

## [Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / An Emergency Meeting About The Succession Finale

You're listening to a Mamma Mia podcast.

Mamma Mia acknowledges the traditional owners of land and waters that this podcast is recorded on.

Hello and welcome to an emergency meeting of Mamma Mia Out Loud.

My name is Holly Wainwright and I'm the eldest boy.

I'm Mia Friedman and I'm a pain sponge.

I'm Jesse Stevens and I'm ludicrously capricious.

If you don't know what we're talking about, why are you even listening?

It's because you're not watching Succession.

We are having a quick emergency meeting about the fight.

We probably won't be quick, let's be honest.

It probably won't be quick.

Holly and I already started before we walked into the studio.

We've done a good 20.

On the finale, the last ever episode of Succession.

If anyone is confused listening to this because they're like, Holly, I thought you didn't like Succession.

I've done a very fast pivot in the last few weeks.

Bullied by my co-stars, my co-host, Jesse and Mia, I embraced the Succession, even went back to the beginning.

I've got a few gaps in my knowledge, but now I'm invested and I'm going to pretend

I can play with the big boys.

Good luck with that.

Big day at the Salami factory with Mia and Jesse talking about Succession.

Before we get into a blow-by-blow of what surprised us, what didn't, first of all, did we love episode 10 of season four, Jesse Stevens?

Loved it.

The second that it ended, I went perfect, no notes, 11 stars, loved it.

The reason it was perfect was because I didn't pick it, but I think the beauty of television is when you didn't pick it, but of course it was inevitable, and you look back and it feels as though it was set up that way from episode one.

It was satisfying.

What I loved too is that I think that it opened up so many questions that I still have that I want to discuss with you all.

Mia, you loved it, didn't you?

I thought it was perfect as well.

I just gasped many times, like I do.

I have done that a lot in this season, but I've done that a lot in this show overall, and not because of tricky twists, and then they found out they were all dead.

Nothing like that.

It's just the writing, the cruelty, the decisions that people make.

The writers did such a phenomenal job over four seasons of never letting you get comfortable. You just never knew what was going to happen, but in actual fact, not much happened, apart from the fact that Logan Roy died over the course of four seasons.

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They kind of ended in the same place that they started, which is all squabbling over the spoils.

It is a show that makes you feel itchy and uncomfortable while you're watching it, I think.

Let's talk about some of our favorite moments.

We won't talk about the ending yet, but talk about some of our favorite moments from the show in general.

Look, I just want to talk a little bit about the way they used Mattson, who is Alexander Skarsgaard.

If he seems familiar to you, he was the abusive husband to Nicole Kidman in the first season of Big Little Lies.

He's such an astonishing physical presence, and I thought what they did really well, or a couple of things this season, to have Logan Roy die in episode three, rather than everyone assume to die at the end, right?

So that was really clever, because it's what happened after he died that was important for us to witness.

I'm going to go see him.

Do you want to?

I'm going to watch him down from here.

They needed, though, something for the kids to fight against.

They needed an actual person who was going to be this malevolent, powerful figure that they were all kind of conniving against, and that was Mattson.

And I thought that they did such a great job.

I mean, he was clearly very much modeled on Elon Musk, who is this tech billionaire, but like morally questionable and like his way.

He's my cousin.

He's good.

There's more of them.

Wait, are you all related?

This is one big story.

And I was listening to an interview with Cara Swisher, who hosts the official succession podcast, and she was interviewing him, actually, Alexander Skarsgard.

And she was saying that his physicality, like the way he would get in everybody's space, like he would have no shoes, or he would be kind of leaping around, or he would come and stand too close to people.

And she said that's very common with these kind of tech billionaires that, you know, you'll be trying to interview them or talk to them, and they'll be wanting to do yoga, like it right in front of you and doing a downward dog, as if that's completely normal.

But she said it's like this power trip.

So I found him a formidable adversary to them this season, really engaging.

The scene with him and Tom in the restaurant made me gasp out loud when he reveals to Tom that he is turning on Shiv.

I'm not looking for a partner.

You know, I'm looking for a front man, because we're going to cut shit close to the bone.

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We're going to get right fucking in there.  
It's going to get nasty.  
So I need a pain sponge.  
Because you could see that as soon as you saw the cartoon, so the cartoon that he was a puppet and Shiv was behind him, you were like, oh, well, this is done.  
And then also when Shiv was at her mom's house and she's like, I won.  
You just can't handle it and all those things you're like.  
And you looked at your watch and you go, oh, it's too early in the episode for you to win.  
That's not going to happen.  
I don't know what's going to happen.  
But I did not see that coming.  
And I love how you were just talking about that character and his eccentricities and all those things.  
And the fact that he kept like Tom was like, this is hang number three.  
And he was obsessed with like hanging.  
Like the hang is the important bit.  
When he was saying what kind of hanger are you, is that like to hang out with?  
Because I listened to Smartless, that podcast with the movie stars on it.  
And they talk about how the hang is the important part of it.  
Like, it's about the vibe, right?  
Like, what kind of hang are you?  
Are you going to party with me?  
Are you going to be a stick in the mud in the corner?  
Are you like what kind of hang are you?  
But Tom was like, this is hang number three.  
And I have no idea what's going on with this guy.  
And I just want to know.  
And then when he drops that on him and he starts saying that he felt clickety clickety with Shiv.  
Plus with Shiv, there's also were a bit clickety clickety.  
Oh my God.  
Which was a callback to episode one.  
And Tom's panic over getting Logan Roy the right birthday present.  
Like a watch.  
So I just want to give this to you in person just to say, you know, happy birthday.  
All the time for you.  
So, there we go.  
It's just a, it's a attack for me.  
So.  
It says attack.  
Yeah, it's incredibly accurate.  
Every time you look at it, it tells you exactly how rich you are.  
In terms of character development, Tom was just he would do anything in a way that the others wouldn't.

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Tom will honestly suck the biggest dick in the room.

That's just my assessment.

Shiv called him an empty suit.

And I've also heard him referred to as an amoeba.

He doesn't have any ideology like he'll run ATN.

He doesn't really care about the election or who wins.

That line he said, what he said, I don't see it as my role to offer dietary advice if they want red meat and hot tar that can have it.

Bon appetito.

Yeah.

And I don't think that Shiv meant for that to be a glowing character reference of Tom at all, but it turns out that's exactly what Mattson wanted was someone who would just do exactly.

A puppet.

A paint sponge.

He wanted a paint sponge.

That's the front man, as he said.

And that Shiv was basically too smart and had too many opinions.

Exactly.

And in terms of favourite moments from that episode,

I loved to actually thought it was one of the best scenes in the entire season, if not series, was in the kitchen.

This is a hot sauce.

Milk.

Milk.

It's a great starter.

Milks, fit for a king.

Milks, fit for a king.

Milks, fit for a king.

Milks, fit for a king.

Milks, fit for a king.

Milks, fit for a king.

Shhh.

Shhh.

Shhh.

Shhh.

Shhh.

Quiet!

Quiet.

Quiet.

for a king. Joy. A bit of joy. See, I found that cloying. I found that it went on for too long.

Oh no, because didn't you find that you had a really unsettled feeling in your gut that something very, very bad was about to happen? Yes. The fact that Kendall Roy, a smile on his face, looked so foreign that you went, this isn't going to go well. Did you know that Kendall Roy

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actually drank that and that it actually was the thing that was created with life? That doesn't surprise me because Jeremy Strong is very famously a very method actor. There was something so innocent and childlike and sibling-like about that scene that the whole episode seemed to remind us that this was a family grappling with the trauma of their own upbringing and that it was just a tragedy. One of the most telling scenes that summed up not only the entire series, but potentially all of us and our own self-importance about our jobs was like, we're bullshit. We don't matter. Like, what we do is bullshit. Which is what Logan had always been telling them, right? That echoes the last thing Logan said to them. I love you, but you are not serious people. And they weren't. And what you said Jesse about that scene in the kitchen was so beautifully bookended by one of the last scenes where she leaves a meeting and they're having it out in that glass walled office and they start physically fighting like children. Absolutely not, man. Absolutely not. Why? No, why? I love you. I really, I love you, but I can't fucking stomach you. This is fucking disgusting. It doesn't even make any sense. Like the way they come at each other is so, and then Kendall grabs Roman's face and it's childlike. It's interesting, but in the worst way. One of the things that obviously marks this writing out as spectacular is that that episode actually follows quite a traditional arc. You know, you've got this build-up, the golden period in the minute where everybody's happy, so you know that this is going to go horribly wrong. So that's like safe and predictable in a way that feels good, but yet it still managed to be entirely surprising in the last third. I want to ask you both. Why do you think Roman and Shiv said yes to Kendall? Why do you think they wanted to anoint him? I mean, when Kendall was sort of delivering his monologue going, it can only be me. I was totally convinced. I was like, Kendall's right. It has to be Kendall. Just please vote for me, Shiv. Vote for me. Do you think that at that point, Shiv was completely committed? I think out of the three of them, I mean, obviously, as he kept saying on paper, he was the one who it should be. The Shiv was smarter though. Do you really think it should have been him? Well, no, I don't think it should have been any of them personally, but yeah, Shiv's definitely smarter. But I think that in that moment, the way they painted it, Mum's house, the three of them together, the going into the water, I think that they lent into the sentimental element of that for a minute and brought into this idea of maybe we could all be all right and give him what he wants, smiling Ken. But then when it came to it, she's just like, no way, I can't possibly let you be that person. She seemed to turn very fast. Some people have criticised this. This is the only criticism I've seen of this is that, yes, it was surprising the ending, but was it convincing in its surprise? No, I mean in Barbados when they were at their mum's house and she went from being gutted that Mattson had double-crossed her to being like, yeah, okay, Kendall, it can be you. But that was because Mia, she had no other play. And the timeline was so tiny. Yeah. Like imagine how mortified she would have been. She had no other cards to play and her only way of having any power was to sort of look at Kendall and be like, well, I'm still needed here. So what made her change her mind, Jesse? I reckon that she really did look at Kendall and go, I think you're the best of the three of us. And when they had that moment where she was like, happy Kendall, happy Kendall,

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and he was smiling, her and Roman know that this is the only thing that can possibly mean. It means more to him.

No, I mean, why did she change her mind at the end and vote for the sale?

I have thought about this a lot.

And I am thinking about it through the prism of my own Karen experience.

And I think that in fact, Shiv's pregnancy was one of the most important plot points in the entire series.

Firstly, which family is she aligning herself with?

Is Tom the new family?

And is this a way for her to feel safe and secure?

And now she is the wife of the CEO and not the CEO herself.

Secondly, is Tom potentially the most like Logan Roy?

And she's just marrying because I think that what we saw at the end was a partnership between her and Tom.

He's nothing like Logan.

But in terms of the position and I will do anything at any cost, is there a safety in that where she felt like, okay, this is like my father?

But the biggest thing I think was her prism was family.

And so Tom, I felt like maybe that was safety.

And then I also wondered, and I've only...

But hang on.

What if she can't trust him with anything?

She's got billions of dollars, like millions and hundreds of millions of dollars either way.

Like she was not going to be, I need to marry a man for my financial plan.

Like that was not...

No, no, no, not for a financial plan.

I think that that phone call that happened in that episode was like, can we do this together?

Thought it might be worth raising.

Are there any positives about the nightmare we've cheered?

As in...

I guess if there was anything there, if there was, then it would be so convenient.

Well, it would be incredibly convenient because you would be married to your husband.

Yeah, exactly.

And then we think of the scheduling.

It's mess-free.

And wanting a bit of stability and wanting all the Tom stuff to end.

And at the beginning of the whole series, it was like Tom was following her around and was in the shadow.

And it was this reversal where it kind of went, okay, is she willing to do that for him?

And is that marriage?

And is that their relationship?

And I also wondered if after that beautiful moment at the mum's house, if this was her attempt to free Roman and Kendall.

Because when she says to Kendall, I don't think you'd do a good job.

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I actually don't think she believes that.  
I reckon she wanted to free them.  
She might be freeing Roman, but you're not going to be freeing Kendall.  
Kendall is going to last five more minutes and then Kendall's done.  
I don't pay that, Jessie.  
I feel like Shiv's arc in this was so depressing.  
I can't bear it.  
In this episode, the way that I was watching it is that she got screwed at every single turn.  
And it was the most depressing message about what the options are for the woman at the end.  
Right?  
Because in that scene you're talking about at the beginning,  
when she's on the private jet and she talks to Tom,  
she lays herself vulnerable.  
It's the most honest we've heard her and she's saying, can we do it?  
And he doesn't, he won't even give it to her.  
He's like, I don't know, maybe not.  
I don't think so.  
Then Mattson doesn't want the baby lady.  
He wants the man who put the baby in the lady.  
And also because of a little bit of sexual tension,  
which we know that's not really the reason, but it's still got to be put out there,  
that would be messy and annoying.  
So, you know, you can't have a woman in a job like that.  
She's pregnant.  
Already got over there with this brick of blood.  
All those things.  
Neither of her brothers take her seriously enough to believe that she could do it,  
even though she's clearly smarter than both of them.  
Then Tom screws her over.  
Then that whole thing at the end where he's like,  
I'll be in the car in 20 minutes.  
Like, get fucked.  
I found it so depressing that at the end of the day,  
the option for Shiv is that she is a rich arsehole, a silent wife.  
Like again, it's sort of a silent daughter.  
What a compromise.  
What an awful compromise.  
That's true.  
Run off with your baby and your billions of dollars.  
None of them got what they wanted in the end.  
And that's what I quite loved about the end,  
that it wasn't a happy ending,  
but I would have been disappointed if it had been,  
if it had been tied up.

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It wouldn't have been in the spirit of the show.  
I think one of the most illuminating things that was said in this whole show was in her eulogy for Logan.  
And she said he could never hold a whole woman in his head.  
And that was very much how the women were portrayed in this show.  
You only got little glimpses.  
It was like the bitch wife or the dumb blonde or the hard ass Jerry.  
And none of the characters were very fully drawn.  
I think Shiv came the closest in that last episode.  
What I'm so relieved about,  
oh no, back to her decision why I think she changed her mind.  
I think she saw Kendall be incredibly cruel to Roman.  
And we haven't seen that before.  
And I think she looked at him and went,  
you are as bad as our father.  
You are as horrible.  
Because Kendall always sold himself as like a good guy version of Logan.  
And in the election night episode,  
that's how Shiv tried to manipulate him with that image that he has of himself.  
It's like you're smart as Logan, but you're a good man.  
And she ended up getting cut out because she didn't lie very well about what was going on.  
But the scene that made me gasp,  
the one that stays with me the most,  
is when Roman's cracking a little bit,  
looks at his scar and starts wavering and going,  
but why isn't it me?  
But why isn't it me?  
And Kendall goes, oh shit, he could turn and basically opens his stitches in the guise of a hug.  
I saw that so differently.  
I saw that so differently.  
The way I read that, and it's so funny because when I've heard the commentary this morning,  
I'm like, oh, I must have been,  
is that you know how he was looking at it, Roman,  
in the mirror and he was going, it doesn't look that bad.  
Yeah, I could potentially put my hand up still.  
Yeah, but I thought he was more like,  
so they're going to think, why wasn't it me?  
You know what I mean?  
Because I don't look that damaged.



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I felt like when he opened his stitches,  
it was almost like going, here it looks shit now.  
I think it was cutting the drawbridge behind him.  
Because Roman was like, oh man, oh man,  
like he was trying to pull away  
and Kendall was holding him really tight.  
And I didn't understand what was going on.  
And at one point I thought, is he killing him?  
Are we going to see that he's got like a knife in his back  
or, but it wasn't that show.  
But I almost was like, what's going on here?  
And then I realized what was going on.  
And I was so shocked by that because the cruelty  
that Kendall showed to Roman is something  
we've not seen before.  
That's so, I saw that differently.  
I thought he was almost doing him a favor.  
Because she then also brought up that you killed a man.  
Because you killed someone.  
Rich.  
What?  
Wait, I mean, Rich, but like you killed so many people,  
you forgot which one?  
That didn't happen.  
It's just a thing I said.  
It's a thing I said.  
I made it up.  
You made it up.  
It was a difficult time for us.  
And I think I, whatever, must have something from nothing  
because I wanted for us all to bond at a difficult moment.  
Wait, it was a move?  
Oh.  
No, no, there was a kid.  
There was that kid.  
So there was a kid.  
I had like a token, a beer and not.  
I didn't even get in the car.  
Hold on.  
What?  
Roman did give him his vote in the room.  
Yeah.  
I wondered if that scene where he was, how I read it,  
hugging Roman, it was just a metaphor for the entire season

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that the closer they get, the more they wound each other,  
whether they want to or not.  
And that it was this story of like deep, deep trauma  
and how awful they are for each other  
and they don't know how to be tender.  
And yeah, I couldn't work out what the intention was behind that  
because it did make Roman look more unhinged or more injured.  
But I thought that's what he wanted.  
But anyway, there you go.  
You can see it in many different ways.  
I thought like Roman wanted that  
because he was like, they're all going to think, why wasn't it me?  
I didn't see Shiv at the end.  
I guess there was a little bit of sadness,  
but then I wondered if she wasn't going to have the power.  
Was it a choice to have proximity to power?  
It was resignation.  
I mean, he puts his hand open as an invitation.  
She reluctantly and very unenthusiastically  
literally just rests her hand there.  
I mean, talk about a lot being said in just one movement  
and then Tom glances down at her like limp hand  
just hanging on top of his.  
And that to me says everything  
because it's about the compromise that they've both made.  
But I don't understand why she would,  
why she makes that compromise.  
But then I guess I don't understand those people.  
I'm like, you don't need this.  
Do you know what I mean?  
You don't need him.  
You don't need to be any part of this world.  
But she's always had her dad.  
And when daddy's girl's dad's not there anymore,  
she needs another man to look after her.  
I don't know how you flip that power dynamic  
in a personal relationship.  
You know, she's always been better than him.  
Like that's the way it's always seen.  
Yeah, but he's always looked after her.  
And he trails around and then suddenly it's like, he's the man.  
And he's so odious.  
I hate that character.  
He is my least favorite character.

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I hate him so much.  
I love him.  
It's so funny because I read,  
I can't remember who it was,  
was saying the most dangerous people  
in the show are him and Greg.  
It's none of the others.  
It's because the person that you least expect  
or the person who's most dangerous  
is the one who has nothing to lose  
and also the one who is an empty suit  
who will literally has no ideology,  
doesn't give a shit about anything except power.  
They'll do literally anything.  
And just the most unattractive human,  
I don't know how she sleeps with that man.  
So why did Tom save Greg in the end, Jesse?  
Because he needs a puppet too.  
Betrayed, he's shiny.  
He's not trustworthy.  
He's betrayed Tom.  
Or does that somehow impress Tom?  
I think a little bit.  
Yeah, I agree.  
He needs a puppet.  
And there's something about that storyline  
that is so about loyalty  
because Tom from the outside  
looks like the most loyal person  
because of how he just wandered around  
after Logan like an absolute dog.  
But isn't it funny how he did not appear  
at Logan's funeral  
because Logan had lost his power.  
Logan was no longer powerful.  
So I was reading a theory that for Mattson  
it was that moment that he went Tom's my guy  
because he was at work.  
While all of these people were distracted  
by grief and emotion,  
it was Tom that put his head down  
and just kept working through a funeral.  
Which is what Logan would have done.  
Tom, exactly.

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Maybe Tom sees that loyalty in Greg.  
I really liked that I found out how much Greg earned.  
That was...  
Yes, I know.  
Less than I thought.  
The highest paid personal assistant in the country.  
You, you, 200k.  
The highest paid assistant in human history.  
It's new management, bro.  
You're going to get busted down to 20, 30, 40k.  
Stop it.  
Seriously.  
And if I get fired, I think you were fucked.  
You say less than you thought, Mayor,  
but then I did the conversion into US dollars.  
And I went, okay, so we're looking more at something  
like 350,000 Australian dollars a year for Greg.  
Can we talk about the scene at Logan's house  
with the palambulatory thing with the stickers?  
I know.  
That was almost touching in a way,  
how much effort Conor had put into that.  
And then I just loved Will's line about,  
we're going to have a big cow print couch over there.  
I loved it so much.  
But what was unexpectedly moving  
about that scene was where the three of them  
wander into the dining room and there's that video playing.  
Typical new clay.  
Hey, JQA.  
How many elections?  
Elections have you lost.  
Clinton the first, but not the worst.  
Picney twice, Jefferson Adams, all very nice.  
Right?  
Him and the others will do that.  
And the three of them sit down and they see a Logan  
that none of us have seen through this whole show.  
And it is a Logan who is joking, being affectionate with Kerry.  
And interestingly, Conor is there making him laugh.  
And Frank and Jerry and Carl.  
God, I love those three.  
And they're just like all of these people who we've dismissed  
as being either idiots or hangers on, they were all allowed

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to see a side of our father that we just craved and we never did.

And you could see how crushed they were.

How did you think it was going to end?

I thought it was going to end with Kendall taking his life.

In fact, at one point I was very relieved because I thought, in a lazier, cheesier script writer's hand, like when they were signing the company over with Mattson in front of the window,

I thought, is Kendall going to fall?

Like because there's a lot of imagery in the whole show, Kendall and Water, but also Kendall looking down and deciding whether he's going to jump off buildings.

And so I thought, oh, I'm so glad that it didn't end with Kendall dying because I thought this was more interesting him sitting there being absolutely shattered, looking at the Hudson River with Colin, his father's man, watching over him.

Stopping him from ending his life.

What happens to him, do you think?

So I listened to an interview with Jeremy Strong

where he said that there was a version where he did jump.

Well, in one of the takes, I climbed over the barrier I sat on the bench and it always to me felt like there was nowhere, there's no coming back from this.

And I looked at these waves and it was so windy that day and so cold.

And there was some piece of metal clanging.

And it was this terrible sound and I sort of couldn't bear it.

I stood up and walked slowly to the barrier that was set up there and climbed over it.

Jeremy Strong, so who plays Kendall, of course,

is very much of the belief that Kendall is not long for this world.

Yeah.

And that cut loose from the only thing he really cares about, his spiral of addiction, suicidality is inevitable,

which is depressing as all hell, but also probably quite convincing.

I think the only one who got a glimmer in my view was Roman.

When he raised that glass at the end and he had that little tiny, tiny smile was like, he is free of that family.

Yeah.

That would have really been a happy ending for them to be free of that shit.

There was a brilliant article on Mama Mia by Karen Dolly,

which I reckon is the best take I've read about how the winner was Roman.

And him sitting there smiling like he never wanted it.

He just wanted a mum and dad who loved him and he loves his siblings.

And he has a really screwed up way of showing it.

But I think that's all he wanted was freedom.

I think Jerry was a winner.

She got the massive payout.

She and Carolina are going to get to keep their jobs.

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No one else will.

And she's still got Roman's dick pics in her phone.

I was convinced that Greg was going to be the winner of this whole thing.

And I was still convinced when he had that information about Chiv,

I thought that could be the card he plays to somehow step up over something else.

Like I knew that he would somehow be an accidental winner.

So I think he won as well, Greg.

Tommy is a little bit that.

He's like the Stephen Bradbury of succession, you know?

But that seed in the bathroom, when they have a little punch on,

it was great how Greg fought back.

And I think that's probably the moment when Tom decided to keep him almost,

you know, because there's just a little bit of fuck you there

that is handy to have in the man who buries the bodies,

like literally and figuratively.

It's the end of succession.

Incredibly satisfying.

Out loud as we will put a link in the show notes to some of the best takes

that we've seen, including that piece by Karen Donnelly.

Thanks for coming to our emergency meeting.

Yes.

Hope you enjoyed it.

Hope it was cathartic for you.

It has been that for us.

It's been wonderful to finally be in this club.

I advise everybody to go back to the beginning and watch like as I am doing now.

My mum felt really left out yesterday during the day.

So she was like, I'm just going to go home and watch the succession finale.

And then she watched it.

She didn't understand.

She didn't understand anything.

Would have been so confusing.

She was so confused.

She didn't know who she was rooting for and she messaged and she was like,

I am very confused.

I was like, this is why we don't just watch the finale.

But I commend your attempt at being part of the culture.

Oh, dear.

Thank you out loud as we'll see you tomorrow.

Bye.

Bye.