

The Hamilcast: A Hamilton Podcast
Episode #4: Then a hurricane came, and devastation reigned

Hosts: Gillian Pensavalle and Bianca Soto
Guest: Ashley Graffeo

Description: Our resident high school teacher, Ashley Graffeo, returns to gush over seeing “Hamilton” for the first time and talk about Chapter Two in Chernow’s book, aptly titled “Hurricane”. Not to mention Hamilton’s early poetry in which he calls someone “an artful little slut”. Damn, Ham!

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The Hamilcast’s Transcribing Army

Ok, so we are doing this . . .

GILLIAN PENSAVALLE: Hey everybody! Welcome to The Hamilcast, this is episode four!

BIANCA SOTO: What?! Already?!

G. PEN: I know! I’m Gillian

B. SO: I’m Bianca

G. PEN: Today we are joined by our resident New York City high school history teacher, Ashley Graffeo, hey, Ashley!

ASHLEY GRAFFEO: Hello!

B. SO: What’s up?

A. GRAFF: Oh, not much, just, you know, saw Hamilton yesterday.

G. PEN and B. SO: Oh! Oh, wow, really?

A. GRAFF: Yeah, it’s not even a big deal.

B. SO: No, not at all

G. PEN: That’s amazing.

A. GRAFF: Yeah, no, I think actually a part of me died in the theater [laughter] and might be haunting the theater now because it was amazing.

G. PEN: Because it was amazing. So, you went because someone couldn't go? Someone backed out of their ticket? Did I hear that right? Because that feels fake.

A. GRAFF: Yeah, so my colleague at work who has seen it multiple times at this point, which I'm still a little bitter about, whatever, she bought the tickets last April for, like, sixty bucks. And the friend that she bought them with ended up going out of the country because it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and she had already seen it, and so she sold me the ticket at face value.

B. SO: Her friend had also already seen it?

A. GRAFF: Yes, her friend had also already seen it.

B. SO: Oh, okay 'cause I was going to say, does her friend know that seeing Hamilton is also a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity?

[Laughter]

A. GRAFF: I think they'd both seen it multiple times

B. SO: Okay, well

G. PEN: You know what?

A. GRAFF: I know.

G. PEN: Who are these people that are seeing it all the time? Anyway, okay, so you went and it was the greatest thing you've ever seen, correct? The hype is real?

A. GRAFF: Oh, the hype is beyond real. The hype might actually not be enough hype.

G. PEN: Wow.

A. GRAFF: Yeah, it was amazing from the moment I walked into the theater, first of all, I started shaking a little bit, I turned to my friend when we were sitting in our seats after having a lovely conversation with the people near us as to how tight the seats are

B. SO: Yes. Yeah.

A. GRAFF: My God! Richard Rogers Theater, get your life, because it was very uncomfortable.

G. PEN: Oh, you were sitting on top of everybody?

A. GRAFF: Basically. It was horrible. But, we were in the front row in the rear mezz, so—

B. SO: Okay but that's good being in the front though because you still get a really great vantage point of the stage

A. GRAFF: Absolutely, I could see everything, there was nothing obstructed, it was awesome. From the moment we got to the theater, the first thing I said was, "I have to buy something." That's my first priority while I'm here, I have to buy a t-shirt or something, and I did, I got myself a Hamilton and Washington and Jefferson and Burr shirt—

B. SO: Yay! Nice!

A. GRAFF: —for the very low price of, like, forty dollars.

G. PEN: Oh, of course

B. SO: Oh, absolutely, I have that shirt too. It's pretty exciting.

G. PEN: A friend of mine, who is going tonight, because everyone around me has either seen it or is going to see it immediately tagged me on Facebook because he had an Ampersand shirt, but it's not the one from the theater, it has Lafayette in it.

A. GRAFF: Oh, nice!

G. PEN: And then at the bottom it says, "Burr" and in parenthesis, "Sir".

B. SO: Is that a homemade Etsy find or something?

G. PEN: It must be an Etsy find

B. SO: Because that's awesome

G. PEN: Yeah and it's light blue. It's very reminiscent of my Columbo shirt, because, yes, I own a Columbo shirt. But it's kind of that same color, and it has everyone, it has Mulligan, but it has Lafayette! And Lafayette is not in that one, right? The one from the theater?

B. SO: No, Jefferson is

A. GRAFF: Yeah, because this one has the founding fathers, I guess. Whatever. And Burr.

[Laughter]

G. PEN and B. SO: Bleh, Burr!

A. GRAFF: Just kidding, Leslie Odom Jr. is great

B. SO: Just kidding, we need him

G. PEN: You said Oak was not in, but Andrew—

A. GRAFF: Yeah, Oak wasn't in, which my friend knew beforehand, she does the Twitter. I'm not a Twitterer.

G. PEN: Except, but you follow, don't you follow @TheHamilcast on Twitter?

A. GRAFF: Well, I mean, obviously

B. SO: Okay. Great.

A. GRAFF: But yeah, she had all this information beforehand and I was just like, I don't even care at this point, I know that whoever I see is going to be amazing

B. SO: Of course!

A. GRAFF: It was Andrew, he's one of the swings and he was fantastic!

B. SO: Is it Andrew—

G. PEN: Andrew Chappelle

A. GRAFF: Yes! Yes, that was him

G. PEN: Can we just talk about how hilarious he is on Twitter because during the Grammys he was live tweeting that, he doesn't have cable, so he was watching it on the live feed, and the live feed crapped out and all of these people were trying to FaceTime him and doing this amazing stuff and he was so adorably frustrated but very grateful. And then after they won, he's now demanding that he's referred to as "Grammy award winning artist, Andrew Chappelle" [laughter] which we all have to do, but he's hysterical. Andrew, we'd love to have you on.

A. GRAFF: I know that people have been photoshopping his face onto pictures of other Grammy winners

[Laughter]

G. PEN: And he also has a dog named Patti LuBone who's adorable and people also give Patti LuBone gifts at the stage door

B. SO: That's amazing.

A. GRAFF: Well, when we went to the stage door after the show, he was the only one that came out, which I had anticipated, I didn't think Lin or anybody was going to come out afterwards, it was a Wednesday matinee, but he came out and my friend talked to him and whatnot and she got a picture with him and I told him, "You did a great job" and then this little thirteen year old girl stopped him and was talking to him and all of a sudden he goes, "Oh my God, that was you?!" And it turns out that this was one of the girls who was photoshopping his face on pictures of Grammy winners and he was like, "That's absolutely amazing, keep up the great work."

B. SO: Aww, how sweet!

A. GRAFF: Yeah, it was so insane to see, especially people after the show just fangirling so hard at the stage door. I thought girls were going to cry when they got their Playbill signed by him. I was like, "Oh my gosh, ladies, calm down."

G. PEN: Yeah. People with dignity only cry throughout the entire performance.

[Laughter]

A. GRAFF: Obviously the only way to cry is starting with "Stay Alive"—

B. SO: Oh God, okay, so let's backtrack. So the three of us on Monday night when the Grammys performance was occurring, we're group texting but then there was a definite silence because clearly we were busy. It was pretty funny, there wasn't even live texting going on because—no.

A. GRAFF: No.

G. PEN: No!

B. SO: But afterwards you said, "I'm crying" and Gillian says, "I'm sweating and crying."

[Laughter]

G. PEN: Because I'm so excited about it and I'm so anxious about it and I think the anxiety is also—I mean I have my tickets for September and that's great, but I'm not waiting.

B. SO: It's a new aerobic workout, just get really excited about Hamilton and your heart rate skyrockets and then you start sweating!

G. PEN: Yeah, like I get really hot, and just the temperature—

B. SO: And shaky

G. PEN: —and shaky, it's like The Beatles!

A. GRAFF: I was sweating in the theater yesterday, my palms were sweating.

G. PEN: My palms are sweating now talking about it.

A. GRAFF: I looked at my friend and I go, "My palms are itchy and sweating," and she goes, "Mine too, it's a normal reaction, happens every time." [Laughter] And I was like, "Okay, cool, good to know!"

G. PEN: Okay, so your friend, who I'm sure she's delightful, we're best friends, it's very rare that you disagree with me on the delight level of people, I need to ask you with no bitterness whatsoever, how has she seen it so many times?

A. GRAFF: Well—

G. PEN: What is her name? Kelly, right?

A. GRAFF: Her name is Kelly.

G. PEN: Hello, Kelly.

B. SO: Hi, Kelly!

[Laughter]

G. PEN: No Kelly, I'm sorry, I'm kidding, again, like I said, I sincerely think, I'm sure you're lovely.

A. GRAFF: [Laughing] Well, we work a block away from The Public, and when it was at The Public she was going to the lottery pretty much every day after work. She kept asking me to go and I was like, "Meh, I'm good." Biggest mistake of my life. [Laughter] because she, I think she won the lottery at The Public, and then I think she won it once when it was on Broadway, and then her friend won it while they were there at the lottery. So I think this might have been her fourth time seeing it.

B. SO: I wonder how packed the lottery was at The Public? I never actually did that, I was kicking myself for not.

A. GRAFF: Well, same, and she would text me from the lottery and she would say that it was pretty packed, and she was actually just telling me yesterday that she was so pissed when she was at the lottery at The Public because apparently there were people there who had also won multiple times and she had yet to see it [laughter] and so she was like, “Just, let them go home, they’ve already seen it, give everybody else a chance!” and under my breath I’m like, “God, Kelly, yeah, seriously, give everybody a chance.” But I am eternally grateful for her, for thinking of me immediately when she found out that that ticket was up for grabs yesterday and for letting me buy it at face value before her friend could hike up the price, like, ten thousand dollars.

B. SO: Oh my God, seriously! So, okay, let’s talk about the show, but without too many spoilers for Gillian’s sake.

G. PEN: You know what? I’m kind of okay with spoilers because I need so much of it—

A. GRAFF: Spoiler alert, Hamilton dies.

[Laughter]

G. PEN: But I know that people are into the spoilers, although if you’re listening to a podcast about it, you’re probably okay. But just fair warning, no one get mad at us. So you two talk, I guess I’ll just be here when you guys are done.

A. GRAFF: No!

B. SO: No!

A. GRAFF: No, participate!

B. SO: I’m going to go get another Sam Adams...[Sarcasm] Okay, so what, uh—

A. GRAFF: There are so many questions, I understand.

B. SO: What was your favorite performance? Because I think that the performances are different than listening to it. Seeing it visualized, it totally changes it, so what was your “wow” moment, or one of the seventy five “wow” moments you definitely had?

A. GRAFF: Well, yeah, obviously. The first moment where I turned to Kelly and I just had a beaming smile on my face, I couldn’t, I just, I just smiled at her because I was about to lose it was “Helpless”.

B. SO: Hmm

G. PEN: Oh!

A. GRAFF: It was just, it was so, because you know what, because the first couple songs were exactly, and this isn't a bad thing, but they were exactly what I had anticipated and I'd kind of imagined, knowing about the rotating stage and all that, I kind of assumed this was how it was going to happen and it was pretty on par. But when "Helpless" happened, I was just like, "I did not see this coming," I did not really see the staging that way. And then "Satisfied" just stopped me in my tracks.

B. SO: Ugh, "Satisfied" is so good.

A. GRAFF: Oh my God, A) it was amazing

B. SO: I know.

A. GRAFF: As are all of the songs

B. SO: Right

A. GRAFF: Even "It's Quiet Uptown" which made me sob silently in my seat. But just the way that they do "Satisfied", because I kind of had an idea of how I thought they might do it because I was like, "Well, you know, she says 'rewind', like ten times, maybe they'll actually rewind." And they did! And it was so good!

G. PEN: That was going to be my question: Did they rewind?

A. GRAFF: They rewound and it was like, they did the choreography throughout the song was just like a mirror image slightly slower of the choreography in "Helpless" and I was like, "This is just so genius!"

G. PEN: I have chills as you're describing it.

A. GRAFF: Yeah I'm picturing it in my head and I'm having a hard time talking about it because I'm just singing along in my head and being like, "Yes, go Renee, yes!"

G. PEN: Maybe I'm completely delusional but after being friends with someone for almost twenty years, which is insane, I kind of feel like I went.

A. GRAFF: No, you totally went!

G. PEN: That's how I'm kind of, I'm justifying it.

B. SO: Yeah!

G. PEN: That's just, I'm so excited, I'm always so happy when I hear that people are going because I know that it's going to be such an amazing experience for them, which I realize sounds like a delusional crazy person, saying that as someone who hasn't seen it, but even you describing it, it's just like, oh yes! It's awesome, it's so awesome.

A. GRAFF: Ugh, it really was! And "Wait for It" was just perfect. I mean Leslie just, he tears the house down.

B. SO: One hundred percent.

G. PEN: What is, how were the people acting? Because I see, sometimes Lin tweets that he sees people were rocking out. How much is too much rocking out? How much like, what were you, I mean obviously singing is a no-go, of course.

A. GRAFF: I did have a fear that I was going to sing along and I told Kelly, "Just smack me if you hear me under my breath" because I've been known to do this. The first time I did that was when I was seven at Guys and Dolls [laughter], so this is actually something I have done, I've sung along.

G. PEN: And what song was it?

A. GRAFF: At Guys and Dolls?

G. PEN: Yes.

A. GRAFF: Uh, I think it was "I Got the Horse Right Here".

[Laughter]

G. PEN: Yes, it was, I asked you because I knew the answer.

A. GRAFF: [Laughing] I went to town! And I was seven, alright, I'm seven.

B. SO: Hey, that's adorable.

A. GRAFF: Well, my dad always tells the story, he's like, "People around were just so affected by your cuteness that they couldn't even get mad." And I was like, "Well, I've heard that happens to a lot of people."

B. SO: Story of my life!

G. PEN: So are people moving? What's the—

A. GRAFF: You know, to be completely honest, I had no concept of anybody else in that theater. I was laser focused on that stage, and I was bopping around and I was tapping out the lyrics and the beats and everything—

G. PEN: How do you not?

A. GRAFF: —and I even caught myself rapping along but obviously not out loud

B. SO: Yeah, it's so hard not to, I remember when, and it was embarrassing because I was in the front row, sorry [laughter]

G. PEN: Oh wait, when you won the lottery?

B. SO: Correct. And I was like, leaping out of my skin with such excitement, and in the front row there's all this leg room, which is crazy and amazing, so I'm loose, I'm ready to go [laughter] and when "What do we have in common? We're reliable with the ladies!" happened, I completely unbeknownst to myself did a total body roll in my seat [laughter]

G. PEN: It's the dancer in you, what were you supposed to do?

B. SO: That's true. I'm not responsible for my actions.

G. PEN: No!

B. SO: Oh my God, it's so hard to just not want to jump on stage.

A. GRAFF: It was at a certain point, I think during "Guns and Ships", I sat up and leaned forward and I was just like, "Yes! Do it! Sing it, Lafayette!"

[Laughter]

G. PEN: Yes! You learned our language and now you can rap faster than anybody! Do it!

A. GRAFF: Exactly! And I just, I was sitting there and I'm literally, I'm recreating it right now as I'm talking about it, I was in the zone, on beat, Ashley always on beat, like it was perfect.

G. PEN: What? Hashtag for sure

B. SO: Hashtag!

G. PEN: So I happened to be nearby the Richard Rogers as you were in enjoying the show and having your mind blown, I was right outside, like so close and yet

so far, I walked by and I realized that the cancellation line was not really that bad, so I stood on it for a little while and realized that you really need to be prepared when you go

A. GRAFF: Yeah, it was cold!

G. PEN: It was really, really cold and I was not at all prepared and it was kind of on a whim. There were people with chairs, some girl was like, "Oh, you have to come prepared, I have snacks for every hour."

A. GRAFF: Yeah, I saw that!

B. SO: Amazing! Wow.

G. PEN: Yeah, she had snacks, but there were some people, and I didn't tell either of you this, that left during intermission.

A. GRAFF: What?!

B. SO: Left the cancellation line?

G. PEN: No, left the show!

B. SO: Left the show?!

G. PEN: Left the show. I saved it for the air because I wanted the reaction.

A. GRAFF: Because they must have had a life-threatening emergency.

G. PEN: No, no, no, they were super calm, they was a mother and daughter, one of them said it's not all it's cracked up to be

[Gasps]

B. SO: Why didn't you ask for their ticket stub?

G. PEN: Because I don't want to see half

B. SO: Because you don't want to second act it the first time, but come on! That's crazy!

G. PEN: And then someone else, they were just kind of muttering, like shaking their heads like they just saw—

B. SO: First of all, I don't understand anybody who leaves a show at intermission anyway because you paid the money for that ticket however much you paid for it,

whether it's face value or not. Why don't you just stick it out? It's another hour of your life, just effing stick it out.

A. GRAFF: Actually, I'm one of those people because I have walked out of a few plays

B. SO: No! Which ones? I want to know.

A. GRAFF: Wait, Gillian, didn't we walk out of one?

G. PEN: We walked out of—

A. GRAFF: Was it Johnny Cash?

G. PEN: It was Ring of Fire, we walked out of it, and to be fair, we did, we were like two out of eight other people in the theater, we did not—

A. GRAFF: And the tickets were free, I got them from my job

G. PEN: Yes, we did not pay for the tickets and we were young—

A. GRAFF: And obnoxious.

G. PEN: And look, we are Johnny Cash fans, I love Johnny Cash very, very much. That show was not happening, at all.

B. SO: I just feel like, okay, let's amend that for Broadway prices.

G. PEN: Oh, if we'd paid, we'd stay, like let's just see how it goes.

A. GRAFF: Oh, I'll stick it out.

G. PEN: Of course!

B. SO: How bad does something have to be that you're willing to leave at intermission and the fact that anybody does that, it's mind-boggling to me. Okay, so people left

G. PEN: People left, yeah I ended up leaving the cancellation line because I was not at all prepared and I was like, "Ehh, I'm here, why not?" and I learned my lesson that you really, you guys, they're like warriors. There are also line-sitters now. This show is making everyone insane.

A. GRAFF: Yeah, I heard, Kelly was telling me that usually on average you have to be within the first twelve people on that line to even have a chance of possibly getting a ticket because on average they probably give out six to seven a night.

G. PEN: Yeah, and it depends on if you're looking for one or two. And also, apparently yesterday they were giving out standing room tickets, which isn't normally the case, so it seems by the people who I was standing there with. They were kind of like, "Oh, wow, they have eleven standing room seats, that's rare." So I don't know what the deal is with the standing room seats, because we went to standing room all the time with Rent, we were there constantly. So I don't know how, if they're not giving them, like they're not giving them away in the digital lottery.

A. GRAFF: I'm not sure, I have no idea.

G. PEN: And they seem incredibly hard to come by and I'm just not entirely sure where they're going or how that works. I'm sure people do, I'm sure if I venture onto a message board I could find out, but I'm not entirely, like did you see standing room people there today? I mean, yesterday?

A. GRAFF: I didn't, I mean, we scooted right upstairs, so I have to be completely honest, I really took in absolutely nothing other than the fact that I was about to see this show, and I even left the theater when we were standing outside by the stage door and I panicked, I was like, "Kelly! Kelly, I've lost my Playbill! What are we going to do? I've lost my Playbill!" and she's like, "Aww, that's rough," and I was like, "Give me yours!"

B. SO: Yeah, come on, Kelly!

A. GRAFF: And she was like, "Just go ask if they can give you a Playbill," and I run back in, I show them my ticket, and I was like, "Please! Please, I was just here! I was so into the show, I just didn't pay attention, I just didn't grab my Playbill, please!" And the guy just looks at me and goes, "Yeah, no problem, give me a second," and I was like, "Oh, thank God!"

B. SO: [Laughing] Settle down, lady

A. GRAFF: [Laughing] I think he was just like, "Jesus, woman, alright, it's just some paper, relax." But I have an actually a very elaborate fantasy in my head today that because I saw it yesterday, the gods would have looked down on me very well, and I would have won the lottery today, and then I was going to call you and tell you that I was about to change your life [laughter] I had this whole fantasy! And then four o'clock came and I was like, "Well, womp, womp."

B. SO: Yeah, we didn't win either, so shocking.

G. PEN: Yeah, I appreciate that because that's really what my life is everyday. It's really weird, the website has a lot of glitches, because we all should have won a long time ago

A. GRAFF: It's very strange

G. PEN: Based on the group text of, "Forty minutes until we win the lottery!"

B. SO: Yeah, it's perplexing.

A. GRAFF: Did they not get those text messages? It's weird. I mean, my student won the lottery!

G. PEN: I know! You know what, here's the thing that's crazy, it feels like everybody's talking about nobody can get in to see Hamilton, it feels like I'm surrounded by people who are seeing Hamilton [laughter] more than once, or winning the lottery or getting their hookup, I don't know what it is, but it's very easy for me to complain about it in my apartment and not in a hurricane...did you guys like that segway?

B. SO: What

A. GRAFF: That was good, I liked that.

G. PEN: You want to talk Chernow?

A. GRAFF: Let's do it!

G. PEN: So chapter two is called "Hurricane". It's a pretty quick chapter, but it's very significant, I think, as everything goes on.

A. GRAFF: It really kind of sets the stage for everything that he's about to become.

G. PEN: And we're constantly reminded how young he was. So he was fourteen, he was a clerk, as we know, but he was, that clerking job really set the stage, it was during such formative years for him that he learned about money and business from such a very, very young age and that really stuck with him.

A. GRAFF: Absolutely, he wrote financial systems into existence, I mean, come on.

G. PEN: I heard about that.

A. GRAFF: Yeah! I think the other thing that's pretty insane, too, is can you imagine yourself at the age of fourteen [laughter] basically singlehandedly running an international import and export business?

G. PEN and B. SO: No.

A. GRAFF: Because I was an idiot at fourteen.

G. PEN: I know.

B. SO: I'm still an idiot.

A. GRAFF: Okay, fair, yes, and it hasn't gone away. Yes.

G. PEN: And speaking of that, so there's this letter he wrote to, which we discussed last week, Edward, who may or may not be his brother, they look very similar. So he's writing this letter, he's fourteen years old, and just one quote is, "I'm not a philosopher, you see, and may be justly said to build castles in the air." Fourteen! [Laughter]

B. SO: With no formal education, no less.

G. PEN: No! None, at all. And then he ends that letter—

B. SO: I love this.

G. PEN: —he ends it with, "I shall conclude by saying I wish there was a war."

A. GRAFF: Yep. It's his only way to move up.

B. SO: But the fact that someone at fourteen, I mean I guess fourteen was older than our fourteen now because you had to grow up a little faster back then and they even say you went to college at fifteen, sixteen

G. PEN: Yeah

A. GRAFF: Right, that's also true, and by that point he would have also, he would have been considered almost a full grown man

B. SO: That's silly.

G. PEN: I know. Well his dad, or James Hamilton, peaced out at ten because he thought they could handle it. I said this to Mike earlier when I was going through the notes of what we wanted to say, I said, "Can you believe at fifteen or sixteen they were going to college?" and he goes, "Yeah, well when you live to forty that's not really that young." And I was like, "Oh, yeah!" it's just another reminder of what they had to go through

A. GRAFF: Oh yeah, their life expectancy was way lower!

G. PEN: So then the hurricane came.

A. GRAFF: Right! Yeah, he was in the eye of it, if I remember correctly.

G. PEN: Really? I wonder if there's a song. Oh wait!

A. GRAFF: Oh, wait a second.

B. SO: A very important part of the chapter and, then consequentially, his life is meeting this Presbyterian minister named Hugh Knox who, before coming to Nevis, was studying at Princeton where the president of Princeton was Aaron Burr, Aaron Burr's father, also named Aaron Burr. And likely the first Hamilton ever heard of Aaron Burr was from Hugh Knox. So he already had this image in his head, I would say, of this family or of this person and the education that follows them. So Hugh Knox becomes pretty much a mentor to Hamilton, and there's a paper that starts up, "The Gazette", I don't know, what's it actually called? [Laughter] It has a much nicer name.

G. PEN: It's "The Royal Danish American Gazette".

A. GRAFF: I don't know how you couldn't remember that.

G. PEN: I know.

B. SO: "The Royal Danish American Gazette"!

A. GRAFF: Rolls off the tongue.

G. PEN: Because every paper is called "The Gazette", it feels like, or "The Daily" something

B. SO: Exactly.

G. PEN: Hey, where's my little press badge?

A. GRAFF: This just in!

B. SO: So Hamilton ends up, it becomes an opportunity for him to start publishing his writings and his first foray into publishing is a set of poems that are very different in tone.

A. GRAFF: Very different, yes.

B. SO: The first one is very sweet and speaks of marital bliss, and is almost virginal in its tone.

G. PEN: Also wise beyond his years, just the way he's seeing love and relationships, in the first one

B. SO: Very much so.

G. PEN: Because in the second poem...

B. SO: The second poem opens with the line, "Celia is an artful little slut."

G. PEN: Really, Ham? Whoa.

B. SO: Whoa!

G. PEN: See, that's more like the fourteen year olds of now.

[Laughter]

A. GRAFF: He's trolling Celia.

G. PEN: Oh! I think it's, is it Cecilia? I think it's Cecilia.

A. GRAFF: Might be.

G. PEN: Sorry, Cecilia.

B. SO: Poor Cecilia. Oh boy.

G. PEN: But the fact that, and Chernow goes into it, Chernow is also, I just want to say the way he writes is so, Ashley, you've said this before we started reading that it really reads like a novel and not—and the way, some of the things he does, he'll say like, "Let's pause for a minute and realize what is happening!" and then with exclamation points, like he gets it, he knows your reaction as you're reading it, and that is very helpful as someone, I usually I prefer reading autobiographies, I like hearing things in a very conversational way, so I love that it's a biography but at the same time it feels like Chernow is sitting with us, telling us these stories and these facts about Hamilton.

B. SO: Absolutely, I agree. And so, Hugh Knox and Hamilton form this bond, pretty much, and after those two poems, I think his next writings ended up taking a more religious tone, I think because of his relationship with Knox, and it's not a surprise that Hamilton would feel some sort of connection because Knox was actually a pretty liberal-minded minister considering the times. Like he supported American independence, opposed slavery, and, most important, believed that illegitimate children should be baptized and that members of the clergy should take them in and not shun them, which obviously would strike Hamilton straight in the heart.

G. PEN: Yeah, I would think so that he could relate to that.

B. SO: Just a bit.

A. GRAFF: Wasn't Knox Scottish as well? So there's also affection there because Hammy was in fact of Scottish descent. So kind of like a father figure, huh? But also you want to remember that Presbyterianism in general at that point about two hundred years after, eh, like one hundred fifty years after the Protestant reformation, so Presbyterianism is actually a relatively new religion at that point, and there's also a few different factions of it as well within that time. Presbyterianism is basically the Scottish version of Lutheranism, which actually kind of believed that good works and being a good person would get you into heaven and not making sure you went to church every Sunday and doing all this stuff, so it was like being the person that God wants you to be, that was more preferable than being completely, very bent on morality kind of person. Of course, there's morality in it—

B. SO: Not quite as much fire and brimstone and just being a good person

A. GRAFF: Exactly, it's not like Puritans in England and then America, but I mean, again, I don't want to say that the Presbyterians of the 1700's weren't a little Puritanical, because they were

B. SO: By comparison, really

G. PEN: And it was Knox, who, so Hamilton wrote this letter to James Hamilton

B. SO: After the hurricane

G. PEN: After the hurricane, about how awful it was, and it really was, I mean they were saying that furniture was found miles away, it was really, it was as devastating as you think it is.

A. GRAFF: Like two hundred pound barrels of sugar lifted

B. SO: Oh my God

G. PEN: I underlined that part too!

B. SO: There was also potentially a fifteen-foot tidal wave because there was also an earthquake earlier that day. What?!

A. GRAFF: Yeah.

G. PEN: Yeah. It was the worst day possible. So Hamilton wrote this letter to James Hamilton, and I'm saying James Hamilton because I'm kind of with the Chernow, I'm not entirely sure it was his father, so it's father in air quotes, but Knox was the one to encourage him to publish it in The Gazette because he thought it was so incredible and just the way to explain how awful this thing was, he even wrote, "The person doesn't want to seem like they're trying to cash in on this awful thing," but people didn't really believe that it was Hamilton who wrote it because it was so well written and no one really bought that it was this fourteen year old clerk. And then they all came together and they were like, "This kid is insane, man!"

[Laughter]

A. GRAFF: They took up a collection, you know what, let's send him to the mainland.

G. PEN: Yeah

B. SO: Pretty much, exactly, yeah, so that he could get his education, so that he could come to America and get educated because he clearly had so much more potential than anybody else, apparently.

A. GRAFF: The other thing I thought was really cool was that a lot of them actually contributed to his education because some of them thought that he would go into medicine

B. SO: Yeah, and become a doctor

A. GRAFF: And he would come back and be a doctor for them. And it's great that Hamilton was just like, "Yeah, see ya! Not coming back!"

B. SO: Yeah, he's like, "I'm getting out of here, bye!"

G. PEN: Yeah, and then there's just one last thing that I thought was very cool, and I have a feeling this is going to come up a lot again further down the line, his Aunt Anne, who I think was the biggest benefactor to him getting out of there, he says that he's forever in debt to her, even before he went to have the duel with Burr, he told Eliza, you know, "I owe her my life."

A. GRAFF: Yeah, she was a champion of his. She really, I mean, she championed him. She saw his potential and just kept, you know she pretty much bankrolled him to go.

B. SO: Yeah, and he seems to feel like he was never able to fully repay her. And I guess maybe that's one of the regrets that he took with him to the grave, but I mean, how do you pay somebody back for that?

G. PEN: Yeah, and I think if someone is that big of a benefactor, they understand, it's kind of a selfless act to say, "I just want you to do your thing," and you know, family can be crazy, but I get the sense that she knew exactly what was going to happen and she was happy to do it.

A. GRAFF: She knew what he was capable of and that he would have never been able to actually reach his potential if he stayed in the Caribbean because, I mean, you know, Chernow talks about it in the book and also just historically, the Caribbean was just, they were colonies, they were there to serve the colony owners. They didn't have free thought, they weren't going to have free elections any time soon or anything like that, and a lot of those places are still actually owned by England. So, there really wasn't anywhere for him to go there, nowhere that he could go that he could shine.

G. PEN: And our next chapter is called "The Collegiate" so I guess we'll find out

B. SO: I guess we'll find out what happens

G. PEN: It's also, fair warning you guys, by far the most detailed and confusing, not confusing, there's just, there's so many names, and there's a lot going on so we're going to break it down for you next episode, in the best way we know how. [Laughter] And hopefully, Ashley, you'll have to listen to our next episode and then report back with all the mistakes that we made.

A. GRAFF: Yeah, no, of course, that's my job.

G. PEN: If we made any. Well thank you so much, once again.

A. GRAFF: Oh, I'm more than happy, more than happy, I'm glad that I got to share my post-show euphoria with you.

G. PEN: I know, I'm so glad—

B. SO: Merely just over twenty-four hours ago! Can you believe it?

A. GRAFF: Oh my God, no!

B. SO: You were there! You were in the room where it happens!

A. GRAFF: I was! You know, I had such a tough time posting pictures last night, figuring out if I wanted to put the line, "I was in the room where it happened," or "I did not throw away my shot." I went with "I did not throw away my shot," I actually regretted it immediately.

G. PEN: I was going to say, I can't believe we've gone four episodes without referencing being in the room where it happens, because that's the one. I know what I'm going to post when I win the lottery, but I'm not going to say it here.

B. SO: It's cute, my friend's mom actually is seeing the show tonight, also

G. PEN: Are you kidding? Are you serious?

B. SO: I give up, guys, I know, I'm sorry

G. PEN: Seriously?!

B. SO: My friend, Meg, who we talked about in episode one who got me the amazing Hamilton gifts two Christmases in a row, her parents are seeing the show tonight, and her mom had knee surgery recently and is having a hard time, you know sitting and walking is very uncomfortable after you've had surgery, so she was so nervous that she wasn't going to be able to come see the show because it would prevent her from getting into the city, they live out in Jersey, it's a whole thing

A. GRAFF: Everything is legal in New Jersey

G. PEN: I know

B. SO: —so she became obsessed, she was like, "Well I am seeing this show," determined, and she said, it's so cute, she says to my friend Meg, she says, "Meg, I am not giving away my shot."

[Laughter]

G. PEN: That's adorable!

B. SO: And Meg was like, "You almost got it mom, that's real cute."

[Laughter]

G. PEN: She's trying! She's getting there.

B. SO: I love it! Yeah, so she's a mere thirty minutes away, so there's that.

G. PEN: I know it's, before I say I know it's going to mean less and less, I really am happy for these people [laughter] I really do hope they have a good time.

B. SO: They will.

A. GRAFF: Everyone's going to have a great time, and you're going to have an even better time when you win the lottery.

G. PEN: When I win the lottery.

A. GRAFF: And/or one of us wins the lottery and takes you.

G. PEN: Yes because that's a for real pact that we have and now that we're putting it on the internet, neither of you can back out. Sorry everybody, I'm going. [Laughter] And on that note, thank you again Ashley, you want to do our sign off with us?

A. GRAFF: Sure!

G. PEN: You have to.

B. SO: It's in the contract. So, thanks again everyone listening, please follow us on @thehamilcast on all your various media, shoot us an email at thehamilcast@gmail.com if you want to chat, and if you're enjoying the podcast, we'd love for you to leave us a review on iTunes. That would be super fantastic.

G. PEN: Yes! That would be excellent, we've had some very nice ones so far but the more the merrier.

B. SO: Fantastic!

G. PEN: Yeah. And also check out my show, "The Residuals", @theresiduals on all the medias. That's my plug. Because I get to do it because it's my show.

A. GRAFF: It's your show.

G. PEN: It's my show. Okay, well thank you again you guys, please stay tuned for our next episode, we will be discussing "The Collegiate," and we will be talking to Lizzy, who runs the HamWing Twitter, the Hamilton West Wing mash up, so that's going to be very fun. I am G. Pen.

B. SO: I am B. So

A. GRAFF: I am A. Graff.

G. PEN: Bye, guys!

B. SO: See you next time!

A. GRAFF: Bye!

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[Music: Hamilton – The World turned upside down – Instrumentals play]

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