of them, you know, as the beasts, [**Keith:** Yeah.] and they say, “Well done.”

**Keith:** Hey, everyone. Keith jumping in here just to make a quick note about the audio from this point forward. You might notice that Sylvi sounds a little bit worse

than in the rest of the episode. It's not a huge deal. It's totally listenable, and everyone else is gonna sound pretty much the same for the whole thing. Okay, bye.

**Sylvia:** Unmute. The way that...I mentioned this, but my Discord was being weird, and I don't think it came through. The way that Gon recognizes the separate Kiriko is just, like, he immediately tunes into, like, one's voice is higher and that their faces are different. Like, "You look completely different!"

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** It's very cute.

**Keith:** Yeah, it's super cute.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** And then we get the reveal that they're this little family.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** And they go through all the different details that the team noticed to be like...

**Keith:** Oh, right, yeah, does someone want to go through the grading? Or are we satisfied with just saying that they all pass? We didn't even mention, actually, what Leorio does. Leorio very quickly jumps to help one of the apparent humans on the floor who had been sort of slashed by a Kiriko.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Opens his box that he's been carrying around, and there's doctor tools in there.

**Austin:** Yep.

**Jack:** Yeah. I don't think we need to go through all of them, unless folks have stuff they want to talk about, but I did think it was really notable that— so, the Kiriko kind of, like, draw out the noble traits of the candidates [**Keith:** Yeah.] and are like, "Oh, you're

passing because of X. You're passing because of Y,” and they specifically read Leorio as considerate, which is really interesting, given that—

**Keith:** Yeah, more considerate than a doctor.

**Jack:** Yeah. So, Leorio—

**Dre:** And more skilled than a doctor.

**Keith:** Yeah, more skilled than a doctor, yeah. And then—

**Jack:** “I will end your bloodline.” Leorio. Mr. Leorio.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** [laughs] This is sort of why I brought up Kurapika in episode two—like, how we see most of that episode kind of through Kurapika and watch him being observant—and then joked about Leorio, because this is really the first time that we, like, see Leorio [Austin: Mm-hmm.] do something, and it’s that he treats this— he effectively treats someone who appeared to be pretty messed up.

**Austin:** Which is wild too, right? Because it’s like, oh yeah, that means that these creatures, these monsters attacked their own child in a way that is genuine. Like, the twist— every—

**Jack:** I was wondering about this, yeah.

**Keith:** Oh.

**Austin:** I've seen this episode about three or four times, because I just realized I've watched the first 10 episodes of this four times or something, because I bounced off of it multiple times, and then finally last year it hooked me, and I actually finished it. So I've seen this many times, and each time, I go, “Oh, Leorio’s gonna realize it’s not really injured or the injuries are in non-essential places or...” and that doesn't happen. They’re just actually hurt, you know?

**Keith:** I have a different read on this.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** Which is that I just thought that they could shapeshift themselves into looking hurt.

**Austin:** Into...

**Dre:** Yeah, that's what I thought too.

**Austin:** But if they're— but wouldn't Leorio have realized, "Oh, you're not really hurt."

**Keith:** Oh, I mean, like, could actually— well, maybe it would still hurt to do this, but like—

**Austin:** Right, so I mean, then they're doing that.

**Keith:** "Oh, I can shapeshift into having my thing open," and then Leorio's maybe—

**Austin:** Wounds.

**Sylvia:** It's also easy to be like, there's non-visible wounds.

**Austin:** Sure. Yes.

**Keith:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** Be like, "I think I hit my head," and like, he'll stay there and take care of them.

**Keith:** It would not be beyond the scope of this show to say that—

**Austin:** But when they come in, [**Keith:** Yeah.] the guy is all bloody.

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

**Austin:** Like, there is blood. So it's like, that's real blood. Leorio isn't like, "Oh, that's raspberry jam," or "that's fake blood." No one says it's fake blood, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And they say, “You did a good job of taking care of our injured son.”

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So, like...

**Keith:** It would not— it’s definitely not beyond the scope of this show to have someone, you know, slash themselves or get slashed by their parent—

**Austin:** Totally. Totally.

**Keith:** And have them sort of be genuinely wounded for, mm, what seems like a kind of minor ploy? [Austin laughs]

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Like, they could've written any scenario they wanted.

**Austin:** They happened to have the right one for Leorio. I mean, it makes me— it raises questions like: did they know it was this trio on the way and they—?

**Jack:** This is what I'm talking about, Austin!

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** This is fascinating to me.

**Sylvia:** Mm.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Well, there’s so many.

**Austin:** I don't know.

**Jack:** How much of this is...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** By the numbers that we learn in episode three, [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] there's at least 30,000 applicants, thereabouts, if not more. And so, one of— something that the captain says on the ship is like, "We are here in order to, like, trim off the people who wouldn't make it anyway, so that the actual [**Austin:** Right.] Hunter group doesn't have to, like, spend too much time. Like, they can just get right to the people who actually make it to the exam." And I don't know if that means it's so big and so complicated that they know who's on the way.

**Austin:** I don't know, because—

**Keith:** Maybe it's like, they've got three scenarios, and it's like, radio in, one scenario 2.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** Or it could just be, like, yeah, just totally randomly. It's not worth it to the Hunter Exam to be that thorough. If you can't—

**Austin:** But we have, like, two versions of a trap, right? We have the buses and the boat, which is like hundreds of people at once are getting disqualified.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Because they couldn't hang. The boat just knocked them out. They got on the buses. They're out. And then we have this, and we have the lady and the masked people, who are carving one or two people away, and the others are getting through, you know? Like, how many people are even meeting the Kiriko? How many—

**Keith:** Right. Yeah, true.

**Austin:** How many of these mini steps are there? Does the captain also tell somebody else, "Okay, uh, actually, you don't want to go on the bus. You want to go into a little cave that's on the second tier of the—" or is he saying, "go to the cedar tree," to everybody? I don't know what the answer is to this.



**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah. It's very— and it does sort of feed into, like, the hugeness of it that it could really be anything.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, absolutely. Like, the whole thing about the, like, the way that all of this is laid out immediately is that it makes the Hunter Exam feel massive, like, **[Austin:** Mm-hmm.] right out the gate to me? I don't know. Like, the fact that they're able to set up...

**Keith:** Um...

**Sylvia:** Mm?

**Keith:** Oh, sorry, sorry. I did my math wrong, because I forgot that there's other people that make it. It's not 30,000 applicants. It's four million.

**Sylvia:** It seems like the way—

**Jack:** Whoa. [Dre chuckles]

**Sylvia:** Because of the way they access the exam in episode three, I would hazard a guess—and this is, like, me inferring, obviously—that there are many ways to qualify **[Austin:** Right.] for that phase of the exam, and because you immediately be like, oh. Like, as you're saying, like, "Oh, how many people met the Kiriko?" That question makes the Hunters feel like a much bigger deal, because you're like, "Well, no, these people— they couldn't all have been there—"

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Right.

**Sylvia:** Like, within the past hour, you know?

**Austin:** Right, that's the thing.

**Keith:** Yeah, the amount of things that they had to succeed at to even get there.

**Austin:** Exactly.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Like, I bet the Kiriko are running this again in two hours, but I bet they're not running it with...you know, I bet they're running it in hour long increments. Maybe they're not. Maybe it's a 15 minute in-and-out thing. Maybe it's like a haunted house. I don't know.

**Sylvia:** [crosstalk] Eh, no, they have to, like, fly away at the end of the episode?

**Keith:** [crosstalk] Well, the Kiriko all fly them all to the city, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Exactly.

**Sylvia:** That seems like it would take a while.

**Austin:** Yeah. That's true.

**Keith:** Maybe each sort of sub-proctor has their one path.

**Austin:** Each navigator or whatever.

**Keith:** Each navigator has their one path that they send at people.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** But there's only ever a handful that succeed, so it's always like, "Okay, I'm gonna have between zero and five people [**Austin:** Right.] on my boat of, you know, a few dozen. I'll send them this way," or something. Yeah, I don't know.

**Austin:** Do you think they have quotas? Do you think the captain was like, "You gotta get rid of 200 people."

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Austin:** "You gotta. You cannot let more than five people through."

**Keith:** I mean, he did go Tony Hake Pro Skater on those waves. [Austin and Dre laugh quietly]

**Austin:** And he's, like, trying to get a combo score higher to knock one more person off.

**Keith:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Austin:** Like, there was a fourth person who almost made it, and he had to be like, "I have to hit that 900."

**Sylvia:** Have to hit that christ air.

**Austin:** [laughs] Yeah, christ air!

**Keith:** So, my math error was Gon, Killua— sorry, not Killua. Gon, Kurapika, and Leorio represent about 30,000 failed people.

**Austin:** Each.

**Keith:** Each. Right.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Oh, no, not each. Each one represents 10,000 failed people.

**Austin:** Oh, okay, gotcha.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Gotcha, gotcha, gotcha.

**Keith:** So the three of them— that was the thing. But then we get, eventually, to downstairs. But let's get—

**Sylvia:** And we do—

**Keith:** Eventually to downstairs.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, let's get to episode three, because that does give us a firm answer on how many people qualified for the exam as well.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Real quick, we do have a little bit more of "What is a Hunter?" to play.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** Oh, yay!

**Keith:** Because that is the end of episode two is we learn...we get more in depth into this sort of ideological disagreement about what a Hunter is. If I can read verbatim something or two somethings.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Please.

**Keith:** According to Leorio, "A Hunter is someone that makes the most money in the world. [Jack laughs] Every year, over 50 Hunters make the list of the world's 100 richest people. Once you're a Hunter, most countries give you a free pass and no charge to use public facilities. Fame and money: that's why people want to become Hunters."

**Austin:** Love to use public facilities.

**Keith:** For free.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** In any country. Yeah.

**Keith:** From any country. Er, well, most countries.

**Austin:** Most countries.

**Dre:** You cannot use the bathroom unless you're a Hunter. [Keith laughs]

**Austin:** Well, you might have to pay, right?

**Keith:** Customers and Hunters only.

**Dre:** Yeah. [Keith and Austin laugh]

**Keith:** And then we have, from Kurapika, “Hunters are the most noble people in the world. The Hunters work to protect people and the natural order. Hunters have many difficult and important responsibilities such as preserving cultural artifacts and endangered species as well as capturing wanted criminals and unscrupulous Hunters. Profound and unyielding conviction: those are the qualities on which Hunters pride themselves.” Very different answers.

**Austin:** Oh yeah. Do you think they’re right? Do you think either of them is right?

**Keith:** Uh, Kurapika’s answer sounds very Hunter commercial.

**Austin:** Mm. [laughs quietly] “Join the Hunters.”

**Keith:** Yes. [Jack laughs] This is an Army Proud...

**Dre:** Right.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Keith:** [laughs] Because, like, we’ve seen the kinds of people that want to become Hunters, and they certainly don’t seem the way that Kurapika is describing.

**Dre:** Yeah, a lot of them suck.

**Austin:** Well, that’s the thing. At this point, we hadn’t seen them.

**Jack:** No.

**Austin:** What we’d seen is these three and then that guy who tried to cheat.

**Keith:** Well—

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Or tried to follow them.

**Keith:** So—

**Austin:** And then a bunch of randos who couldn't hang.

**Keith:** It is true that they couldn't hang, but like, that's the sort of people who are trying to get in, at the very least.

**Austin:** Right. Yes, totally, totally, totally, but I'm just drawing a line [**Keith:** Yeah.] between this episode and next episode—

**Keith:** And next episode.

**Austin:** Where we truly learn what type of people make the cut to get to the true Hunter Exam.

**Keith:** I was so excited in the screenshot stream that we did with Jack that we got to show them the lineup of freaks in that one screenshot and got to hear how Jack described everyone in that lineup. This gave me a similar feeling of, like, when they get down there. They're like, oh, the basement of this, like, steak shop is actually the entrance to the Hunter Exam. Very good gag where they pretend like it's this big building that they get to, and they're like, "No, no, it's in the steak shop." And there's, yeah, 400 other people, and we get a really good look of a bunch of weirdos.

**Jack:** Yeah. Do we want to take just five minutes before we begin the last part?

**Keith:** Sure.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Dre:** Yes, please.

## Music Talk [1:33:43]

[single note from song]

**Keith:** Uh, Jack, while we were on break, you mentioned that we didn't want to miss talking about the music.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Also, Sylvi mentioned talking about the theme song. [Sylvia laughs] Those were the two halves of this idea to come back in and talk about music.

**Jack:** I think that, since the theme song starts, do you want to talk a little bit about the theme song, Sylvi?

**Sylvia:** Oh, I love the theme song. This is just, like, it kind of has become, at least in the circles I run in, a, like, canonical anime theme.

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Sylvia:** It is, like, a thing that people think about, and I don't...

**Austin:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** I don't think it's too much of a spoiler to be like, "this is kind of the theme for the whole show."

**Jack:** Yeah, I've heard this.

**Keith:** You know, it's funny, because that is the sort of Togashi special, because the incredible, absolutely phenomenal intro to *Yu Yu Hakusho*, "Smile Bomb", is also the theme for the whole show.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I gotta hear this. How's that go? I have to remember.

**Keith:** Oh my god, “Smile Bomb” is so good. Oh my god!

**Sylvia:** Oh, “Smile Bomb” is very good. I haven't even watched *Yu Yu Hakusho*, but I've listened to “Smile Bomb”.

**Austin:** *Yu Yu Hakusho* is great, but.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Oh yeah, this song rules.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** This song rules. I like this more than the...

**Keith:** That is, I think, the best anime intro of all time.

**Austin:** Ever?

**Keith:** Like, songwise. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Sylvia:** I won't argue!

**Keith:** I don't think there's an anime intro song that's better than “Smile Bomb”.

**Austin:** Sounds like a city pop jam. It's good. I don't know.

**Jack:** I think that the...it makes sense that you say that this theme is going to stick around mostly, because I think that there is enough emotional depth and range in what we've got here that it can carry you through a lot of different styles and tones. I mean, when I'm writing themes for the show, I don't know where we're gonna go, but I know that this is gonna be what people hear at the beginning and at the end of every episode.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** So I want to sort of try and write for a wide enough latitude of feelings, and listening through to what we've got here at the beginning, it seems like you could go a



long way with that music.

**Austin:** I'm curious, how familiar are you with the idea of an anime theme song or, like, OP?

**Jack:** Much more familiar than I am with the genre or with the shonen genre.

**Austin:** Okay. With anime themselves. Right, right, right.

**Jack:** Yeah, I think that because of the...because they are both so stylized and because they are shorter buy-ins and because they usually have these, like, extremely elaborate title sequences with them, I have seen a lot of title sequences for shows that I haven't seen.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Jack:** I think that probably not having seen the shows that they're attached to means that I miss some of the context of how they work, sort of as structural pieces.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** But I've definitely— I've seen my fair share much more than I have seen, you know, examples of the genre in and of themselves.

**Austin:** So, like, an example of this is that, like, *Fulmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood* has 64 episodes and has five opening themes across those 64 episodes, right?

**Jack:** Right.

**Austin:** They tend to be deployed after the end of a major arc, seasonal— you know, which is to say often between seasons, a new season of the show starts with a completely new theme. They are often in the same genre space, you know? You have something that is, like, doing some sort of emo J-rock thing. It's gonna stay doing emo J-rock, but the...maybe the band stays the same or the singer might stay the same across, but you know, the song is different and the actual opening animation is gonna show different characters and stuff from different parts of the show and blah blah blah

blah blah. And so, to some degree, the fact that it doesn't change here really surprised me the first time I watched it, but it means it has this really solid identity, right? Starting an episode of *Hunter x Hunter* makes you feel a way, because it's that song, you know?

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** It's this song playing.

**Sylvia:** You always hear those, like, same open—

**Austin:** Yep.

**Sylvia:** That opening, like...I don't even know how to describe the sound that it actually starts with.

**Austin:** Right.

**Sylvia:** It almost— it feels like a count-in to me, but it's not. [laughs quietly]

**Austin:** Yeah, it does feel that way. Yeah.

**Jack:** It's worth saying we had talked about the idea of me hearing it for the first time and then writing the music based on that. We didn't end up doing that, because we reached this goal faster than we thought we would and then put it into production, and past a certain point, it became more important for me to actually start watching the show than it did to do some sort of silly game with the music. I don't know what I've done with the music yet. I've got some ideas, but I wanted to head it off at the pass: what you heard at the beginning was not my interpretation of the *Hunter x Hunter* theme from only one hearing.

**Keith:** Right, that is a good note for the people that were expecting that. I'm sure we would have said it if we had done that.

**Jack:** Yes.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Jack:** But I can in fact specifically not confirm that. What I think I am actually gonna do more of—and which leads into talking more about the rest of the music—is that there is a real varied palette of music throughout this. I mean, we already have themes that are coming up again and again.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** You know, themes to convey threat or humor or certain characters, but there is a real...you know, in the show notes, Austin, you were talking about, uh, what do we think about the world? What's true about the place? What year is it? What buildings are there? You know, how much technology do they have? And I think that this is reflected very intensely in the music; not the opening, but the music that runs through the episodes themselves. You know, one moment we will have a marching band playing. Then we'll have these, like, weird overlapping delayed string parts that sound really good, then we'll have, like, kalimbas and guitars playing, and it feels really consistent. It feels really coherent. The composer—I don't know if it's just one composer or a team—are doing something in the way that they are structuring their arrangements that allow for a real feeling of consistency, even if they are swapping in and out different instrumentation. But I've been really impressed with it, and I think that the show gives the music time to breathe. I don't know if you feel the same way or if this is something that's gonna kind of continue as we watch, but there have been a lot of moments where I think we've been invited to listen to the music, as we've been seeing what's going on.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I think... [sighs] What I noticed about the music, listening to this, is less, like, the specifics of how it's made, because I'm not, like...I don't...

**Austin:** Big same.

**Sylvia:** I'm not tuned in the way you are, Jack, but there's, like, they do a really good job in the first three episodes of introducing a lot of, like, recurring leitmotif and [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] recurring, like...when there's certain songs that play when it's like, "Oh, things are wrapping up in a positive way," with this, like, little flute in it, or there's, like, a...

**Austin:** Like “I’ve come to town,” music.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Like, the “beginning of an adventure” music hits a lot, and it’s great, and it’s like, “Oh, and here we are. We’ve made it to our destination,” or “the adventure is about to unfold in front of us.”

**Sylvia:** It really has, like, it gives you the feeling of like you’re cresting a hill in a lot of ways.

**Keith:** It’s great, because they do such a good job of, like, finding really...of really telegraphing what each of the songs does and is meant to do, so good that when I was looking for the name of one of the songs, a name that I did not know, I typed into Google or I typed into YouTube, “Hunter x Hunter adventure theme.”

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** And the song is called “The World of Adventurers (Gon’s Theme)”. It’s the exact song that I was looking for.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** I mean, that song is great, just the extremely, like, “All right, we’re heading off!” kind of song.

**Jack:** If it’s the one that you are...

**Austin:** Yeah, “doo doo doo!”

[song plays briefly over Keith and Austin accurately imitating it]

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah. My suspicion is I’m probably gonna do something with that.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, that makes sense.

**Jack:** That is the one I was thinking of, especially because, you know, the theme for this is not gonna have the same length as a Friends at the Table. It's gonna be closer to A More Civilized Age, and I think that...I have a very good model in the way this show uses music to be, like, hit a theme hard, and get out as quickly as you can.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Which is really great. But yeah, I don't think I have anything else on music.

**Austin:** I'm curious what the— for people who've gotten deeper into the '99— or I guess no one here's gotten too deep into it. I'm curious what that sounds like.

**Keith:** Uh, it sounds more like Zelda.

**Austin:** Right, okay.

**Keith:** It's like, there's more flutes—

**Austin:** Which, again, I actually think this is— this isn't that far, in terms of the emotion or the feeling, but it is not the same musically.

**Keith:** Right. Yeah, it's not the same music. It's, like, gentler and slower, and they...there's a lot more, like...the beginning of this show really hits you over the head with, like, Gon's enthusiasm and his sort of, like, real kind of, like, need to get out there and start doing it. Like, he really, really wants this Hunter thing.

**Austin:** Mm, mm-hmm.

**Keith:** And the '99 show has a lot more space for Gon to be thinking about other things.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Keith:** So far, anyway, and the music reflects that. There's a ton more of Aunt Mito.

There's a whole other character that we haven't seen in this that is in that.

**Austin:** Right, right.

**Keith:** In, like, five or six scenes. Gon has an animal friend that is not in this show at all.

**Jack:** Huh. What is the animal?

**Keith:** He trains a foxbear.

**Dre:** Oh!

**Austin:** Interesting.

**Jack:** Whoa!

**Keith:** He trains a foxbear cub, and it becomes his friend, and it is massive. I mean, it's like three times the size of a grizzly bear or something. It's huge.

**Jack:** Huh.

**Keith:** And there's a whole, like, subplot about foxbears and about his connection to animals.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Huh.

**Keith:** In the '99 show.

**Austin:** That's so interesting. I really want to go back to that, and maybe I'll do that as this is going on too, start doing that.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, that might be my, like, the way I get my fix.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** I like it so far! I mean, it's good. The dub is definitely way not as good as the

2011 dub.

**Austin:** It was 1999 dub is the thing, right? So.

**Dre:** Right.

**Keith:** Yeah, the '99 dub is, like, not very—

**Austin:** Well, I'm just saying, like, in the '90s, dubs were different.

**Keith:** Right. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** You know?

**Keith:** They were different, yeah. So like, it's kind of a...in a way where I would never tell someone not to watch the 2011 dub, like, I feel very, you know, dub/sub...it is not an argument that I'm interested in at all.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** But sometimes one of them's better than the other, and I would never tell you not to watch the 2011 dub. I think it's really good, but the '99 dub...

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** I don't know, Gon sounds like he's 20. It's weird. [Keith and Dre laugh]

**Austin:** Eh, it's very different.

**Keith:** It's very weird, yeah. It's very weird.

**Austin:** The last thing on the music here is it really does also continue the thing of this show feeling more *Dragon Quest*-y to me, and like, listen, the *Dragon Quest* composer is an absolute piece of shit. Or was; I guess he's dead now. RIP bozo. [laughter] Huge nationalist and just real, real piece of work. But...like, truly, I have no qualms about saying that into a microphone. But the music in this reminds me of sort of the jaunty adventure stuff there and more broadly...over on *Shelved by Genre*, the fantasy/sci-fi/et

cetera—we'll do crime fiction at some point; we'll probably do romance fiction at some point—with Michael and Cameron at Ranged Touch, in an episode that I think is coming out...? Will definitely be out by the time you hear this, thinking about our release schedule here. We talk a lot about the picaresque novel and the sort of, like, the story of the character or the person who wants to, you know, go off and be a kind of roguish hero going from town to town who's, like, you know, bouncing from place to place and these very vignette driven, very like, okay, who's the— like, not quite monster of the week, but like town of the week, encounter of the week. You know, corrupt sheriff of the week or something, right? Popular in fiction. And this sometimes has that quality, right? Where you're like, all right, today's adventure is boats, [Keith laughs] and the next one is these shapeshifting guys.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And then the next one is— and I think it's interesting to think about this show as having that character right now during this.

**Keith:** Right now, yeah.

**Austin:** And to think about how that sticks in some ways and changes in other ways, because it's a long show, but thinking about genre in those ways and not just like— it's very easy for us to keep coming back to shonen, but I think that things like the music push us in these other directions like fantasy and picaresque, and so I think about, you know, what's the holistic genre space that we're playing in? Because as much as I think this is a show that's wildly in conversation with shonen, it's also playing in a bunch of different spaces, and like, video games is definitely one of those spaces, right?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** This is a show that does feel like a JRPG right now.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Gon is getting his party together, you know? [laughs quietly]



**Keith:** It's one of those things that's interesting in how much overlap there is specifically with original *Dragon Ball*.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** Which is, like, kind of a style of shonen that goes extinct, for how massively influential it was.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Like, it's hard to find a show that feels like *Dragon Ball*. And *Hunter x Hunter*, in a lot of ways, even as it changes a lot, feels to me like, oh, what if someone— what if we kind of had this genre, like, living through the '90s into the 2000s and what would it look like?

**Austin:** Mm, mm-hmm.

**Keith:** And I think *Hunter x Hunter* sort of is, like, the...it feels to me like, oh, what if there was a bunch of *Dragon Ball* style shows that were more recent, and this was just still my favorite of those?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. Speaking of things that look weird, can we talk about these freaks?

**Dre:** Yeah!

**Keith:** I linked the freaks. I have several pictures of the freaks here for everyone.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I would really like quickly to just shout out the ending theme as well—

**Austin:** Oh, yes.

**Jack:** Oh, it's so good!

**Sylvia:** By Japanese electronic band [Austin: Yes.] Fear, and Loathing in Las Vegas, who I fucking love. That's all. I just wanted to mention that they're really good.

**Jack:** It's great.

**Sylvia:** Check out their stuff. [Keith laughs quietly]

### **Episode Three [1:48:08]**

**Jack:** Yeah, so they see this...you know, we touched on it briefly. They see this big skyscraper, and they're like, "Oh, wow, this is where the Hunters are!" and then their guide points at a little, you know, tumble down steak place, and says, "Oh, no, actually— it's actually in here." And at first, it seems like the lesson that they're being taught here is, you know, you should be humble, you know? You know, not all that glistens is made of gold or whatever. You know, lower your expectations or whatever. Except when we enter this and descend in an elevator 99 floors down what is revealed to be an upside down skyscraper, [Austin laughs] we are back in the game of Hunters again, because the thing that you actually learn is something like: wondrous things hide beneath unlikely places. You know, in part, the lesson is "be humble," but it's just as much a lesson about, like, well, you never know when a little steak joint might actually have an upside down skyscraper beneath it.

**Austin:** [laughs] It's true.

**Jack:** It's really, really interesting. And they emerge in— this is such a good shot.

**Austin:** Well, this is where they say out loud, "This is where millions of aspiring Hunters come to test their skills."

**Jack:** Yes.

**Austin:** Which I guess is over time, which is wild. Anyway, where do they emerge?

**Keith:** Oh, we also get the— real quick.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I think this was a little bit before that. This is where we get the statistics of only

one in 10,000 applicants actually make it to the Hunter Exam proper.

**Austin:** Right, right, right.

**Keith:** And only one out of every three years does a single rookie pass the Hunter Exam.

**Jack:** Jesus. The amount of—

**Austin:** Bad news for our heroes.

**Keith:** Bad news for our heroes.

**Jack:** Because there's three of them.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** The amount of ink that is being spilled giving us the, like, rules of regulations and statistics and reputation of the Hunters versus explaining clearly what they are is wild.

**Keith:** Gon still has no idea, at this point, what a Hunter is, does. We know that they're either noble or—

**Austin:** Gon's trying to eat some steak!

**Dre:** Yeah! [Keith laughs]

**Austin:** Gon is like, "Where's my steaks at?"

**Jack:** [laughs] It's so sweet.

**Keith:** Gon is hungry. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** The steak combo that'll open your eyes to the light. [Austin and Keith laugh]

**Austin:** Exactly!

**Jack:** Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** Ah, love a good secret password. That's so good.

**Jack:** They're in a huge underground tunnel.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** A massive— I cannot— if you're not watching, I can't tell you how big this tunnel is. It is wide enough that standing in the mouth of this tunnel, facing them, must be 500— uh, we know. There are 405 people when they enter the room.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** There's actually 406, because there's a weird little green jellybean man who appears.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Perfect guy.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** This is a—

**Dre:** Do we get his name?

**Keith:** Yep.

**Jack:** Uh, yep.

**Keith:** Well, I don't know if we get it here, but we do eventually get it.

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Jack:** We did get his name, Dre, because I wrote it down in my notes. It's Green Green Jellybean Man. [Keith and Austin laugh]

**Dre:** Oh, yeah. No, yeah, that's it.

**Keith:** Okay, so, we didn't get his name, so I guess we won't say it.

**Sylvia:** We did not get his name.

**Jack:** This guy's great. He appears in one shot! It is so funny to me that you say, [mocking] "Yes, we know this man's name. He's gonna come back." I could not— [others laugh] gun to my head. If you put a gun to my head and said, "Jack, point at the characters that we're gonna see again in this show."

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I would die. [laughs quietly] Just, no chance.

**Keith:** Well, you had no idea. You had no idea, but when we were doing the screenshot thing, like, I knew the whole time how good of a game it would be to try to get you to say who was important and who wasn't.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** And describe what about them makes them look like they're important. Yes, this guy is a green green jellybean. That really is what he is.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** And all these people are wearing little numbers on their chests, and they're milling about in the dark kind of hostilely in kind of— it's like those guys in— well, they're not as hostile, or they are more hostile than the guys in *Werckmeister Harmonies*, Austin.

**Austin:** Right, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Jack:** This is the town square with all the people hanging around next to the, like, braziers.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, and like, they have sniper rifles and arrow quivers and

monkeys and weird pins all over their bodies.

**Jack:** They look extraordinary!

**Austin:** And one of them has a baseball bat type thing with a beehive on the end.

**Jack:** Yes.

**Austin:** And one of them's a little kid with a computer.

**Jack:** Now, this answered a— a question that I had right up until this moment [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] is: hey, can women be Hunters?

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** And...

**Austin:** And what's the answer?

**Jack:** Uh, well, per this scene, probably.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** However, as far as the story is concerned, not a single one of them has spoken.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** We have not been introduced to the idea that— uh, put it this way. Hunting has been portrayed as a purely masculine or purely male practice. But yeah, as we pan across this crew, we see a few women, but none of them will speak in this episode.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** Uh...oh yeah, yep, that's true. The...another thing that we get is we're immediately confronted at the end of the last episode with the idea that you might have to retake the Hunter Exam? And then—

**Austin:** That's in this episode. Oh, no, you're right.

**Keith:** Oh, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** This episode is...

**Keith:** Right, and then we get kind of an episode all about having to retake the Hunter Exam.

**Austin:** Right.

**Jack:** We do.

**Keith:** It turns out, pretty much everyone here has been here before.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Because we meet a character named Tonpa. Does someone want to give me Tonpa's nickname?

**Dre:** The Rookie Crusher? Or the Rookie Slayer?

**Keith:** Thank you, Dre. The Rookie Crusher.

**Sylvia:** I think he's the Rookie Crusher, yes.

**Keith:** The Rookie Crusher, yeah.

**Jack:** But we don't know this at first!

**Keith:** We don't know this at first.

**Jack:** And in fact, I bought it.

**Austin:** Oh, Jack.

**Keith:** Wow.

**Jack:** This is why I'm a Gon.

**Sylvia:** Let's go!

**Austin:** You're a fucking Gon. Look at you.

**Keith:** Wow.

**Jack:** Well, because I— what I actually wrote down was how cool a character archetype the guy who's done it 39 times is. [Dre laughs] What I didn't do was take the follow-up step of: why has this guy done it 39 times?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** As soon as it was revealed, I was like, "Oh, yes. I know why." But what this guy does is [laughs] he has a whole schtick! It's great! He shows up and says, "All right, well, I'm gonna give you the clues. We're gonna be friends, and then I'm gonna give you my shitting drink."

**Keith:** He gives real information.

**Jack:** Yeah, he does.

**Austin:** Right, he's like, "That's Todo the wrestler. Not only is he powerful, he's super smart!"

**Keith:** Yeah. There are these three brothers. They always do really well, because— by the way, "always do really well."

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Keith:** Not quite well enough.

**Sylvia:** Umori, Imori, and Amori?

**Austin:** God.

**Sylvia:** I have the names.

**Austin:** Thank you.



**Keith:** Yeah, thank you, yeah.

**Jack:** I also have the names.

**Keith:** They always do really well, because they have great teamwork. Like, these are tips! These are genuine tips that they're getting.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Would you like to sip?

**Keith:** Would you like to sip? By the way...

**Austin:** Oh, by the way, would you like a sip?

**Sylvia:** Would you like a sip of this normal juice?

**Austin:** [laughs quietly] Cru de grape?

**Jack:** And before they sip it...and this is just good writing. As it is raised to their lips, we suddenly— and we do this for a lot of this episode. This suddenly becomes a show in which Tonpa is our main character.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm. [Austin laughs]

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Because we get his little POV saying, "Aha, little do they know..." and then, you know, they all spit it out for various reasons. Gon can tell that it's poisoned, and then everybody— or not poisoned. He can tell that it's "spoiled," because he's too kind-hearted.

**Keith:** And saves— yeah, yeah.

**Jack:** He saves the others.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** Saves the other two, who all spit it out.

**Jack:** And a weaker show, at this moment, would pull us back out of the perspective of Tonpa.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** You know, he's been, like, foiled, and we're switching back to Gon and co.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** No.

**Keith:** Very sweaty and embarrassed.

**Jack:** We remain with Tonpa for basically the rest of the episode, and we get a little side story.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Of him being like...he becomes the narrator, and we start following him around, independently of the other characters.

**Keith:** In his efforts to crush the rookies, and he tells us about—

**Austin:** And he's like, "Bro, there's something wrong about this year."

**Keith:** This year's rookies are weird.

**Jack:** It's a bad year.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** So, we meet a ninja called Hanzo, who is looking for a scroll of illusions, the mightiest ninja scroll.

**Keith:** He presents himself with a sort of Gon-like earnestness.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I love him.

**Keith:** He's sort of walking around telling everyone, "Don't tell anyone, but I am a ninja."

**Sylvia:** It's such a good bit.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** "I'm here for this very important scroll."

**Sylvia:** The ninja with no subtlety is such a funny character idea. [Keith laughs]

**Austin:** So funny.

**Sylvia:** Like, it is so good.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Because it's— he's never presented as incompetent. He's just not subtle.

**Austin:** Right!

**Keith:** Right. He has a set of rules that are designed to protect him as a ninja, and he knows them, and he follows them, and they work, and he is free to be himself otherwise.

**Austin:** And he's, like, a chatty guy, right? Like, you constantly see him talking to other people in the background, in a really enthusiastic and open way.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's so funny.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah. But he refused to take it, because he's a ninja and he makes it a point to not take food or drinks given to him by other people, and he's very sorry, and he's very, all of a sudden, serious when he says this.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** His whole face darkens.

**Jack:** And Tonpa buys it.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah. Tonpa's, like, scared of him for a second.

**Jack:** This is why Tonpa is valuable as a POV character. Having been led through his various traps and knowing that he's done this so many times, we can— Gon can't, but we the viewer can trust his experience of these people. He can be like, "I know how it usually is. I know what these people are like, and now I can see how they're different," because a man barges into another man, who turns around and dissolves him into flower petals. This is Hisoka, a playing card magician, who looks like he's from JoJo, actually.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Mm, yeah.

**Jack:** And he has a real sort of—

**Austin:** Again, this show is in conversation with other shonen.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, very much, especially this character.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** Pale white face. Also *Sailor Moon*. He looks like a *Sailor Moon* character too.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Jack:** Pale white face, playing card marks on a pale lime green doublet, pink hair, and this man is no fucking good. He is a really nasty piece of work, and in fact, I think one of the characters, Gon says, "Why is he allowed into the Hunters Exam?" and Tonpa says,

“Well, this is sort of how it works, you know? If you can meet the criteria, even—” he says, “Even demons and fiends can be Hunters.” Me, underlining again, “What are Hunters?” in my... [Dre laughs]

**Keith:** Yeah, the—

**Austin:** Well, and that’s when he gives him the drink.

**Keith:** I believe the dub says “the devil.”

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Uh huh, yes. To be clear, the thing you just described happens before he gives them the laxative drink.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** He’s just started talking to them for the first time, before Hisoka shows up and eliminates a man from reality, and then—

**Dre:** Eh, just his arms.

**Keith:** Just his arms, I think.

**Austin:** Okay, well.

**Jack:** As he screams.

**Austin:** You’re right.

**Jack:** He falls to the floor and screams.

**Austin:** I apologize. He’s definitely, yeah, he is still here. You’re right. Good luck with the Hunter Exam. You’ve not trained for this.

**Keith:** [laughs softly] Oh! No, he is— sorry, this is pedantic. He is eliminated. He is

pulled out from the exam, and we do get a—

**Austin:** Okay.

**Keith:** We do get the proctor saying that we lost one person, [**Austin:** Right.] but I think they do specifically say that he's not dead.

**Austin:** That's good. Good for him.

**Keith:** Good for him.

**Austin:** I'm very happy about that.

**Keith:** He'll try again next year. [Keith and Jack laugh]

**Austin:** I bet!

**Dre:** I mean, how else will he learn his lesson to not be rude if he dies, you know?

**Austin:** 100%.

**Jack:** Right, right, right, right.

**Austin:** 100%, that's what we're here for.

**Jack:** And then he meets a fancy boy on a skateboard, and I went, "It's Killua."

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** It is Killua!

**Jack:** Because I knew who this was. Killua's got a real, you know, an entrance befitting of his status. He drinks a laxative juice and cannot or will not shit.

**Keith:** "Hey, mister!"

**Sylvia:** It's so fucking good!

**Keith:** Because—

**Sylvia:** Sorry, can I please—?

**Keith:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** It's my favorite part of these whole episodes.

**Keith:** Okay, okay, okay.

**Sylvia:** Is that when Killua— he's like, "Hey, can I get some more juice?" and he has a sip, and he's like, "What the hell? This kid's had so much juice. He should be pooping his brains out." [Dre laughs]

**Keith:** He's gonna die if he doesn't stop.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. He's gonna die of dehydration. [Jack laughs] And then we get this, like, closeup of Killua, and he gives him this shitty little look, and he's like, "Actually, I'm immune to poopy juice, because I've had so much poisons in my body all the time. [Austin laughs] I've been trained to be immune to pooping myself like a baby." [Keith laughs]

**Jack:** It's so funny.

**Sylvia:** It's so fucking good, and it's—

**Jack:** And then he moves out of the story.

**Sylvia:** It also just, like, is such a good moment for Killua, because you're like, "Oh, there's— what the fuck is up with this kid?"

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah, fully. He's great. Worth mentioning, his character design, since we— he is gonna become part of the main cast. You would not think so from this episode, if you didn't know that. He's introduced along with some of the other assassins, and so—

**Sylvia:** He is in the intro.

**Jack:** That's true. That is a very good point. He is in the intro and the outro, yes. You would go, "That's the guy from the intro."

**Austin:** Unlike the little boy with the computer whose superpower is "has the internet."

**Jack:** Oh my god!

**Austin:** Nicholas.

**Sylvia:** His name is Nicholas.

**Austin:** Yeah, Nicholas.

**Sylvia:** He has Wikipedia.

**Austin:** He has Wikipedia. [laughs] It's a great power.

**Jack:** Tonpa says, "Out of all these people, the one I hate the most..." and he pans over to a little Wolfgang looking fucker typing on his computer, [Austin and Dre laugh] "...is Nicholas." And it just killed me. [Keith, Austin, and Jack laugh] It was so good.

**Austin:** It's so funny!

**Sylvia:** He's fucking Martin Prince from The Simpsons. [Dre laughs]

**Austin:** Uh huh. Yes!

**Sylvia:** Like, 100%.

**Jack:** Uh, Killua is maybe Gon's age, has white spiky— well, sort of puffy hair like a flame above his head almost. He is wearing a white shirt, like a white longish t-shirt. He looks well-dressed. He is carrying a skateboard? Is that a skateboard or a hoverboard? I couldn't see.

**Keith:** He has a skateboard, yeah.

**Austin:** It's a skateboard.



**Jack:** Yep.

**Austin:** That's the prop that he got when Gon got the fishing rod and...

**Keith:** Yeah, Gon got the fishing rod, Killua got the skateboard.

**Jack:** And he doesn't know how to unequip it.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

**Keith:** And is there anything...? I mean, I just love Killua showing up and, like, his first thing is putting on, like, a "Hey, mister! Could I have some of your drink?" sort of, like, naive thing, just to fuck with him.

**Austin:** Yeah, just to fuck with him.

**Keith:** Like, *just* to fuck with him.

**Austin:** He knows.

**Keith:** He knows! He knew right away, in the same...

**Sylvia:** We mentioned you don't want to be on Xbox Live with Leorio. You don't want to be on Fortnite lobby with Killua. [Keith and Jack laugh]

**Keith:** In the same way that Gon also knew, like, but just isn't going to drink a bunch of laxatives, because, uh, for whatever reason, laxatives work on Gon. [laughter] He sort of describes it by being sort of, uh, living in the woods. "I've had a lot of grasses and stuff, so I know about how this tastes weird."

**Sylvia:** Me too, Gon.

**Keith:** Yeah. [Austin and Jack laugh] Anything else about Killua before we hit the last rookie?

**Jack:** Uh, I just want to— uh, who's the last rookie?

**Keith:** We only briefly see the last rookie, but we get a very fun line about him.

**Jack:** Whoa.

**Sylvia:** I don't remember this, Keith.

**Austin:** I think I know who you mean.

**Keith:** Yes.

**Sylvia:** I think I know who you mean, but I don't remember.

**Keith:** Okay, I'll say—

**Austin:** Number 301?

**Keith:** We can double back— yes.

**Sylvia:** Right.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Keith:** We can double back to Killua, if there's anything else after, but the guy who walks like he's made of clock pieces and is covered face and body in pins.

**Jack:** Oh my god!

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Tonpa says—

**Jack:** Are we gonna get more of him?

**Keith:** "I can't even go near this guy, he's so scary."

**Jack:** Yes.

**Austin:** [laughs] Yes.

**Jack:** I've written down, "Rattly pin man."

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Because he's not, like...so, he looks a bit like what if— when we make PARTIZAN and PALISADE, so if you— you should check out Friends at the Table.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** It's an extremely good actual play podcast we make. You can go to [friendsatthetable.net](http://friendsatthetable.net). Something we talk about in one of our most recent seasons is that there is a society or a culture called the Columnar who tend to make a lot of toyetic stuff, that is to say stuff that both evokes toys and also plays into the production and culture and politics of toys. Is that fair to say, Austin?

**Austin:** Yeah, that's fair.

**Jack:** I would describe this rattly pin man as, like, a toyetic Pinhead from Hellraiser.

**Austin:** Right. Right. Yes. Yeah, what if Pinhead was...and like, importantly, I don't mean an expensive figma of Pinhead.

**Jack:** No, which is a kind of toyetic.

**Austin:** I mean what if you could go to KB Toys in 1994 and buy Pinhead. [Keith laughs]

**Jack:** He is...there is some...I have already seen some really startling character and creature design. This guy [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] looks amazing, and yes, he doesn't have any lines. He walks past, and he rattles.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, it's like—

**Jack:** You can hear the...

**Keith:** He's startling in a whole other kind of way.

**Austin:** Well, and it's like, okay, this is Hunters. Hunters are woman with sniper rifle,

little boy with computer, clown magician who can turn you into petals, [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] little boy with skateboard who's immune to poison, and toyetic Pinhead. What's a Hunter?

**Jack:** Wonderful.

**Dre:** And also a guy [**Austin:** Oh!] with a blowdart gun that looks like a beehive.

**Austin:** Right. Sorry, none of these people are Hunters. None of them have passed the exam yet.

**Dre:** But they could be.

**Jack:** Yes! Yes!

**Sylvia:** These are the type of people that the Hunter Exam draws, though.

**Austin:** Yes. Yes.

**Keith:** These are before the top 400 out of 4 million applicants to become a Hunter.

**Austin:** And to be clear—

**Sylvia:** 405, to be specific.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** Yes, 405.

**Austin:** Also, lots of background people we haven't mentioned because they're just guy in hoodie. [laughs] And it's like, oh, you're not gon' make it.

**Keith:** Right, right. Yeah, good luck.

**Austin:** You can't.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Hey, in a minute, they're gonna give you a chance to leave, [laughs quietly] and you should take it.

**Austin:** You should take it!

**Jack:** It's like that Voltaire quote. You know, like, "If God didn't exist, man would be forced to invent him" or something.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** I feel like the— what we have here in all these people is the kind of world that the idea of Hunters is born out of, you know? Like, you don't get Hunters unless you are living in a world where it's like, uh, iPad baby superboy, small skateboarding boy who can't do poison, [**Austin:** Yes.] rattly pin man. You know, when you are in that world and at the same time, you know, there are massive pine trees with shapeshifting monsters underneath them, steak shops that descend endlessly into massive underground caverns full of people. This is how you get the Hunters.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Well, it's very chicken and egg, because is it the reverse? [Jack laughs] Do you have these people because you have a world that there's Hunters in? How many years do the Hunters have to be around before you start getting people who—

**Austin:** Getting this stuff.

**Keith:** Hey, I just grew up into someone who carries a sniper rifle and sunglasses [**Austin:** Right.] and wears a cool vest, or...

**Jack:** Or let's go one further step down: my granny runs the weird mask quiz.

**Austin:** Right, right. [Dre laughs]

**Jack:** And every Christmas, she ropes me in. I'm not even a Hunter. I don't even want to be a Hunter, but we live in the Hunters' world, and every year, I have to put on the mask and get the raven. [Keith laughs]

**Austin:** Do you think the guy who doesn't have a shirt on but has the number badge right on his chest has made a foolish error or is this him displaying strength? This is number 100.

**Keith:** Um..

**Jack:** Uh, where is he here?

**Keith:** Where is he?

**Austin:** This is nothing. This is not a guy.

**Keith:** Oh.

**Austin:** This is a background motherfucker.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** His number's 100. It's once they start walking. It's just a guy who's in the mix, and he's just put the badge on his chest directly.

**Keith:** Uh, trying too hard.

**Austin:** Trying too hard.

**Jack:** The monkey has a human face, Austin. I don't think you mentioned that when you said this person has a monkey.

**Austin:** Sometimes monkeys have human faces. Wait, where's the monkey with the human face? I may have just missed it.

**Jack:** Uh, he's number 115. It's in the top screenshot that Keith posted of all the weirdies.

**Austin:** Oh, oh, oh. I see, I see, I see, I see. Yeah, that's fucked up. I hate that. I don't like it.

**Jack:** And then rattly Pinhead is also there.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. This is RDCworld.

**Keith:** Oh, yeah, I remember the monkey guy, yeah.

**Austin:** RDCworld just dropped a video called “Showing up to a Fighting Game Audition but You Sorry.” [Jack laughs] That’s this. That’s a lot of these people here, are about to learn they don’t have it like that.

**Jack:** Worth reminding of what we said...

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** There’s—

**Jack:** Back at the beginning of the episode, of like, Leorio is the one we are closest to here. Yeah, Leorio’s just a guy in a suit.

**Keith:** Yeah. There is a sort of, like, Sokratic energy to these people where it feels like the more intensely they feel like they belong there, the more you know that they are grist for the mill.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** Mm, mm-hmm.

**Keith:** You know, like, Leorio might look like a guy, but he’s also, like, cautious and kind of quick and kind of smart. You know, he maybe fell for the bus thing—

**Sylvia:** He’s canny.

**Keith:** But he was also keeping an ear out.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** You know?

**Austin:** But if you showed up with a monkey? Come on.

**Keith:** Come on.

**Austin:** Yeah, you're not gonna be the monkey Hunter. You don't think there's already a monkey Hunter?

**Keith:** [laughs] It's me, the monkey Hunter. [Jack laughs]

**Austin:** Get out of here. Come back next year; lose the monkey.

**Keith:** Yeah. We've already got a monkey Hunter.

**Jack:** This fool does not know about—

**Sylvia:** Being so disrespectful to our friend from the screenshot stream, Gorilla. [Austin, Keith, and Jack laugh]

**Jack:** Right! Right! Oh, this is great, because I am now realizing— correct me if I'm wrong. The screenshot stream is never going to end. The experience of watching *Hunter x Hunter* is constantly going to be being shown things that you do not understand and being asked to reckon with them.

**Keith:** Uh, there's going to be a dip, but yes. From beginning to end, you know, maybe reverse bell curve. Like, you're gonna feel...you're gonna feel like you know more and more and be more confident, and then it's gonna get thrown out the window, I think.

**Jack:** And then we have final— one kind of, like, final sequence. It's really good. It's just great. A big wall lifts up, and behind it is a man with, uh, a big mustache but no mouth.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** [chuckles] Right, but a voice.

**Jack:** But a voice, and he says—

**Keith:** No, I'm saying his name is But A Voice.



**Jack:** I— [Keith laughs] No, his name is Satotz.

**Keith:** Yeah, his name is Satotz, yeah.

**Jack:** And he says, “If you’ll follow me, please.” Now, keen eyed viewers should ask yourselves, “Is a Hunter trial about to begin?” “No,” say all these people. “We’re instead on our way to a Hunter trial,” but as Satotz begins to run in this beautiful long weird stride, like a Ghibli character almost.

**Sylvia:** There’s a bounce to it.

**Keith:** There’s a very uncanny moment where he’s doing this weird stride and people are walking behind him, and all of a sudden, nothing changes about him, and they’re finding themselves sprinting to catch up.

**Jack:** It’s so good.

**Keith:** While he just sort of, like, glides along the ground with his massive steps.

**Jack:** And whoever is directing this episode or storyboarding it or whatever lets us sit in that kind of uncomfortable moment for a second. You know, we realize almost as the characters do that, yeah, there are gaps opening up here, and I think Kurapika says, “What’s happening?” and someone says, “Oh, the people at the front have started to run,” [Austin chuckles] and that’s when you learn that, like, Satotz is moving faster. There’s just a great music cue here as we get him turning in one move and beginning to stride down, this marching band cue starting up in the background. Really nicely coordinated. But it was at this moment that I realized that this is the stupid butler from Majora’s Mask, [Austin laughs] the guy who goes backwards and you have to chase him down the long weird corridor.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** That is Satotz and all these people. And I think the episode ends midway through running, right? We cut on the moment?

**Keith:** Yep. Yep.

**Jack:** Ah, it's good stuff.

**Austin:** It does become clear it is explicitly a test.

**Jack:** Oh, yeah, he actually says the test begins.

**Austin:** He is like, "I am the examiner from the first phase. I'm taking you to the second phase. This is the test."

**Keith:** Right, the first test is to get to the second test.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. And, I guess, importantly, we get more Kurapika being smart, because he says to himself, "This is gonna cost us a lot of mental strain."

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Not this is—

**Jack:** Running in the dark, running aimlessly.

**Austin:** Running aimlessly. It will measure our willpower. It's not just about can I keep my physical body up. I'm surrounded by a bunch of weirdos. This is, you know. Actually, I don't know. Is this Kurapika, or is this the narrator talking?

**Jack:** Uh, I think this is Kurapika.

**Austin:** Okay. Okay. I'm muted. I have the— it's playing, but it's muted, so I wasn't sure. So yeah, what a wild great end to this first little section.

**Keith:** Um...

**Jack:** It makes it— oh, go ahead, Keith.

**Keith:** Oh, I just, like, I don't remember exactly how long they run for.

**Austin:** We'll find out.

**Jack:** Well, I was gonna say: it is...hmm. I'm coming back to Squid Game again, which is like, [Dre chuckles] you know, not just because they have numbers on their chests but because of this idea of a large scale game played by multiple people, the bounds of which the participants don't know as they are in it.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** And there is something in—

**Keith:** With a death penalty attached to it.

**Jack:** With a death penalty, yes. That's true. But you know, we have been told that people die in the Hunter trials or whatever, the Hunter Exams. You know, Satotz gives us that warning. You know, "Turn back." But something that is interesting about the way Squid Game works is that some of the games are complex or are weird. You know, you're either playing that game with the big robot that turns 'round or you're playing that game where you have to cut the shapes out in the candy.

**Austin:** Mm, mm-hmm.

**Jack:** But sometimes the game is just a tug of war, you know? Sometimes it's just cross a glass bridge. And I do think that there is something interesting after the elaborate shapeshifting game of the people, the navigators, that task one is just run in the dark.

**Austin:** Right.

**Jack:** There is something very straightforward and cold and: you know, okay, you're the best of the best. We are dispensing with the bullshit for a bit. Follow me in the dark.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** I am faster than you think I am. Which I like a lot.

**Austin:** We're in it.

**Keith:** We're in it.

**Jack:** Yeah! I want to watch more.

**Austin:** We're not really in it. We're at the beginning of it.

**Keith:** Yeah. There's a lot— we're in it, but there's a lot of different "it"s to be in, between here and the end. [Jack laughs]

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** We're in the Hunter Exam.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** We are in— you know what?

**Keith:** We are in the Hunter Exam.

**Austin:** We are.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Have we entered the first arc proper? The Hunter Exam has begun? [Dre chuckles]

## **Final Thoughts [2:13:48]**

**Keith:** Is there— are there any final thoughts? Full— no thoughts barred.

**Sylvia:** I want to know, just based off these three episodes, like, who's everybody's favorite in the crew so far?

**Jack:** It's Leorio.

**Keith:** That's so hard.

**Sylvia:** Oh, okay! I was— that was me fishing for Jack's the most, because we've all seen this.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** It's so hard to answer.

**Keith:** It's hard to answer. I just, I genuinely, I love all of them. I really love all of them.

**Sylvia:** I mean, yes. Same. I'm a Kurapika girlie, especially based on these three episodes.

**Jack:** Kurapika is great.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Killua, my darling boy, will get more time to shine, though.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** What a fucking first impression, though.

**Keith:** I know. It's a great show. It, uh...

**Austin:** Yeah, I think it's unfair to Killua to judge this before we get more Gon and Killua interaction.

**Keith:** It was hard to put the line here when I knew the next—

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** But I think it had—

**Austin:** I think it's right.

**Keith:** Right. I think it was the right call.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** But I do love that second episode where we had...

**Austin:** Here's one. For those of us who've already seen this once, who's a side character or a background character who popped more for you this time than the first time you watched? For me, it was the random shipmate who kept fucking up.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** Who they end up saving, who's just like...

**Jack:** Ha.

**Austin:** For a couple reasons, and I'll be quick on this, which is—

**Sylvia:** You mean Katzo.

**Austin:** Katzo.

**Keith:** Katzo, yeah.

**Austin:** Who Gon sees trip and fall early on and get made fun of by [Keith: Yeah.] his shipmates, and Gon doesn't intercede but clearly feels for Katzo in that moment.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Gon is in observation mode and does not do the thing where he's like, "Stop it, you big meanies! Why don't you pick on someone your own size?" and they go, "[scoffs] Someone like you, kid?" Like, that's— there's 18 other shows that will do that there.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Gon watched, and at the end of the day, saved him, you know, from falling off of the ship, but I think that was a really fun, telling moment, and also I just thought that character was kind of cute.

**Keith:** There's something else about that character [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] too, where they try to show you that he's sort of weak and being picked on.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** But actually, he's one of the only ones [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] who's got his sea legs at the end of the day.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** And is helping Gon take care of these people who are, like, [laughs quietly] who were bullying him.

**Austin:** Sometimes the steak shop actually is a 100 foot down— [**Keith:** Yeah.] er, a 100 story downwards secret skyscraper, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah. For me, it was... [laughs] I mean, barely in it, but I could not get over the late horn honk on the...during the quiz. [Austin and Jack laugh]

**Austin:** Great. Perfect.

**Keith:** It was so good.

**Austin:** Good answer.

**Sylvia:** A really good bit.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** That whole segment, like, stood out to me a lot more this watch through.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I think my answer is...I've always been like, "Oh yeah, Hanzo's funny." Like, I think of Hanzo, and I would be like, "Haha, yeah, funny bald head. Slap him on the back

of his head; make a loud noise.”

**Jack:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** But personally, I think just his introduction this time really got me.

**Keith:** Yeah, it's really good.

**Sylvia:** And like, the way that just, like, Tonpa reacts to him and, like, setting him up immediately as this sort of foil for Gon is very good.

**Austin:** Dre?

**Sylvia:** Also, he just looks funny.

**Austin:** True.

**Dre:** Mm. Are you asking which person popped to me?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, who popped?

**Dre:** Uh, the guy with the blowdart gun.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Keith:** Oh, yeah.

**Jack:** Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Dre:** That guy's cool as shit.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** He's very cool.



**Dre:** What's his name?

**Jack:** His name...

**Sylvia:** We don't know yet.

**Austin:** No, they said—

**Jack:** Uh, no.

**Austin:** They did, because...

**Sylvia:** Did they?

**Keith:** Yes.

**Jack:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** I'm pretty sure.

**Sylvia:** Oh, okay.

**Austin:** He's one of the people that—

**Jack:** He's called Geretta.

**Austin:** Right, yes.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Keith:** Uh, yes, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

**Austin:** Has the big, like, Elizabethan collar on.

**Dre:** Yeah! [laughs]

**Austin:** But also, like, a...

**Jack:** And, like, a cap.

**Austin:** Cap. Yeah, it's great. Great outfit. Yeah. Great crew.

**Keith:** Good crew. Uh, any— do we want to end with—? Do we end with plugs?

**Austin:** Let people— uh, sure, we end with plugs, and we should let people know what to watch next.

**Keith:** Oh, so, next— like, literally the episode names: “Hope x And x Ambition,” “Hisoka x Is x Sneaky,” and “A x Surprising x Challenge,” which is fun. I think a lot of the challenges have been surprising challenges already, so let's see what **[Jack:** Hmm] the show thinks is a surprising challenge.

**Jack:** This is four, five, and six?

**Keith:** Four, five, and six. Yep. Uh, let me just double check that I don't have us watching four by mistake.

**Austin:** Mm, that's a good catch.

**Sylvia:** Judging— I think I remember where that ends off, and that sounds like a good end point, but...

**Keith:** Yeah, it does. Uh, am I...? Oh, I really gotta bookmark this, because I checked my docs, and it's not there.

**Austin:** You just typed— [amused breath] Keith?

**Keith:** I just typed “docs” into your...

**Austin:** You just sent me a DM that said, “docs.”

**Keith:** Yeah. Well, because I know that I sent it to you.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I have it. It's four to six.

**Keith:** It is four to six? Okay.

**Austin:** It is four to six?

**Sylvia:** It is those episodes.

**Keith:** All right. Can you link me that?

**Sylvia:** I'm bookmarking it myself and then sending it to you.

**Keith:** Austin, I tried to search in our messages—

**Austin:** [chuckles] Okay.

**Keith:** Because I knew that I sent it to you, so.

**Austin:** You did send it to me, at some point. It's not in there. I can't find it.

**Sylvia:** Right. We're specifically not putting this in, because we don't want to spoil Jack for stuff.

**Austin:** Yes. Right. Right. So yeah, four to six. Uh, I have one last thing to say, because we've said the words "*Sailor Moon*" a few times, and if we don't say these— if we don't say it, someone's gonna— people have already sent the emails in, right?

**Keith:** Right, yes.

**Austin:** But Togashi is married to Naoko Takeuchi, who is the creator of *Sailor Moon*.

**Jack:** Right. Yes.

**Austin:** That is the best. There are little comics from her about their marriage that are very cute.

**Sylvia:** They've both done little comics about it, actually.

**Austin:** Have they both done? Yeah, okay.

**Sylvia:** In the manga for *Hunter x Hunter*—

**Austin:** Oh, right.

**Sylvia:** Togashi will end chapters with little, like...I have very specific memories of, like, a drawing he did of their little, like, furry— like, cute fursonas [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] going on their honeymoon.

**Austin:** Very cute.

**Jack:** Ah, that's so cute.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, it's really good.

**Austin:** Love that. What a power couple.

**Keith:** Uh, we'll say again: [friendsatthetable.cash](https://www.patreon.com/friendsatthetable). That is the Friends at the Table Patreon. That is the Patreon that made this show possible, made it possible faster than we all thought that it was gonna be possible. [Austin chuckles] I have such a recent memory of Austin saying that he thinks we'll hit it in September, [**Jack:** Ha!] which is so funny. Now. Now, it's funny. Then, I was like, "Yeah, I could see September."

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Keith:** And you can follow Friends at the Table on [TikTok](https://www.tiktok.com/friendsatthetable). You can follow Friends at the Table on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/friends_table) and [Cohost](https://www.cohost.com/friends_table). It's friends\_table on all of those, except Cohost is friends-table. And the Twitch, where we're streaming kind of a lot, at [twitch.tv/friendsatthetable](https://www.twitch.tv/friendsatthetable).

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah. If you have come here for *Hunter x Hunter*, Friends at the Table is an actual play podcast where we tell stories using dice and cards and Jenga towers and, uh...

**Keith:** And mouths and brains.

**Jack:** And mouths and— [chuckles] yes, and mouths and brains.

**Sylvia:** Tabletop games specifically, if people aren't familiar with the term "actual play."

**Jack:** Yes.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** If you've been thinking of getting into Friends at the Table, you could start with a dark sci-fi story of revolution and the hunt for justice and equality with the series PARTIZAN, or you could check out a strange twisted dust-blown horror fantasy series called Sangfielle. Those are probably fun places to begin.

**Austin:** We definitely have some, like, Hunter-like characters in both of those shows.

**Sylvia:** Oh, definitely.

**Keith:** Oh, yeah. It's hard to not...you know.

**Austin:** Because Hunter— because what is a Hunter?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** No one knows.

**Keith:** Because, at this point, we have no idea.

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

**Keith:** We good? Was that a good clap?

**Austin:** Yeah, sure.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** All right! Welcome to Media Club Plu— wow, already. Welcome to Media Club Plus, brought— eh. [Sylvia giggles] I'll get there.

**Sylvia:** It's all good.

**Austin:** You'll get there.

**Keith:** I'll get there. Welcome to Media Club Plus, brought to you by Friends at the

Table, a podcast about diving into the media that interests us and the stories that excite us. This season—

**Austin:** Wait.

**Keith:** Yeah?

**Austin:** We gotta do it the other way.

**Keith:** Stories that excite us and the media that interest us?

**Austin:** No, no. “Brought to you by Friends at the Table, welcome to Media Club Plus, a podcast blah blah blah,” because if you say it the way you just said it, it sounds like you’re describing Friends at the Table. “Friends at the Table, a podcast da-da-da-da-da.”

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** It works in text; doesn’t work in speech. Say it again. Say it the way it’s written one more time, and you’ll hear what I’m saying.

**Keith:** Welcome to Media Club Plus, brought to you by Friends at the Table, a podcast— right, got it. Gotcha.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Dre:** Ohh, I see.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah. [Jack chuckles]

**Austin:** So we have to go, “Brought to you by Friends at—”

**Keith:** Well, originally I had it written as— but it didn’t sound good with the word “plus” in there.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Keith:** I had, “Welcome to Friends at the Table...” uh, sorry, “Welcome to Friends at the Table’s Media Club Plus.” Or Media Club, Friends at the Table’s Media Club.

**Jack:** I think you should say, “Brought to you by Friends at the Table, welcome to Media Club Plus.”

**Keith:** Okay.

**Jack:** Like we’re doing a Warner Bros., an old Warner Bros.

**Austin:** That’s so funny.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** Yeah, I love that, actually. Or like we’re doing, like, a special edition of *Inside the Actors Studio* that’s been presented by TCM. [Sylvia laughs]

**Keith:** That is—

**Jack:** Brought to you by NPR, this is...

**Sylvia:** Oh, I don’t want to do NPR.

**Keith:** I don’t think people will buy NPR from me.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, no.

**Austin:** I’m not saying— don’t do it as NPR. Do it as Keith.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Welcome to Media Club Plus, a brought— Welcome to Media Club Plus, a podcast about driving— wow. [Austin and Sylvia laugh]

**Austin:** That’s cool, though.

**Keith:** Yeah, a podcast about driving! What's everybody got these days? [Austin and Sylvia laugh]