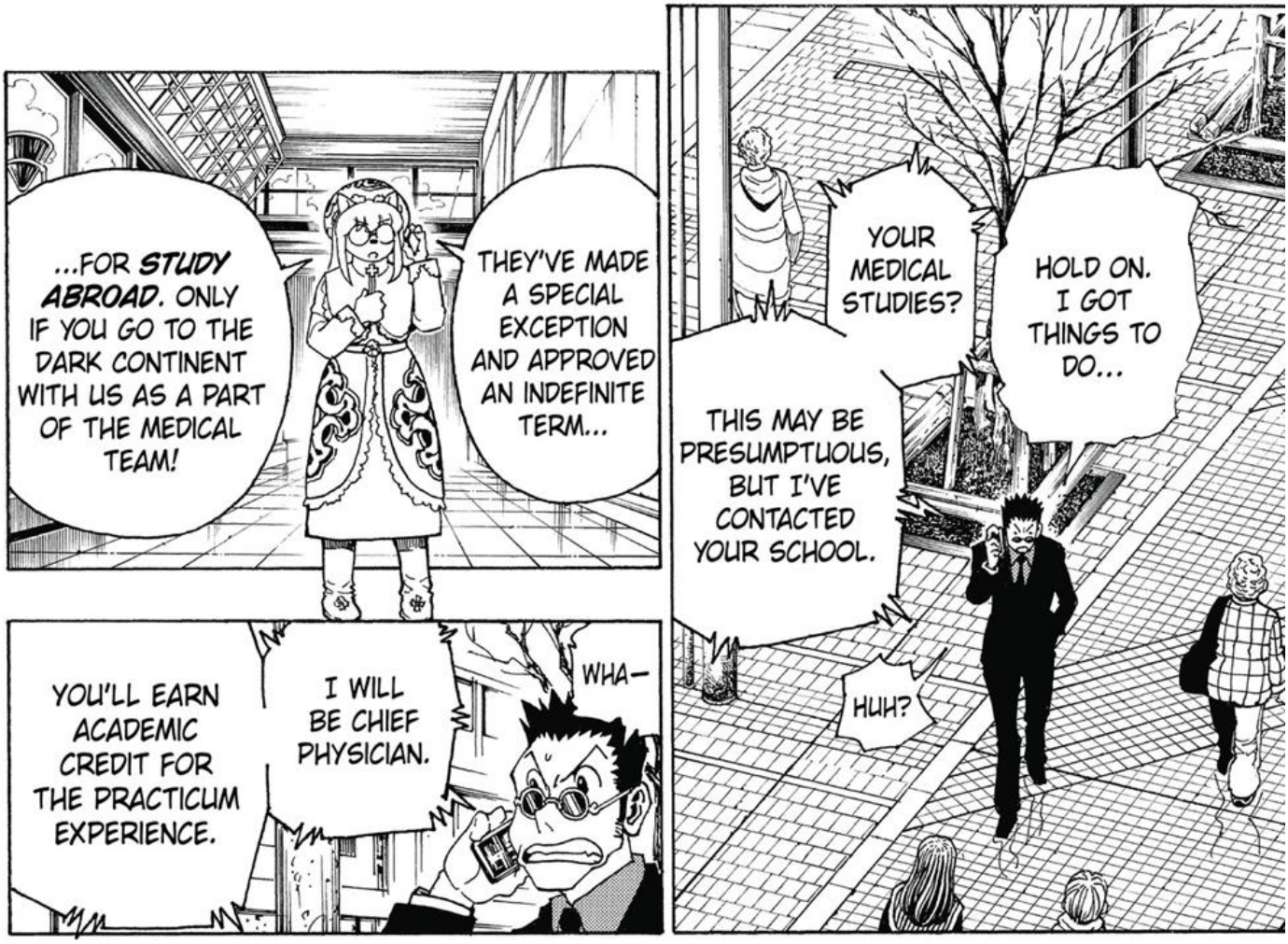
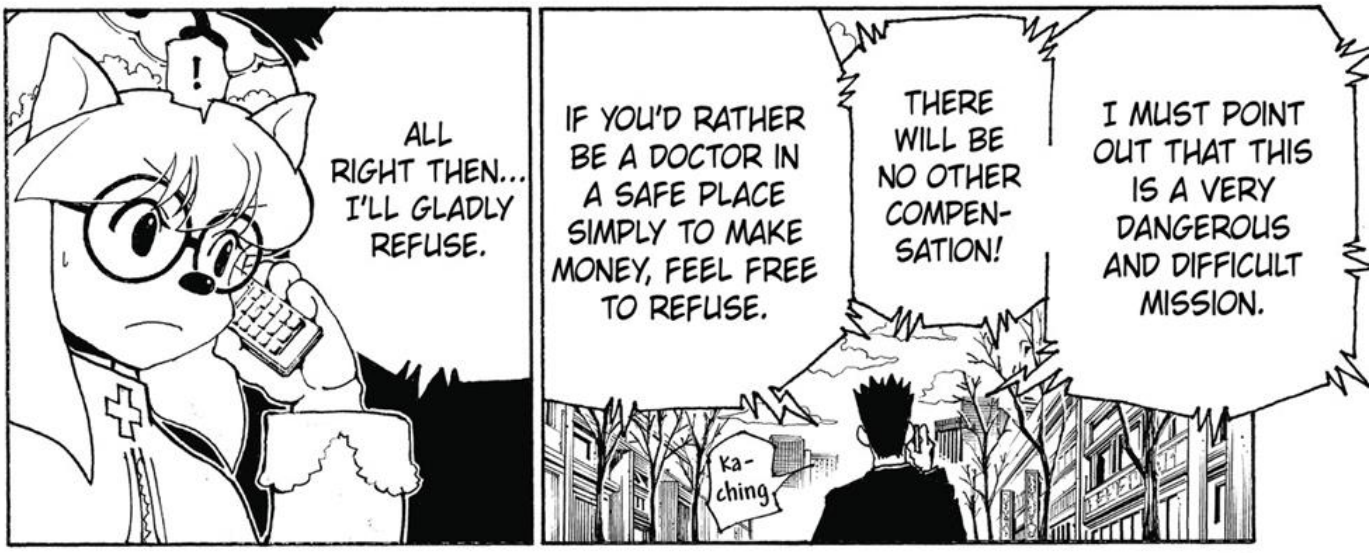


Chapter 343: Invitation



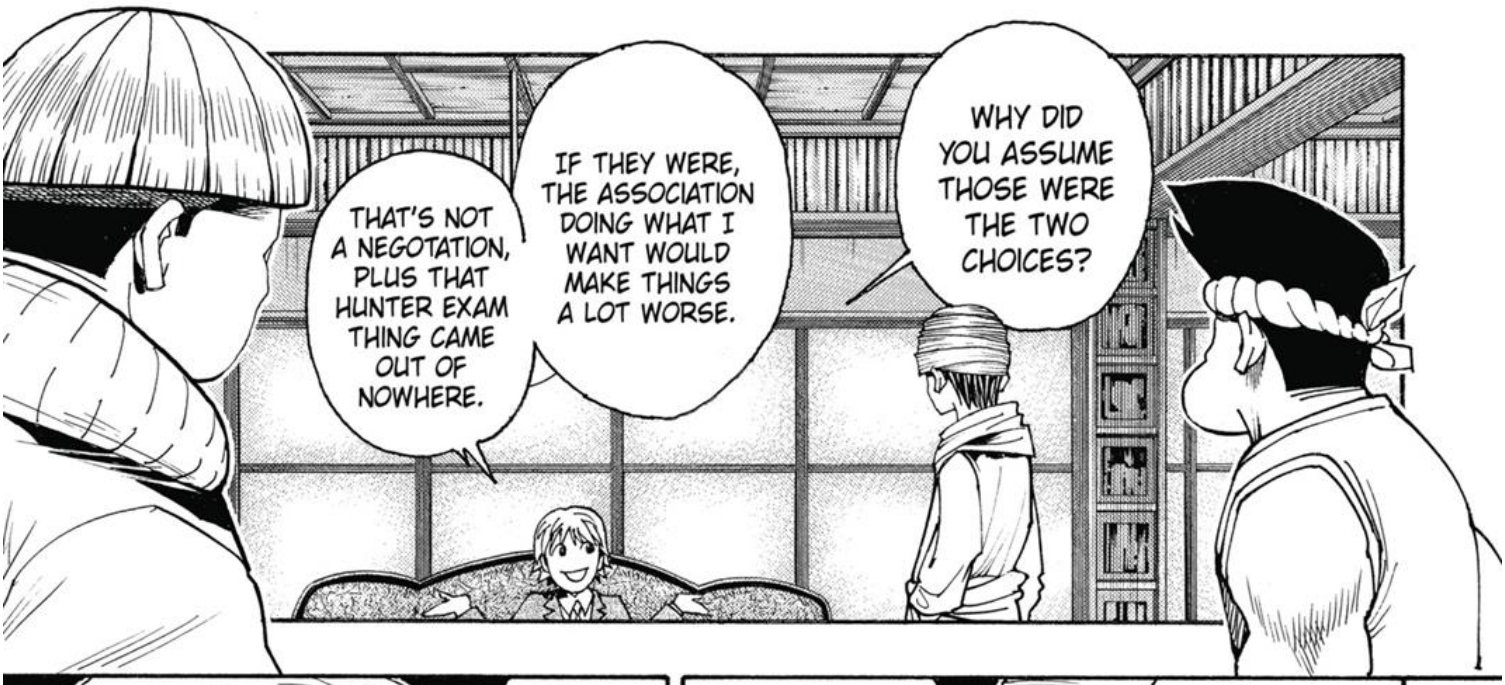

...FOR STUDY ABROAD. ONLY IF YOU GO TO THE DARK CONTINENT WITH US AS A PART OF THE MEDICAL TEAM!
THEY'VE MADE A SPECIAL EXCEPTION AND APPROVED AN INDEFINITE TERM...
YOUR MEDICAL STUDIES?
HOLD ON. I GOT THINGS TO DO...
THIS MAY BE PRESUMPTUOUS, BUT I'VE CONTACTED YOUR SCHOOL.
HUH?
YOU'LL EARN ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR THE PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE.
I WILL BE CHIEF PHYSICIAN.
WHA—

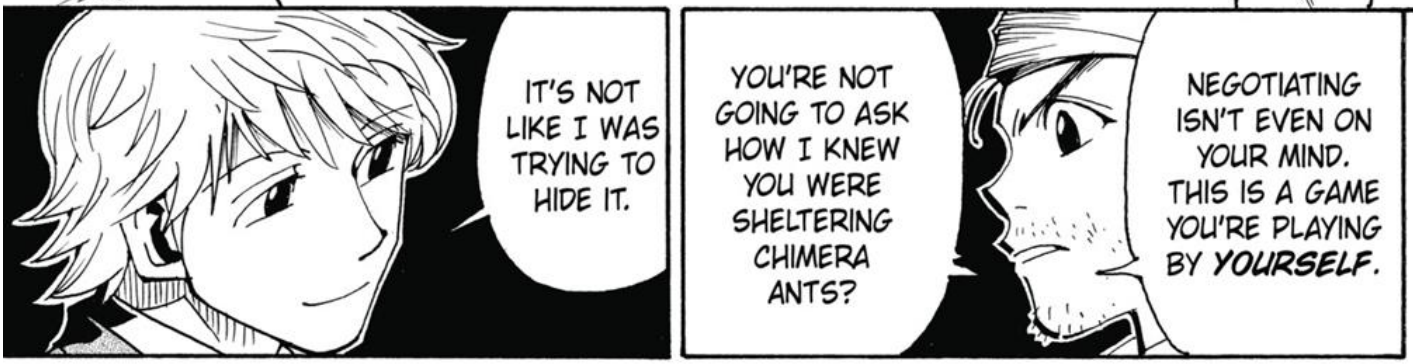

OF COURSE, IF YOU'RE NOT GOOD ENOUGH, YOU MAY END UP WASTING MONTHS TO YEARS OF YOUR LIFE!
I KNOW I'M THE ONE ASKING YOU A FAVOR, BUT I WON'T GIVE YOU AN EASY GRADE!

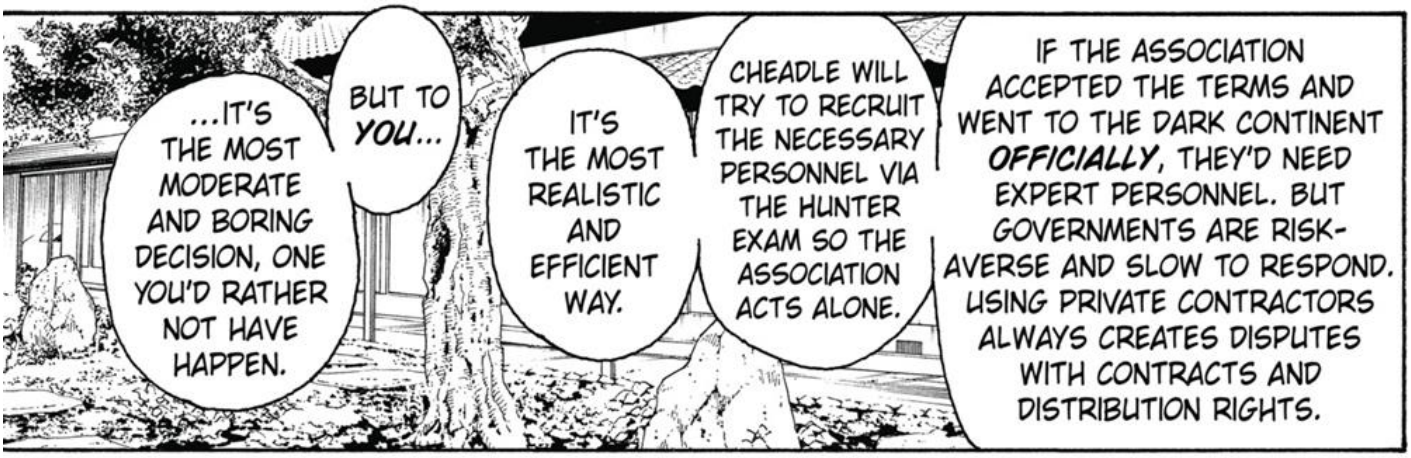

!
ALL RIGHT THEN... I'LL GLADLY REFUSE.
IF YOU'D RATHER BE A DOCTOR IN A SAFE PLACE SIMPLY TO MAKE MONEY, FEEL FREE TO REFUSE.
THERE WILL BE NO OTHER COMPEN-SATION!
I MUST POINT OUT THAT THIS IS A VERY DANGEROUS AND DIFFICULT MISSION.
ka-ching

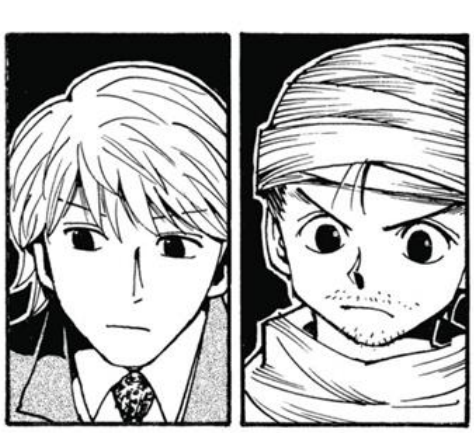

WHAT BETTER OPPORTUNITY COULD I WISH FOR?! LET ME DO IT!!
I SHOULD BE THE ONE ASKING YOU!!
THANK YOU.
SURE...
...OPENING IN THE ZODIACS, RIGHT?
YOU HAVE ONE MORE...
THERE'S ONE THING.
BUT...
...I'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND.
THERE'S SOME-ONE...


R
R
M
M


WHY DID YOU ASSUME THOSE WERE THE TWO CHOICES?
IF THEY WERE, THE ASSOCIATION DOING WHAT I WANT WOULD MAKE THINGS A LOT WORSE.
THAT'S NOT A NEGOTATION, PLUS THAT HUNTER EXAM THING CAME OUT OF NOWHERE.


NEGOTIATING ISN'T EVEN ON YOUR MIND. THIS IS A GAME YOU'RE PLAYING BY *YOURSELF*.
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO ASK HOW I KNEW YOU WERE SHELTERING CHIMERA ANTS?
IT'S NOT LIKE I WAS TRYING TO HIDE IT.


IF THE ASSOCIATION ACCEPTED THE TERMS AND WENT TO THE DARK CONTINENT *OFFICIALLY*, THEY'D NEED EXPERT PERSONNEL. BUT GOVERNMENTS ARE RISK-AVERSE AND SLOW TO RESPOND. USING PRIVATE CONTRACTORS ALWAYS CREATES DISPUTES WITH CONTRACTS AND DISTRIBUTION RIGHTS.
CHEADLE WILL TRY TO RECRUIT THE NECESSARY PERSONNEL VIA THE HUNTER EXAM SO THE ASSOCIATION ACTS ALONE.
IT'S THE MOST REALISTIC AND EFFICIENT WAY.
BUT TO *YOU*...
...IT'S THE MOST MODERATE AND BORING DECISION, ONE YOU'D RATHER NOT HAVE HAPPEN.




NETERO WOULD—
HE WOULD *NEVER* DO THAT!

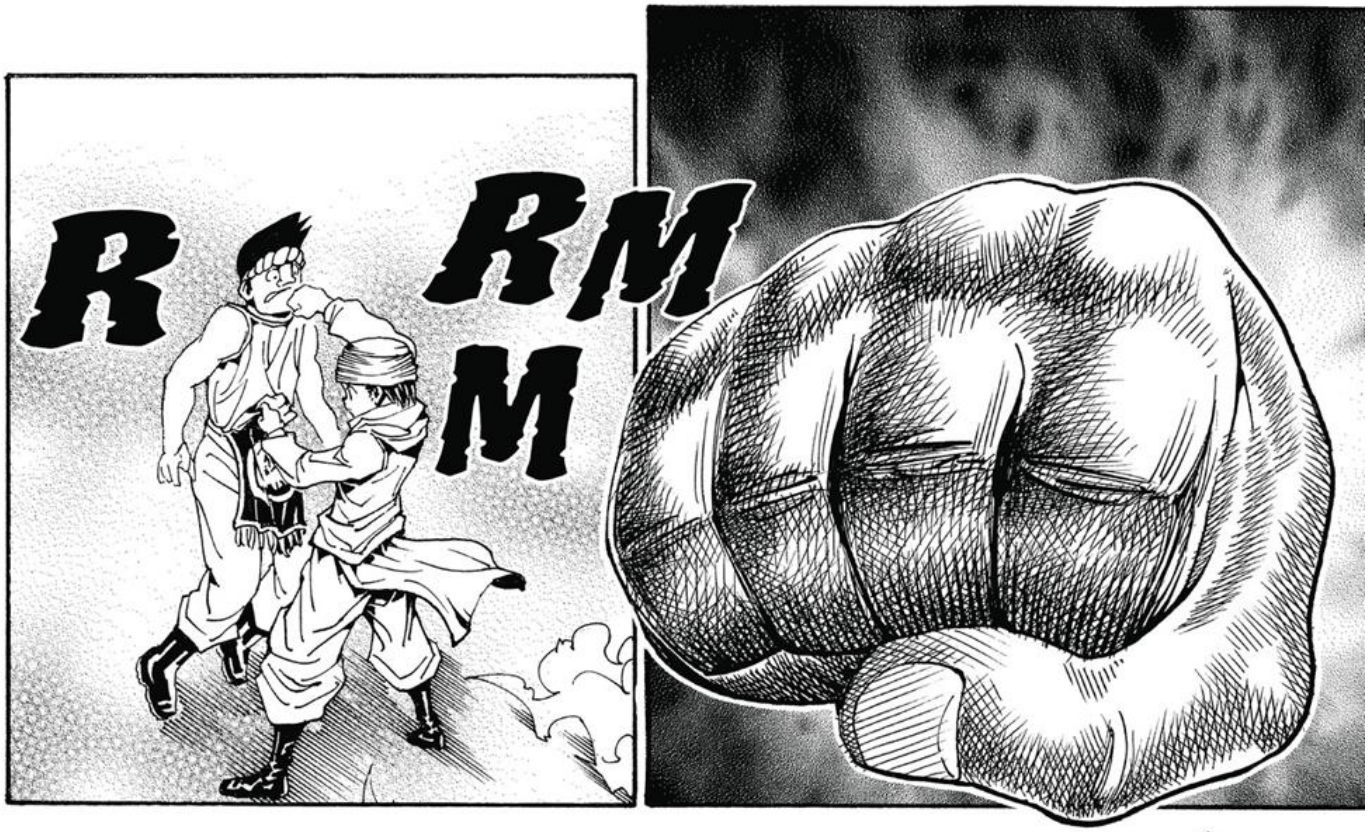

HE'D ACCEPT LOSING THE VS AS A CLIENT AND REFUSE TO ACCOMPANY BEYOND! HE'D FIND HIS OWN WAY THERE FIRST...
...WAIT FOR BEYOND ON THE DARK CONTINENT, AND ANNOUNCE THAT THE HUNT FOR BEYOND IS ON!
THAT'S WHAT THE HUNTER ASSOCIATION *SHOULD* BE, RIGHT?
WHY ARE YOU TRYING SO HARD TO DESTROY IT IF YOU'RE SO OBSESSED WITH IT?
QUITE A TWISTED FORM OF LOVE.
ANY PROOF THAT I'M DESTROYING IT?
EXPLAIN THIS FORCED CHOICE TO ME.
YOU'RE A BABY CRYING FOR ATTENTION. IF THE ASSOCIATION BECAME BORING TO YOU, YOU'D GO FIND A NEW PLAYMATE.
THE QUICKEST WAY TO FIND ONE IS TO DUMP THE CHIMERAS INTO THE WORLD...! THAT WOULD ALSO FORCE A CHANGE IN POLICY REGARDING THE DARK CONTINENT.
BUT IF THE ASSOCIATION SHOWS A BACKBONE, YOU'D HAPPILY DELIVER THE FINISHING BLOW BY SENDING THE CHIMERAS...
...TO TAKE THE EXAM. IT'S THE ONLY WAY FOR *ANYONE* TO BECOME A MEMBER.
A "BALANCED EXAM" THAT CHEADLE WILL CREATE AMOUNTS TO A FREE PASS FOR ANYONE WITH YOUR TUTELAGE AND CONNECTIONS.
YOUR FOLLOWERS WILL PASS IN BULK. THOUGH I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* YOU'D DO WITH AN ASSOCIATION FULL OF CHIMERAS...
YOU AND I ARE SIMILAR.
WE THINK IN UNORTHODOX WAYS.

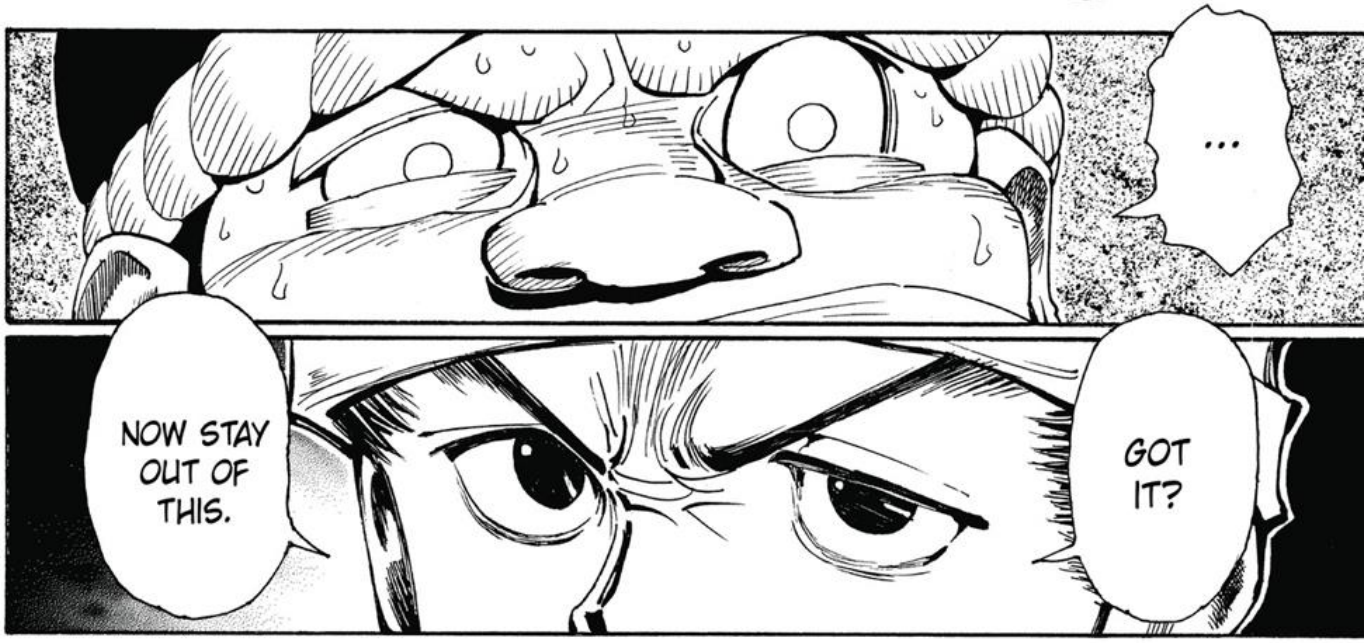

THAT'S WHY I THINK WHAT I THINK.
SCUMBAG.
WHAT A WAY TO PUT IT.
BUT YOU'RE RIGHT, SO WHATEVER.
PEOPLE NORMALLY FEEL HAPPINESS WHEN...
...THEY LOVE AND ARE LOVED IN RETURN.
I FEEL HAPPINESS WHEN PEOPLE HATE ME...
...AND I FEEL COMPELLED TO HURT THE THINGS THAT ARE DEAR TO ME.

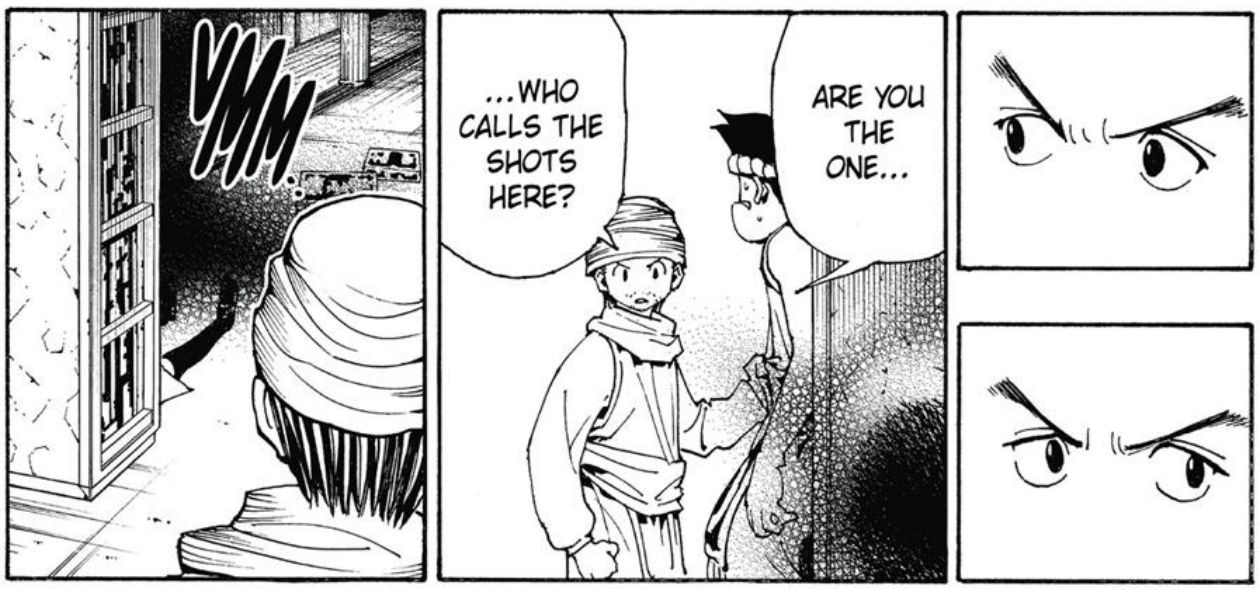

BUT IS THAT SO STRANGE?
DEPENDS ON THE EXTENT.
BUT I'M SAYING YOU'RE TOTALLY OUT OF IT.
AND THAT'S NOT HOW WE'RE ALIKE.
UM, MAY I?
YOU MAY NOT.
STAY OUT OF THIS, BALDY.
BWONNG
BUT I WAITED SO LONG...
'EY 'EY, WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE ?!
BUSTING IN HERE AND ACTING ALL—


BM
BM
BM
BM
BM
BM
BM




R RM
M


...
GOT IT?
NOW STAY OUT OF THIS.

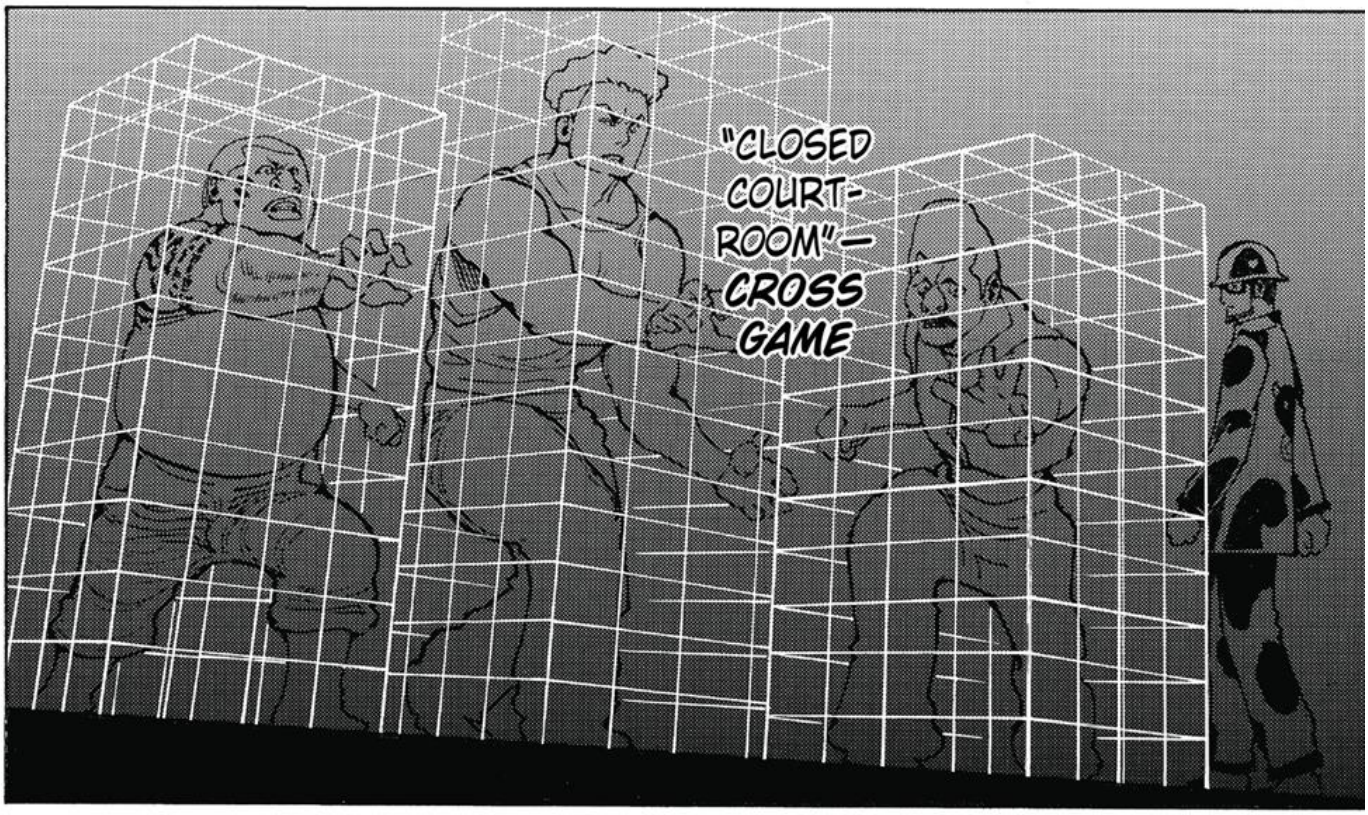

MM
...WHO CALLS THE SHOTS HERE?
ARE YOU THE ONE...

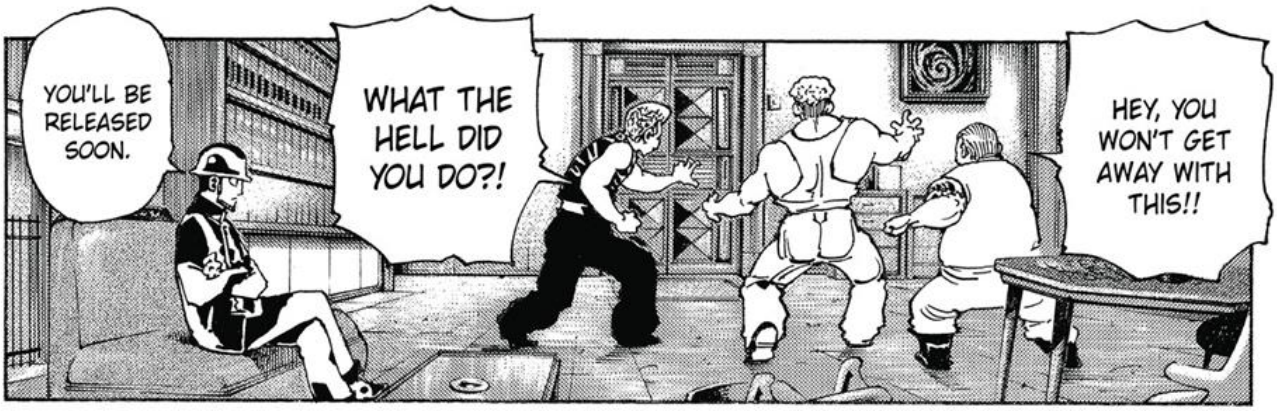

I'M NO. 2, OF COURSE.
HA HA. COME ON, GING.
OH, YOU UNDER-ESTIMATE ME.
GAH!
THUD
SO IT'S NOT A HIER-ARCHY OF STRENGTH.
THAT'S NOT THE CASE, WHICH IS THE TROUBLE.
IF YOU WERE ONLY ABOUT BRUTE FORCE, I'D PUMMEL YOU AND THAT WOULD BE IT.
HMM. ♪
...
I'D HAVE TO BREAK YOUR SPIRIT INSTEAD.
YOU'D BE LAUGHING INSIDE EVEN AS I MADE YOU COUGH UP BLOOD AND STEPPED ON YOUR HEAD.
ANYONE GOT A PROBLEM WITH THAT?
I'M NO. 2 NOW.


CHK
TK
TNK
TNK
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
I'M FROM THE HUNTER ASSOCIATION.
IS KURAPIKA HERE?
HE'S OUT.
PLEASE TAKE YOUR LEAVE.
SLAM
THEN I'LL WAIT HERE UNTIL HIS RETURN.
CAN I HAVE SOME COFFEE? I'LL GET THE MILK MYSELF.


SHF
SHF
SHF
VMM
!
DON'T COME NEAR ME.
THIS IS A WARN-ING.
I WILL NOT ALLOW ANY VIOLENCE!!
I AM A CRIME HUNTER WITH SPECIAL IN-VESTIGATIVE CLEARANCE!
SAVE YOUR LIP FOR THE NURSE AT THE HOSPITAL, MORON!!!
WE'LL SEND YOU THERE!!
SNAP!!
RESTRAIN !!


?!
I-
CAN'T-
MOVE ...?!
V
M
M
RK
RK
RK


"CLOSED COURT-ROOM"— CROSS GAME

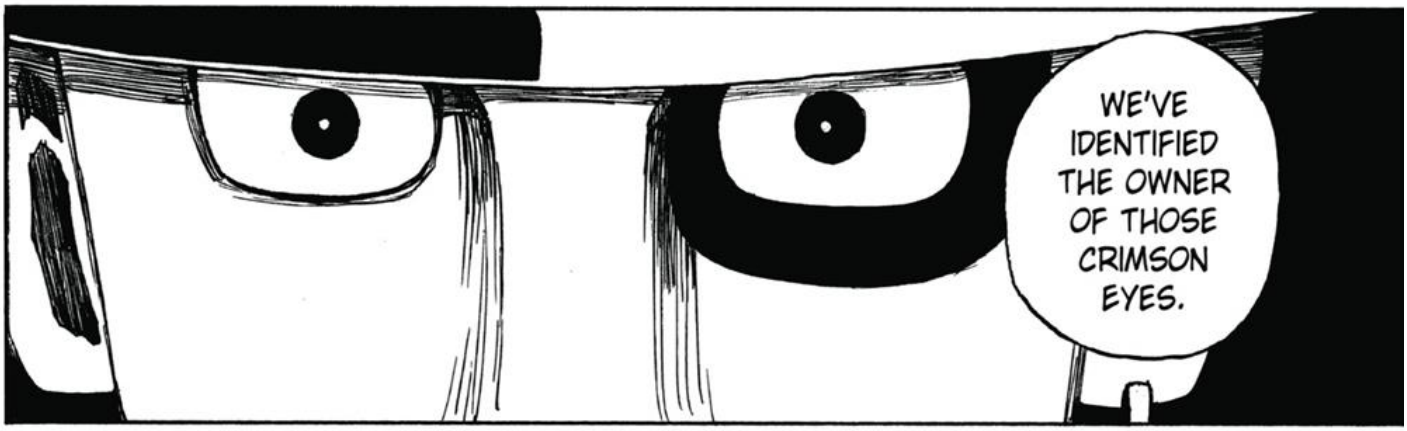

YOU'LL BE RELEASED SOON.
WHAT THE HELL DID YOU DO?!
HEY, YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH THIS!!

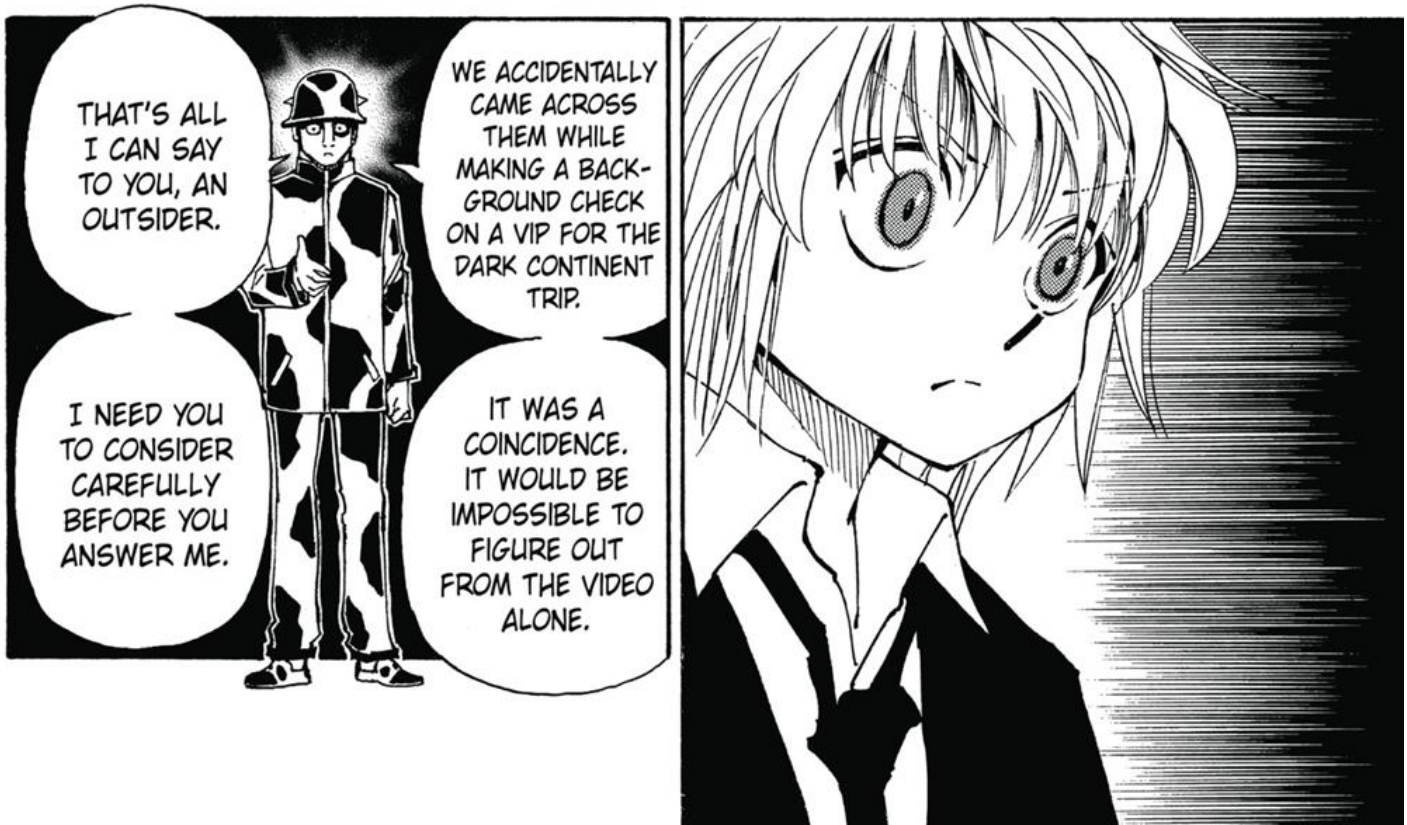

...
I WILL IMMOBILIZE YOU AS MANY TIMES AS YOU RESIST.
BUT HERE'S ANOTHER WARNING! NOT ANOTHER STEP.
OVER AND OVER.
THE BOSS IS DOWN-STAIRS.
OKAY, FINE.
TRY NOT TO PROVOKE HIM.
BUT HE'S IN A BAD MOOD.
THEY'RE BOTH LEGAL HERE. YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO SAY ANYTHING.
WE GET 100 PERCENT OF OUR INCOME THROUGH PERSONAL SECURITY DETAILS AND GAMBLING. WE PAY OUR TAXES.
WE'RE NOT A CRIME SYNDICATE, YOU KNOW.
WHAT ARE YOU IMPLYING ?
YOU'RE A HUNTER, RIGHT? IS THIS YOUR REAL OCCUPATION?
I'M HEARING A LOT OF NOISE.


WHO ARE YOU?
WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH ME?
I CAN MOVE ?!
UH–
SO HE'S SEEN HIS SHARE OF CARNAGE ...
MIZAISTOM, HUNTER ASSOCIATION.
HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEWS ABOUT KAKIN GOING TO THE DARK CONTINENT?
I DON'T CARE.
LEORIO TOLD ME ABOUT YOU.
AND I'M HERE TO MAKE A REQUEST.
COME TO THE DARK CONTINENT WITH US.
I REFUSE.
I'M BUSY.
IS THAT ALL?


I HEAR YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THE CRIMSON EYES... OF YOUR MURDERED FRIENDS.
SIGH
UM M
...CHOOSE YOUR WORDS WISELY.
FROM THIS POINT ON...
WHAT OF IT?
I AM INDEED LOOKING FOR THEIR EYES.
THIS IS NO PLACE FOR YOU OUTSIDERS.


DEATH
THERE'S A DARKNET SITE OF PECULIAR, SIMILAR-MINDED PEOPLE.
DO YOU KNOW THAT SIX MONTHS AGO, A VIDEO SHOWING A LARGE NUMBER OF CRIMSON EYES WAS UPLOADED THERE?
OF COURSE.
SO WHAT?
KURAPIKA IS LOOKING FOR THEIR OWNER.
BUT WE DON'T HAVE ANY CLUES SO FAR...


WE'VE IDENTIFIED THE OWNER OF THOSE CRIMSON EYES.


WE ACCIDENTALLY CAME ACROSS THEM WHILE MAKING A BACK-GROUND CHECK ON A VIP FOR THE DARK CONTINENT TRIP.
IT WAS A COINCIDENCE. IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO FIGURE OUT FROM THE VIDEO ALONE.
THAT'S ALL I CAN SAY TO YOU, AN OUTSIDER.
I NEED YOU TO CONSIDER CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU ANSWER ME.


IF YOU JOIN THE ZODIACS, YOU WILL ACCOMPANY US TO THE DARK CONTINENT, BUT YOU WILL SPEND ABOUT TWO MONTHS ON A SHIP.
WOULD THAT BE OF INTEREST TO YOU?
SO THIS PERSON IS ALSO GOING TO BE ON BOARD?
...
MY PRIORITY...
...IS TO RECOVER MY BRETHREN'S STOLEN EYES!!
ALL RIGHT.
I WILL JOIN YOU.
BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY...!
WILL YOU TELL ME WHO IT IS?
KAKIN'S FOURTH PRINCE...
TSERRIEDNICH HUI GUO ROU.

PARISTON, YOU'RE OUT OF IT!

I THINK YOU'RE THE ONE WHO IS OUT OF IT (AS A PARENT).

