

Gon's Problem - Hunter x Hunter ep. 69-71: Media

Club Plus S01E22

Transcriber: robotchangeling

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Introduction

Jack: I heard about a really cool Tubi horror movie today that I'm excited to see, [Sylvia laughs] which is weird, because Tubi usually only makes movies that feel like a human fever dream.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Is Tubi—

Sylvia: You guys ever heard of *Hunter × Hunter*?

Keith: I have, yeah.

[Jack imitates theme] [Sylvia laughs]

Dre: No, what's that shit about?

Keith: Is that what you're asking for? Are you asking for that?

Sylvia: Maybe a little. It is 8 p.m.

Keith: Well, someone had cold chicken!

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

[Sylvia laughs]

Jack: I was going to get my clarinet. I was going to bring us in live. [Sylvia laughs]

[song continues]

Jack: The chicken was frozen. It wasn't ready for me to cook in time. [laughter] I had to— just took longer than it took time to eat it. Such bullshit to begin. [laughter]

Sylvia: Is it just me, or is Keith turning it up?

Keith: Welcome to Media Club Plus, a podcast about diving into the media that interests us and the stories that excite us. As always, we are brought to you by Friends at the Table. This season, we're watching 2011's *Hunter × Hunter*, based on the manga by Yoshihiro Togashi. My name is Keith J. Carberry. You can find me on [x.com](#) and [cohost.org](#) at @KeithJCarberry. [music ends] You can find the let's plays that I do at [youtube.com/runbutton](#). Very happy to be doing a lot of *Metal Gear Solid 3* recently, a lot of *Shenmue* recently. So, you should go to [youtube.com/runbutton](#) and subscribe. Frankly, I don't care if you never intend to watch any of it, but you should try it.

Sylvia: Just subscribe.

Keith: Yeah, just subscribe, but you should try it at least once.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: With me, as always, is Sylvi Bullet.

Sylvia: Hey, I'm Sylvia. You can find me everywhere on the internet at

[@SYLVIBULLET](#). Sylvi spelled without the E, Taking Back Sunday style. Also, go check out the Friends at the Table YouTube as well. There's a lot of cool stuff up there. Jack and Keith play *Crusader Kings*. Keith and I play 999, and also there's a lot of farming games. Janine and Keith recently— Keith, you appeared on one of Janine's *Life Makeover* streams, if I'm correct?

Keith: Yeah, I went to *Life Makeover*, and I did the voice of Anton the pirate and also Gerald the duke.

Sylvia: So, you want to go watch that, for sure. Like, run, don't walk.

Keith: Yeah, that game's crazy.

Sylvia: Yeah. Those are my plugs.

Keith: Also with me is Andrew Lee Swan.

Dre: Hey. You can find me on Twitter at [@swandre3000](#), and I just want to commend Keith for being the most professional podcaster. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: Thank you very much. And also with me is Punished Jack de Quidt—

Jack: Why am I—

Keith: —who's going last because of behaving badly. [all laugh]

Jack: I didn't realize we were doing punitive podcasting. We were doing punitive podcasting.

Keith: That's why Dre's always last, 'cause Dre's always behaving so bad.

Jack: Oh, I see.

Dre: Yeah, that's fair.

Jack: That is true. You can find me on Cohost at [@jdq](#). I fucked up my cooking plans this evening. What else? Um...it's not as humid as it was last week, and I've been

enjoying that. I spent some time outside. I sat in a park and listened to some live music. It was great.

Keith: That's great. Do we have any other plugs that we went out of order? Did I throw anybody off and we missed something? Listen to Friends at the Table.

Dre: Oh yeah, that show.

Sylvia: Listen to Friends at the Table. [chuckles]

Keith: Yeah. Go review—

Sylvia: Did I say friendsatthetable.cash?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Did we mention the JoJo episodes?

Keith: Oh, right, yes. That's a great point. The part four of the JoJo's Bizarre— no, part two of our *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure* bonus.

Sylvia: Part two.

Keith: Part four overall of the Media Club Plus associate bonus episodes is out on the Patreon, friendsatthetable.cash. It's \$5 gets you all four, and then you can stay signed up and keep giving us money as a reward for doing such a good show. We do have more planned. We're going to do *Dragon Ball Z* soon. Yeah, that's it.

Dre: My brain is so broken. Can I take us on a ride really quick?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, sure.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: I don't know if it was Sylvi or Keith, but one of you said "part two," almost like "part

tuah,” and that made me think about— [Sylvia chuckles]

Keith: Oh my god.

Dre: —the hawk tuah girl from TikTok.

Keith: Oh my god.

Sylvia: Can I tell a story about that where, when I saw that trending, I was like, “Is this the name of a new wrestler?” [others laugh] Like, is this the unfortunate name of someone in WWE?

Keith: Ah, it’s funny.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Ahh.

Keith: I’m confused—

Jack: Let’s get this show on the road.

Keith: I’m confused why, when I logged into Twitter, there was 150,000 tweets about hawk tuah. That’s insane.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: The people love blowjobs.

Dre: It’s true.

Keith: People love blowjobs, but still. I mean, “blowjobs” isn’t ever trending. [Jack laughs]

Sylvia: No. But we did celebrate when the Brothers showed back up, so...

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: We did, we did.

Keith: This is how you make it in America in 2024. You be slightly funny about blowjobs, and then you disappear. [Sylvia chuckles]

Summary [0:04:58]

Keith: Okay, so. [Sylvia laughs] Here's what we did in these episodes.

Sylvia: Yeah, please.

Keith: Let me ask you this.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm?

Keith: Is there anything sweeter than spending \$100,000 on little bunny rabbit lollipops?

Jack: Yes, there is.

Keith: It's revenge.

Jack: It's revenge.

Keith: Correct, Jack. It's revenge. And that's exactly what Killua gets when joining up with the only other viable team left on Greed Island, captained by Tsezguerra, the Single Star Hunter. Killua and Gon put them to the test to force them to show them their Ren, to team up with them to beat Razor. They do pass. It's really funny. We'll talk about that. They show up to Razor's little gym and do so well that Razor calls off the whole thing and just skip right to the boss battle. [Dre laughs] After some gratuitous violence to set the stakes and a quick catch-up for Gon, Killua, and Bisky and Goreinu that Greed Island is a real place, it's time for dodgeball, including not one but two gorillas.

Jack: Whee! [laughs]

Sylvia: We did it!

Keith: We did it. We are now screencap complete. There's a long and complicated and

very cool but also very rules-based match of dodgeball, followed by an immediate encounter with the Bombers. Already on the back foot in multiple ways, the eight of them, after Hisoka leaves, come up with a plan. Their plan? To come up with a plan. [Jack, Sylvia, and Keith laugh]

Jack: Yeah. It's mostly dodgeball. It really is mostly dodgeball.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: It's really mostly dodgeball.

Jack: Remember when Togashi got really interested in art forgery [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] and sort of, like, focused in really intently on art forgery? He's sort of done the same for dodgeball here.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And with the same—

Sylvia: Yeah, both of them really take me back to fourth grade. [Dre snorts]

Jack: Yeah. With the same sort of— a thing Togashi does all the time that we talk about is that you can never predict when he's going to move on from something very very quickly or when he's going to linger on it almost painfully. And in this case, we have— [Sylvia chuckles] Am I misunderstanding this? Do we almost have three episodes of dodgeball?

Keith: We have almost three episodes of dodgeball.

Sylvia: Uh, two and a half, I'd say.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, it's about two and a half episodes of dodgeball. I think you could really, you know, contain what counts as dodgeball and call it two episodes. Like, we've missed half of episode 69 and half of episode 72.

[cut]

Jack: The fact that he's not immediately back makes me think that it's either a power outage or he's been raptured.

Sylvia: Welp.

Jack: He's back!

Dre: Oh!

Sylvia: There he is.

Keith: I'm back.

Sylvia: Hey.

Keith: Okay, here we go. What I went on to keep saying, for a really long time, [Sylvia laughs] not knowing that you were gone, was that I love this version of dodgeball. I don't know if this is a version that's played anywhere, but this reminds me of *Super Dodge Ball*, the *Super Dodge Ball* games for the, like, NES and the Neo Geo. I've never seen this, like, outside players passing it around and throwing in anywhere else before.

Dre: Yeah, me neither.

Keith: But it's very fitting for Greed Island to have, like, the Neo Geo game, like, in there.

Jack: Yes!

Sylvia: It's *Windjammers*!

Jack: It's *Windjammers*.

Keith: It is very— yeah, *Windjammers* is a lot like frisbee super dodgeball.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's also very economical where so much of the buildup to this has been like, we need to get 15 players, but what we're actually getting is sort of nine, and we can stack the deck with some, [**Keith:** Right.] you know, low tier players. They're extremely funny. We'll talk about them later. But it is elegant storytelling to have a version of dodgeball—whether it's a real world version or not—that allows eliminated players or players outside to still be, you know, consequential parts of the game. We can keep the camera on Goreinu or somebody, you know, after he's been eliminated. You know, Bisky has some cool play.

Sylvia: I've definitely played dodgeball like that before. Is that new to you guys?

Jack: I love playing dodgeball.

Sylvia: Where there's the, like, jail outside area?

Keith: This is not any dodgeball— yeah, this is not any dodgeball rule that I've seen outside of media.

Dre: I've seen, like, jail, where like, you know, if you, like, catch the ball, you can, like, pull somebody out of jail.

Keith: Yes. That's how I've played too.

Jack: I've seen that.

Dre: I've never seen the outside players also be allowed to, like, pass the ball back and forth and stuff.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Oh, yeah. No, that's— I remember doing that.

Keith: I know this only from *Super Dodge Ball*. [Jack laughs]

Dre: I was also much more of four square kid than a dodgeball kid, so.

Keith: We played dodgeball. We played, like, big, like, class-wide games of dodgeball [Sylvia: Yeah.] in gym class, like, at least once a month for almost my entire elementary school. It was great. I loved it.

Jack: That sounds like a lot of fun.

Sylvia: Yeah, dodgeball rules.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: I was good at catching 'em.

Jack: Dodgeball, especially the kind of kid that I was, there is, um...there's a real frisson of danger with dodgeball that you don't get with other sports that P.E. teachers let you play, most of the time.

Keith: That's true.

Sylvia: No, there's not a lot of gladiatorial combat in gym class.

Jack: No, and I think that even if I wasn't able to articulate that, I was fascinated by it. [Jack and Dre laugh] I was like, "Oh, whoa! This feels like there's actual stakes here!"

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: It wasn't until high school gym class, where they started making us play ultimate frisbee, that I was allowed to hurt myself even more. [Sylvia and Jack laugh]

Dre: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Episode 69 [0:10:09]

Jack: Before the dodgeball, though, we have what Keith sort of alluded to, which is that as they are sort of testing Tsezguerra and his team to see if they want to join, Killua says, "Show us your Ren. We'll decide if we want you afterwards."

Keith: It's so good.

Jack: Which I think is the exact line [**Keith:** Yeah.] that Tsezguerra gave. And there's something so delightfully petty about this, which is that Killua is not really beefing with the official audition process, the one with the long line of people where they met Puhat, et cetera. He's beefing with that horrible little— what he perceived as the personal slight of [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] “show us the Ren” in the corridor outside the auction house.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Like, Killua is not someone you ever want to have holding a grudge against you, because he will hold onto it for the rest of his fucking life. I can just tell.

Jack: Yes. Yeah. Do you think he would still hold the grudge after he gets this sort of satisfaction here?

Sylvia: Uh...

Jack: Do you think that frees him from it?

Sylvia: No, I think it's just, Killua seems like the type to hold a grudge forever, but once he gets one over you regarding whatever the grudge was about, will probably give up on said grudge.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah. That seems right to me.

Keith: I really like the two different modes. Gon was so mad at the moment and, like, storming out of the hallway.

Jack: Oh, that's really cool.

Keith: And was, like, pacing back and forth. And Killua was like, “Chill out. He was right.” And then, now, things have circled back around. It's the first time Killua has shown any animosity or even that he cared about this at all.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: You know, sort of relishing in the opportunity to kind of embarrass Tsezguerra,

which they do do. They immediately— he shows off by jumping super high into the air.
[Sylvia laughs]

Jack: It's really cool. This is like—

Keith: And they immediately break his record. [Dre laughs]

Jack: Yeah. This is the closest thing we've seen to Nen flight so far, right?

Sylvia: It's very *Dragon Ball*.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: It's very *Dragon Ball*, yeah.

Jack: It's very *Dragon Ball*.

Dre: Especially when they just hang up there for a while.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: I don't remember how much of it was in what we watched in *Dragon Ball*, but yeah, there's a lot of *Dragon Ball*—like early *Dragon Ball*, before people had learned to fly—where they spend minutes fighting in mid-air, just 'cause they've jumped so high.

Jack: Oh, well, the end of the Tien Shinhan fight has that extremely cool...

Keith: Oh, right, yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah, the long...

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: They're fighting in the sky, and then they're falling, and most of the episode is them falling through the sky. The commentator gets in a little Capsule Corp...

Keith: It's so good. [laughs] Oh my god, I love him.

Jack: What is it? It's like a little, uh, plane or something?

Keith: Yeah, it's like a little sky bike.

Dre: Yeah, like a little sky scooter of some kind.

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: It's great. Yeah. Gon and Killua, you know, just do this kind of Ren flight effortlessly, and it really brought home to me that Gon and Killua are very capable, but they just don't know stuff.

Keith: Right.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: So often, once they are told about a thing, they just have a go at it and do very well. And there's certain aspects of Bisky's training that's like, there is actual physical progress that needs to be made, but we've seen on several occasions Gon and Killua learning about some sort of new Nen technique that they hadn't even begun to conceive of and immediately putting it into practice. Just being like, "Oh, right, of course!"

Keith: They really, like, kind of repeatedly show that their biggest impediment is their inexperience and not...

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Like, we don't spend a ton of time training, and even the training that they've done is like, here's basic stuff plus stuff you've never heard of that you just need to now hear of.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: And then, once they've heard of it, yeah. They had never heard of using Nen to jump high and then immediately, what did they jump, like, 45 feet in the air? [chuckles] It was crazy.

Jack: It's great. Someone said— I think Killua says to Gon, "You won't stop until you

win.”

Keith: Yeah. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: This is a piece of essentially [Keith: Yeah.] textbook foreshadowing.

Keith: Right. [Dre laughs]

Jack: As the dodgeball tournament begins to hove over the horizon.

Sylvia: God, yeah.

Keith: Yeah. Gon throws a little fit because he lost by, like, a few feet to Killua’s jump, and Gon’s like, “Let’s keep going!” and Killua’s like, “No, because I know you’ll eventually beat me, and I don’t want that to happen.”

Jack: Well, and—

Keith: But silently. They never say it. They never, like, talk about that it’s happening, but in the background of Tsezguerra, like, thinking about all this stuff, they do keep jumping. I can’t remember if Gon wins, but he does win—

Jack: It’s so funny.

Sylvia: It’s really, it’s so good.

Keith: He does win out at getting to keep trying. I don’t remember if he ever wins, though.

Jack: There’ve been a few moments where the show has really played with the depth of the frame. It’s not something that it does a lot of the time. I think, in part, to sort of keep a focused camera, keep focused storytelling on, you know, the small cast in a mid shot. But there have been a few instances of people doing things, often out of focus, in the background, and it’s really funny. I say focus there. Everything’s all in focus, ‘cause it’s animated. I mean, like, focus of the scene, not camera focus.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: I feel like they've— I can't remember a specific time, but I feel like they've done that with Leorio a few times, where like, Leorio's in the background, like, doing something goofy.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Definitely. He would. [Dre laughs]

Keith: Genthru's up to 97 cards. They're now only missing Strip of Beach and Wild Luck Alexandrite, which, as a reminder, is card number 75 that Gon and Killua got from helping the sick villagers be not-sick villagers.

Jack: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And then I think they sort of—

Sylvia: Yeah, just sick in the good way.

Keith: Yeah. I think they just sort of rush into this montage of the new team kind of winning at sports.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Well, so, there are sports that they know about. They are beach volleyball, wrestling, boxing, soccer, juggling, free throws, sumo, bowling, and ping pong. And they're like, "But, you know, there are going to be some others that we don't need." Because we haven't spelled it out, I think it's worth saying: the reason that they're looking for nine players is because they know that the amount of players who are kind of skilled at Greed Island are massively outnumbered by essentially jobbers.

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: You know, people who—

Keith: People who accidentally wound up in Greed Island without realizing how serious it is.

Jack: [laughs] Or who were, like, good enough to pass the test. No, no. I reckon these are people even pre-test. These are people who were— yeah, who we're just sort of stuck in the game.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: But they need 15 players to sort of trigger the raid, so they've sort of settled on this nine player count as, like, this is probably the easiest number of skilled players we can get, and we're just going to fill in the rest of the crew. And we see them. It is so funny the way that Togashi draws these people, because it's like a perfect inversion of his freaks. [Sylvia laughs] These are all the most normie people he could draw, and by dint of that, kind of loop back around and become sort of magnificent again.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: But you know, the thing that's so funny about is is that he's sort of saying the same thing about them that he was saying in the first Hunter Exam but for the opposite reason. [Jack laughs] And so he's portrayed them oppositely, where it's like, these are all people who could have, like, just barely passed or not passed the Hunter Exam. And they wound up in here, 'cause they learned about Nen, but they could have just as easily been, you know, fighters in either the first or second Hunter Exam, but like, before, that kind of person was scary, and now they're, like, office nerds.

Jack: [chuckles] Yes. Yeah.

Keith: Like, these are— they're basically wearing— these are basically poindexters.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: It's like what if Nicholas passed the exam, right?

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's worse than Nicholas. [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: Damn.

Jack: Nicholas knew how to use his computer.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Get 'em.

Dre: I think it is worse than Nicholas.

Keith: I think it feels worse than Nicholas, but I think that Nicholas would lose in a fight to any of these guys.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Maybe.

Jack: Probably. Unless it was—

Dre: Unless he has, like, a Nen robot.

Jack: Nicholas doesn't know what Nen is.

Sylvia: Damn, what would Nicholas's Nen power be?

Keith: If Nicholas had a Nen robot, he would have used it to win the first trial instead of flunking out.

Dre: Well, no, I mean assuming, you know, he passed the Hunter Exam and learned about Nen.

Sylvia: Yeah, this is...

Keith: Okay. Okay, sure.

Sylvia: Dre and I are working on our “Nicholas is the main character” AU right now.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: [laughs] It’s a really odd AU.

Sylvia: It’s really weird. Nobody likes it. [Jack laughs] We’re constantly told to stop.

Keith: [laughs] They focus a little bit in on the boxing. They basically reveal that the boxer that beat their old friend wasn’t shit.

Sylvia: Oh, yeah.

Keith: And there’s, like, a special rune in the boxing ring to make—

Sylvia: This is—!

Dre: Yeah, that was sick.

Sylvia: I wanted to get Jack’s take on about the sacred text, or Divine Script. That’s what it’s called.

Keith: Divine Script, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, it’s baffling, isn’t it?

Sylvia: Yeah. Really is just like a fun thing to just throw out there and not elaborate on at all.

Jack: So, it’s not quite a rune. We actually get this extreme— so, you know, we’ve seen previously that the ring has this sort of pattern drawn in the middle of it, [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] just like the pattern in a boxing ring.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And we get an extreme closeup on it and see that it is just like that, uh, like the

monk in the Japanese horror film *Kaidan* who gets the script written on his face. This is just tiny cramped writing [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] of Nen script that boosts the teleportation power. So our, um, Barry, [Sylvia laughs] our Tsezguerra guy— I think his name actually is Barry, right?

Keith: Yeah, it's Barry. Yeah, it's Barry.

Sylvia: Yeah, I'm pretty sure.

Dre: No, that sounds right. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Just sort of pummels him into the corner of the ring so he can't get the power of that. I mean...

Keith: Yeah, the first guy was like, "I'm an Emitter too, so we're going to go blow for blow emitting."

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: This guy was like, "Fuck that. I'm just going to be strong and get in to close to use your emitting."

Jack: I'm going to stunlock you. Yeah. I don't know what to do with Divine Script.

Keith: [laughs] I think you do.

Sylvia: Yeah, I was just wondering if you could think of a way it could fit into any ideas you have.

Keith: Yeah, is there any sort of framework that you've come up with that maybe that could slot into?

Dre: Mm, mm-hmm.

Jack: [laughs] It's not— I've been explicit about this! It's not—

Sylvia: No, no. See, I'm like—

Jack: Humans can't write—!

Sylvia: This is, like, the opposite, 'cause it's divine, right?

Jack: Oh. Ohh.

Sylvia: But also, here's something that I do think is actually kind of maybe worth mentioning.

Jack: Angel World.

Sylvia: Is if it's Nen script on this, is it the first time we've had any sort of, like, divine meaning ascribed to Nen?

Jack: Um, it might be.

Sylvia: Right? Or am I wrong?

Keith: It could just be a name. Wing wrote Nen writing on the little bands.

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: Oh, no. But Sylvi's saying that, like, the use of the word "divine."

Keith: Right, yes.

Sylvia: Yeah, that's more what I mean.

Keith: That's new, for sure.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Ah, that's so interesting.

Sylvia: That's the thing that I kind of was like, "Oh, huh, never really considered that."

Jack: Yeah. I don't really know what to do with Nen script, if I'm being honest. It's something that's come up a few times, and it is so compelling.

Sylvia: It's inscrutable.

Jack: And inscrutable. It's sort of like a slippery idea.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: That, like a lot of Nen, you know, is being utilized on a sort of case-by-case basis.
[chuckles]

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Dre: Uh huh.

Jack: You know, where it's like, "Well, it can do this, and it enables us to do that." But there's something so compelling about the idea of, like, writing out Nen. Now, to— what is it that Bisky and Kurapika both say about Nen? They're like, "Well, of course you could do it like this." You know, of course you can put Nen on a person, so it would make absolute sense to write out Nen script, but it's not the same script that the characters use, that the, like, Hunter text.

Sylvia: No.

Jack: It's its own sort of cursive. Very, very strange.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I would be so interested to see if the, you know, roving spotlight of Togashi's interest ever settles on Nen script, at some point either in the anime or deeper into the manga. You know, I don't think Togashi's the sort to be like—[chuckles] unless he is—"here is how Nen script works," but I do wonder if he's ever going to zero in on it a bit more.

Keith: I mean, if he does, you can bet that there's going to be, like, four chapters on it.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah, that's what I'm saying. [Keith and Jack laugh]

Dre: It will be a powerpoint.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: He'll teach you how to write it or something, yeah.

Keith: So, Barry wins boxing. Rodriot wins bowling. Kess wins basketball. And this is when Razor is like, "Okay, I get it. They pass."

Jack: He's smiling very placidly about this.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: With a sort of like, "Yeah, okay, fine."

Sylvia: He scares me.

Keith: I'll tell you this.

Jack: He's freaky.

Keith: It'll be really freaky if he ever decides to be a scary guy all of a sudden.

Sylvia: Yeah, right? [Keith laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Yeah. It'll be twisted.

Jack: I find this next bit really funny, 'cause one of the pirates sort of suddenly remembers that he's supposed to be a pirate and not a gymnasium guy, [Keith and Dre laugh] and is like, "I am launching a classical pirate mutiny." He says, "I'm sick of all these games." It's like, you know, we'll get the boys who agree with me together. We're all going to leave. And then he just says, "We can get on a boat [**Keith:** Yeah.] and leave the island. We can just sail out of here."

Sylvia: How's that end for him?

Keith: This is—

Jack: Razor takes this well, huh?

Keith: Yeah. This is Bopobo, the guy that Killua set on fire.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: The thing that makes him snap is the idea that he will not get a rematch with Killua, who he is holding a pretty well-earned grudge against, I think.

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah. Killua did set his head on fire.

Jack: [cross] Again, he set his head on fire. [Jack and Keith laugh]

Keith: And, right, so he does a couple of things. So, first of all, he instigates a mutiny. And then the second—and, mm, maybe the worst thing, according to Razor—is he kind of lets it slip that they're on an island and they can sail back to the real world.

Sylvia: He breaks the taboo.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Keith: Oh, yes, he broke taboo. Is that what they say? Broke?

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, that's what at least my sub said.

Keith: Does anybody want to describe what happens if Razor catches you breaking taboo? [Sylvia laughs quietly]

Jack: I would love to, but first, I actually want to point out another detail.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: Prior to this, Razor says, sort of tauntingly, "Want to go back to jail, Bopobo?" which immediately rang alarm bells for me.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Because this is not the first time we have seen Hunters using prison labor.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: There is more to it than that, if there can be, but I was immediately reminded of the really blasé way the Hunters will instrumentalize prisoners' bodies as part of Hunter games, because it's not just, you know, "we use prisoners for labor." In both these cases, it is sort of manning prisoners as a fighting force where their lives are on the line.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: So, then, sort of without really stopping him in the sense of saying "stop talking," he just charges up in his hand sort of, like, one of the bolts that he used earlier to destroy the Phantom Troupe's boat. RIP Nobunaga. [Sylvia and Keith laugh] And he—

Keith: Canon.

Jack: Am I remembering this right? He tosses it very slowly at him. It kind of moves very slowly, and then it hits his head and blows the top corner of his head clean off.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: We're back in Togashi head trauma zone again.

Sylvia: Oh yeah. We got a couple moments of it.

Jack: Yeah, not just head trauma. It's like, Togashi will, like, remove parts of people's heads.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And people's faces.

Sylvia: No, this dude's head gets obliterated.

Dre: It's gone.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: It is, like, he is fully decapitated is the way that he looks afterwards.

Jack: And he just keels over. And of course, [chuckles] all the useless idiots that Gon's team has acquired...

Keith: Yeah, they have—

Jack: You know, just, like, Bob and Carl and Mike [quiet laughter] are all just like, "Oh, we've got to leave."

Dre: We are getting the fuck out of here.

Sylvia: Sorry, my mom's calling.

Keith: Jeff has to keep being reminded that, like, they don't have to fight.

Jack: Wait, is your actual mom calling, or were you being one of the useless guys?

Sylvia: No, no, that was a joke. That was one of the guys. [Keith laughs]

Jack: Okay, good. I was checking.

Sylvia: Yeah, no, no, no.

Jack: I didn't know. [Dre laughs]

Keith: They have to keep being reminded that they don't have to fight, that there's enough of them that they don't have to set foot— now, this does get complicated a little bit, and I think they all just leave, right? Eventually.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: They all leave eventually, but they get talked down from leaving here at first.

Keith: It really puts into— you know, it really shows the contrast here. Like, these are all Hunters.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. Although, we—

Keith: Tsezguerra and these guys have the same job.

Jack: Yes. [Sylvia laughs] We've talked about this in the past though, actually, in scenes where...what was her name? Uh, Bies?

Sylvia: Oh, oh, Baise? The kiss girl?

Jack: Baise.

Keith: The kiss girl.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Yeah. We had a really good chat when she was around and Squala and kind of that— and Basho, that crew, about how funny it is to see Hunters interacting with normal people. And I think that this is another really fun take on that, right? Where it's like, it's what you say, Keith. These people are also Hunters, but ultimately, any time that you can—

Sylvia: There's levels to this.

Jack: Yeah. [Dre chuckles] Any time that you can play gonzo Hunter stakes against civilians, it produces such a funny effect. It really is like watching people operating on different levels of reality, except one person's level of reality is extremely understandable and one group of reality is just monumentally stupid. [Dre and Sylvia laugh] The Hunters are so dumb. [laughs] I love them so much.

Keith: Killua steps in to do some rules lawyering, which I think is really funny, 'cause it

ends up not mattering, but Killua realizes that Bopobo has to lose sumo wrestling, because he's dead now, and since they technically didn't choose who was going to fight him, they can just assign that win to one of the losers. And Razor's like, "Yeah, whatever. We're doing something else now." [Dre and Jack laugh]

Jack: Yes.

Keith: We're playing dodgeball.

Jack: Killua's just sort of like, "Well, you can have the win," and points at one of the useless guys with a stripy shirt, and the— [laughs] this is such good animation from the animation team.

Sylvia: "Huh?!" [Keith laughs]

Jack: They manage to convey both...these three things. Horror that Killua has turned and pointed at him; fear. And then, number two: shock that he's been given the win. And then, number three: kind of delight that he's been given the win.

Keith: Yeah, a little bit of pride that he got the win.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: I did it! [Keith laughs]

Jack: Really nuanced animation in just, like, a single moment. It's great.

Keith: Yeah, it was great.

Jack: It did also make me think that if I was in a high stakes situation and Killua Zoldyck turned and pointed at me, even if he was on my side, I would be afraid. I'd be like...

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I'd just, I don't want that eye turned to me.

Dre: What if it's his kitty cat eye?

Sylvia: Hmm.

Jack: Kitty cat Killua is mostly reserved for Hunters, for other...

Dre: Okay. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Like, comrades, I think.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Razor says, "It's time for an eight-on-eight game of dodgeball." My note says, "Where is the gorilla?" [all laugh] Well, I mean, dodgeball is clearly about to happen.

Sylvia: Oh, he's right behind me, isn't he?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Dodgeball is about to happen imminently, and there's still no gorilla.

Keith: Wouldn't it have been so funny if there was a second dodgeball in a later episode [Jack laughs] and that's when the gorilla was there?

Jack: I hadn't thought of that. I never even conceived of that as an option. It's like what you said in the last episode, Keith. The closer we get to gorilla arrival, the funnier the absence of the gorilla is.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Jack: And at this point, it is just a fever pitch, as far as I'm concerned. [laughs]

Keith: Right, because if you had never guessed what the nature of the gorilla is, [Sylvia laughs] then surely you're like, the speed at which gorilla must be introduced as a character—

Jack: [laughs] Yes, yes!

Keith: It must be a breakneck turn of events. Like, Kool-aid Man style gorillas crashing through the wall [Dre laughs] and saying, “We’re here to play dodgeball!” [laughs]

Jack: [laughs] Yes. “You called?” I had no idea.

Keith: “I heard you needed two more for dodgeball.”

Jack: But we actually get— I got a really great screenshot answer sort of immediately, which is one of the first things that I noticed in that screenshot, and I hate to keep going back to this, but it is sort of a foundational document for this project, is the screenshot stream.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, sure.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Is, like, a weird hooded figure. And I asked about this hooded figure, and Keith and Sylvi said, “Someone here has a power of sort of creating—” I don’t remember exactly what you say, but sort of, like, creating, uh...entities. Sort of puppets, puppet entities.

Keith: Nen Beasts is what they call them in this.

[0:30:00]

Jack: They call them Nen Beasts in the show, yeah. But you didn’t say any more than that, so I couldn’t tell whether this hooded figure was one of them or was a way to counter that or something like that, but it turns out that what has actually happened is that Razor’s 14 Devils are not actually the pirates. They are his Nen ability to summon [Sylvia: Yeah.] a group of numbered men. And he starts by summoning seven, but the fact that his Nen ability is called the 14 Devils gives us a clue as to what might be happening. These guys are great. Does someone want to describe this character art? ‘Cause it’s so cool.

Sylvia: To me, they remind me of— remember when Kurapika was getting the test done

to see if he was, like, worthy? The “who’s a worthy bodyguard” test?

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: And they had the, like, Nen puppets there.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: They, like, kind of feel similar to those guys in a few ways, to me, personally.

Jack: Yeah. They're a little more menacing.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: They have big sharp interlocking teeth.

Dre: And that’s, like, most of their face is teeth, right?

Keith: Yeah, the rest of their face— everything above their mouth is covered by their hat. So it’s like pulled down over where might be their eyes and nose.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Or might be more teeth.

Keith: Their bodies are all different shapes and sizes, but they're wearing, like, a white pajama set. [laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Keith: With numbers on the front and also on their blue hats.

Jack: Yeah, there's a real Thing 1 and Thing 2 from *The Cat in the Hat* vibe happening

here.

Sylvia: I was going to say.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: They're like murderous dodgeball Thing 1 and Thing 2.

Keith: And then their hats have, like, mo-cap balls on them corresponding to their number. So, Razor is very sure, like, that there's multiple ways for you to know which number guy this is.

Jack: [chuckles] It's great. And this ends up being relevant in a way that I wasn't predicting.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Which is really fun. These guys are more than just— I mean, they're not much more than just some summoned Nen Beasts, but the way in which they are a bit more ends up being really entertaining.

Keith: Their number also— this is maybe something that gets revealed a little later on, but their number also seems to correspond to their strength or ability in some way.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Or size even.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Like, number 2 is the smallest one.

Keith: But number 1 is, like, kind of in the middle.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah. Hmm.

Jack: Goreinu does some more rules lawyering, and they sort of determine that this game is going to be over— this game is going to decide the whole thing, because the elimination of a player counts as a win, and with this many players on the field— dodgeball court? What do you call that?

Sylvia: Court. I would say court.

Keith: Pitch?

Jack: [chuckles] On the pitch, in the diamond. [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: Pitching is what they're doing with the balls.

Jack: Right, right, right. They pitch the dodgeball.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: This is going to be over pretty quickly. This is so funny. They need two useless players, [**Keith:** Yeah.] and nobody wants to do it. [Dre laughs] And I wrote down, "It's his time!" [Keith and Sylvia laugh]

Sylvia: Bah god! That's gorilla's music! [Dre laughs]

Jack: But I still had no idea—

Keith: [voice deepened] I heard you needed someone. [Jack and Keith laugh]

Keith: [voice deepened] Banana.

Jack: He emerges.

Dre: That sounds kind of like Optimus Prime.

Jack: He appears.

Sylvia: Well, Optimus Prime in Beast Wars. What is he?

Dre: Oh!

Keith: Gorilla.

Jack: Ohh.

Sylvia: He's a gorilla.

Dre: Fuck.

Jack: And Razor says, "Well, look. The ball that we're using is just a regular dodgeball. However, I am going to imbue it with Nen, so it is just as strong as the projectile I launched earlier which blew that guy's head off."

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: At this point—

Keith: And this is when they all pee. They all pee their pants. [Sylvia laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Jack: All the useless people.

Keith: Yeah, right.

Jack: And Gon says, "If our lives are on the line, we should only field willing players," which is some really nice transparent Gon philosophy.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It's not the line he always takes, which is interesting.

Keith: No. Well, I don't know. I think this is a line that he takes, and they show us the sort of dark mirror of this line in these episodes.

Jack: Oh, right, yes. Yes, I suppose that's true. But I would just as easily have bought Gon as a weirdy saying, "Well, look, we're—" No, because they were actually signed up, and when they signed up, they were told that they wouldn't have to...

Keith: Right.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: You know, they could throw the games.

Sylvia: I think that's the crux of it, right?

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: At least to me. It was like, Gon doesn't want to go back on a deal or a promise he made to some people.

Jack: It's a classic Gon.

Keith: This sort of reminds me of his arguments with Chrollo and the Spiders, being like, "Why do you kill people? Why can't you, like, see how painful it is [Sylvia: Mm-hmm.] for, like, people to die?" [Jack laughs] And I think that he's pretty consistent on, like, not wanting, like, to kill random people, which comes up actually just now, because he then turns this, like, kind of not wanting people who weren't really involved, not wanting those people to die, and he asks about Bopobo. He's like, "Wasn't that your friend?" [laughs]

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: "Wasn't he your friend, this guy?"

Sylvia: God. Yeah.

Keith: I don't know what vibe he was picking up that they were all friends, but.

Sylvia: I know. [Keith laughs] Gon, you're so naive.

Dre: They all play together. They hang out. That means they're friends.

Sylvia: Yeah, uh huh.

Jack: Tsezguerra has an interesting little button on this. He says, "The pirates are real death row criminals."

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: "So, his execution was fair."

Keith: Yeah, he says, "Execution was warranted." There's a whole thing. There's a whole thing part of this where Razor's like, "No, he was a murderer and worse, other stuff. Lots of bad crimes. He was on death row." Tsezguerra's like— everyone's kind of confused, because it seems like a lot of people kind of thought maybe they were made of Nen, until this guy's head got blown off.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Tsezguerra also has to go, "This is a real place. Greed Island is real."

Jack: Everybody realizes. It's great.

Keith: Yeah. Everybody realizes, except for Hisoka, who's like, "He's right." Hisoka already knew, of course.

Jack: [laughs] 'Cause of course he knows.

Keith: Bisky says, "It didn't even occur to me that that might be true."

Sylvia: [scoffs] Bisky.

Keith: And Tsezguerra says that Razor is a Game Master, one of the creators of the game, and this is where Gon gets kind of a look in his eye.

Jack: Can see where we're going here.

Keith: Because if he's one of the creators of the game, he knows about Ging.

Jack: [sighs] Oh my god. Razor realizes that this is Gon and suddenly pours with evil Ren. I mean, it's not evil Ren. It's sort of—

Keith: You don't want to fuck with purple Nen.

Sylvia: Eh, you know. You don't want to fuck with purple Nen.

Jack: You really don't, yeah. Our heroes have used—

Keith: When the purple Nen comes out, it's bad news.

Jack: Yeah, that's what it is. Our heroes have used purple Nen in the past, but I really do mostly associate it with— I've called it malevolent Nen, previously.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Have they ever used purple Nen?

Jack: I suppose heroes can be malevolent. Hmm?

Keith: Have they? Gon and Killua?

Jack: I'm sure we have seen...

Keith: I know that Wing has, 'cause Wing was showing them malevolent Nen.

Jack: Oh.

Sylvia: We've also had some of that with Illumi and Hisoka, right?

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Illumi and Hisoka definitely are purple.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, Hisoka was the first time we ever saw it.

Sylvia: Well, I was thinking of also Illumi's, like, stuff with Killua in the Hunter Exam.

Jack: That was all purple Nen.

Sylvia: That was also purple. Like, purple is just, like, a quick shorthand for "this is kind of noxious energy."

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, for sure.

Jack: Yeah. He says, "Your dad told me not to go easy on you when you get here."

Sylvia: I hate him!

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: And then Gon's shocked face turns into, like, a grin of resolution.

Keith: Yeah. Yes, yeah.

Sylvia: Hey, you know when he made this face? When he had to hunt Hisoka.

Keith: Yep.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yep. It's interesting that this is also sort of a stand-in for Ging in this moment.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Jack: I can't fight my dad, [chuckles] but I can fight you. [Dre laughs]

Keith: But I can fight his friend.

Sylvia: God, I wish you could, Gon.

Dre: I wish you could, Gon.

Keith: This is punching your uncle. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Yeah, but to be clear, when I say, "I can't fight my dad," I don't mean that in the sense that Gon wants to exact revenge or something on his dad. Gon, I think, would just be delighted to get to, you know...

Keith: Yeah, he wants to fight him for friendship.

Jack: Yes. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: [chuckles] Yes. Oh, Gon. Gon is delighted about this.

Keith: I love this bit. I think this is a really great bit. There's so much interesting Gon stuff happening in all of this, the like...

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: This guy getting killed. He didn't really do anything, but also he's a murderer, so he kills people, but also, even murderers shouldn't be killed, which is what he did with the Spiders, and also his dad's involved, 'cause he made the game, and this guy made the game, and so they knew each other. And like, all this kind of, like, different angles of Gon stuff is kind of collapsing into, like, potential energy for this fight.

Jack: It's great. It's great. You know, we talk almost incessantly about the way that shonen stages fights as expressions of ideology, but part of the supporting sort of scaffolding to make those things work is that you need to surround the fights with these pressing questions, right? With...

Keith: Right.

Jack: Give the characters levers to pull, to turn...

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: And you have to think about their levers to see them pulling them.

Jack: Yeah, absolutely.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And I think that when I have seen shonen fight ideology that hasn't hit as hard for me in stuff like early or inconsequential fights in *Dragon Ball*, it's because I haven't felt those sort of axis coming— axes coming into alignment, you know, to make the fight work.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: But here, as we embark on three episodes of dodgeball, there is so much work going into, like, what are the emotive pressing kind of animating stakes of this thing. Speaking of, Goreinu says, "I'll count as three," and summons two gorillas! [Keith and Dre laugh]

Sylvia: Yeah!

Keith: It's almost unceremonious, considering how the gorillas have been built up.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: It's so funny.

Jack: No, Keith. Not how the gorillas have been built up. How the gorilla has been built up.

Keith: Right, gorilla. [laughs]

Jack: The funniest possible punchline to this [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] is that there are 100% more gorillas. [Jack and Dre laugh]

Keith: Yeah, there's a gorilla that you didn't know about. Actually, I ran through this while I was watching it. I was like, "Now that we're here, is it going to be kind of shitty that the gorilla was just a magic trick the whole time?" and then I saw the two gorillas passing the ball back and forth, [Jack laughs] and I was like, "It helps that there's two." [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah. It really helps that there's two.

Jack: It does help that there's two. It's so funny!

Keith: And they have opposite powers.

Jack: They do.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And we'll get into them later. These are some pretty cool gorillas.

Keith: Yeah. They steal it from *Jujutsu Kaisen*.

Dre: [chuckles] They do.

Jack: I want to say, as well, about how...what a treat. What a lovely— so much of that first stream was about the limitations and possibilities inherent in interpreting an image, as opposed to interpreting a moving image, you know? That whole game was about how much can you claw from an image without context. And it is so joyful and such a lovely coda to that stream that there was something that I was missing 'cause I was looking at a single image, you know?

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: I was not looking at a reverse shot. I was not looking at a pan. I was not looking at a tiny out-of-context clip. There was information that I never could have gotten, because a character was just off screen, and that is— there's something really playful and fun about that, and it speaks to why making these kinds of projects with my friends is so enjoyable, that after all this time, we can run into a twist ending that kind of came about because we were looking at images.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It's lots of fun.

Keith: And this whole time, this whole time, I've been thinking about these gorillas. Like, I know that you also have, [Jack laughs] but I was so excited to finally get here.

Jack: So excited to get here. I will say, you know, not to do some Killua-style rules lawyering here, these are Nen summons, not people, and Nen summons don't tend to have names, so the fact that this gorilla doesn't have a name makes more sense to me, now that I know that this is a Nen summon.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Right.

Jack: What I will say is that the Nen powers do have names. This does not have a name, at least not here.

Keith: Oh, yeah, yeah. Goreinu never says the name [Dre: Yeah.] of the power that he uses to...with the gorillas.

Jack: Gorilla delight, though.

Keith: This is where we learn a lot about the rules.

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] Gorilla delight!

Keith: [laughs] This is where we learn a lot about the rules of dodgeball.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Do we care about this?

Dre: No.

Keith: Okay.

Sylvia: Mm, yeah.

Keith: There's a—

Jack: No, not terribly. I don't think we need to. But, I mean, we...

Keith: There's, like, two minutes of specifics.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: There's— the one thing is that, to me, in dodgeball, if you catch a dodgeball that's thrown, you're usually out. That is not true here.

Sylvia: Yes. No, that's not true here.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: And the other important thing is ricochets count. So, if it bounces off of you and hits another person, you're both out, but that person could also save you, but also it's still— it can cross the line. If it crosses the line, then that person is out, as if you had thrown the ball. That is essentially the two important— oh, and you can come back once.

Jack: Oh, yeah. Mm-hmm.

Keith: There's one revive per team.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Those are the important things.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: And now they're playing dodgeball.

Jack: Well, something's going on here that is going to pose...not so much a challenge for us, because I think, as this game progresses, the stuff that is going to be most interesting for us to talk about is what is going on sort of on the other level of the game.

Keith: Right.

Jack: But a lot of this rules setup really is to enable Togashi and the anime team to stage a pretty entertaining game of dodgeball.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: The game works. It's perhaps not entirely clear where all the players are at various moments, but I feel like a lot of this rules talk enables us to get to a place that is interesting to us as a viewer but not terribly interesting as the project of Media Club Plus, which is what follows is just a fairly exciting game of dodgeball.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: The interesting thing about this to me— and this becomes even more intense later on in the fight, when Gon starts doing his thing.

Sylvia: Oh, it's so cool.

Keith: This is not just in pace but in, like, structure, even down to the geography, the closest that we've seen to, like, another, like, power battle shonen style fight.

Jack: Yeah. It is.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And it's a dodgeball game.

[0:45:00]

Keith: It's two sides with, like, you know, usually there's an imaginary line. They have made the line real, that isn't, you know, crossed. And they're kind of shouting ideas back and forth at each other and threats and tactics, and then, every once in a while, lobbing a big attack.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: And I'm watching it, and I'm like, this is, like, the closest that we've seen to maybe something from *Dragon Ball Z*, like where Goku's fighting Frieza.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: It's also very classic sports anime, in a lot of ways, like, just straight up.

Jack: Oh, it is. Yeah.

Keith: Oh, sure. Yeah. Now, what was the— I know that sports anime was big around the time when this was airing, but what was going on with sports anime back when this was being released as a manga? I don't really know.

Sylvia: I don't really know either, honestly.

Jack: For the listener who might not be super up on it, could someone give just, like, a one sentence description of what sports anime is?

Sylvia: Oh, it's just— what we're talking about is literally just it's taking the shonen tone and structure in a lot of ways and just applying it to sports.

Keith: High school volleyball.

Sylvia: Yeah. *Haikyu!!* is the best one, yep.

Keith: That's what I've heard, yeah.

Jack: They play volleyball in *Haikyuu!!*?

Sylvia: Oh my god. Maybe we should watch some *Haikyuu!!* [Keith laughs]

Jack: I would absolutely watch some *Haikyuu!!*, yeah. [Dre chuckles] Do they have two gorillas? [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: No.

Keith: That's actually a dealbreaker for me, if they don't have gorillas.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: But they have a little guy who can jump really high.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: Oh, great.

Keith: Yeah, that helps.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. So, I mean, I ask that because, on the one hand, sports anime sort of explains what it is in the title. But thank you also, Sylvi, for, like, tying that together with shonen.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Because I think the sort of characteristic to it, for me, is the way it is turning a lot of shonen aesthetics towards sports.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Well, yeah. It's one of those things where it's like, sports anime— like, sports series are popular both, like, in the shonen and shojo publications. They just kind of have different tones. But like, this very much is the tone of something like a *Haikyuu!!* or

a, like...what's one that's popular? Is Blue Shift the soccer one that's popular right now? Where it's like, there's the talking about— I actually haven't seen it, so I don't know if this happens in that other one. I just was like, what's a touchstone? Anyway. They did the, like, planning on the field and like, oh, it sure is nice of everyone to let the game pause while they figure out their plans.

Jack: Right. [chuckles]

Sylvia: It happens a lot, you know?

Jack: That's how football works.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: I mean, I guess that is, like, the thing that keeps it so in touch with shonen as a genre, is like, the commitment to treating time super malleably.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Sylvia: It's what you need it to be in whatever moment you're in is kind of how it's treated.

Jack: Yeah. As the game begins, the referee introduces himself. He is number 0 of the 14 Devils.

Sylvia: Hell yeah he is.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: This is a very polite man.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: [chuckles] Throughout the entire course of this game, even as almost lethal dodgeball is being played and people are getting put out, the ref shows no bias towards

Razor. There's no twist that the ref is sort of working against them. The ref will arbitrate on rules in favor of the players or in favor of Razor, depending on how the rules go.

Keith: Mm-hmm. He's very impartial.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Which makes sense. Razor just killed a guy for not playing the game right, so.

Jack: [laughs] It's so funny. He's also got this big, you know, big-toothed sort of like a saw-toothed smile. He's wearing blue. The others are all wearing white.

Keith: He's also the only one that speaks.

Jack: He's the only one that speaks, and his spoken affect is so sort of, like, gentle and—

Sylvia: Calming.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Calming, yes. [laughs quietly] Killua will ask him for rules clarifications, and he'll be like, "Okay, right, rules. You know, we're going to do this." It's very sweet. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Here to do a job. Gonna do good.

Keith: I do want to mention the little powerpoint presentation that Razor gives [Sylvia chuckles] on how the rules has this very cute little art style.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: These, like, little chibi versions of the field. It's very funny.

Jack: It's so good.

Keith: I just shared a picture of that. That'll be in with the screenshots. I love these. These are so fun.

Jack: Razor is very, very, very, very, very good at dodgeball.

Sylvia: Scarily so.

Jack: It becomes clear immediately that their main avenue for success is deny Razor possession.

Keith: Yes.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Because when he's got the ball, it's real bad for you.

Keith: There are very few characters that we have met who could survive a dodgeball thrown by Razor.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Including Goreinu. [Sylvia chuckles] Goreinu takes the brunt of the first throw, and he has such a good line as it comes towards him. He says, "Can I dodge it? Can I catch it and live? No! Death!" and the kanji for "death" appears on screen. [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: It's so good!

Keith: So, what does he do in order to not die?

Jack: He shouts, "White Goreinu!" and we learn the power of the white gorilla, [Sylvia laughs] which is that it swaps places with Goreinu, and I think gets a hole blown clean through its body by the dodgeball?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: It explodes his head, same as...

Jack: No, I guess his head is...

Sylvia: [inaudible] gorilla.

Keith: Yeah. He gets the same exact wound that Bopobo does.

Jack: Yep, and that's the end of him.

Sylvia: It's so funny when the gorilla gets hit, by the way. Like, sorry to PETA or whatever, but like, it's so fucking funny. [Dre, Keith, and Jack laugh]

Keith: Sylvi, I do want to say that the gorilla was never real.

Sylvia: No, I know. I don't think it's a problem. I just said it's funny.

Jack: And—

Sylvia: But someone might get upset with— someone who's not listening or not watching might be like—

Keith: Well, they haven't seen that this gorilla has a human face and a beard. [Keith and Dre laugh]

Sylvia: Yeah, he does have a human face and a, like, manicured beard.

Keith: Yeah, very well-groomed beard.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: To your point, Keith, about this gorilla not being real, I do think it's notable that we get a pretty lovingly animated, um...

Keith: Oh, right, there's two ways that he's not real. He's not real as in he's not in real life, and he's also not a real gorilla in the world.

Sylvia: And he's also animated. Yeah.

Jack: Yes.

Keith: He is a fake gorilla even by their terms. [laughs]

Jack: He fades away, Yoda-style, [Sylvia laughs] the way we've seen Nen summons kind of disappear, and I think that that is really deliberate, given the pool of blood we saw spreading underneath poor Bopobo. A lot of business was made in the early part of this episode about, like, "Wait a second, these guys are real. They are not Nen constructs."

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And I feel that that is hammered home by seeing the gorilla, you know, fade away into blue and white light.

Keith: Yeah, they don't show it a lot, but the whole time this is happening, Bopobo's just, like, dead and in a pool of blood somewhere in the gym.

Sylvia: I'm sure it's the other—

Jack: Oh, two guys carry him out.

Keith: Oh, yeah, sure.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Early on, we see them carrying him away.

Dre: They threw him in the ocean or something. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: There is extremely fast square passing here. The 14 Devils— or the 7 Devils, I guess.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Start passing the ball, which is, you know, glowing with purple malevolent Ren.

Keith: I do like that the thing that immediately precedes this is they get a couple of the Devils out, and Razor just goes, like, “Okay!” and Goreinu’s like, “What? Okay what?” and he’s like, “Okay, time for me to win.”

Sylvia: Yeah. [Jack laughs]

Keith: Time for you to lose this. He said— oh, here it is. “I’m prepared to defeat you now,” is what he says.

Sylvia: Ohh. It’s... [Keith laughs] Oh, it’s chilling.

Keith: Me and my stupid watermelon shoes. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Tsezguerra gets absolutely—

Dre: Oh, his shoes suck!

Jack: His shoes suck! And at the end, they’re coming apart.

Keith: His design is so good except for his stupid shoes.

Sylvia: His shoes? Wack. His smile? Wack. [Jack and Dre laugh]

Jack: His ability to play dodgeball? Really good.

Sylvia: The way he throws a dodgeball? Wack. Me? I’m dope as fuck! [Jack laughs]

Jack: Poor Tsezguerra gets walloped by a dodgeball and goes down hard. He is not dead, but it is not good. Two pirates as doctors come rushing in with a little doctor’s bag, [Keith: Yeah.] and Tsezguerra’s like, “No, no, I’ll be fine.”

Dre: “Don’t touch me.”

Keith: I love the irony here. He’s looking at Goreinu, like, after having watched, you know, his life flash before his eyes and just barely escaped with his head, and

Tsezguerra's like, "He's done. He's too emotionally damaged to be of any use now."

Sylvia: Oh, yeah. He's broken.

Keith: And then Tsezguerra immediately gets literally broken by, you know, by [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] not even like a charged up ball. Razor just throws it.

Jack: He has—

Sylvia: And it hits him, like, in the spine.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Well, so, we do get— there's like, I noticed this during the shot. If you look at Tsezguerra when he's getting hit, you can kind of see his Nen.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Sylvia: On his back there, and it's like a really nice little detail that it's like, oh, he tried to stop it, and it still fucked him up.

Keith: He did. Yeah, they say— Razor's like, "He used just enough protective Nen to avoid a fatal blow."

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Which is true.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: He does seem almost dead. [Dre chuckles]

Sylvia: Which, also, Razor's out here trying to just kill them, straight up.

Keith: Yeah, for real.

Sylvia: You know?

Jack: [laughs] Yes. Yeah, that's true.

Keith: Look, they tell you when you go into Greed Island that you will die in here.

Sylvia: Hey, Razor, buddy. My kid's going to come through here at some point.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Kill him. [Jack laughs]

Keith: This is a game for people who want—

Sylvia: Take care of it for me.

Keith: This is a game for people who want to play a game that can kill you for real. This is a game where you can die in the game.

Jack: Well, but that's the 100 level class for Hunters. They're used to this.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Also, people don't know that.

Keith: No, people do know.

Sylvia: Do they know that they—?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Okay. I...

Keith: Yeah, everybody knows going in, yeah.

Sylvia: Okay.

Dre: They talk about it at, like, the auction specifically.

Sylvia: Right. They do say if you die in the game you die in real life. My bad.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Now, I'm sure there's some people who got in there the first time and maybe didn't know that, but.

Keith: My memory is that this is— it's even some of the, like, free information that they got off the Hunter website, like not even the stuff they had to pay for.

Dre: Hmm.

Keith: That they were like, "Yeah, you die in the game, you die in real life."

Sylvia: Okay.

Dre: Yeah. And I wonder—

Jack: Hey, brief sidebar.

Sylvia: My bad.

Keith: Oh, go ahead.

Jack: Oh, sorry. Do we know what the origin point for "if you die in the game, you die in real life" is, as like a cultural phrase?

Sylvia: Oh. Um...

Jack: Is it *Existenz*?

Sylvia: Wait. I think it's— I always thought it was a, like, play on "If you die in the Matrix, you die in real life."

Jack: In the Matrix. Yeah, that's what I figured, but like...

Keith: I think it's earlier than that.

Sylvia: I'm googling.

Keith: I feel like I was just thinking about this a couple months ago, and I don't remember anymore. The 1976 science fiction novel *Dream Park* by Larry Niven.

Jack: Wait. Please give me the one sentence synopsis of *Dream Park*, because it sounds to me like it's a theme park where, if you die in the theme park, you die in real life.

Dre: Do you, uh...I have a one sentence synopsis from Reddit.

Jack: Hit it.

Dre: "In the novel, a group of gamers participate in a live action roleplaying game called Dream Park, [Sylvia chuckles] where they enter virtual reality scenarios that can result in real harm or death if they fail."

Jack: What year is this?

Dre: '76.

Jack: *Neuromancer* is 1984.

Keith: Wow.

Sylvia: Wow. Wow!

Jack: Whoa. I want to read—

Sylvia: Yeah, I'm curious about this now.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: What's it called? *Dream Park*? I bet the cover's fucking sick.

Dre: Um, when I look this up on Wikipedia, it says '81 instead of '76, but...

Sylvia: Okay.

Keith: Oh. I mean, that was just a comment on Reddit, so.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: They're allowed to get the year wrong. That's fine.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Still three years before *Neuromancer*.

Jack: Okay. So, I will say this: the modern cover of *Dream Park* is not very good. It's—I'm pasting it here. It's two people, kind of in uniform, standing in front of a silver dragon with a sort of city in the background. However...

Dre: Yeah, I was about to say. You got that old cover? 'Cause it bangs.

Jack: I got a few old covers.

Sylvia: Why are they in vault suits on this new one?

Jack: Look at this shit!

Sylvia: Oh, yeah.

Dre: Oh, I've got an even different one.

Sylvia: Now this is the shit I'm here for.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. You know, what I would like is to—

Sylvia: Oh!

Keith: I would like for the covers to be highlighting the park a little more.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: [chuckles] What, you sure you don't mean this gigantic baboon, Keith?

Keith: Yeah. Wow, there's a lot of covers.

Sylvia: They got gorillas in *Dream Park*? [Keith and Jack laugh]

Keith: Yeah, look, these are the two gorillas. [laughs]

Jack: Oh, this one is beautiful. This is a really odd cover.

Keith: Oh, here we go. That's my favorite.

Jack: It's like a blue sunny day and a tall building and a hand reaching out.

Dre: Oh.

Keith: This is my favorite.

Jack: God.

Keith: I like that one the best.

Jack: Okay.

Sylvia: I do like all the "and Steven Barnes," on all these. [chuckles]

Jack: Larry Niven...and Steven Barnes.

Sylvia: And Steven Barnes.

Jack: There's a really nice Tsezguerra moment here when he realizes that he has neglected basic training. In a really sort of simple fundamental way, he's like, "I haven't actually worked on the fundamentals for a long time," which is notable, given Biscuit's insistence on focusing on the fundamentals in Greed Island and Tsezguerra's sort of gentle plotline about the experience difference between him and the kids. I think it's notable that here, as he sort of lies wounded, he's like, "I was missing out on the very thing that these kids have been being trained in." You know, that...

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: “I lack that proximity to learning that these kids are in right now, and in that way, they get a big advantage over me, even though I am technically a more experienced fighter.” And all of this kind of endeared me to Tsezguerra.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: He’s a character that has sort of snuck up on me. He doesn’t have a— he doesn’t, frankly, have a lot of character. He doesn’t have a lot of development. He’s introduced, and you’re never quite sure whether or not he’s going to be a villain inside the game, you know, working against Gon and Killua. But by this point, I’m like, “This dude’s all right.”

Keith: It’s this really—

Sylvia: He’s kind of an uncle now.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: It’s this really well done shift that they’re able to do in *Hunter × Hunter*, where a character can change from being, like, a plot obstacle, someone that’s there to, like, cause, you know, different kinds of tension in the story, and shift them from being an obstacle to a character, like, really gently.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And it’s like, oh, all of a sudden, like, I’ve been hearing what Tsezguerra thinks about all this stuff. He’s been commenting on stuff. He has opinions about Gon and Killua. He has, like, regrets. Like, this happens. He goes from being an obstacle to a character in half of an episode. [Dre chuckles]

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: And most of that is, like, three minutes of this episode.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Like, it's kind of wild. And this is not the first time that this happens in *Hunter × Hunter*. It's just really...

Jack: Elegant writing.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: It's a notable example of it, though.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Like, it is really worth pointing out, especially, like...I think moving forward—'cause like, we've had a little bit of the whole, like, meeting Gon inspiring people stuff, right?

Jack: Mm.

Sylvia: And like, I think the most recent is, like, Zepile being like, "Oh, maybe I should be a Hunter."

Jack: Right. Yes.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: But like, and like, I think this is another good, like, reinforcement of that.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: The whole, like, "these kids are inspiring me to get back to the basics" type thing.

Keith: He's impressed by their Nen. He's looking at them, without really having seen

them do a whole lot, and he's like, "I can tell that they're better than me in really important ways, and that is, like, embarrassing for me."

[1:00:11]

Jack: I think part of what impresses me the most about it is its brevity or is its cleanliness. You know, we're not talking about, like, a really well drawn or a really detailedly drawn character here. You know, what we're getting is quite thin, but it's like Togashi and co. have figured out how little they need to move to make this thing work and make it evocative.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And that's really impressive.

Keith: Well, sometimes all you need to do is put, like, googly eyes on a rock, and all of a sudden... [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Yeah. It's true.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: All of a sudden, you know, it's Hank, and he's your friend.

Jack: Yeah. It's White Goreinu. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Quick related question. I can't remember, am I the only one who is watching this with the English dub?

Sylvia: I did not watch this with the dub.

Dre: Keith, you said you're going back and forth.

Keith: I switch back and forth. Yeah, I watch— yeah, I watch it a lot, about half and half.

Dre: Do you have any thoughts on the actor who does Tsezguerra's English dub voice?

Keith: Uh, he's a little flat, but I think he seems nice.

Dre: Yeah. [Sylvia chuckles] Like, I don't think he's bad, by any means, but it's kind of more just a reflection on how good the English dub is, that like, [**Jack:** Interesting.] I notice Tsezguerra's dub for English being just a little not as consistently good.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: I wonder how much of that has to do— I don't know why I'm jumping in here when I haven't heard it as much.

Dre: Mm.

Sylvia: But I wonder how much of that has to do with him being kind of a one note character. Like, the stern guy.

Dre: I mean, it definitely is some of that. Like, a lot of it is him kind of being like— it was sort of Vegeta-esque, where it's like whenever Vegeta realizes that somebody is better than him.

Sylvia: [chuckles] Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: And he's like, "What the fuck?!"

Jack: [laughs] I'm so excited to meet Vegeta. [Sylvia laughs]

Dre: It's just like— yeah, I think Keith saying flat is good.

Keith: Yeah, he's flat.

Dre: 'Cause it's just a little...the emotion isn't as strongly there.

Sylvia: Mm.

Keith: [imitating] “These kids! I can't believe they're doing this!”

Sylvia: Oh, okay.

Dre: Yeah, that's a very good— any sound.

Keith: Thank you. [Dre laughs]

Jack: It's time for a new tactic from everyone's favorite pervert clown, and by “a new tactic,” I mean his number one tactic, [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] deployed here extremely effectively for dodgeball.

Keith: There is a button that I have never pressed. [Sylvia gasps]

Dre: Oh shit!

[clip of “The Magician's Baile” begins]

Jack: Oh. Yeah! Yeah, yeah!

Sylvia: Oh fuck!

Keith: We've never heard this on the show.

Jack: It's notable because—

Sylvia: On Media Club, you mean.

Keith: Right. On this show.

Jack: Yes, yes.

Sylvia: Yeah, okay. Just to be clear.

Jack: They can— Hisoka can use his Bungee Gum so as not to give the ball back.

[music ends]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: He can essentially, like, snap the ball back towards him on some Bungee Gum. Killua hopes that he'll do this, and he does, and it works really well, [**Keith:** Yeah.] as his theme plays. Hisoka's theme is one of my favorite character themes in the show.

Sylvia: It's really good.

Keith: Okay, so, I have two things about— two things. The first thing, Jack, what you just said: I love the point that you've made a lot of times in *Hunter × Hunter*, when it's relevant, about how useful it can be to not have a character theme that is tied too closely to a character, to be able to, like, [**Jack:** Mm.] use things for feelings and moments instead of just, like, this is what plays when this character shows up. But then, holding Hisoka's in reserve...

Jack: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Is so good. This only ever plays for Hisoka, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] and it makes it that much more his.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And it only plays rarely. I mean, it played quite a lot in the early days, when the composers wanted to establish that this was his cue very clearly.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: But we've had a lot of Hisoka in the last— you know, we had him appearing for the first time in a while, [**Dre:** Yeah.] and his theme didn't play. I think his theme played very, very rarely in Yorknew City.

Keith: Maybe not at all, I think.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Maybe not at all.

Sylvia: Yeah, I don't think it did.

Keith: 'Cause it's really his, like, engaged song. Like, when Hisoka turns on, and he's like, in fight—

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Don't say that.

Dre: Well...

Keith: Not...not like that.

Sylvia: Sorry.

Keith: 'Cause that's always true.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah, we do get a little bit of that in this episode.

Sylvia: We get a lot of that.

Keith: We get a lot of it. We get a lot of, like, little moments of it.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Where like, you could— usually Hisoka is like, you know, dial turned to 10 on that stuff. It's right on the front page.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: These episodes have a lot of, like, if you're not looking at Hisoka while Gon and Killua are talking, you might miss him being gross and weird.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: But anyway, when he's, like, ready to fight, like, this is his, like, battle music

almost more than his character.

Jack: Well, not quite. It's such a versatile theme, because—

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And this is such smart, you know, composing a cue for a character, where you could play the syncopated clapping part that is the very distinctive percussion, and it would be enough to evoke Hisoka's theme. You could play the strummed intro on the guitar, and it would be enough. You could play the melody played up in the top part of the guitar. You know, you can mix and match all these little elements that are, on their own, so distinctive, that give you this real palette of how far do we want to go with this guy's theme in this moment, so that we can save the bigger versions for more distinctive, you know, instances. I think it's notable that there is a full arrangement of Hisoka's theme that we heard when he was fighting in Hva, and that doesn't show up here. That's a really remarkable theme, where the orchestra gets given this track.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: You know what's really hard to pick out until you're putting on a soundboard, is how good the fucking, like, solo bit is. It's really good.

Jack: Oh, with just the melody itself on the guitar?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It's so good.

[melody of "The Magician's Baile" plays]

Keith: That.

Jack: It's so good.

Keith: I'm going to shorten that.

Sylvia: It bangs.

Keith: It's so good.

Jack: It's clear they've got a player who knows how to play that style of guitar, you know?

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Oh, absolutely. My guitar teacher was a flamenco guitarist.

Jack: Ooh.

Sylvia: I've heard a lot of it, and yeah, no, that's some good shit.

Jack: It's great. It's also, um...it's not tremendously menacing. It's menacing in its arrival, because it heralds Hisoka arriving, but as a piece of music itself, it is more playful or it's more mysterious. It's got a kind of—

Sylvia: Well, that's why it works so well.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. It's got a kind of beauty to it, and—

Sylvia: It is Hisoka as a song, in a lot of ways.

Jack: Yes. Yes, exactly. He's a very—

Keith: Yeah, it becomes menacing when we let it be colored by Hisoka.

Dre: Yeah. Once we make the association of “this means Hisoka is here and about to do shit,” yeah.

Jack: Yeah, Hisoka is so repulsive in so many ways—

Sylvia: [laughs] Yeah.

Jack: That it is, on some level, very savvy composing to give him a theme that is playful and enjoyable to listen to. You know, if— you could compose for this guy— and Hirano

is definitely capable of it; we've heard him do it. You could make his soundscape so violently oppressive that it would make Hisoka extremely sour to, you know.

Keith: Yeah. But you know whose theme is scary? Illumi. The Spiders. Their themes are scary.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Mm. It's true.

Jack: Yeah. And Hisoka is scary, but [**Keith:** Right.] in order to make the show work, he needs to be on screen and making moves and making tentative alliances with our characters.

Keith: Yeah, just—

Jack: That's a heavy lift, so give him a theme that can do some of that work for you.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah. The theme is as malleable as the character is.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Smart, smart, smart composer. And, yeah.

Keith: I'm happy that we got to play it, because it's never come up on the show since we started with buttons.

Sylvia: It's also, like, just a great example of how much restraint the production team has not to use that outside of Hisoka.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Oh my god. The temptation, when you have a great theme, [**Sylvia:** Uh huh.] is

just to play it as often as you can, [Keith chuckles] and that's wrong. [chuckles] You need to avoid that temptation.

Sylvia: No, they definitely did it correctly here.

Keith: I've seen *Hunter × Hunter* all the way through, now, three and a half times, I think. And I've never gotten sick of that song. It's so good. [Keith and Dre chuckle] I don't think I've ever gotten sick of anything, except maybe the Spider stuff a little. [Sylvia sighs]

Jack: Oh, the— what is “Requiem Aranea”? How does that begin?

[Sylvia hums part of “Requiem Aranea”]

Keith: Yeah, “Requiem Aranea” is for the spiders, and then there's the—

Jack: Oh, yeah. [chuckles] Thanks, Sylvi.

Sylvia: Yeah, no problem. [Dre chuckles]

Keith: And then there's the “Riot” stuff, and then there's the other Spiders song. There's actually two— there's three Spiders songs that, like, all really sound similar, and they also sort of sound like the Zoldyck songs. They kind of bleed into each other.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Keith: And that's the only music that I've ever kind of been like, “Okay, enough with the chanting.” [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: You can't really—

Sylvia: “I'm ready to leave church. Can we—”

Keith: Yes. [Keith and Jack laugh]

Sylvia: “We've got to move on here.”

Jack: You couldn't really write cues for every member of the Phantom Troupe, because it would be such a burden on your composer, right? To be like—

Sylvia: Oh, yeah, no.

Jack: And it works thematically, because the Spider is sort of seen as a— does Chrollo have a theme? Or do they just play Spiders themes for him?

Sylvia: I think they just play the Spider theme.

Keith: Chrollo has “The Man of the—”

Sylvia: Oh, you're right.

Keith: “The Man of the Cross”, or what is it called?

Dre: Oh.

Jack: “Man With the Inverted Cross”, yeah.

Keith: “Man With the Inverted Cross”? Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: There are a lot of different Spider themes that kind of reference each other and sound similar.

Sylvia: I think it's all using the same thing as a base, though, right?

Jack: That would be the way I would do it, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Would be I would write a core soundscape and then work variations.

Keith: “Man of the Reversed Cross”, “Dirge From the Dark Side”, and “Riot” are the three main ones. I think there's one more too.

Sylvia: They also use, like, just some actual fucking, like, classical music too.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: [laughs] Yeah, they play Mozart or something at some point.

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah.

Keith: Oh, and “Requiem Aranea”. Did I say that that was for the Zoldycks earlier? That’s wrong. I was being dumb.

Sylvia: No. I thought you were just including it with the Zoldyck theme when you mentioned it.

Keith: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Okay. Let’s wrap up 69, our first episode. These will move faster as we get into it. We had a lot of setup to do here.

Sylvia: Well, because we can talk about the dodgeball game as a whole, once it’s going.

Keith: Right.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Right?

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: There are moments we need to hit, but we can't beat-by-beat go through the dodgeball game. It wouldn't even make sense.

Jack: Has Hisoka always had these spiked fingernails that we see him having here, or is this a new part of the costume?

Sylvia: I think so.

Keith: Yes. Yeah.

Dre: Yeah, I think so.

Jack: He has? Okay, cool. He has sharpened nails but very distinctively. Unlike Killua's sort of sharpened nails, which are like claws, Hisoka's are almost like these needle points on the end of each finger. Really, really creepy. Hisoka launches a Bungee Gum, and Devil 6 and Devil 7 merge together to make 13.

Sylvia: Oh, it's so cool.

Keith: It's so cool.

Jack: Who's just a huge guy who breaks Hisoka's Bungee Gum. "Is that allowed?" says Killua, turning to the ref, and the ref's like, "Yep." [Dre laughs]

Keith: It is— you know, we gave the ref a lot of credit for being, um...

Sylvia: Impartial?

Keith: For being impartial. This is kind of a dirty trick.

Sylvia: Yeah, that's not so impartial, if you ask me.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Nen's allowed to be used. You're allowed to be using as much Nen as you want.

Sylvia: I guess that's true. It's a Nen ability.

Keith: Yeah, but they made—

Dre: Yeah, Goreinu does something of, like, a similar ilk later.

Keith: He does, yeah.

Sylvia: [resigned] Yeah, you're right.

Keith: So, they are consistent with it, but Razor gets the upper hand by knowing first that this is a possibility. And, you know, it's just like, they made so much about there has to be eight people, that like, "your eight people don't ALWAYS have to be eight people" is kind of shady. [Jack laughs]

Dre: Yeah, that's true. That's true.

Sylvia: Yeah, you're right.

Jack: It's great. It's such a nice moment. It's such a nice moment to watch Nen, uh, you know.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Silly Nen games is when the show is at its most entertaining for me. [Sylvia chuckles] Razor charges up a ball and specifically aims it at Gon, as sort of, like, the first test.

Sylvia: Ohh.

Keith: The image here is unbelievable. This is, I feel like, where they really pay off his, like, kind of creepy smiling face.

Sylvia: Oh my god. They make all the angles so much sharper in some of these shots, and like...

Keith: Yeah. They turn him horrifying.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: [laughing] They turn him horrifying.

Sylvia: The animation also looks really good when they—

Jack: No! He turned horrifying! [Keith and Sylvia laugh]

Keith: Some of these— god, some of these— look at the way they've drawn him. Oh

my god, he's 100 feet long in this one. Oh my god. [Dre chuckles]

Jack: Sorry, I interrupted you, Sylvi. What were you going to say about the animation?

Sylvia: Yeah, he's a nasty man.

Dre: He is.

Sylvia: It just, there's some moments that have an incredible flourish to them, especially towards the end of the dodgeball game. But like, I thought that, like, this throw was well done, [**Keith:** Yeah.] and like, there's a really good, like, dodge sequence later that I'm sure we're going to mention that was the highlight of the animation for me during these episodes.

Keith: Look at the attention to detail. They've puffed out his cheeks with the effort here.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: It's great. It's great.

Keith: It's great.

Sylvia: Yeah, no, he's doing, like, power lifter face.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: This is happening so fast that it's hard to notice these little details, [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] but I feel like part of the game that the production team are playing here, part of the sort of coup de théâtre of the thing is like, if we're going to do what is essentially a huge shonen fight, we're going to do it with 16 people simultaneously, [**Keith laughs**] and we're going to pack it with these tiny details on these characters' faces. It's wild. This is very, very, very dense, even if a lot of what's happening is dodgeball, and we don't really need to go into it. [**Sylvia chuckles**] There is an immense explosion as Gon deflects the ball. His shoes go flying off?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: It's so good!

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: That's also another moment, when he gets—

Keith: Or more like he goes flying off. His shoes stay right where they were.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah! The way that looks is so good.

Keith: It's so good.

Sylvia: It's so well done.

Keith: So, he kind of does— and I love how the Nen school pays off in moments like this, where you can see him getting his Ken ready, and Razor delivers this, like, “Huh, Ken. Yeah, right. That's not going to be enough.” And right at the last minute, he shifts his Ken into a Ko to block the ball, using his neck and forehead to, like, brace against...

Sylvia: It's the most— go ahead.

Keith: So that he stops it with his wrists and his head and neck and uses Ko at the last second to, like, to save himself, to save his head.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Everyone else that this has happened to had their head blown off.

Jack: Fully blown off, yeah.

Keith: Instead of—

Sylvia: Do not tell Gon Freeccs to use his head. He would get another concussion.

Keith: He did use his head, yes. But he didn't have enough traction in his feet to stay planted, so he just flew out of his shoes and back against the wall.

Jack: Bisky and Killua run over to him, and Gon stands up, blood, you know, running down his face like in the fight with, I think, Canary, we have that very distinctive image of Gon with a line of blood down his face?

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Where did that show up?

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, Canary.

Sylvia: Yeah, that sounds right. There's also— I think, also, didn't we get a little of that in the Hanzo fight, [cross] when he's got the blade on his forehead?

Jack: [cross] We may very well have done, yeah.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: Oh, yes, that's what it was.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: It was the cut on his forehead. Gon says, "I'm totally fine," and Killua says, "The hell you are!" [Keith chuckles]

Sylvia: Aww.

Jack: And the narrator says, "Gon is fired up."

Keith: Yeah, he's got a big smile on his face. He's got the same sort of determined look [Dre: Mm-hmm.] that he had when Razor says that his dad said not to go easy on him.

Sylvia: [sighs] Gon!

Keith: He's like, "He's following through. He's not going easy on me."

Episode 70 [1:15:23]

Jack: 70 begins with a lot of dodgeball. Some small things to note here: at one point, Goreinu, saying that he is the type that tends to hold grudges, [Sylvia laughs] reveals what his other gorilla does. That swaps with other people. He swaps—

Sylvia: The gorilla check is crazy. Like...

Keith: Yeah, pretty good.

Jack: [laughs] The gorilla check. He swaps Razor into the path of a dodgeball, and, you know, he gets hit.

Sylvia: Put him in the fighting game, 'cause that would go nuts, honestly.

Jack: It would be great.

Sylvia: Put Goreinu in the fighting game.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: Devil 13 flings Devil 2, a really tiny devil, to catch a ball. Goreinu gets knocked out, and both the gorillas disappear. Oh, wait. A note from the end of 69 that I wrote was: "I love that it's just the main cast and also one gorilla." [Keith and Sylvia laugh]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Once there have been a few eliminations, we get to this extremely funny point where it is Killua, Bisky, Gon, Hisoka, and one nameless gorilla. [Dre chuckles]

Sylvia: Yeah, that's the main cast.

Keith: And that's where the screenshot is from.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: But yeah, this was a great moment of, like, they almost got him. Like, he could have used his Back, but that's important. It's important to make him use his Back. His one "get out of jail free" card, not his spine.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm. Yeah, does end up being a good move for the team overall from Goreinu. It's his, like, little moment of getting something back.

Keith: Yeah, it's a great move. It doesn't work because of 13 and 2, but it was really, really close.

Sylvia: So close. So close.

Keith: And, you know, Razor is totally caught off guard, and it's really funny, 'cause it's kind of the first chip in the armor, you know?

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Like, Goreinu couldn't get it, but someone could.

Sylvia: He's beatable.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: There's some just lovely shots of a game of dodgeball itself. There's a great shot of Hisoka bending over backwards so that the ball passes over his head.

Sylvia: That sequence is the— that's when he curves the shot, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, Razor curves the shot on a right angle.

Sylvia: That is some of the best animation in the show, I think.

Keith: It's great.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: It's really quick, but the, like, when Killua dodges out of the way and then realizes Razor's trying to get all three of them with the curve, [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] so he's going for Bisky and Hisoka, and they both dodge, but Hisoka does this, like, *Matrix* dodge, and then after doing that, I can't remember which number it is, but one of the numbers has the ball.

Keith: Number 5, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah. And goes for another throw, and it's just this really, like, fluidly well done action sequence that I remember really wanting to shout out when I saw.

Keith: It's great.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: And they do a great job of, like, having this really impressive, like, set of things happen, where, one, we learn that he can curve the ball in this, like, kind of bizarre 90 degree angle thing using his Nen, and then we also get Bisky out. We also, like, damage Hisoka's hands. We, like, set up this thing for later where Killua almost dies, and this, like, makes Gon really angry.

Sylvia: God.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And then we also— what was the last thing? There was, like, one other...

Dre: We learn that clothes count as part of your body?

Sylvia: Yes.

Keith: Oh, we learn that clothes count as part of your body. [chuckles] Bisky gets out without having done anything, unfortunately.

Sylvia: Her skirt gets hit, which is bullshit.

Keith: Yeah. Her gigantic skirt gets hit.

Jack: Yeah. Hisoka's hand is really fucked up, and he sets two of his fingers in one scene. This is also foreshadowing.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Keith: Yes. Oh, yes, it is! Yes.

Sylvia: Yeah, absolutely.

Keith: That Bungee Gum can hurt your hands.

Jack: It's foreshadowing that, like all great foreshadowing, you know, only becomes more interesting in retrospect. Killua's hands are about to get really fucked up. Where it's interesting to me is less that "oh, you know, Hisoka's hands get fucked up, and Killua's hands then get fucked up," but more that we keep coming back to this thing of, like, characters are weaving in and out of similarities and differences with Hisoka. And there is something about the wound to the hand, [**Dre:** Mm.] the wound to Hisoka's hand presaging the wounds to Killua's hand as being, like, you know, in the last episode we described everybody in an awful web with Hisoka, feeling a kind of similarity and a kind of difference. And I love that, you know, moments before Killua's hands really get fucked up, Hisoka's hands get fucked up, which I think it's just interesting. Interesting TV.

Sylvia: Yeah. It's a good way of just making the viewer know: oh, it's going to come down to Gon and Razor. Like...

Jack: Yeah, totally.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Bisky, as Gon comes in, Bisky sort of begins her spiel, first by saying, "Listen to me. Do not overdo it," and Gon's just like, "Yep."

Dre: Yep. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: And she realizes that Gon is sort of saying— she asks him, like, a math problem,

and Gon says, “Yep.”

Dre: She says, “What’s 1 plus 1?” and he goes, “Yeah...”

Sylvia: I wrote— my note is, “Gon is the most concussed he’s been all series.” [Dre and Jack laugh]

Jack: He really is!

Keith: And then she realizes what’s happening.

Jack: It’s so good.

Keith: She realizes what’s happening and switches tactics and says, “Beat him even if it kills you,” which seems irresponsible. What does he say to that, though?

Jack: “Osu!”

Dre: “Osu.”

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: [chuckles] That’s great.

Keith: So he wasn’t, like, not listening. He was just being an asshole.

Sylvia: Yeah. [sarcastic] Damn, Gon Freecss being an asshole? [Keith laughs]

Dre: He big angy!

Keith: He’s angy.

Jack: He’s big angy.

Sylvia: Listen, they tried to kill his boyfriend, you know?

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Well, so, here’s the thing. You will have seen this, constant viewer, coming from

the beginning, which is that we are moving into Gon's Problem, Gon's Mistake. [Sylvia laughs] We have now seen this thing, that is about to happen, happen maybe three times already? Each time resulting in severe physical damage to Gon.

Keith: Increasingly severe.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: That is to say, to spell it out: Gon refuses to win on terms that aren't his own or terms that haven't been previously set.

Keith: He won't win on a technicality.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: He won't win on a technicality. Another way that I was— I was trying to figure out kind of, like, where he draws the line. He also doesn't like winning via inaction. He really likes winning, having taken action or having had action taken on him. You know, he won't—

Sylvia: He doesn't want it to be because of his opponent's mistake. He wants it to be because of something he did, is kind of the vibe I got.

Jack: Yes. This is—

Keith: Maybe he was the wrong kind of person to teach about going through mountains. [Keith and Jack laugh]

Sylvia: Weird. Maybe. Who can say? Certainly not Bisky.

Keith: No, no. I learned we don't go around these. We just march through them. Just go through the stone.

Jack: Gon is a little guy that has, like all great characters, a sort of small palette of flaws that he can work with that are, you know, distinct from each other, that share some similarities but are distinct from each other. I would say that this one, Gon's Problem, [Sylvia chuckles] is the big one, as far as he's concerned.

Sylvia: Yes. Absolutely.

Jack: There is stuff going on with his relationship with his dad. There's stuff going on with his bizarre desire to fight Hisoka. Obviously these things are related to Gon's Problem, but Gon's Problem is the beautiful sun that shines through all these candles. And—

Keith: And it is interesting that it's something that, like, is sort of born from Gon's Mistake, which has worked out so well in the past.

Jack: Yeah. He keeps learning all the wrong lessons from this, which is that it does work.

Keith: Right.

Jack: Hanzo says this when he's like, when he sort of beats Gon in that fight.

Sylvia: Within an inch of his life.

Jack: Within an inch of his life. He says— he turns, basically, to the rest of the contestants and says, "Look, he's going to keep doing this," and he does. But there's a bit of a twist on it this time, because Gon is—

Keith: Sorry, you said when he beats Gon. He does not beat Gon, crucially.

Jack: Right. Sorry, yes. [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: He beats him in a literal sense, but not in a victory sense. [Dre chuckles]

Keith: He beats him in a literal sense, yes. Right, yeah.

Jack: He resigns. He resigns. It starts to happen a little differently this time, which is

that Gon is trying to pull Killua into this plan of, like, “We have to beat Razor absolutely,” whereas Killua is very much of the opinion, you know.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Get the W.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And then Gon says, “You could've died.” He's trying to pull Killua into the sort of animated fury that powers Gon's Problem, the righteousness.

Keith: Hmm.

Jack: And he does this by sort of saying, by demonstrating his care for Killua in this moment. You know, “Look at what he did. He could have killed you.” And also working into that Killua's, you know, fear of being bested, right? He nearly took you out! And this moment is, as Gon succeeds in dragging Killua into this plan, is both really fun to watch and is central to what is going to happen with Killua over the back half of this.

Keith: I think another crucial aspect to this that gets sort of highlighted later is Killua's sort of...the way that Gon's demonstration of, like, caring about Killua kind of leads Killua into agreeing with Gon's sort of plans.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Keith: Like, he's put so much faith in Gon, and when Gon is, like, willing to— not that Gon's usually unwilling. That's why they keep ending up in situations like this. Gon is always like, “I'm doing this for you, Killua. Like, we're, you know, we've got to do it, because you're my friend,” and then Killua's like, “Oookay...”

Jack: “I don't know about that.” [Dre chuckles]

Keith: “We'll do it your way...”

Jack: Yeah. I think it's also interesting that we so often see Killua valuing his own life

only in the sense of a Zoldyck assassin, right? Where it's like, I am a valuable entity. Killua is very often acting in self preservation.

Sylvia: Oh yeah.

Jack: You know, we spent a lot of Yorknew Arc watching Killua not act, for self preservation.

Sylvia: That was a major part of when they got kidnapped.

Jack: Yeah, absolutely. But I think there's a really meaningful difference between the “I know my limits, and I'm a powerful sort of blade, and the blade should not get destroyed.” This moment when we see in the screenshot that Keith posted, Killua's eyes going wide as he sort of realizes that his life might have value intrinsically? [chuckles] Because, you know, people care about him, and he might be able to care about himself?

Sylvia: Hmm.

Jack: This, like, “You could have died,” and Killua going like, “Oh, shit, yeah. That actually means something, when there are people around me who care for me like Gon does,” is...

Dre: Mm.

Sylvia: Yeah. [Jack sighs] Sad.

Keith: A slightly— this is not a different read, just like, a more— like, a second layer on top of this. Because Killua already had this realization that he could have died. He's already freaked out over this. I really do think specifically this is like, “Oh, Gon noticed, and that's why he's mad.”

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yep. Yeah, I think, you're right. And so, Gon develops a tactic. The tactic is this... [Jack and Keith laugh]

Dre: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Keith: It's a Kamehameha.

Jack: It is a Kamehameha! Killua holds the ball like a golf tee. Well, sort of. He holds it in his hands like he's preparing it, and not a lot is made of this. You know, just hold the ball. He says, "Bend your knees." [Sylvia sighs] But it...we've talked about Killua's hands getting really fucked up. You can see where this is going.

Sylvia: It's so well done.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: It is.

Sylvia: The slow roll is so well done.

Jack: The show is so stealthy about this moment. Not a lot of weight is paid to "Killua, you hold the ball." And then Gon blasts it with his rock. He says, um... "Show me Rock," is what he says first to power up, and then he says, "Jan Ken Rock," and "jan ken" is not translated in the subtitles. What's going on there? What is the...?

Sylvia: Jan ken is just, to my understanding—and this is mostly through movies and anime, so if I'm wrong, please correct me—is that the, like—

Jack: He's calling out—

Sylvia: Instead of saying "rock paper scissors," you say, "jan ken poy" or whatever.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Right, right, right.

Sylvia: And so I think it's just to keep that going.

Jack: So he is playing the rock paper scissors game as his Nen strike.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, or at least using the rhythm of it, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: What a fun power to—

Keith: Because the Scissors is the Emitter— or, no. The Scissor is the...Paper is Emitter. Scissors is the other one.

Jack: Yeah. I was going to say, it's so neat. I don't know whether or not we're going to do this, but Togashi's given himself the runway, right? Where it's like, Gon is using Rock here, so why not teach him new Nen applications for Paper and Scissors as the show continues?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: You know, it is a Nen power that contains within it the clear direction that it could go, if you were interested, which is fun.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: This is phenomenally powerful. Big 13 catches it but is knocked out of the ring, in a lovely slow motion tumble. None of this stuff is easy to animate.

Keith: No.

Jack: Not just the way that these bodies are flying around but the way you're cutting through the action, the way you're cutting from shot to shot so that it's transparent. But then you do sometimes just get very beautiful little shots like 13 tumbling backwards in slow-mo. It's really, really neat. Tsezguerra's team, outside the ring, are encountering Gon's power firsthand, and one of them turns [**Sylvia:** Ah.] to the other and says, "He's

got high standards.”

Keith: Yeah. They do such a good job of, like, making this the most impressive thing by far that Gon’s ever done, and then it succeeds, and then it cuts back to Gon, and he’s mad, 'cause he knows it’s not enough.

Jack: He says, “I need more power.” Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: He meditates and produces a HUGE aura.

Sylvia: It’s so cool.

Keith: His aura looks— we’ve never seen an aura look like this. He looks like he’s sitting in a raindrop or in a candle flame.

Jack: It’s beautiful.

Sylvia: Ohh.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, it’s very gentle at first, before it explodes into that thing. Smooth, perfect. Bisky, just getting her little dagger in, turns to Razor and says, “You may have chosen the wrong sport.” [Keith and Dre laugh]

Sylvia: I love how much of a little shit she is.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And then all the lights burst in the arena, as Gon produces this, like, gold burning Ren around him.

Sylvia: Goes Super Saiyan?

Dre: Yeah, uh huh.

Jack: It's Super Saiyan. It's also characteristically the opposite of the purple Ren, and it is also— and when I realized this, I was like, “Oh, right, yeah. Scripts are written in order so that they can speak forwards to events that are going to happen later.”

Keith: Right.

[1:30:01]

Jack: Remember how everybody described Gon as, like, shining so brightly you couldn't look at him?

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And now here we have that literalized, Gon standing in the middle of this gold aura, shining like the sun. It is amazing to see, and it's such a great way that Nen has always been used since its introduction, right? Which is to literalize and make clear emotional relationships, emotional stakes, the way characters feel about each other. You know, we can have, so early in the show, characters looking at Gon and saying, you know, “He's burning like the sun. He's so hard to look at. It's so wonderful,” and then finally, later, as he does this phenomenal demonstration of Nen, as all the lights burst in the room, we finally see Gon standing in this golden glow. It's great! Really good stuff.

Sylvia: Yeah. Fantastically done, honestly.

Keith: And it's a great mirror of the exact last thing that happens, where Razor is able to take this ball, bump it up to the ceiling, absorbing all of the impact in his arms and legs, and unlike Gon, who shot the ball straight up into the roof and got out—he ended up using Back on himself; we skipped over it—Razor's able to shoot it right up into the air, and then it sort of gently falls back to the ground. Well, I think Hisoka uses— well, we'll talk about that in a sec. Hold on.

Jack: Gon is amazed by this. Gon actually really loves this.

Sylvia: You're still here.

Keith: Gon loves it.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Everyone else hates it.

Keith: He failed, and he loves it.

Jack: Yep. Yep.

Keith: He had just succeeded and hated it.

Jack: [laughs] Oh my god.

Sylvia: Damn.

Keith: He just—

Jack: This little guy.

Sylvia: Makes you think.

Keith: He uses rubber, rubber, rubber, and then gum at the end, and that's how they get it.

Jack: Hisoka catches the ball with the Bungee Gum. This is great. We keep possession, because again, like I said earlier, if Razor's got the ball, it's real bad. [Keith laughs] He says, Hisoka says, "You have to catch the ball, you know." Again, it's Bisky and Hisoka doing these little barbed, you know, comments to Razor.

Keith: No, I'll fix it. I'll fix it so that it's good.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's maybe worth saying that that moment where Bungee Gum and Hisoka's Bungee Gum catchphrase was set up and the joke was driven home was at a point when— right around the moment that the show was interested in building some more facets onto Hisoka than “he's the frightening clown,” right?

Keith: Right.

Jack: We got a lot of Hisoka Nen power. We got Hisoka chatting with Machi. We got Hisoka talking about snacks he used to love. And so I think it makes sense that they would also give him a joke. Like, give him a setup and punchline that they can do in that moment. But it coming back here after so long was so funny. [chuckles]

Keith: Yeah, it's really great when you can call back to something from, what, 40 episodes ago? 45, something like that?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Tsezguerra notices that everybody is starting to get really wounded. His team is like, “Wow, Gon's team is doing great!” and he's like, “Actually...”

Keith: It's three versus two. What could go wrong?

Jack: Hisoka's hand is very badly wounded. I think he broke two or three of his fingers, and he set them on screen. It was...

Keith: Yeah, he broke two fingers.

Sylvia: Oh, it was when he was doing— like, it broke when he was doing Bungee Gum, wasn't it?

Keith: He caught—

Sylvia: Oh, no, that was later. Nevermind.

Jack: He caught the ball, and it...

Keith: He caught 5's ball [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] after dodging the L-shaped curveball.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And he didn't have time to protect himself so broke two fingers.

Sylvia: Yeah. I was thinking of something else.

Jack: Tsezguerra has noticed that Killua is extremely wounded. He's walking with his hands in his pockets, which is such a nice play on the classic Killua nonchalant posture.

Sylvia: Yep.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: But of course, here, he's doing it to hide his hands.

Keith: It's such a sad moment, knowing— you know, maybe especially knowing, like, where it goes and how he's hurt, but where he's like, you know, Gon's exhausted from having done his two, you know, power moves. Hisoka's got two broken fingers. And then his group's like, "Well, we've got Killua still, right?" and he's like, "Wrong. Killua's more hurt than anybody." And then it just, like, shows him standing there calmly with his hands in his pockets, and I remember going like, "[gasps] It must be his hands." But I can't be sure.

Jack: I didn't realize that it was his hands, because what has happened is that Killua has realized that to protect his hands with Nen as Gon uses his power would severely weaken the power, so he has only been putting a tiny bit into his hands, and his hands have been getting obliterated by Gon's Nen. This is perhaps the least subtle metaphor that the show could be working at this point. It is both going to get less subtle and hit harder [**Sylvia:** Yep.] as these episodes continue. We'll talk more about sort of, like, the way that this metaphor ends up playing out here, but Tsezguerra offers to be the tee outside the court, because that's both allowed and Tsezguerra knows a sort of way he

could move Nen to make it work better, [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] but Gon says, “We can't do that. It would be a cop out,” and Killua says—

Keith: I think it's Killua who says that.

Jack: Oh, is it Killua who says that? Okay.

Keith: Yeah, Killua says it first. He's the first one to decline.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: He says, “I'm not hurting as much as you think,” which is just tragic Killua, you know...

Sylvia: Yeah. There's a lot of...I rang the alarm of the “hey, Killua's hurting himself again.”

Jack: Yep.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: The big thing I thought of with his determination to, like, put himself through this stuff for Gon's sake is the, like... [sighs] Do you remember when he was getting tortured by Milluki?

Jack: I do.

Sylvia: Like, forever ago? And he was like, “Yeah, I just figured if you did this, you'd feel better afterwards.” I feel like you can draw a line between Killua's, like, gut instinct of how to make people happy is putting himself in harm's way or sacrificing himself...

Jack: Yeah. Mm-hmm. Absolutely.

Sylvia: And like, it's just, it feels less shitty in the moment, because it's like, well yeah, he's doing this for someone who he cares about and who cares about him.

Keith: Yeah. It's especially sad that, you know, Gon is asking him to do this.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: And like, his reaction when, later on, they have the conversation where it's like, "I need Killua to be the one doing it," is like, oh yeah, this really got him in the heart.

Jack: This actually happens now. Gon always knew that this was hurting Killua's hands.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yep.

Jack: Which is...

Keith: That's gruesome.

Sylvia: That is gruesome to me, yeah.

Jack: It is gruesome, and it is also...it is working into the text something that we keep sort of orbiting around with Gon, right? Which is like, what are the consequences of there being a person like this?

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And what are the consequences of knowing them? And making it so that Gon always knew. He says, "I need Killua to hold the ball. He's the only one who can do it." And the thing that this made me think of, the note that I wrote, is that this is Killua as an anvil for Gon's hammer.

Sylvia: Yep.

Jack: You know?

Dre: Ooh.

Jack: Killua is positioning himself as the anvil, and Gon's power is the one that is sort of getting expressed through the surety and the strength and the steadfastness of Killua.

And this really moves Killua, when he hears, "He's the only one who can do it."

Tsezguerra has a really sad line just before this, actually, when he sees how ruined Killua's hands are. They're all swollen up. He says, "I bet he can't feel anything but pain," and we are just so firmly in the realm of working the metaphor here that having these characters say this outright is...we're in a space where part of the way this is working stylistically is that the metaphor is just being placed front and center, to the point where we have Tsezguerra speak out into the world one of the core anxieties surrounding Killua, right? Which is like, he can't feel anything but pain.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: You know, what's in these relationships for him?

Keith: There's so many important things here. The first thing is, like, this is the mirror of the stuff that happened earlier with Gon wanting to make sure that everybody who was playing was committed, because to Gon, like, signing up, being like, "Yes, I want to participate," means, like, you're allowed to get your hands blown off. You're not allowed to blow off someone's hands unless they agree to let you blow off their hands, but then, after that, those are the rules of the game. We're all trying to win.

Jack: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Killua said he wants to help me find my dad. This is part of that.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: He knows that. And the sad thing is that they are both down to do this. Like, Killua, you know, for barely one moment, and it's at the very beginning of this, where Gon first won't accept the technical victory, where he's like, "Wait, no, we really should just win as fast as possible." From that moment forward, he's on board, and especially so after Gon is, like, kind of leveraging Killua's feelings about him in order to make this

happen.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: The second thing is: Bisky's their teacher. Where is she? Silently standing beside Hisoka, watching this happen.

Jack: [chuckles] Yes.

Keith: Watching Tsezguerra.

Dre: Well, no. She already told him, "Go kill him, even if it kills you."

Keith: Yeah. Watching Tsezguerra, like, be, like, empathetic and concerned and kind and protective of these two kids that, like, are literally, you know, in her charge, you know.

Jack: This show has a low view of teachers.

Keith: It has a really low view of teachers. [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: It has a really low view of teachers. Maybe that's why they had to have Wing, you know, menacingly smile two times with no real context, is they've got to give you— they can't let a teacher get away [Dre and Jack laugh] without you going like, "What's going on there?" [laughs]

Jack: You know, I've said in the show before, in Media Club Plus, that I suspect that as I watch more of this, it will come into focus more and more that this is a show about learning things, about having a passion, about having a skill, about developing a skill, about developing a skill that you're not very good at, about developing a skill that you're extremely good at. You know, this is a show that is constantly talking about learning. And it is interesting that the teachers in this, or the capital-T teachers in this, are often so strange.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And the show has such a low view of them.

Keith: Well, the third thing that I was thinking when I was watching this is like...like, what is different about Gon than other Hunters? You know, like, we want him— you know, they show us how bad the Hunters are, and then they show Gon and Killua sort of engaging in that world and how readily Gon goes, you know, deeply into it and participates in some of its, like, you know, kind of darkest corners. And like, it feels like, because it's a show, that he should be seeing what we're seeing on the camera about the Hunters, but it feels like he just doesn't see it. Like, the thing that makes Gon special is that he's strong, not that he's, you know, [cross] an ideological stalwart.

Jack: [cross] Perspicacious or something. Yeah.

Dre: Yeah. Well, and I think it seems to also be implied that he is strong because, where most people see we're going to play murder dodgeball and they go, "I'm getting the fuck out of this gymnasium," Gon says, "Yeah, no, that makes sense. That makes sense to me."

Keith: That makes sense. Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Tough stuff. [laughs]

Jack: This is only going to keep getting sadder, right?

Dre: Probably.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Eh.

Keith: Well, no. They win dodgeball.

Sylvia: [sarcastic] Yeah, what are you talking about?

Dre: [sarcastic] Yeah, yeah. No, yeah, you're right. Yeah, they win.

Jack: Gon comes up with an idea, and Killua says, "Gon always comes up with the craziest ideas." There's an extent to which this is still very much like a buddy comedy of two 12-year-olds. I feel like the "always comes up with the craziest ideas" right after "my friend has obliterated my hands, and I'm fine with it" [chuckles] is really funny.

Keith: He's also come up with an idea that makes Hisoka get all grossly excited.

Sylvia: Yeah...

Jack: Yeah! Yeah.

Keith: This is, like, part of that thing. We haven't talked a lot about specifically moments, but this is the kind of general trend of what's been going on, of like, Hisoka in the background being like, "Look at me, getting to play with Gon and Killua some more."

Jack: He's so excited to see their Nen. This is also...I think when we first saw Hisoka in the opening title sequence for Greed Island, I was like, "So much of Greed Island speaks to stuff that fascinates Hisoka," right?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Like, it's 8v8 in a deathmatch dodgeball game. This is, you know.

Dre: It's very Hisoka-coded.

Keith: That's why I love the joke of him showing up to the dating sim world and, like, knowing all the answers to the quests.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah.

Keith: It's like, of course Hisoka knows how to, like, speak this weird language. [Dre chuckles]

Jack: As the episode comes to an end, the narrator says, "Gon and Killua share a strong bond of trust." Yeah. Whose hands are getting obliterated in the process, and

who is having a jolly time searching for his dad?

Sylvia: Yeah. Weird.

Keith: We said— Jack, I think it was you that said that this isn't subtle, but, you know, it's— which it's not, but...it's shocking to me, every time I encounter it, how much heavy-handed imagery can be missed by...very passionate fans of a specific show or whatever. [Sylvia and Jack laugh]

Sylvia: [sarcastic] What could you be talking about?

Keith: [sarcastic] Oh, nothing.

Jack: Ah, you know.

Sylvia: [sarcastic] Oh, nothing.

Jack: People are reading things differently. I mean, I think this is what the show's about, but, you know.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Also, there is a power in putting it straight in front of the camera.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I think, especially when you're playing in a genre like shonen, where everything is heightened so often.

Keith: Right.

Jack: And there's so much subtle work that is being done in this show. You know, there are ways in which this show is subtle and really interesting, but there is something very powerful about just delivering it straight down the lens.

Episode 71 [1:45:07]

Jack: Okay. 71. In a little bit of sort of story sleight of hand, Razor empowers his aura by removing the Nen Beasts. We have now seen Gon blast the ball at him with increasing power, three times? Twice?

Keith: Twice.

Jack: To the point where, if he just keeps doing this, he will beat Razor, and it'll be a done thing. So we have to empower Razor such that this final episode is interesting, and I think that this is quite an elegant way of doing it, just being like, we know that Nen takes effort to maintain.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: But it mostly feels like a mechanical thing, so that they can make this feel like it still has stakes.

Keith: I could not give you a timeline on this, on what is establishing what here, but like, using clones to copy yourself and then losing some of your power because of that is, like, a pretty established thing in shonen that has clones, which is a lot of them.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. [chuckles]

Dre: Sure.

Jack: Look, clones are fun.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: This happens to Tien. This happens, you know, in the *Dragon Ball* that we watched. Tien literally does this, becomes one fourth the strength in order to create three copies.

Jack: Yes. Yeah. That's true.

Keith: So, I lied. I can give you a timeline, 'cause it's *Dragon Ball*. [Jack and Keith laugh]

Jack: As Razor— Razor has the ball now. And as Razor shoots the ball across the thing— every time Razor— I want to talk about this ball, actually. The ball has been animated so well throughout this whole thing. It is warping. Its shape warps when it gets hit really hard. It is wobbling erratically, as though there is sort of, like—

Keith: It acts like a water balloon.

Jack: Yeah, as though there's violent Nen energies kind of pulling at it. It is constantly burning with different colors of Nen. It weighs the same as a bowling ball, when Hisoka picks it up at one point. I love this focus on what Nen does to a normal object. You know, this is introduced as a normal bowling ball. It's not had Nen— it's not been witched with Nen. It's not been spelled. I love this thing of, like, this poor ball has just had, you know, Nen masters working on it, and the focus on the way that that changes its shape and its movement throughout is so good. Razor just blasts it at our team, and what happens then? It's really interesting.

Keith: Does someone want to describe the configuration?

Sylvia: Oh, their little team move?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Yeah, their little team move.

Dre: When they merge.

Keith: Yes, they have also merged. [laughs]

Sylvia: They did kind of do that, yeah. Huh.

Keith: That's funny.

Sylvia: Yeah, so, the way that they prepare to grab this is you've got Gon in front, both hands at the ready; Killua in the middle, like, sort of leaning on his back; and then also Hisoka's behind Killua, and all of their hands are kind of in the same are where the ball's going to land. Killua's less so, because they're fucked up, but like, he's still bracing there, if you look closely.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: He's described as both a brace and a cushion and, like, is the thing that keeps this whole idea, like, feasible, the fact that he is there. Like, he has to— I can't remember the specifics of how Tsezguerra describes it.

Keith: What he says about Killua— you're talking about Killua in the center?

Sylvia: Yes, Killua in the center.

Keith: Right. He's got—

Jack: Between Gon and Hisoka.

Keith: Yeah, it's basically that if he uses too much force, it'll, like, break Gon's hands by, like, not, you know, absorbing enough of the force into himself. But if he doesn't use enough force, then they'll fly away; they'll get, like, knocked off balance.

Sylvia: Mm.

Jack: Yeah. Razor says— or maybe it's Tsezguerra saying it. Yeah, he says, "He (Killua) was stuck between them (Gon and Hisoka), acting as both a cushion and a brace." And this is great, because the stakes or sort of the emotional content of the dodgeball game as a way of expressing Gon's Mistake [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] and as a way of expressing Gon's relationship with Killua and the ways that that is [**Keith:** Yeah.] maybe asymmetrical, suddenly sort of effortlessly gets expanded out into a conversation about Gon, Killua, and Hisoka, just by the way that they have put their bodies in the arrangement. You know, setting aside the gross implications of this predatory character being so physically close to these two people, which I think, you

know, has to be deliberate...you know, Hisoka— or, sorry, Killua is now stuck between Gon and Hisoka, quote, “acting as both a cushion and a brace.” I think it is so interesting that they have literalized this, in this really distinctive shot. We get shown it several times, sort of the way that they are posed, and then we get shown it later as they sort of get broken apart. We see what would happen if Killua’s sort of application of Nen was wrong. They’d all sort of go tumbling. There are these beautiful shots—that I’m sure Keith is going to include—of, like, just this arrangement of the three of them against a black screen.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, I’ve got it.

Jack: None of this is subtle. It is the most literal way you can arrange characters bodies on screen to say something about their interrelationships, but it’s so cleverly done.

Keith: This is the— sorry, go ahead.

Jack: Oh, no, no, no. Go ahead. I think I wanted to talk about sort of a point coming off this, but...

Keith: Just that the, like, to your point about it not being subtle, and like, okay, it’s not subtle. Maybe it doesn’t have to be subtle, because it’s shonen. But like, why is it so impressive? Why is something that’s, like, so heavy-handed and not subtle? I think it’s because they keep— like, Togashi keeps coming up with really surprising ways to, like, capitalize on these ideas that he’s had, where it’s like, it’s not subtle, but the fact that he chose to go in this direction is still, if not surprising, then at least, like, really interesting and fun.

Jack: It’s such a strong image as well.

Keith: Yeah. It really is, yeah.

Jack: There is so much talk here, and Keith alluded to it when he was talking about the way that Killua had to sort of balance his aura. There is so much talk about the precise application of the aura, you know?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: But not much about either the symbolic position that Killua is in or the position of being relied upon, you know? Almost nobody is saying things like, “None of this works without Killua,” or “Killua is—”

Keith: Except Gon.

Sylvia: Except Gon, yeah.

Jack: Except Gon. And I wonder why the other characters are talking about it through the language of Nen. Is that because Nen sort of supersedes it? Nen is a way into talking about these emotional relationships or these symbolic positions?

Keith: [sighs] I don't know.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Dre: Hmm.

Keith: Maybe it's that other characters don't have the context, and so they're allowed to use sort of, like, on-the-face explanations of the Nen that emerge because of their relationship to then sort of de facto describe the relationship?

Jack: Right. Yeah. I mean, I think that's possibly it. Also, people who aren't Gon and Killua historically are very bad at reading Gon and Killua.

Keith: Mm. [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: Oh, yeah.

Dre: That's true.

Keith: Even Melody, yeah.

Jack: And I wonder if there is something there? I really don't know. It was at about this point—seeing Killua physically putting his body between Gon and Hisoka, after Gon had

just ruined his hands—that I was like, these last 40 or 50 minutes have really been working towards some pretty nuanced images of Killua as opposed to Gon.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Where are we going with this? This has become— in my notes, I wrote, “This is very pro-Killua.” That’s a bit reductive, but you know what I mean.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Like, we have turned suddenly towards the ways in which Killua is being acted upon by— you know, even by people like Gon, and that’s sort of crept up on me. You know, I think I was maybe caught up in the, like, “I’m looking for Gon’s dad” game.

Keith: Right.

Jack: But it’s notable.

Keith: Even though we’re all here saying Killua’s the main character. [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, but I—

Keith: It’s hard to know how literal that is until you see it being literal.

Jack: That’s exactly— that is exactly what I mean. Gon is so much a capital-P protagonist.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: You know, capital letters in all of those things. That when you start to realize that the actual protagonist is standing next to him, you go, “Oh.”

Keith: *Big Trouble in Little China.*

Jack: I still need to watch *Big Trouble in Little China* [cross] again. I saw it as a—

Keith: [cross] Oh my god, Jack, you gotta watch *Big Trouble in Little China*!

Dre: Mm, me too.

Jack: No, Keith, Keith, Keith, Keith, Keith, Keith, Keith! I've seen it, but I saw it as a kid.

Keith: Okay, okay, okay, okay.

Jack: I need to go back to it.

Keith: Okay.

Sylvia: You can yell at me. I haven't seen it.

Jack: It's been two decades.

Keith: You haven't seen it either?

Sylvia: No.

Keith: Oh, you haven't seen it actually, though.

Dre: I haven't seen it either.

Sylvia: I haven't seen it at all.

Keith: Oh, wow!

Jack: We should maybe watch *Big Trouble in Little China*.

Keith: Yeah, let's do that.

Sylvia: I'd love to.

Keith: Yeah, let's do that.

Jack: Bonus episode: *Big Trouble in Little China*. [Jack and Keith laugh]

Keith: I mean, it is— it's a stretch, but it is kind of a relevant thing.

Jack: I'm such a John Carpenter fan. I will always go to bat for that old weirdy.

Keith: I can't believe you haven't seen his best movie.

Jack: Keith, I HAVE seen it! [chuckles]

Keith: Sorry. Sorry. You haven't remembered.

Jack: [laughs] Yeah, yeah. Yeah. I saw two Carpenter movies when I was a kid, and neither of them really worked for me. Neither of them spoke to me. I saw *Big Trouble in Little China*, and then I saw *Escape From New York*, both of which I know are primo Carpenter movies.

Keith: And they're almost, like, necessarily connected to...

Jack: Yes. Yeah.

Keith: *Big Trouble in Little China* is like the 10 to *Escape From New York's* 7.

Dre: Hmm.

Jack: I thought you were going to say to *Escape From New York's* Ren. [chuckles]

Keith: No.

Sylvia: Oh.

Keith: Well, I guess they are kind of— *Escape From New York* is Ten and *Big Trouble in Little China* is Ren.

Jack: John Carpenter would hate Nen. He'd say, "What's this crap?"

Sylvia: Yeah?

Keith: Yeah...John Carpenter has interesting tastes.

Sylvia: Yeah, he's a gamer.

Jack: He does. He's really enjoying *Fallout 76*. [Jack and Dre chuckle]

Keith: Sure. Hey, but plenty are.

Jack: Yeah. It's great. So, yeah, yeah. Killua is...yeah, lots of focus on Killua.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Where are we going with this?

Keith: It is so...it's such, like...these episodes have been so good with layering different character interactions and character beats on top of each other. Like, we just got through the fucking sicko Hisoka stuff. That is, like, underlying this whole thing, is like, Hisoka at his grossest is now, like, here with them.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: You know, underlying everything. All of the stuff with Gon and Killua that is, like, at the same time, kind of sweet and also sad and kind of cruel. Like, and, you know, touching on Gon's, like, different relationships with, like, death and killing and violence. All of this stuff kind of hitting in these episodes all at once. It's just a really, really well done confluence of beats.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's wild that we spent the last episode of Media Club Plus saying, "This isn't really working."

Keith: I know.

Jack: "This is vague. It's not focused." [Dre and Keith laugh] And all that stuff is true. You know, I stand by that.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: I think it wasn't working. It was vague. It was rushed. It had neglected bits of its own storytelling and so had to sort of scramble to catch them up. And then suddenly we're here in these three, and it's like, oh, we're going to explore this in an extremely focused way.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And there's some just lovely, lovely, lovely stuff happens. Razor says— Razor, seeing Gon's crazy Nen, says, "He's a monster." This is interesting to me.

Keith: He's— oh, sorry.

Jack: Why?

Keith: He said— I want to connect these two lines.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: He said, "He's a monster. Ging would be proud."

Jack: Yeah!

Sylvia: Yep. [Keith and Jack laugh]

Jack: Yeah, it's so good.

Sylvia: I think that's real important.

Keith: It's really important.

Jack: I don't know if it's...if it was a difference in the translation, but he doesn't actually say "Ging would be proud." It's so more specific. He says, "He's a monster. Ging, you should be proud."

Keith: Oh, yeah. Sorry, I was— that is what he says.

Jack: "This kid is indeed your son." [chuckles]

Keith: Mm-hmm. Yeah, I've got that right here.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: And you didn't do shit! [Keith laughs]

Jack: Oh, it's a good show. It's a good show!

Keith: He gave him out! Of course he did something.

Dre: [sighs] [sarcastic] That's true, yeah. No, he abandoned him as a child, and that's why Gon is strong. You're right.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: I hate this motherfucker.

Keith: Oh, I mean...

Dre: [laughs] He sucks so bad!

Keith: Okay. I'm not saying it's good, but I also won't say that that's incorrect.

Dre: Sure. Yeah. [Jack chuckles]

Keith: Like, is there a world where Ging was, you know, a different person, and Gon ends up this way? I don't know.

Jack: No. No.

Keith: Right. Yeah.

Dre: What was he, uh...what's the tweet we've referenced before, where it's like, "*Hunter × Hunter* is a show about a kid [cross] whose dad goes out for cigarettes, and he wants to go find out why cigarettes are so cool"?

Jack: [cross] [laughs] Cigarettes.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yep.

Dre: This is now Gon, like, getting the whole pack of cigarettes and somebody being like, “Well, now you have to smoke them all at once, and you’ll learn your lesson,” and he’s like, “Ah, this fucking rules!”

Keith: Yeah. [Jack laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: “This is so good!” [Keith and Jack laugh]

Jack: “I love smoking.” It’s so true.

Keith: Hisoka gives him cigarettes. Netero gives him cigarettes. [Dre and Jack laugh]
Wing gives him half a cigarette.

Jack: Bisky, Wing.

Keith: Bisky gives him a pack of cigarettes.

Jack: Chrollo won’t give him any cigarettes, and that makes him violently angry. [Keith and Dre laugh]

Dre: Nobunaga’s like, “Hey, we should get these kids over here to smoke cigarettes!”

Sylvia: “Hey, these kids look like they could chain smoke.”

Keith: “Let’s give some cigarettes to these kids.” Machi’s like, “These are kids. They don’t have— we shouldn’t give kids cigarettes.”

Jack: [laughs] Kurapika—

Keith: That’s headcanon, sorry.

Sylvia: Yeah. No, I like it.

Jack: Kurapika is like—

Keith: I try not to ever have those. [Jack chuckles]

Sylvia: Ah, too late.

[2:00:00]

Jack: Kurapika is like, “A cigarette contains nicotine, an addictive...” [Sylvia and Jack laugh] “Cigarettes are often made with a filter component in the...”

Sylvia: “Menthols give you a nice tingling sensation.”

Jack: Razor just blasts the ball at Gon, saying, “He won't dodge it. That isn't how he wants to win,” except Gon does dodge it accidentally by passing out.

Keith: Oh, wait. Did we skip over the third punch?

Jack: Oh. Yes. This is the third punch.

Keith: Yeah. Killua says, “I'm going all out.” Sorry, Gon says, “Killua, I'm going all out.” Killua says, “You'd better, or you're gonna hear it from me.” [Jack sighs, pained] He fills the gymnasium with his yellow and orange Ren, punches the ball, and Razor tries to bump it back and does. Like, he's worried about how he's going to possibly escape this, and he's like, “Oh, I could just bump it right back towards them as, like, a volley.” It launches like a cannon.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Back at Gon, who— and yeah, this is where Razor goes, like, “He won't allow himself to win like this,” but he just passes out, and it misses him.

Jack: This is so good.

Keith: [laughs] It's so good.

Dre: [laughs] It's so good.

Jack: This is such a great, like, double twist, because I, I think—

Keith: Triple twist.

Jack: Uh, the first twist, for me, is Gon passing out.

Keith: Oh, okay.

Jack: 'Cause the first thing I think is, "I'm kind of sick of Gon's Problem, and I want to see them do something other than Gon just butting his head through this." So, his body physically giving out.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Him physically being unable to play Gon's game is great. Gon just keels over and dodges perfectly. It's a lovely mirror—weird how these mirrors keep happening—of Hisoka bending over backwards to dodge the ball.

Keith: Dodge the ball and what else?

Jack: Well, so, Hisoka... [hushed] It's so good.

Keith: While everyone is cheering that they've won, because Gon accidentally missed the ball...

Jack: Yep. Which would have counted as a, you know, that would have knocked out Razor.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Hisoka promptly catches the ball and shoots it back towards Razor, saying—

Sylvia: He says, like, "That won't do, Gon, will it?"

Jack: He says, "Only a flawless victory will do, right, Gon?"

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's beautiful! It's great, because it is Hisoka playing into Gon's worst tendencies.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It is Hisoka trapping Gon in another sort of cycle of gratitude and obligation.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And it is Hisoka saying, "I feel this way too."

Keith: Yes. Yeah.

Jack: You know, 'cause this is something Hisoka also believes.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Hisoka also doesn't want a technical victory.

Jack: Yeah. And we keep saying, in the show, things like, for example, "Oh, Gon and Hisoka are similar in this way. They both believe this," but actually physicalizing it, you know, actually making it so that they both, to the horror of everybody around them, give into this impulse together is great.

Keith: Yeah. And so, now we have Killua has his hands blown to shit. Gon has exercised his life force to exhaustion and has passed out in the middle of the game. Hisoka has caught the ball and has all of his fingers mangled by the force of the dodgeball against his Bungee Gum. You know, they're all totally wiped out. Sends it back at Razor, who's just like, "[scoffs] We're gonna volley now. I can win this. I can win a volley."

Jack: And he goes to volley, but he can't.

Keith: Because Razor doesn't know that Bungee Gum possesses the properties of both rubber and gum! [Jack laughs]

Sylvia: Let's go! Only time I'll ever pop for Hisoka.

Keith: Well, it's his funniest joke.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: It's the best thing he ever does.

Jack: It might be his only joke.

Sylvia: You know what?

Keith: Yeah. I think that time that he destroyed that guy's arms.

Jack: Oh, the arm business?

Keith: That was pretty funny, yeah.

Jack: By "destroyed that guy's arms," you mean— oh, he did also destroy his own arm. That was quite cool.

Keith: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Dre: Yeah, that was a pretty good joke.

Jack: I love the, uh...hang on. Wait. I can find it. Maybe I can't. Let's see.

Dre: I believe in you.

Jack: Oh! I love that so much is— you know, his name is "sneaky."

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: So much of Hisoka is played up as him being a trickster or something, and I really do like the moments where, instead of predatory grossness, we do just get a Hisoka trick front and center.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And I do think that, less the Bungee Gum, which is more just sort of like a classic Hisoka play, but Hisoka keeping the game going felt like he'd pulled one over on the audience. I really liked that moment, and I thought it was really sort of joyful Hisoka characterization.

Keith: Well, there is something really slick, though, about how he uses the Bungee Gum. Like, Texture Surprise obviously can be manipulated to do a bunch of kind of bizarre things, but like, the play of using, like, rubber, then rubber, then rubber, then rubber, and then all of a sudden, it's gum. [Sylvia chuckles] Like, it kind of puts you in this false sense of security of [Jack: Yes.] like, knowing what Hisoka's going to do, which is the exact thing that he loves to cultivate in people.

Jack: [chuckles] Yes.

Keith: Is this idea that you can guess his next trick. But his most recent trick was getting you to guess wrong what his trick was going to be.

Jack: It's great.

Keith: And then they play that out in a minute when Hisoka leaves. We'll talk about that in a minute.

Dre: Oh, yeah. [laughs]

Sylvia: God.

Keith: He does the social version of the same thing. He does glue, when he's been doing rubber, rubber, rubber. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: It's so good. I've just written— so, they win. Razor sort of admits defeat.

Keith: Yeah, he says total defeat.

Jack: Total defeat. I've written down two quotes here. Someone says, "It was a team victory," and someone says, "That doesn't sound like you at all." I didn't attribute this.

Dre: That was Hisoka.

Keith: That was Hisoka, yeah.

Dre: Yeah, Hisoka says, “That was a total team victory,” [**Keith:** Yeah.] and Gon is like, “That doesn’t sound like you.” [laughs]

Keith: I have the whole quote here. Gon wakes up and is like, “What happened?” and they explain, and he’s like, “So Hisoka clinched it for us?” and then Killua says, “Or he stole our glory. Depends on how you look at it.” And then that’s where Hisoka comes in, saying, “We won, because we all worked together. That makes this a team victory.”

Jack: Ha! What a weirdo.

Keith: Well, it kind of mirrors one of the first things that he says to Gon, in the Hunter Exam.

Jack: Oh, in the show?

Keith: And he tells— I can’t remember the exact quote, but he, like, tells him to make sure he has good friends.

Jack: Oh, he does!

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: And, you know, it’s so— I can’t put my finger on exactly what this part of Hisoka’s character is. Like, it feels like: because this is what friends are for; you need someone to hold the ball sometimes. And it feels so out of character for him, like Gon says, but Hisoka does have Illumi. He has one green line.

Jack: He does.

Sylvia: Damn, he does. We have confirmed that.

Keith: He has one green line.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: So it's, like, hard to say that it's totally self serving.

Jack: Another way you could view it is that Hisoka sees Killua as instrumental in his cultivation of Gon.

Dre: Oh, I think that's true. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: I absolutely think that's true.

Jack: Hisoka can't get Gon where he wants Gon to be without Killua.

Keith: Right. Well, but he also— you know, he likes both of them. He's not, like, in there for Gon at the expense of Killua.

Sylvia: Yep.

Jack: He likes Gon a lot more than Killua, though.

Dre: That's true. When they're walking away, they both feel him looking at their butts
[**Sylvia:** Ugh!] and make him walk in front of them.

Jack: It's the fucking worst.

Keith: I think that what happens is that Hisoka sees how strong Killua is first and then realizes that they're more on the same level, and then his hooks work on Gon in a way that they don't work on Killua.

Jack: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Keith: And also he knows Illumi, and that is, like, kind of makes Killua a more dangerous issue.

Jack: Yes. Yes, it really does.

Keith: So it feels like his attention is on Gon, and I think it's just kind of a coincidence

that that's true. But, you know, maybe the deal is: obviously he has— all of this is wrapped up in, you know, the different ways that he's, you know, evil and dangerous and self serving and violent, but on the other hand, we have that episode where he has an apartment. He has a shower. He has a favorite candy. He has a childhood. He has a friend. Maybe he just thinks having a friend is good.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: He tries to make friends with Machi, you know? He tries to be closer to Machi. Is it—

Sylvia: Well, he does the thing Jack said, when we learned about the favorite candy and stuff, that it makes Hisoka kind of chilling when you realize he's an actual, just a guy.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, and I think that maybe, like, having a sort of even partially genuine pro-friends attitude makes him feel even weirder and grosser and worse.

Jack: Yeah. I agree.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: It doesn't have to be, like, a trick that he's playing. It could be a trick that Togashi is playing.

Dre: Friends are important, because who else will you find to murder you in a deathmatch at the end? [Jack and Keith laugh]

Jack: Well, it's time for everybody to shout at Ging now.

Keith: Oh, this is great. [Sylvia grumbles]

Jack: Because Razor tells Gon that Ging isn't here, and he doesn't know where he is. Gon—

Keith: There's a fun joke right before this. I'm sorry to interrupt you with a joke, but...

Jack: No. [Sylvia chuckles]

Keith: There's a really funny moment where Razor's like, "All right, just like we agreed, we'll all leave town." And everyone goes, like, "Oh yeah, I guess that was what this was about." Like, they had kind of all forgotten, and they never really cared.

Jack: [laughs] Yes.

Keith: And it's funny on its own, but then the second layer of, like, kind of dark comedy underneath that is, like, he killed Bopobo because, theoretically, everyone cares about pretending that it's a game, but no one here cares. [laughs]

Jack: Right. Not by now, no. No.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Also, it's another check mark in the fact that the Phantom Troupe just move different, where like, the Phantom Troupe figured this out instantly. And, you know.

Keith: Right, yes, yeah. Yeah. I love them.

Jack: Way before all of this business. They we're just like, "Oh, I don't think this is real." Maybe because they grew up in Meteor City, and nowhere feels real.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Damn.

Keith: Shalnark, just a smart guy, I think.

Jack: [cross] Yeah, Shalnark is their Kurapika?

Keith: [cross] Maybe Kurapika also would have been like, "I bet this is a real place." Probably.

Sylvia: If you've got that haircut, you're smart. [Keith and Jack laugh]

Jack: If you're a little *Dragon Quest* boy.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: It doesn't even matter how long it is in the back. If you've got it, it makes you smart. [Jack chuckles]

Jack: So, Gon— Razor tells Gon that Ging isn't here and he doesn't know where he is, and Gon, to his credit, and the vocal performer really sells this. He's like, "I sort of expected that." Razor starts by saying that he'll tell Gon some old stories and then immediately reveals that he is also a death row convict.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: He's murdered a lot of people.

Keith: I've got this quote, if I can read it here.

Sylvia: Please do.

Jack: Yeah...

Keith: He says— you maybe know?

Jack: No, it's...I don't really know what to do with this.

Keith: I have something about it. There's a few different things here. We can pause in between [Sylvia: Yeah.] the bits that I have, if we want to narrow in on anything. He says, "I too was a convict on death row. I was a murderer, caught and incarcerated. I was sentenced to death. Then Ging hired me to come here. He taught me something important: that if one person in this entire world believes in you, just one, you can be redeemed." [Sylvia chuckles]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Pause.

Keith: Pause.

Sylvia: Bro. [Jack laughs]

Keith: Bro.

Sylvia: He did not believe in you or give you a way to redeem yourself. He put you in a *Pokémon* gym where you're allowed to murder people with dodgeballs. [Jack laughs]

Keith: Okay. Okay.

Dre: Also, you're allowed to murder people just like you, who I guess you didn't decide it was important to believe in or give a chance to.

Keith: Look, I...

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Let's keep reading, and we'll talk about that.

Sylvia: Go ahead. I just...

Keith: I want to put a pin in that.

Sylvia: Yeah. Go ahead.

Keith: It cuts, flashback, to Ging and a slightly worse-looking Razor, saying— Ging says, "My son will come here one day." Is this the first time we've seen Ging speak? We've heard him speak.

Jack: Yeah. It is. It is. It's creepy.

Keith: "My son will come here one day. When that happens, give him a good beating."

Sylvia: Crazy. Crazy!

Keith: And they talk for a little bit, and then he puts his hand on Razor's shoulder, and he says, "Thanks. I'm counting on you, Razor," and then it cuts back to the present, and Razor says, "It felt like no one had ever called me by my name before."

Jack: Because being near Ging and Gon has an effect.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Something about...

Dre: Is this also where we get the flashback thing from Razor?

Keith: Which flashback thing?

Dre: It's a— he has, like, a flashback to, like, I think when he's a kid, and it's basically somebody, like—

Keith: Oh, yes. Yeah.

Dre: Calling him, like, shitty. And it's just, you know—

Sylvia: Oh, yeah, it's, like, right after this.

Dre: Yeah, and it's a— this is the second time we're getting this, right? Where we're seeing a person who is led into a life of violence because they are treated poorly as a kid.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Because it's also— oh, I forget his name, but the scissors pervert.

Keith: The scissors pervert, yeah.

Jack: Binolt.

Keith: Yeah, Binolt. Yeah.

Dre: Yeah. And I guess, again, it's saying that, like, well, the only reason Razor didn't end up like this is 'cause Ging believed in him.

Keith: Right.

Jack: Except, like Sylvi said, he is murdering people with dodgeballs, inside a...

Dre: Yeah, that's true.

Jack: This is also the Troupe.

Keith: I want to say, unequivocally—

Dre: But if you look at the EULA for Greed Island, you sign up, [Jack laughs] and you give consent to be killed in dodgeball, so...

Sylvia: No, that's true.

Keith: I want to say, unequivocally, that Razor should not have blown Bopobo's head off with an energy ball.

Sylvia: That's brave of you to say. [Jack chuckles]

Keith: I think that is 100% true that he should not have done that. The question is, I guess: why was he there? Who picked him? Like, he clearly was not of the same mind as the other 13 fake Devils.

Jack: Oh, Bopobo?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, I don't know.

[2:15:00]

Keith: But it seems like, you know, the game's been going on for a really long time, and I would imagine that makes you kind of stir crazy. I wouldn't say that, uh...I wouldn't say that, you know, no one believed in— that Razor didn't pass on the same thing. Maybe he tried, and Bopobo just keeps trying to fucking kill people.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: He certainly didn't seem very nice.

Sylvia: No, I think that's safe to say.

Keith: Our first impression of him was, like, he's torturing that guy.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: So, but I think that there's something about charisma that is— not just in *Hunter × Hunter*, but in *Hunter × Hunter*, it is, like, dangerous to be charismatic. The way that you can get people on your team by, like, having this sort of ineffable quality [**Dre:** Mm.] that makes people be like, “There's something about that guy,” that is shown to be wrong in, I think, the text. The text is always like: all of those people? There's something off happening there. There's something, like, not natural about the way that they're interacting with people, about the way that people gather around them.

Jack: Right.

Keith: You know, and like...you know, what does that mean? “It felt like no one had ever called me by my name before.” Like, how can you read that without it being, like, chilling that Razor is—

Jack: And sad.

Keith: And sad that Razor is here, years later, happily killing for his brief memory of

Ging?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah.

Keith: I shouldn't say brief. He did mention spending hours with Ging, talking all about his game.

Jack: Longer than Gon.

Keith: You know, Razor helped build the game. Razor's not just a guy that he broke out of jail to kill people in the dodgeball game.

Jack: I don't know. Hang on. Do we know that? Because—

Keith: They do say that they spent hours talking about the game and—

Jack: They spent hours TALKING about the game. The kind of horrifying read that I get on this— [chuckles] this is a great line. Past murderer Razor says, "Can I kill him?" of Gon, [Keith laughs] and Ging says, "Don't underestimate him." Razor says—

Sylvia: Doesn't say no!

Keith: Doesn't say no.

Jack: Razor says he always thought Ging was crazy. He was so excited like a little kid about the game, and then he hired, quote, "me, a condemned man, to fight his son. If felt like no one had ever called me by my name before. Ging believed in your strength, so he left you to me."

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Jack: "And I believed in your strength, which is why I didn't hold back." I think he has been put— I think his job is fight Gon.

Keith: Well, we— so, I think that that is his job. I think that's totally true, because the

only—

Jack: That's why he was hired.

Keith: He's the only real person that we've seen interacting with everyone that's, like, their job was to be an obstacle. Gon was supposed to play the game and get through, and this is the only, like, real person who is an obstacle in this way, so I think it's totally true. But the other thing we know is that he's a Game Master. He has, like, special Game Master abilities. He polices the perimeter. He's in charge of all this Emitter stuff. You know, this is the stuff that we got from the scene with the Spiders when he sends them on their way. You know. I don't know how much Razor built this game, but they do act like he's one of the creators.

Dre: I guess they also never really say when he learned Nen or if he's even a Hunter, I'm just now realizing.

Keith: No. I don't think they say that.

Sylvia: No.

Jack: No. And now they wrap the game up. The woman who told them to go and— oh, well, so, actually. Gon says he couldn't have won without everyone else, and Razor tells him to go find Ging, and this is like—

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: This is the victory, as far as Gon is concerned.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: The thing— you know, he went into the game sort of hoping that there would be a clue. This is as close as he can get to it, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Is like, the person who— he has passed the test.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: The person his dad put there is saying, "Continue with your search."

Keith: And it does feel like a specific and intentional test by Ging. Razor says, "Ging believed in your strength. That's why he left you to me. I believed in your strength too, which is why I didn't hold back." Gon kind of introduces the idea that everyone helps him, with this air of, like, "Maybe I didn't beat you?" until then Razor reassures him and goes like, "Yeah, that was good," and he goes, "Okay, yeah, that was good. Check."
[Keith and Dre laugh]

Jack: God, Gon. What a guy. The woman who hired them to do this reveals a light pointing out to a cave in the ocean, but she says that there is no treasure there. It's a sacred ground. And she tells this very short sort of, like, moving story about how the fishermen would never defile it, and so that's why they kind of kept it secret, even as they were tortured and killed for it by Razor and his men.

Sylvia: It's so *Dragon Quest*, by the way.

Keith: It's so funny.

Jack: As the sun comes up through a window, she's like, "This is the real treasure." You know, "I can see the sun come up, and I can imagine the fishermen coming back." This is hackneyed, but the performer is doing a really good job.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And Killua says, whispers to someone, "Don't forget that this is a story within the game, okay?" and then she finishes her story, and with a puff of smoke, [Keith laughs] disappears into the card Strip of Beach.

Keith: It's so funny!

Sylvia: It's SO funny. [Dre chuckles]

Keith: It's so side quest. It's so funny.

Jack: And Gon is like, “Yeah! We got Strip of Beach!” [Keith and Jack laugh]

Keith: This is where Hisoka leaves. He’s like, “I’ve had enough fun.” They invite him to be, like, a permanent ally, and he’s like, “No thanks.” And then he—

Jack: Yeah, Killua invites, because he’s curious about the Troupe.

Keith: Yeah. And it’s so funny. He leaves; he’s like, “Yeah, it’s fine. If you need me, you can find me with,” uh...I can’t even remember the, uh...

Jack: Yeah, it was some card combination.

Keith: The cards. And this is his intentional reveal that he was lying the whole time about not knowing the game.

Sylvia: It’s, like, Magnetic Field or something is the one that...

Keith: Yeah, Magnetic Field and the one from the other day.

Jack: Yeah, he knows exactly how to play the game.

Keith: Yeah. Hey knows all about the cards. He knows how to play the game. He was just fucking with them. And then Bisky—

Jack: Bisky says—

Keith: Yeah. Sorry, you can go. You can read it.

Jack: Bisky says, “There are people who tell lies, like, in order to get their goals, and then there are liars who also lie without reason. You and I,” Killua and Bisky, “are the former, and he is the latter.”

Keith: Yeah. “There’s no use fretting about it,” she says. [laughs]

Jack: Yeah. He’s Hisoka. He’s going to be doing this.

Keith: He’s Hisoka, yeah. He’s apparently famous for it.

Jack: And then, final business with Genthru. So, Tsezguerra is contacted by the Bomber. Asta and co., all of the previous, you know, Kazsule and co. The implication is that they have all been killed by the Bomber. And the Bomber asks them to hand over the card. Gon, furious that Asta has been killed, Asta and co. have been killed, basically says, [chuckles] “I’m gonna fuck you up.” [Dre chuckles] And Genthru has a great line. He says, “Who the hell are you?” [Keith laughs] hearing Gon down the phone for the first time, ‘cause he’s just been working with Tsezguerra. Meanwhile, Phinks contacts Hisoka as he leaves, since they have found the exorcist.

Keith: Yep. Great little note stuck in there.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: It was nice to hear from Phinks.

Jack: It was nice to hear from Phinks. Still no idea what his power is. [Keith laughs] And then, as we move towards—

Dre: Well, we’ve now learned it’s not getting yelled at on the phone, so.

Jack: [chuckles] He’s so bad at the telephone.

Sylvia: Finally, hey.

Keith: Oh yeah, he finally has a successful telephone call.

Dre: Yeah, just a normal phone call. [chuckles]

Jack: Rare. Rare W for Phinks on the telephone.

Keith: I love this. This is just, like, a fun little thing. We finally have some material, you know, like, plot scaffolding from the error of assuming that children are children, are normal children. Like, it’s always worked out in their favor that they’re underestimated, but finally some plot happens because of it. Genthru assumes that Tsezguerra has the original Strip of Beach card and not the clone and also assumes—

Jack: Yeah, they made some copies.

Keith: Also assumes that Gon's team will be easier to beat, so they basically decide together to go after Tsezguerra's troupe while they're weak and to take his legitimate Strip of Beach card. Meanwhile, that is the best case scenario for them, because Tsezguerra's like, "Look, I can't beat Genthru. You might be able to, if we play a cat and mouse game with them while you recover and train and think of a plan."

Sylvia: How long do they say they can distract them for?

Keith: One to three weeks. It was kind of—

Jack: Yeah. First, they say one week, but then, as the plan develops, and I think as Tsezguerra sort of begins to have a little more faith that Gon's team is going to do it and is going to give them the Alexandrite at the end, which is a nice moment of, like, Gon's team is never interested in beating the game. They're happy to hand over the Alexandrite to, you know, a team that they like that isn't Genthru. He sort of ups it to, like, "We will try our best to keep Genthru off your back for three weeks, but Genthru is a really capable opponent, so you are going to need to formulate a plan." And this is kind of where we leave Bisky, Gon, and Killua, having successfully detached themselves from Hisoka. [chuckles]

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Getting ready to figure out how to beat the Bomber. Something I want to point out is that after Gon sort of blows up on the phone to Genthru, Tsezguerra scolds him, saying that he was selfish and foolish to antagonize Genthru like that. Not—

Keith: Yeah, he says— oh, sorry, yeah?

Jack: Not just because it would put you in danger, but because it would put Killua in danger. You know, Tsezguerra has identified that this is a source of tension. And Gon is moved by this.

Keith: Yeah, he seems to have a genuine little apology moment, although he

apologizes to Tsezguerra, not to Killua.

Jack: He does. Yes, he does.

Sylvia: Yep.

Keith: Wait, he does apologize to Killua?

Jack: No, no, no. I'm agreeing with you.

Keith: Okay. Right.

Jack: It's notable that he, yeah. Yeah, and that's, I think, where we leave it.

Keith: Yeah, that's it.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Final Thoughts [2:25:27]

Keith: Any big notes for this one? Any overall things? Anything that we missed?

Jack: This was great. Togashi—

Sylvia: Oh!

Jack: Oh, sorry. Go ahead, Sylvi.

Sylvia: I just have one little thing. There's a really good— I don't know if it's in 70 or 71.

Keith: Yep.

Sylvia: There's a really good just electric guitar rendition of the ending theme.

[clip of "Reason ~ Instrumental" begins playing]

Jack: Oh, yes, there is.

Sylvia: I really liked it.

Keith: I meant to talk about both of the new songs from 70 and forgot to do either, so here we go.

Sylvia: Well, you're welcome.

Keith: You can hear this, right?

Sylvia: Yep.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah. This is very *Final Fantasy* sort of...

[music finishes]

Jack: Oh, it's also very *Nier Automata*.

Sylvia: Little bit.

Keith: Oh, yeah, yeah. So, there is another new song. It's got a very— so, that was just called "Reason ~ Instrumental". There's another new one that plays during Gon's power-up moment when he's getting ready to launch his final attack on— in episode 70, so I think that's the second of his big punches. And that one is weirdly called "The Emperor's Time".

Sylvia: Oh, huh.

Keith: Yeah. Which, that's weird, right?

Sylvia: Weird.

Jack: Huh.

Keith: That that's called "The Emperor's Time"?

Jack: Sorcerer Time, right?

Keith: What's that? Yeah, that's, uh...

Jack: Sorcerer Time.

Keith: Right, yeah, Sorcerer Time. Yeah, they get it wrong on the show all the time, 'cause it's actually called Sorcerer Time. [Jack chuckles]

Dre: Mm, mm-hmm.

Keith: But it's a really fun fight song. I feel like, uh...oh, I'm forgetting the composer's name.

Jack: Do you have it on the board?

Keith: I do have it. Yeah, I do have it.

Jack: Hirano.

Keith: Hirano is, like, so good at stretching into genres, but something that he is great at every time [clip of "The Emperor's Time" begins playing] is electric guitars and drums.

[music ends]

Jack: This is wild!

Keith: It's really good.

Jack: Yeah, that's great.

Keith: Highly recommend people go listen to "The Emperor's Time".

Jack: Sorcerer's Time.

Keith: Right, yes. You won't find it, because, again, they got it wrong in the show. [Jack chuckles]

Dre: Mm, mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Jack: I loved these episodes. They were great.

Keith: These were great.

Jack: Togashi did something that he doesn't often do, which is that, you know, Togashi loves to set up one sort of genre move and then pivot away from it. He genuinely both managed to do an exciting shonen dodgeball fight and, like, a sudden unveiling of a lot of character dynamics at the same time.

Keith: It's so funny that that is, like, the reputation that Togashi has based on *Hunter × Hunter*, when, like, I first and longest knew him as the *Yu Yu Hakusho* guy, where the main thing about that show is, like, setting up to something and committing to it for an extremely long time.

Jack: [laughs] But we—

Keith: [knowingly] I wonder if that's going to happen in this show.

Jack: Oh, gee, I wonder. Well, you'll learn about that not next time but maybe the time after. [Keith and Dre chuckle] Something I am curious about is, um, Yorknew City began quite gently. Do you remember there's that, um...

Keith: It did. They're on the boat.

Jack: Yeah. The thing *The Simpsons* does all the time is, like, begin an episode in one way, and you're never sure, like, what this episode is going to be about. You know—

Keith: Yeah, they'll introduce the A plot as a consequence of, like, the first eight minutes.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And I am so curious about whether or not the thing that Chimera Ant is about, the thing, whatever it is, that's going to propel us through, you know, almost as much of the show as we have already watched [**Keith:** Yeah.] is going to be apparent quickly or if it's going to be like boiling the frog by degrees, and we're only going to realize [**Keith:** Sure.] we're in it, you know, when it's already here.

Keith: Propel is an interesting word.

Jack: [thoughtfully, suspiciously] Hmm. Okay. Yeah. I don't know.

[Keith cackles, Jack imitates the cackle, both laugh]

Dre: Oh no, Evil Keith is here!

Jack: Evil Keith! I have had so much fun with this show in its various configurations that there's not a single bit of me that's like, "and now the real *Hunter × Hunter* begins with the Chimera Ant Arc."

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Instead, I think the thing that I'm feeling is just the excitement that my curiosity is about to get rewarded, [chuckles] you know?

Keith: Yeah. You know, it's always, like...it's never a sure thing. Like, I don't know that liking...I'm kind of shocked that the Chimera Ant Arc has the reputation that it has, because it is structurally difficult.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: It's not the thing that, like, is so obvious that will gel with people, and I think that it's due to the strength of a lot of its component parts that someone who's like—

Jack: That it even works at all.

Keith: Yeah, or that— or not that it works, but that, like, that people are willing to go along with the ride. I think that, like, if it were weaker, it might have a worse reputation without actually being worse.

Jack: Interesting. Yeah. I'm excited. I'm excited. Let's see. *Hunter × Hunter* has 140 episodes?

Keith: Uh, 144, something like that.

Jack: We are at episode 68.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Chimera Ant is probably going to be starting around 72, 73, and Chimera Ant is 60-something episodes long. Okay, so there will be some *Hunter × Hunter* after Chimera Ant. We're not going into the final extremely long arc.

Sylvia: No.

Keith: No.

Dre: Mm-mm.

Jack: Okay.

Sylvia: Well, it is the final arc that's extremely long.

Keith: Right.

Jack: Yes. [laughs]

Dre: True, true, true.

Jack: Okay. I didn't— 'cause that's some context that I'm glad we sort of did the math there. I didn't know whether or not we were— you know, the rest of the road was very long, but it was one stretch of road.

Keith: Right. It's like a stretch of road and a driveway.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah, you gotta pull into your driveway at the end of the journey.

Keith: Do we want to hear about the next episodes that we're watching?

Jack: I would love to.

Sylvia: Yes.

Keith: We're watching episodes 72, "Chase × And × Chance"; 73, "Insanity × And × Sanity".

Jack: Ooh.

Sylvia: Damn.

Keith: [laughs quietly] Episode 74, “Victor × And × Loser”; and episode 75, “Ging's Friends × And × True Friends”.

Sylvia: I swear to god, I thought you were going to say “Ging's Mistake.” [Keith and Jack laugh]

Keith: Four eps.

Jack: Ah, Ging's mistake. Four eps.

Dre: Four eps!

Jack: Okay. Four eps!

Keith: Four eps.

[[“The Boy in Green”](#) begins playing]

Jack: And four eps to you. [Sylvia and Keith laugh]

Sylvia: And a four eps be with you.

Keith: And a four eps to you.

Dre: And also with you. [Jack chuckles]

[song plays out]