

Indoor Ant/Outdoor Ant - Hunter x Hunter ep. 86-88: Media Club Plus S01E27

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Introduction

Jack: Hit it, maestro!

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

Keith: Welcome to Media Club Plus, a podcast about drive—a podcast about *diving*
[Sylvia laughs] 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 x Hunter*, based on the manga by Yoshihiro Togashi. My name is Keith J. Carberry, you can find me on x.com, the famous and well-liked website, x.com, [keithjcarberry](#). You can also find me on [Bluesky](#) now, tweeting up a storm on a site that doesn't technically have tweets on them. I don't care about it. I'm doing it anyway. Why not. [Sylvia laughs] Uh, also, by the time you're hearing this, um, the Run Button, [youtube.com/runbutton](#), uh, *Metal Gear Solid Three* let's play will be completed and you should go watch all of the *Metal Gear Solid* stuff, especially, I think, *One* and *Two*. Not that the *Three* is the worst of the three, it's just we didn't like the game as much, so... [Sylvia: Wow.] So uh, why don't you go listen to the—to the—I know—I know, I heard for [cross] years and years—

Sylvia: [cross] *Three*'s my favorite.

Keith: [cross] —that *Three* was everyone's favorite. I really think it's not very good of a game.

Sylvia: I...I...we can talk about this another time.

Keith: Sure.

Sylvia: I like it 'cause it's a puzzle game.

Dre: Mmm.

Keith: Uh, I think they're all puzzle games in a way.

Sylvia: They are all puzzle games and I just think *Three* is my favorite—um, wait—*Two* is good too.

Keith: Yeah.

[Sylvia makes hesitant noise]

Keith: Uh, let's see, and hey, we're closer than ever to fully caught up uploading all the streams and stuff on [twitch.tv/friendsatthetable](#) over to [youtube.com/friendsatthetable](#) so

you should go to those to watch us stream live then watch us have streamed live if you wanna do that. Those streams are great. I can't stress enough how good Run Button and the YouTube—and the Friends at the Table streams are. I have a blast doing all of them and they're all really fun, and with me as always is Jack de Quidt.

Jack: Hi, I'm Jack. You can get any of the music featured on this show or on Friends at the Table at notquitereal.bandcamp.com.

Keith: You've heard Sylvi Bullet already. Sylvi?

Sylvia: Hey it's me, the yapper. Uh, you can find me everywhere as sylvibullet. Sylvi spelled without the E. And, I guess you mentioned all the YouTube and stuff. You can check out friendsatthetable.shop, we have a new shirt for the tenth anniversary of Friends at the Table up there. And—

Keith: [cross] The *tenth* anniversary of Friends at the Table?!

Jack: [cross] Ten years?!

Dre: [cross] Ten!

Sylvia: I know, right?

Dre: Hit the button, Keith.

Sylvia: There's a poster as well.

Keith: Uh.

[clip of "Chain Bastard" begins.]

Jack: [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah, okay!

Dre: Yeah, that one works

[music ends]

Jack: Um, yeah, we have a—

Keith: I didn't know what button, so that was the—oh, I actually do know what button.

[Dre laughs] It was—I know that what you wanted was this.

Keith's soundboard: F-f-f-f-friendsatthetable.cash.

Dre: Yep.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: [laughs]

Keith's soundboard: F-f-f-f-friendsatthetable.

Keith, Sylvia, and Jack: [Shop!](#)

[Everyone laughs]

Jack: Yeah, we have a—we have a really cool anniversary shirt designed by Raven Warner, it features ten characters from Friends at the Table dancing in a ring, and let me tell you, the discussions that went into getting those ten characters were complex, and most of them initially happened before we said to the cast, “What characters of yours would you like to see?” [Sylvia laughs] [Keith: Mm.] Because we initially put together some lists, and then it was basically like one of those shootouts where everybody fires simultaneously and falls over. [Sylvia laughs] And then we said, “All right, well we'll just ask people what—what—what they want.” But the shirt is—is so cool. And we also have another piece of anniversary merch, we have a tenth anniversary poster, designed by the great Annie Johnston-Glick. I am so excited about it, and it comes in—I am doing my very best salesperson spiel. It comes in three handy sizes: a small poster, a slightly larger poster, and then a cute little postcard if you want to, I don't know, hold it in a large pocket of yours and pull it out and show it to people occasionally, say, “Look, it's the tenth anniversary.”

Sylvia: Oh.

Keith: The people want to shop!

Sylvia: Why are you closed!

Jack: The people want to shop!

Sylvia: [cross] Toronto heritage moment.

Keith: [laughs] [cross] Right now we're closed, but by the time this is out, we will be open at friendsatthetable.shop.

Jack: Friendsatthetable.shop.

Keith's soundboard: F-f-f-f-friendsatthetable.cash. [rimshot sound effect]

Jack and Dre: [Shop!](#)

Keith: [laughs] I meant—I hit—I wasn't looking. I meant to hit this.

Keith's soundboard: [airhorn noise]

Keith: I meant to hit that.

Sylvia: Nice. I like the— [laughs] the—rimshot a lot more, actually.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: [laughs] It's way better.

Keith: It's—yes.

Jack: Introduce Dre.

Keith: Dre, how are you?

Dre: I'm good.

Sylvia: [laughs]

Dre: Hey, if you wanna follow me, you can follow me on Instagram, [@andrewleeswan](#). Here's the last three things I've posted on Instagram: number one, uh, tool organization in my workshop.

Keith: Nice.

Jack: Hell yeah.

Dre: Number two, cookies I made.

Keith: Nice.

Sylvia: Oh.

Dre: Number three, my dog.

Keith: You've got an excellent set of color coordinated tools.

Dre: Thanks!

Sylvia: May—what type of cookies? I haven't seen them.

Dre: They were uh, a style—a Levain-style, I think that's how you pronounce it?

Sylvia: Oh.

Dre: Uh, it's a bakery in New York and they make like big, fuckoff, like huge thick cookies.

Sylvia: Cool.

Dre: And I made them specifically 'cause we made an ice cream with them to give to my father-in-law for his birthday.

Sylvia: Oh, fuck yeah.

Jack: That's great.

Keith: Is the tool picture the one I'm thinking of where it was all—all the green?
No—no—okay. I'm looking—

Dre: [cross] Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. That's one of 'em.

Keith: [cross] Oh, it was that. Okay.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah, it's one of 'em.

Keith: We watched these three episodes.

Dre: Hell yeah we did.

Keith: We watched episodes 86, 87, and 88. Uh, uh, any broad thoughts before we hit the recap? Anything that we're excited to talk about?

Jack: I—

Sylvia: These are funny.

Jack: Yeah, they are—there's a sort of tone trick being played here.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: There is, I talk—yes.

Jack: The place to talk about the tone trick is—is probably after the recap.

Keith: Mm-hm.

Jack: I had a good time with these episodes. They are sort of like dogleg, in terms of the main plot.

Keith: Dogleg?

Jack: Like we've doubled back on ourselves.

Dre: Ohhh.

Keith: Ohh, I've never heard that.

Sylvia: Oh, that's fun.

Dre: Me neither.

Jack: Oh.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Um—

Sylvia: Is that a British thing?

Jack: It might be. Well, I'd just assumed it was a thing everybody said and I learned maybe six seconds ago that it might be a British thing.

Dre: Yeah. Sure.

Keith and Sylvia: [laugh]

Dre: I bet the same guy that made up dog holes made up dogleg.

Sylvia: Yeah, but we don't wanna talk about that.

Keith: This is like—this is like me learning about Hoodsie Cups is not—is not everywhere.

Dre: What?

Keith: You don't have Hoodsie Cups.

Jack: We absolutely don't, no, Keith, we don't have Hoodsie Cups.

Keith: Hoodsie Cups is a New England dessert. It's Hood, which is a local dairy uh, distributor, manufacturer, dairy farm, I don't know what they— **[Jack laughs]** **[Sylvia:**

Sure.] But they also make a dessert treat called the Hoodsie Cup, which is basically like a half, a quarter of a pint—it's like three ounces— [Dre: Oh, sure.] it's like three ounces of ice cream, usually half vanilla, half chocolate, in a little cardboard cup with a lid that you peel off—

Jack: Sounds lovely.

Keith: And then you eat it with like a tongue depressor. [laughs]

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I've—I've had these. They were not called Hoodsie Cups, [Sylvia: Sure.] 'cause that wasn't the brand, but yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: I believe Hoodsie Cup—Hoodsie invented this. I don't know, but I think that—

Dre: I hope they did!

Keith: I hope they did!

Dre: And you know what, I hope they did.

Keith: I hope they did.

Jack: Something that I think is really funny about this, firstly, is that when you say, "This a regional milk-based snack"—

Sylvia: That's such a funny phrase.

Jack: —You would think that you would put—you wouldn't put a comma in that at all, but what this actually is is a regional milk, comma, based-snack, [Keith laughs] in that it's like a local milk company.

Keith: Right. Yes, it's a regional milk milk snack.

Jack: Also—yes. Um, and this blew my mind when I came to America, because Americans haven't figured out how to do this yet, and it's a—it's a number one, like, [Keith: Oh, do—] quality of life improver.

Dre: Hmm!

Jack: In the UK, at shows and theaters, during the intermission, they serve tiny little pots of ice cream that you eat with a tongue depressor.

Sylvia: Oh.

Jack: They serve Hoodsie Cups, basically.

Dre: Oh.

Keith: Look at—look at the—look at the logo on this. This is unbelievable—it's so good.

Dre: It is good.

Jack: What is the lo—woah! Okay!

Keith: It's un—it's such good branding. It's really great.

Jack: This looks like it is a logo for a sort of like, um—

Sylvia: Oh, that's cute.

Jack: Soda shop from the 50's, [**Keith:** Yes.] [**Dre:** Yeah.] except the logo has been rendered out into the 60's, so [**Keith:** Yes.] it's this—all this sort of like, very like, bubbly sort of like, lurid letterwork of the 60's, and then these red polka dots, and it just says, "Hoodsie" on it.

Keith: It's popped right out of the Golden Age of Cinema.

Sylvia: [laughs]

Jack: It—it has. I bet Steven Spielberg was—where was he from.

Keith: I think he's from California.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Aw, shit. Steven Spielberg was eating In-N-Out burgers, and like **[Keith: Yeah.]** inventing new ways to move the camera.

Sylvia: Filming his—his mom.

Keith: He went to school in California at least, I dunno, maybe he didn't grow up there.

Dre: Woah.

Jack: [laughs] Filming his—his mom crashing trains into each other.

Sylvia: That's the only thing I know about *The Fabelmans*, I still haven't seen that, but I know that it's like, weird. [laughs]

Jack: Um, so all this is to say, no I don't really have thoughts about these *Hunter x Hunter* episodes prior to the recap.

Sylvia: Okay.

Keith: Okay. [laughs]

Dre: [laughs]

Keith: [laughing] Great, I'm glad that we got that all in.

Summary [0:09:15]

Keith: Okay, so, we've talked about a lot about how this—this season seems to be incorporating some horror elements. In a very funny way, a lot of those horror elements have sort of melted down into sitcom and melodrama scenarios, **[Dre: Mm-hm.]** which is very funny, and then these episodes twist that and it introduces like, sitcom and melodrama elements that then get boi—baked into like a horror cake. **[Sylvia laughs]** And this comes in the form a new character named Palm. **[Dre laughs]** Palm is not one of the assassins that Gon and Killua **[Jack laughs]** are sent to eliminate. She's actually their ally. If she—if they beat—if they beat the assassins, Knuckle Bine and Shoot McMahon, **[Sylvia laughs]** then she gets to go with them to the NGL, which she wants

because she's in love with Knov, one of the two Hunters, uh, that uh, are accompanying Netero. Uh, she wants to do that really badly, and she's willing to kill to make it happen. Not kill Knuckle Bine and Shoot McMahon, but kill Gon, Killua, and Bisky, who's there with a new outfit, new hairstyle, and same old attitude. Uh, and while this training to beat Knuckle and Shoot occurs, there's movement in the NGL, specifically downward movement into a pocket dimension, where Knov is sending Ants by the squadron-load under cover of Morel's pipe smoke, uh, **[Sylvia laughs]** into a weird little interdimensional room that uh, Netero is waiting in to punch all the Ants to pieces. Into little bitty Ant pieces. **[Jack laughs]** And, while all this is happening, the remaining two Royal Guards are born. Do we wanna say their names, or should we wait?

Jack: Oh, let's wait.

Keith: Let's wait.

Dre: Yeah, let's wait.

Keith: You'll wanna hear the names, folks.

Sylvia: They're so—yeah, you—

Keith: [laughs]

Jack: You wanna hear the names.

Sylvia: Stay tuned, [cross] you're gonna wanna hear these names!

Keith: [cross] Yeah, you're gonna wanna hear these names. Oh!

Episode 86 [0:11:19]

Jack: As if a clock has hit its maximum and a bell has rung and it needs to happen again, Chairman—we learn that the little tiles that Chairman Netero gave Gon and Killua at the end of the last episode as part of this sort of like, assassin thing, are tiles from the game of shogi, um, which is sort of often referred to as “Japanese chess.” It is its own

thing. It is a two player competitive board game. Chairman Netero can't help it and he is literally pulling the boys into a game, uh, once again.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Even when the very fate of the world is—is, uh, y'know, all to play for, Chairman Netero says, "Well, why don't we play for it?" and, y'know, introduces shogi tiles as—as the things that the boys need to interact with. And—and he says, "Y'know, you need to beat my two assassins and you need to take their pieces. They have the other halves of these shogi tiles."

Keith: Yeah, I don't remember exactly what, uh, Knov and Morel say, but it's something like, "He—the Chairman really loves to take risks."

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: He says something like that—or really—he likes to make bi—like risky gambles, or something, and then they make their own bet.

Sylvia: It's the—it's definitely about gambling—

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: 'Cause then they have a little, like [cross] interlude about gambling, yeah.

Keith: [cross] They have their own side bet. Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hm.

Jack: It's...and we'll get into it, because I think the moment that it actually starts happening it—it feels very sudden, and—and kind of transformative. But we begin to get a bit of a hint as to like how Chairman Netero operates when he's out in the world on a mission, um, and uh, while still not really revealing the extent of his Nen power. And to see Chairman Netero kind of in like, um, like—like full-scale professional active mode as

we get later, uh, really helps inform his, “He like to take risks,” “He’s playing weird games with people.” Um, Keith was not kidding when—when he said, “He’s hanging out in a pocket dimension punching Ants into small pieces.”

Keith: Yeah, he’s literally down there wearing athleisure...

Sylvia: [laughs]

Keith: Got athleisure wear on. And uh, punching—there’s just like—there’s a shot where he’s just in a room full of dozens of totally dismembered Ants.

Jack: Um, but Gon and Killua head out of the NGL—or no, they’re out of the NGL already. They—they—they get further away and into a place that’s sort of Vienna. I don’t really know where this is.

Keith: It is very Italian, yeah.

Dre: [chuckles]

Jack: It—Vienna is not in Italy, Keith.

Keith: No, no, you’re right, it’s in...Austria.

Jack: It is...I think it is in Austria, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Oh.

Keith: [cross] I know exactly where—

Jack: [cross] I don’t know where Vienna is, but I know it’s—

Sylvia: [cross] Apologies to Vienna, I don’t know.

Jack: If you’re from Vienna, [cross] write a five star review on [laughing] Apple Podcasts and let us know what country you’re in.

Keith: [cross] Yeah, it's Austria, it's Austria, it's Austria.

Jack: Okay. Um. And almost immediately, they encounter a, uh, who I described in my notes as a sinister entity. Do we want to talk a bit about how Palm, which is spelled P-A-L-M, like, center of your hand, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] is introduced?

Keith: Palm Siberia.

Jack: Woah! That's her full name?

Keith: Yep.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Palm Siberia.

Dre: Palm Siberia.

Sylvia: She looks like, um, the girl from *The Ring*.

Jack: She does look like S...

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: I do. I wrote—I wrote *The Grudge*, but I almost wrote *The Ring*, 'cause I can't remember which one looks like which.

Sylvia: I feel like *The Grudge* is just like a little kid. *The Ring* I remem—*The Ring*—and I'm blanking on her name right now.

Jack: Oh—

Dre: Well *The Ring*'s like a younger girl too, I think.

Sylvia: It is a younger girl too, but has the very distinct, like, [cross] creepy hair kinda face thing.

Jack: [cross] *The Grudge* is—

Dre: [cross] It's the creepy hair, yeah.

Jack: [cross] —black hair over her face. Big eyes.

Keith: [cross] Oh, *The Grudge* also has the creepy hair.

Sylvia: Oh really?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: I haven't seen *The Grudge*. I'm a fraud. Um.

Jack: *The Grudge* is good. Um—

Dre: Yeah. I don't watch those, I'm baby.

Keith: I don't watch those, I'm baby.

[0:15:00]

Sylvia: I love those, I'm just a faker.

Jack: She looks a bit like Sadako from *The Ring*, [**Sylvia:** Sadako, yeah.] or Kayako from *The Grudge*, except like her hair has either been wet and hasn't dried fully, or has sort of frizzled and fried away. [**Keith:** Yeah.] Rather than having sort of like a sheet of hair over her face like Kortopi, it is almost like dangling down in these presumably very irritating to draw threads. [**Everyone** laughs] They are all over her face and body.

Keith: It looks—it looks wet or greasy or—it looks distinctly unpleasant.

Dre: It looks like ah, what's the—it looks like—like crispy to me.

Jack: Yes. Yeah. Yeah. And she has a very sharp face, very big eyes, uh, pale—pale skin. Her—the—the impression you get from her straight away is that she is, y'know, barely restraining herself from violence, and that's true, [**Keith:** Yeah.] [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] that is sort of what we learn about her immediately.

Sylvia: That is accurate.

Jack: But we also, um—she is, like all of Togashi’s great scary characters, um, ready to kind of say what her deal is. Like Keith said. She is one of Knov’s pupils who has been sent out of the NGL, or rather has not been allowed into the NGL, because Knov says that she is not ready. And she is uh, um, like adamantly devoted towards her master, and it is not initially clear whether she is—or rather, she can’t quite tell whether the thing she is feeling is like, deep devotion—I think she explicitly says like, “I don’t love him. I’m not in love with him.” But then she overpleads her case. [cross] She has tangled up this...

Keith: [cross] Yeah, I think it comes across as a lie.

Jack: Yes.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: It’s the least convincing lie we’ve had in this show I think. [laughs]

Jack: “I’m not devoted to him, I just—I just—I’m—or rather, I don’t love him, I’m just so devoted to him.” And you know, this is a nice moment where—

Sylvia: Sorry, was that Palm or Killua?

Everyone: [laughs]

Jack: This is a nice moment where the scope of—of what is going on is kind of revealed to us a bit, because to hear Chairman Netero say it, it’s just sort of like, “Look, Gon and Killua, I don’t know if you’re ready to do this yet, so you go out and kill two assassins. Or—or take shogi tiles of two assassins, [Keith: Right.] and then you’ll be ready to join us in the NGL.” And what Palm’s arrival sort of reveals, and—and what we learn about the two assassins a little later, is that the whole squad, Morel and Knov, are both doing this. We have like, masters out in the field, and then a sort of Hunter Battle Royale in [Dre: Mm-hm.] [Keith: Right.] Vienna to determine who they’re going to send in as secondary people. Now, this is like straight out of the Hunter playbook, the Hunters

have never turned down a Battle Royale for younger people whenever they get the opportunity.

Keith: No, they start with the Battle Royale.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah, I was about to say, this is Hunter Exam three at this point. [laughs]

Sylvia: It's page one of the handbook.

Jack: But I do think that there is something about the fact that Netero looked down at Killua in this moment of like distress, in this like, utter breaking down of what he believed he was capable of. Y'know, remember, at the end of the NGL sequence Killua essentially believes that he killed Kite. [**Keith:** Yeah.] Y'know, he said, "Kite thought we were less—we were worth less than a one-armed Kite." Et cetera. And so—

Keith: Someone—someone said—I wanna bring this up just because uh, someone said this in a comment somewhere, and I didn't check—I didn't fact check it, but someone said that um, Killua's actually saying that about Pitou, saying—calling Pitou—Pitou is the "he" that thought they were worth less than a one-armed Kite, and that Pitou hops out—

Sylvia: Oh, that would make sense.

Dre: Ohhhh.

Keith: —Says, "We didn't get attacked because—because he was more interested in Kite than in us."

Dre: That makes sense.

Jack: Oh that—that line read makes so much more sense.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: I remember in the last episode I was like, what was Killua talking about, but yeah. Thinking of—thinking of Pitou there as the, “He evaluated our combat capabilities.”

Keith: Right.

Jack: Anyway. All this is to say that in this moment, this really low moment for Killua, Netero looks down at him and he says, “If you want to come to the NGL, I have placed two assassins in Vienna. [Sylvia laughs] You have to take them out, [Keith: Yeah.] and then you can come in.” Rather than saying, “Welcome to Hunter Exam Three, Killua. [Keith laughs] There is like a whole little ecosystem of pupils who want to come and join us, [Keith: Yeah.] join that fight instead of this one.”

Keith: It really is another little Hunter Exam. Um, it’s also a lie. These aren’t assassins.

Jack: No, they’re other pupils!

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, it’s like, why did you lie? [laughs] To make it more intriguing?

Sylvia: I wonder if that’s just like—’cause it’s an assassin game, right? Like, that’s the thing, is like—

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: They’re not assassins in occupation, but that is kind of what they’re trying to do to each other in theory.

Jack: See, I hear you Sylvi, but in the world of *Hunter x Hunter*, [Sylvia: Yeah.] where the—the boy in question you are talking to is from a famous family of celebrity assassins...

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Fair enough.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: You know, you've got to be specific.

Dre: I mean I do—I also do wonder if that says more about Netero, and like Netero's conception of like, the only way to handle the Ants is to assassinate them, whereas like, one of the first things we learn—not one of the first, but one of the things we learn about Knuckle is he is a guy who explicitly says, "We shouldn't just kill something because we don't understand it."

Keith: Right. Very—very Gon-like.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Super, super Gon-coded.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: We'll—we'll—we'll get into Knuckle and—and Knuckle is so, so cool. [laughs]
What a funny character.

Dre: [laughs]

Keith: I love Knuckle.

Sylvia: I love him.

Keith: Uh, uh, by the way, do you—did you listen to—actually I don't remember if um—I can't remember if it was about the English VA or the Japanese VA that it's the same actor as one of the—as the Nijimura brother that we spend—

Sylvia: Okuyasu?

Keith: Yeah, yeah. That—I can't remember who that was about.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Really? Oh, that's great. Yeah.

Sylvia: I'll check.

Jack: I got big Okuyasu vibes from him actually.

Dre: Mmm.

Jack: Kind of like, like a—I was about to say like a gentler Okuyasu, but the Okuyasu twist is that he's actually kind of a softie.

Keith: Which is also the—the Knuckle twist.

Jack: The Knuckle twist, yeah.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: This is—and it's also—[cross] he's also the same as Kuwabara from *YuYu Hakusho*.

Dre: [cross] It's Kuwabara, too, right? Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: It's also the Kuwabara twist.

Jack: I mean, this is a stock character, right? Y'know.

Keith: Yeah, the—the—the—god, what is it? I don't wanna—it's the—

Sylvia: It's the Japanese voice actor, by the way.

Dre: Ah.

Sylvia: That is Okuyasu's voice actor.

Keith: Okay.

Sylvia: Which means I believe this performance comes before that if I'm remembering? Yeah.

Jack: If you would like to hear about us talk about Okuyasu, a loud-mouthed, brash, [Keith: Yeah.] deeply likeable uh, um, how else to describe Okuyasu?

Sylvia: Delinquent?

Jack: Yeah, delinquent. You can listen to our bonus episodes talking about *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure* over at the Friends at the Table Patreon, [friendsatthetable.cash](https://www.patreon.com/friendsatthetable). We have a bunch of really cool bonus episodes. I had so much fun watching uh, *JoJo*. I actually think there's a lot of *JoJo* in these episodes, not just because—

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Yes.

Dre: Mmm.

Jack: —the VA for Okuyasu is—is here.

Keith: Yeah. And buckle up. [laughs]

Jack: [laughs]

Keith: Uh, yeah, just to—

Sylvia: Knuckle up.

Keith: Just to—Knuckle up, yeah. Uh, another long line of great 90's characters inspired by the uh, bosozoku like, biker gang uh, stereotype in Japan.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Mm-hm.

Dre: Mm-hm.

Jack: Yeah. I'd like to talk—

Sylvia: It's such a good look for a character, it's just so—yeah.

Keith: And attitude. Just like, a horrible delinquent who's fundamentally kindhearted and misunderstood. [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah, it's great.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: It's just like—it's just over and over and over again, I'm like, oh I just love this every time.

Jack: [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah, it's always gonna hit.

Jack: Um, some—some more stuff about Palm, really quickly. Um, I think that there's a really fun thing going on here in that Palm has found herself sort of trapped in like a reverse Baise situation. Do you remember Baise from um, **[Keith: Oh!]** what was her name? Beess? [cross] Baise.

Sylvia: [cross] No, Baise.

Keith: [cross] Yeah, yeah from—

Dre: [cross] I think it was like Baise. [with a 'Z' sound]

Keith: [cross] Baise, yeah.

Jack: Oh, Baise, [with a 'Z' sound] yes. The woman who kisses you and you sort of become like a hypnotized thrall to her.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Right.

Dre: Mm-hm.

Jack: You get hearts over your eyes, and she usually uses this to like, manipulate you and then kill you almost immediately.

Sylvia: And then she got killed by a vacuum.

Jack: And then she got killed by a vacuum in one second.

Sylvia: Yeah. With a vacuum.

Jack: Um, uh, uh, Palm is sort of a reverse Baise in like the effect and the love. She has sort of like, turned an obsessional focus onto her master, who has shown no real—she's sort of like um, Baise-powered herself into a problem. Um. **[Dre laughs]** And I do think that in a show like this, which is so interested in devo—in people's devotion to each other, y'know, whether that is Killua's devotion to Gon, or Gon's devotion to Ging, and uh, the weird thrall's violent devotion towards Baise, and now we have Palm, who has sort of like, summoned up this like, sapping, rotting love, that is causing her to **[Keith: Yeah.]** become this sorta like, shivering violent wreck. And as far as we can tell, that is not Nen-based. She's just like this.

Keith: She seems to just be like this. Uh, she has her own theme song, it's called "Man-Hunting," if you can believe it.

Sylvia: Oh my god.

Jack: Oh, how does it go?

Dre: Oh!

Keith: It goes like this.

[clip of "Man-Hunting" plays]

Jack: [laughs] She is a horror movie villain—

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Except, she has gotten the wrong script sheet, and she has instead picked up the script sheet for a B character in a sitcom.

Keith: [laughs] Yes.

Sylvia: Oh, see I—I—I thought you were going romcom, [**Dre:** Yeah.] which is also how I would see it. But like, yeah, yeah, yeah, that is fully correct.

Jack: [stammers] It's like—it's like what if the girl from *The Ring* had to show up in *The Nanny* [**Sylvia:** Pfft.] and was like, game to say the lines, but at the same time was like, [**Dre** laughs] "I'm the girl from *The Ring*. You better fuckin' watch out." [**Keith and Dre** laugh] It's—it's really great. Also, this is Netero again using Gon and Killua to test Palm! [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] This isn't just the, y'know, um, there's a, um, I've been reading um, *My Brilliant Friend* by Elena Ferrante, which is a sort of like, bildungsroman novel, sort of pseudo-autobiographical, about growing up in Italy in the, I want to say, 60's, maybe 50's or 60's, and uh, there's this great scene early in it where her and her friend at school um, are being sent to other classes in the school to beat the other classes' pupils in quizzes. And what the kid doesn't realize, but what the author realizes looking back is that they were just pawns in teacher games basically, you know? It was like, "Oh, Mrs. So-and-So of Class A had a bone to pick with Mr. So-and-So of Class C, so he sent his smartest children over there to beat his smartest children in—in a quiz." And this is all Netero is doing, and all Morel and Knov are doing as well. You know, the Hunters love to talk a big game about like, "I want to get the best squadron inside the NGL, so let's have these—these new Hunters fight each other." [**Keith:** Yeah.] But really as well, there's like a, y'know, they're—they're playing betting games on who they think is going to win, y'know. [**Dre:** Mm-hm.] "I want my people to do better than their people." Netero has very clearly sort of like, picked Gon and Killua as his champions, which is a real poison chalice, I think. Um. But yeah, Gon and Killua are a test for Palm as much as Shoot and Knuckle are a test for Gon and Killua.

Keith: Yeah. Otherwise, Palm would be on Knuckle and Shoot's side.

Jack: Yeah! Absolutely!

Keith: Knov and Morel are obviously friends, or at least friendly and know each other. And why would she be on the other side? Doesn't really make—

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: 'Cause—'cause it's the weaker side.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Uh, I uh, just some specifics here. She's talking about Knov and is pouring so much sugar into her coffee that it's mounding up above the cup.

Jack: [laughing] It's so good.

Keith: And then she's like explaining how she's absolutely, definitely, definitely going to the NGL and nothing is going to stop her, and she's used her um, uh, she basically does the leaf in the water thing to her coffee and makes the coffee explode everywhere. Gon and Killua are like, "Oh, I guess she's an Enhancer." [laughs]

Jack: [laughs] She also explicitly says, over and over again, like, "I am willing to kill to get into the NGL, and I will. If you—"

Keith: But again—not Knuckle and Shoot.

Jack: "No. I'll just kill."

Keith: Her—her threats of violence are a warning, a motivational— **[Dre: Mm-hm.]** they are not helpful.

Jack: She says, "If you don't get your act together, I can't hold on for too long, and I'll just kill you." Um, and she says this basically from her opening scene. **[Dre: Mm-hm.]** This is what I mean. She is ostensibly a helpful character in these episodes, who is constantly just threatening like an awful oncoming violence against **[Keith: Hm.]** anybody who isn't learning quickly enough.

Keith: With—with one exception.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: [chuckles nervously]

Keith: Which is her—her rapidly developing feelings for Gon.

Jack: [laughing] Yes.

Dre: She gets the, Gon will say something heartfelt and inspiring and we get the like, smash cut to her face and the **[Sylvia: [imitates a heartbeat]] [imitates a heartbeat]**. Yeah.

Jack: Her awful uh, like Junji Ito face.

Keith and Dre: [laugh]

Keith: It is—

Dre: And her heart grew three sizes that day.

Jack: [laughs]

Keith: It's impossible to overstate how Palm is explicitly portrayed to be like a horror movie monster. It is not like—Palm is scarier than the Royal Guards. By a lot.

Jack: Palm really makes this—makes this sort of like, doubling back, out of the NGL, slowing down the pace work. Because, um, what begins to transpire is, as Gon and Killua go back to their room where Palm is waiting for them, Palm reveals that she has brought in a special guest thanks to some indistinct facet of her Nen power. I think she said like, “When I touched you,” or something? Or like, there’s an imp—

Sylvia: She said she did research.

Keith: [cross] Yeah, she did research.

Jack: [cross] She did research. Uh, and the special guest, kicking open a door so hard I think it knocks Killua backwards...

Keith: Frowning immediately.

Jack: Frowning immediately. I think the first thing we see out of the door is her fancy little shoe, [**Dre** laughs] and then she comes out and she's already pointing at Gon and Killua. Bisky has returned, and like Keith said, her outfit has changed, but her entire demeanor has not. Part of me was like, is Bisky going to come back worse, but somehow, it is—it is almost worse that she's just the same. No change.

Keith: [laughs] No change.

Dre: Mm-hm.

Keith: In Greed Island, out of Greed Island, this is Bisky.

Jack: Yup.

Keith: She can be dressed like a uh, magical girl or like she's working at a Christmas theme park...

Sylvia: I will say, her new design is very cute. I love her new haircut.

Keith: It is very good, they— [cross] the haircut is *really* good.

Jack: [cross] She's got a sort of like, Christmas Lolita dress.

Keith: Yes, yeah.

Sylvia: But pink.

Jack: Yeah. What is her new haircut? It's like, a sort of like, asymmetrical shock of hair behind her?

Dre: Mm-hm.

Keith: Yeah, it's like a...

Sylvia: It's like a messy bun.

[0:30:00]

Keith: Yeah, it—it looks like uh, Swiss to me. Looks like a Swiss thing.

Sylvia: Probably Austrian since they're in Vienna.

Keith: Yeah, it's probably Austrian 'cause it's in Vienna.

Dre: [laughs]

Jack: Vienna is in Italy. Um. Bisky's—

Keith and Dre: [laugh]

Sylvia: [laughs] What the—I'm bein' gaslit.

Jack and Dre: [laugh]

Jack: What does Bisky do? Jack shit. She points at them and tells them that they need to train. [**Keith:** Yeah.] She sets them absurd training regimens. Her first one is just so punishing, which is she tells them to express their Nen and hold it like that for two hours.

Sylvia: Three!

Keith: Her first one, it's the only thing that they do for a month! [**Jack** laughs] There is no second part! She basically shows up and she's like, "All right. I'm the fucking teacher around here, here's what you guys gotta do: pick up a heavy weight and hold it!"
[laughs]

Jack: And then she just sits down, crosses her legs, and starts reading like, a magazine of hot boys.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah!

Keith: Yeah, she just starts reading like—like a—

Sylvia: She's fujoing out.

Dre: She's reading *Playgirl*, yeah.

Keith: She's doing—she's the—she's the inverse of uh, uh, uh, Master Roshi, and um, who—what's his fuckin' name from *Naruto*, who writes the—the—the fuckin' porn books.

Sylvia: Oh, um. Jiraiya.

Keith: Jiraiya. Right, she's doing like, the dirty old master, inverted, sort of like, [Dre laughs] 59-year-old who looks like, but who's reading like, *Playgirl*, if that even still exists.

Jack: Part of what is so funny about Bisky's whole deal, and it has really only gotten funnier the second time it has happened, is that she doesn't show up, give them a task, and then fuck off, she just sits there.

Keith: [laughing] She just sits there and watches, right!

Jack: [laughs]

Dre: Yeah!

Sylvia: She's just like—

Jack: She's like, "I'm here for the long haul." Remember when she put them in that pit with the scissors pervert and just sat on the edge of the pit for days?

Dre: [laughs]

Sylvia: So fuckin' funny.

Jack: Bisky doesn't seem to sleep ever, which is like another great, "I am afraid of the teacher" thing. [Dre: Mmm.] There are in fact—there are in fact moments in this where um, Gon and Killua actually do sleep and Bisky doesn't, y'know, just sort of seems to be

sitting there, hanging out. Um, there's just this constant, like—the thing that is underwriting Bisky's brutal training, first is that it's really funny, and I mean that that's underwriting it in the—in the narrative sense. Y'know, the reason that we as viewers buy it is because it is part of an extended comedy bit. And also, we saw her beat that guy without even thinking about it, and she is constantly outputting this kind of like, um, latent power, you know. All of her affect is like, there is some uh, Nen majesty going on here that she doesn't even need to show us. God, the screenshot that Keith posted in the Discord of Bisky with her hands on her hips frowning is looking like Bisky, and then [laughing] behind her is Palm.

Sylvia: [laughs]

Jack: Palm is just like, coming up from the background like the Creature from the Black Lagoon. It's great.

Dre: [laughs]

Keith: She looks especially withered in that shot. Um, I posted a picture of it, by the way, I realize that the—when Dre said crispy, uh, the thing that it reminded me of was, she has like, those long strands of Christmas tinsel, is what her hair looks like it's made out of.

Sylvia, Dre, and Jack: [noises of agreement]

Keith: Just like this horrible plastic-y, like, if someone had turned um, cassette tape into hair.

Jack: Yeah. There is um, and I won't belabor the point, because we sort of already talked about it a bit with like, Palm's devotion, but I do think there is something interesting about, y'know, we often talk about like, love, and the look of love in this show, as being like a bright golden light that you can't look away from, and I really like that it is outputted in Palm. You know, the experience of staring into this light has sort of like, ravaged her, or like fried her, with the crispy hair and the pale face and the—and the weird demeanor. Um...

Dre: Mm-hm.

Sylvia: That's how people describe me.

Jack: [laughs]

Keith: Well there's two things I wanna—there's two things that I wanna talk about before we move on that happen right before Bisky shows back up. Uh, the first thing is that we meet Knuckle already, [**Jack:** Oh, god.] because he is parading down the street... [laughs]

Jack: All-time great character.

Dre: This beautiful idiot. I love him.

Keith: He's basically doing a one-man marching band down the street being like, [**Jack** laughs] "I know you fucking guys are here, you better come out and fight me, meet me at five pm!" And then we get like—

Sylvia: "If you want an ass-kicking, meet me at five pm in the park!"

Keith: And then we get like chatter from people watching, being like, "He's not telling them where to meet him." [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: [laughs] He's just like, "Pam-param-param, I am an assassin!"

Keith: [laughs] It's so funny. And then because they figured who and where Knuckle, uh, Gon and Killua start strategizing, and I think that this is a really good illustrative scene about where they're at.

Dre: Yeah, a hundred percent.

Keith: Uh, we get Killua sort of like, now that he's recovered a little bit from the shock that he was in after Kite dies and leaving the NGL, he's sort of reconsidering what Morel said, which is uh, "According to that guy, I'm not qualified to judge if a fight can be won,

but I disagree. If you're fighting someone you can only beat once or twice out of a hundred times, don't bother. You want 50/50 at least." Uh, which is I think a very fair point.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: And then Gon says something extraordinary.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Gon like, really opens up the barrel for a beautiful Gon's mistake here. [Sylvia laughs] He says, so the first thing they say is, Killua says, "Well we should just like—we should—we should figure out what these assassins' Nen abilities are. We can—we can prepare best if we've got a real sense of what we're up against." And Gon says, "Absolutely not. No. We're going to be going into the NGL and fighting Chimera Ants that we won't know what their deal is until they start using Nen powers, so we should—we should practice fighting Ants with unknown abilities." Um, and this is frontloading, or—or—or starting to pick at something that I think the show has always been interested in, as—since we—since we first started talking about Nen, but I suspect with the Ants gaining Nen powers is going to become more and more significant, which is, "What is that guy's weird Nen power?" [Keith: Mm.] You know, as soon as—as soon as we learned that there were—that there were Nen powers everybody on the show said to me, "Y'know, the thing that it becomes is like, you're gonna meet a bunch of people with a bunch of weird cool Nen powers and a lot of the delight of a systematized magic system is, y'know, someone squares off against our friends and they're gonna pull something out of the bag that is completely unexpected." And the show is now starting to work that directly into the text, where characters are talking not just about Nen powers in the abstract, but they're talking about like, what does it mean to not know what someone's power is? Do you build up anticipation in yourself in a fight before figuring out someone's Nen power? And that like, sort of like, turning Nen abilities into a hidden information game that everybody is trying to work out, or is kind of like feeding off the energy of not knowing, is something that comes up I think more and more in these episodes, and sort of the—the starting pistol for that for me was Gon saying,

“Y’know, I don’t actually want to know these assassins’ Nen abilities, because we’re going to be fighting Ants with mystery abilities.”

Keith: It is—it—he—he makes a really good argument. [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] It makes a lot of sense, like. [**Dre:** Mm-hm!] And it’s—it’s a handicap in their immediate goal that is uncharacteristically um, uh, self-preservationist, I think. Like, “If we can’t handle in a controlled environment someone else’s Nen abilities that we don’t know, then why would we try to handle the Ants?”

Jack: Yes. Although it’s a—it’s a real difference in like—I often feel that when we see Killua doing this kind of stuff, he is coming from a place of like, “This is my job,” [**Keith:** Yeah.] is like, you have one chance to hit the target, you plan, prepare, execute them, collect the Zoldyck money and leave. And Gon is like, yeah, trying to think of a much more sort of like, holistic view, and as the episodes develop we learn that Bisky is also trying to do a kind of—Bisky is interested in a training broader than “fight the assassins”.

Keith: Right.

Dre: Mm-hm.

Jack: Um, but to my point about the show starting to pull on this thread of like, a question the show is interested in isn’t just, “There are Nen powers,” but “What are their Nen powers?” This scene is immediately followed by two tests of it. This is when Palm reappears—sorry, this is when Bisky reappears, and Palm says, “Once I used my ability, it was quite simple.”

Keith: Mm-hm.

Jack: What is the ability? And then in the scene after this, which we’ll talk about in a second, we see Pitou planning something, and sort of beginning to talk about their ability, and again we are immediately forced to ask, y’know, what is Pitou’s ability? So I think as soon as Gon raises this question, we’re then presented with two scenes that say, “Y’know, Gon might be onto something here.”

Keith: Uh, yeah, I like this. It's really—it's—this is classic Gon, it's so fun. Uh, "Once we're inside, that's what we're gonna be facing. Our goal isn't to defeat Knuckle and Shoot, it's to get stronger, strong enough to go back in the NGL and rescue Kite. We need to be strong enough to beat enemies we don't know anything about at a moment's notice. If we always need to plan ahead, then what's the point?" And then Killua's like, "Okay, but we still need to focus on beating Knuckle and Shoot, and we only have a month." And then Gon's like, "No, let's do it in a week."

Sylvia: [laughs]

Jack: [laughs] It's so classic Gon.

Keith: And then once—once we've met Bisky again, Bisky hits him in the head, and is like, "What the fuck are you talking about, if you're gonna do a week? If Netero said you have a month, what he really means is, this is—should take someone a year."

Sylvia: That mean old man.

Keith: This is like—he is so—he is so cruel in his expectations that the idea that you'll be able to do what he's asking in a month is itself mean.

Jack: Um, uh—

Sylvia: This is also like, did we mention, underpinned by—Gon is constantly being like, "We have to do this for Kite." Like...

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yep.

Keith: Right, whose head we have seen in a lap.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, no, my note is, who's gonna tell him?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Like, every time it happens, that's just all I can think is, oh, who's gonna tell him?

Jack: It's great. Um, and, y'know, uh, it guides a lot of the lighter tone of these episodes, which is that, y'know, Gon believes that they're on their way to fight Kite. So, y'know, "We gotta get strong! We can't be sitting around feeling—feeling sorry for ourselves! [cross] What is there to feel sorry for?"

Keith: [cross] "On our way to rescue Kite."

Jack: What did I say?

Keith: "Fight Kite."

Jack: Oh, no, no, no, we're not gonna—well. Hm. Because—

Dre: Maybe after they rescue Kite.

Keith: Yeah, maybe after they'll—

Jack: Mm.

Dre: Y'know, to—to—to prove their—their strength.

Jack: Meanwhile, in the NGL, [**Keith:** Right.] Pitou has re-fixed Kite's head to his body [**Keith:** Mm.] and has stored him, Sleeping Beauty-like, in a glass coffin.

Sylvia: Yeah, that's what they did to Sleeping Beauty.

Dre: That seems fine.

Jack: [laughs] After decapitating her.

Sylvia: Like, all—

Keith: She—we've gotta—we've got a uh, uh—

Sylvia: I misremembered this. I remember them being like chopped into different pieces in the ice still. For some reason.

Jack: Oh. No, I think—

Sylvia: I—I—no, that's a—that's wrong, I'm just flat-out wrong about that.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: We get this like, weird uh, sort of like, sexualization of the con—this is a very Hisoka moment of like, she's relishing the time that they fought together and like,
[**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah.] [cross] "I need to—I need to have that experience again."

Dre: [cross] Yeah, that's uh...

Sylvia: "I need to experience that feeling again."

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: It's li—it's very like, Raiden, like, naked in the tube in *Metal Gear Solid*, almost.

Jack: Oh, I—

Keith: Which—in which one?

Dre: *Metal Gear Solid Two*?

Keith: I don't remember that part of it.

Dre: That's the one where Raiden walks around naked, right?

Sylvia: Oh, the way Kite looks.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, sorry.

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: We thought you meant like, when does Raiden talk about being horny for combat?

Dre: [laughs] Yeah, no, sorry.

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvia: *Metal Gear Rising*, I think, but...

Dre: Probably, yeah.

Keith: No spoilers. I'm on my way.

Sylvia: No worries.

Jack: And they say, y'know, "If only I could feel that moment again. That moment of fighting. Fighting you." And I wrote down, is Pitou a necromancer? Interesting. We shall see. In a park, Knuckles—Knuckle? Knuckles.

Keith: Knuckle.

Dre: Knuckle.

Sylvia: Knuckles is a short red echidna.

Keith: Yes.

Sylvia: Um.

Dre and Keith: [cross] Knuckle—

Sylvia: [cross] Knuckle is our friend.

Jack: [cross] Knuckle is a likable idiot.

Sylvia: Both are likable, to be clear.

Jack: Oh, that's true.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: I'm more—I am not super familiar with Knuckle...s the Echidna.

Keith: Knuckles. Knuckles the Echidna. Knuckles is sometimes likable. They've made Knuckles more likable over the years.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Knuckle is immediately likable, because he's first mad that they didn't show up, and he has a small brown dog with him, [**Sylvia** laughs] who is not his, but he is trying to take care of this dog. He's sort of like, "Who's—"

Sylvia: Jack, do you wanna—do you wanna know what I called this dog in my notes?
[laughs]

Jack: [laughs] What did you call this dog?

Dre: [laughs]

Sylvia: Oh my god, it's the dog that kills Killua! [laughs]

Jack and Dre: [laugh]

Jack: Oh no, he's appeared!

Sylvia: Yeah, they say it in the subtitles, uh, my bad.

Jack: This dog—

Dre: [laughs]

Jack: This dog is really funny. Um, the anime team, I—I—I haven't seen the panels from the manga, so I don't know whether or not this is the anime team making decisions

about how to draw this, or Togashi just draws dogs really distinctively, but between Squala and, uh, and Knuckles—Knuckle. [laughs] Uh, this little pudgy dog is fantastic. He looks like a pygmy hippo. He looks like Moo Deng.

Sylvia, Keith, and Dre: [laugh]

Jack: The pygmy hippo.

Sylvia: The realest.

Keith: Uh, Sylvi, do you know?

Sylvia: I actually was not able to catch up with the manga this week, unfortunately.

Keith: Okay. That's fine.

Sylvia: The week got a—the time got away from me.

Jack: Uh—

Keith: I might have it. But I'll—I'll—we can keep going, and I'll double back for this.

Dre: What are we looking for?

Keith: Oh, just how these dogs look in the manga, because they're so distinctive.

Dre: Ohhhhh. Yeah.

Jack: While Gon and Killua sleep, uh, having been given a small rest by Bisky, she activates her Nen ability, which in case you've forgotten, is a massage therapist, and—

Keith: Named?

Jack: Oh god.

Dre: Cookie!

Jack: Coo—Cookie?

Dre: It's Cookie, right?

Keith: Yeah, Magical Esthetician Cookie.

Dre: Mm-hm!

Jack: It's so good.

Keith: [laughs]

Jack: Who appears in like a magical girl transformation sequence, but is not Bisky, just seems to be like a—y'know, straight from Demon World. She's crawled out of Demon World. And my favorite thing about uh, uh, Esthetician Cookie, is that the first time she appeared, I thought to myself, the joke here is that she's going to be uh, uh, um, massage uh, person, who then does something lethal. Y'know, because Bisky is like, violent and uh, uh, y'know, powerful. But Bisky is also—cares very much about her appearance and so, the fact that she really is just an esthetician is—is really funny. We didn't super see it actually in action in Greed Island, but here Esthetician Cookie gives Gon and Killua a massage, and she plays the piano, and this a Nen ability called Piano Massage.

Dre: Mm-hm!

Keith: [laughs] Yeah, it totally is. It really just is that. And there's a piano and she gives a massage while the piano plays itself. It's a Nen player piano.

Jack: This is *JoJo*, as well, this is um, "Let's All Go and Have a Good Time at the Italian Restaurant." Uh, where they eat special Italian food that causes their bodies to violently um, like expel impurities and like, um, like tired muscle, et cetera? This is sort of what is happening here with Magical Esthetician Cookie.

[0:45:06]

Keith: Uh—

Jack: After this, Palm—

Keith: I—I—I just um—I really like—it's sort of—it's the, the other side, it's like a mirror image of um, Kastro from Heaven's Arena, who has chosen to specialize in two extremely difficult forms of Nen for his Nen type, which is Enhancer, to master. [**Dre:** Mm.] And Bisky is like the other—and it—and it leads to his death. And the other side of it is Bisky who's like, so powerful, seemingly, this is what it says to me anyway. Bisky is so strong and so powerful and such a competent fighter, that instead of having a Nen ability that works with her strength, she has chosen to have a Nen butler [**Jack** laughs] that recov—that like, helps her recover when she's been hurt [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] or when she's stressed, or when she's constipated. [laughs]

Dre: Bro—

Sylvia: I think we've talked about the—we've talked about this before. I feel like...

Keith: We talked about what Cookie does; I don't think that I—that we mentioned—I don't think that we talked about Kastro.

Sylvia: I swear I—

Dre: Hm.

Keith: Maybe I'm wrong. [cross] I thought that I had this...

Sylvia: [cross] 'Cause I think I said this exact same thing too.

Keith: Oh, okay.

Sylvia: But I might be wrong.

Keith: Okay. I just don't remember.

Sylvia: 'Cause I agree.

Dre: I mean her—her Nen power is that she never has to take a day off of training if she doesn't want to.

Sylvia: Yeah, it's like, um, I think I compared it to like how athletes have to like, ice themselves. Like, they do like the ice bath thing after fighting.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Or not fighting, but like competing, y'know?

Dre: Yeah. Mm-hm.

Keith: Well, it's just—the—the—the—the point that I only wan—the only point I wanted to make was that, uh, that it's for Kastro it's bad, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] and for Bisky it's good because she's just much better.

Jack: Yes.

Sylvia: She's just—she's got the sauce and he doesn't.

Keith: She's got the sauce, yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: I—I—will not ever be caught powerscaling, so I will say that Bisky has—

Sylvia: This is not true.

Keith: Not true.

Jack: —invariably climbed Heaven's Arena.

Keith: Yes.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: Oh, I'll do it, you just won't catch me.

Sylvia: Okay.

Keith: [laughs] 'Cause you're too fast.

Jack: [laughs] Quick!

Keith: Like, how you just powerscaled but I couldn't catch you.

Sylvia: Ohhhh.

Jack: You can't get me! Oh, wow.

Sylvia: Because with you're powerscaling the Media Club Plus members, Jack is the fastest.

Jack: Yes. Keith has found uh, the dog from the manga, and I have—I have got to say: Togashi did it even funnier than the anime team did.

Dre and Keith: [laugh]

Sylvia: He nailed it.

Jack: This dog is fuckin' incredible. Um...

Dre: Why does it look so weird in the second picture? [dissolves into laughter]

Sylvia: I love it.

Keith: I love it.

Sylvia: So much.

Jack: It's 'cause he's just drawing like a loose, gestural dog.

Sylvia and Dre: Yeah.

Jack: It's so good. God, this dog looks so funny. [laughs]

Keith: Yeah. The dog's really funny.

Jack: It's—the—the first drawing of the dog, it looks much like it does in the show. It is sort of like a small, soft-eared little dog with a short snout wearing a collar. In the second

image, it looks like someone was told to draw a goblin dog, [**Keith** laughs] but they could only do it in four line strokes. [**Dre** laughs] They just had to be like, “Go!” Um, and then here in this—in this other panel, he’s drawn one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight beautifully rendered dogs.

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah. These are lovingly rendered like, [**Dre:** Mm!] golden retriever puppies.

Keith: And one cat.

Jack: [laughs]

Keith: There’s one cat in the corner.

Sylvia: Oh, there is! That’s so cute!

Dre: Awwww.

Sylvia: It’s playing with the li’l Shiba.

Jack: Which just makes dog number two so fuckin’ funny to me.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: He just sat down and he said, “I’m gonna do this in ten seconds. [**Keith** laughs] Watch.” [makes drawing noises]

Keith: Well it’s like—it’s like a joke ‘cause it’s taking a shit, so it’s just— [wheezes]

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Is it taking a shit in the second one?

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah.

Dre: [cross] Yeah it is.

Keith: [cross] It's absolutely taking a shit, yeah.

Sylvia: It's dumpin'.

Jack: I thought it was sitting there wagging its tail. It's probably taking a second shit.

Sylvia: I mean, it might be doing that too.

Jack: Yeah, dogs. Dogs do that.

Dre: Mm-hm.

Jack: They're nasty little animals.

Sylvia: [snorts]

Dre: Wow.

Keith: Well the—the text says “You gotta pick up after your dogs. Keep our parks clean. Where's your dang owner?” I think it's dumpin'.

Sylvia: I love him.

Jack: Because—because Knuckle immediately starts selling himself to us as a likable, good-hearted guy. If we didn't—

Keith: And we've had this—we've had this instilled in us about Hunters.

Dre: Yeah. Yeah. The strongest Hunters, animals like them.

Jack: I don't think that is what Ging said, and we will get back to this.

Sylvia: It's people who like...

Keith: No, it says, uh, it says, “A good Hunter is well-liked by animals.”

Sylvia: A *good* Hunter.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Sorry, not strong. Good.

Jack: Who says that?

Keith: Ging says that.

Sylvia: Ging said it to Kite.

Jack: No, didn't Ging say to Kite that *Hunters* are well-liked by animals.

Keith: I thought it was good Hunters.

Sylvia: I think he said, "Being well-liked by animals is a sign that you'd be—you could be a good Hunter."

Jack: Is a sign of a good Hunter.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Okay, that's—that is important because later on Gon says, "Good Hunters are well-liked by animals," and I had thought that this was a moment of Gon misremembering what someone had reported his father as saying.

Dre: Mmmmmmm.

Sylvia: Mmmm.

Jack: But that's not actually the case. In any case, um, Palm offers some advice to Bisky, and her advice boils down to this: "I want to go into the NGL to be with the man I'm devoted to, and I don't love him, but I am devoted to him—so—"

Dre: "I am gonna kiss him when I get there, but it's not because I like him."

Jack: "I am gonna kiss him, it's not a love kiss. It's a devotion kiss."

Sylvia: "No hetero."

Jack: “No hetero. And I’m going to get there and if you make me wait any longer I’m going to end up killing everybody.”

Sylvia: It’s really funny.

Jack: And she says this both very matter-of-factly, and as though she is describing, like, “There is a bus I have to catch, and if I am not at the bus station in time, all hell is gonna break loose.” Um. She’s having—she’s having a bad time.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Nawwww.

Dre: [cross] Palm or Bisky?

Keith: [cross] Swirling, purple, ominous Nen. I’m—Bisky also kinda having a bad time. Keeps making little faces—I gotta get outta here.”

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah. Lot of internal monologue. Being like, “Oh, I gotta get the fuck out of here.”

Keith: It says a lot about uh, Palm that Bisky is afraid of Palm.

Jack: Yeah. It does. I think Bisky is afraid of being killed.

Keith: Yeah!

Jack: I think that Bisky is sort of like, less afraid of Palm in the abstract, and more afraid of like...

Keith: Trouble.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: “It is going to be really annoying to have to deal with this.”

Keith: Right. “I don’t need the grief.”

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah. “I don’t wanna deal with the drama.” It’s—yeah.

Jack: Meanwhile, in the NGL, Netero and co. are starting to y’know, make some plans. Uh, Netero or someone—I didn’t write down, I didn’t attribute this—”The experts can’t come to a consensus on how long it’s going to be before the King is born. The Chairman thinks it will be in at least two months.” Now—

Keith: I believe that’s Palm that says that, right as they’re cutting to the NGL.

Jack: Oh, sure, right. And I like this a lot because I don’t trust that that’s true or right, but I think that Chairman Netero probably has a better idea of it than maybe like, Spinner, or somebody? Just because he’s Chairman Netero.

Keith: Mm-hm.

Jack: Um, and so it does make the sort of like, awful anxious like, portents of Kite’s last days seem kind of like, sad and flat. The thing was Kite was actually so anxious about was the Royal—was Pitou’s arrival. Y’know, the King might—might actually be two months out, y’know. I don’t think it’s two months. I think we are looking at a week or so, but to ask Kite, y’know, just before he died, he’d have said, “We’re maybe days away.”

Keith: Well the—the—the—the important thing is that between that line being delivered and the end of these three episodes, one month has passed.

Jack: Ohhhh.

Dre: Hm.

Jack: I don’t feel good about this. [laughs]

Keith: Uh, yeah, it—it—that month went by really quick. That’s half of the two months. I also like—it sort of illustrates the difference between being Netero or like, being Kite or

Spinner Clow, where, Kite and Spinner are experts, Netero has access to expert consensus.

Jack: Yes he does. From possibly the government.

Keith: Right. Hundreds of—y'know, who—how many people can we possibly ask about this? That's what we've got.

Jack: Well the other thing is that like, Netero is not a—oh god, what did Kite call himself? Like a—a bio—biological something Hunter.

Keith: Oh. Yeah. Oh, I think—

Jack: Like a bio-specialist.

Sylvia: [cross] He's not like a cryptozoologist.

Dre: [cross] He's not a Magical Beast Hunter.

Sylvia: No...

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: But it's like—it sounded like cryptozoology basically.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Like, Netero is not one of those, but you can bet your bottom dollar that he has access to like ten, you know? Kite is not the only one of those, and Netero has probably been talking to them.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: We also see him doing the eye thing that we saw Hisoka do ages and ages ago. He holds—

Keith: I know! I was so excited to see that!

Jack: He holds his hand up to his eye. Just really good little, um, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] uh, Togashi absolutely cannot resist explaining a background detail and—and building it into his whole thing, so it is really charming in the instances where we just get one of these little, y’know, this must just be a—a Hunter technique [**Keith:** Yeah.] that we’ve seen Netero and Hisoka use.

Keith: And I—I like that uh, it’s sort of a little like, a little confirmation or suggestion, that like, that’s basically the first Nen power we ever see.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Sylvia: We get some—one, I do really like that. I didn’t actually think about that recontextualization, that’s really fun.

Dre: Me neither.

Sylvia: I was just gonna say, I really enjoy the extra Netero characterization we get here, [**Keith:** Yeah.] because we don’t see him in Hunter Exam mentorship mode.

Keith: Right. Teacher mode. Kindergarten teacher mode.

Jack: Quote-unquote “mentorship”.

Sylvia: This is him in the field. This is him working. This is him tryna get his groove back, as he says later.

Keith: And yeah, it’s his—it’s his first time in the field in a long time.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah. Which also speaks to the threat, right?

Keith: And he’s to—

Sylvia: Where it’s like, “Oh we got Netero outta retirement.”

Keith: And I—he's totally clowning on uh, Knov and Morel, which is so funny.

Sylvia: It's so good.

Jack: But they don't seem to be too mad about it.

Keith: No.

Jack: They acknowledge how—they are like, "Oh, he is better than us."

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah. He's Michael Jordan, you know?

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Uh, so, he's—he's—he's doing that thing, he's looking at Pitou, and says, "This isn't good. That thing is a lot stronger than me." And they kinda can't believe it, they're like, "Stronger?" This is Knov, who uh, I think in these episodes is categorized as being uh, extremely confident. Sort of like, no-selling the Ants almost, like, **[Dre: Mm-hm.]** "This is fine, we've got the Chairman, everything is going according to plan." **[Sylvia: Yeah.]** "Stronger than the Chairman? Surely you jest. If that's the case, not a single Hunter in the world would stand a chance against it." Which is a little—

Sylvia: Hmm.

Dre: Hm. Hm. Hm.

Keith: It's a great little thing. Like, oh, Netero is—confirmation, Netero is strongest Hunter. But then Netero says, "It's been more than half a century since I was the strongest among Nen users, but I do see your point. Although I'm flattered, I'm currently just about even with the two of you." Uh, and um—

Sylvia: And then Knov, he's like, "Oh, then you shouldn't have any problem."

Keith: Yeah. [laughs]

Sylvia: And do you have what Netero says verbatim? 'Cause it's really good.

Keith: Augh, no, I don't have it. Yeah, if you have it, please read it.

Sylvia: Yeah, I don't have it verbatim either.

Keith: He basically goes like, he—he laments how sad it is that he's become so weak. And Knov is like, "Aaaah."

Sylvia: Less than half his former glory, and he's like crying big exaggerated tears. It's really funny.

Jack: [laughs] I really like Chairman Netero.

Sylvia: Yeah, it's like, oh yeah, he is like this with everybody, it's not just when he's talking to precocious 11-year-olds. [**Dre:** Mm-hm.] He is the uncle who's always clowning.

Keith: Bef—before we learn what Morel's big club thing is, the last thing that I wanna say is that Chair—the Chairman uh, says that he would prefer a non-violent outcome.

[**Jack:** Yeahhh.] Which is a very interesting thing to say [**Sylvia:** Yeahhh.] just an episode before we see him in a room full of slaughtered ants. [laughs]

Jack: Yeah. I know. It's so funny.

Keith: It's very uh, like Spider-Man video game, of like [cross] "Oh yeah, I just meant the boss."

Sylvia: [cross] Oh yeah, I was gonna say it's "less than lethal ammunition", is what it's like to me.

Keith: [laughs] Right. Like, "I meant non-violent for the—for the in-charge Ants. These other Ants, no, no, we'll kill all of them. Whatever."

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: That's sort of the implication that I think.

Sylvia: Oh, for sure.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: But uh, who wants to talk about the big weird club thing?

Dre: Oh, bro.

Jack: Oh, just before the big weird club thing, tiny detail. [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] As we've talked about the Ants using Nen vocabulary, and it being really notable the way the Ants are suddenly talking about, y'know, Enhancers and whatever, I did really like that um, one of the Extermination Team talks about Pitou having, quote, "Nen surveillance stopping them from getting closer." [**Keith:** Yeah.] We have a word for that, but they're not using that. Um. I don't know whether or not that's deliberate, but I think that—

Keith: What's the word?

Jack: Uh, it's En, right?

Keith: Oh. Right. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Jack: Your—your—your En.

Dre: Mmm.

Jack: And—and the Extermination Team knows that language.

Keith: Sure.

Jack: But I—as does the viewer—

Keith: Just being casual.

Jack: But I really like that they said—hm? They—they could just be being casual, yeah. I love that they said, uh, "That thing has Nen surveillance."

Keith: Yeah. Oh, there's actually, there's even one more thing.

Jack: Oh, woah!

Keith: The Chairman pretends to ask them what their plan is, and Knov is like, “Obvious he knows what the plan is because he asked for us. There’s—there’s only one thing that we would do with the three of us here.” Which is very funny. We don’t know the plan—we’re gonna see the plan happen as Morel reveals his big thing is.

Jack: Well, Morel doesn’t actually reveal it. Knov opens a portal in the ground, a portal-ass portal. Like a—like a—

Keith: Like from *Portal*!

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Like from *Portal*, or like, a wizard’s portal. [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] You’re pondering your orb and you turn ‘round, and you open the portal with a wave of your hand. This is the most like, capital M Magic I’ve seen Nen look in a while. And he produces, effortlessly, Morel’s weapon from this, and Morel throws what is revealed to be a cover over it. We talked about it in the past as being a big, sort of like wooden club, but it’s actually something wrapped in a tarpaulin. What is it?

Sylvia: Dre? You were excited.

Dre: It’s his fuckin’ rig, bro.

Keith: [laughs]

Jack: It’s his truck? He’s got a big truck?

Dre: Nah, no, no, he’s—he’s fuckin’ blastin’ ohm’s in this thing! He’s got a giant pipe!

Keith: He has a *giant* pipe.

Jack: He’s got a huge pipe! Oh, this is wonderful.

Keith: He has a pipe the size of—bigger than a human man.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Keith: 'Cause Morel is a giant and this pipe is big compared to him.

Dre: It's very nice.

Jack: There is—the way they—it is really nice. The way—and it's like—it's like ornate. The way they shoot and—and the reveal of Morel's—Morel's Nen ability is really like, painterly, and interesting. They take their time with it. This is a really charming Nen power to see unveiled. Because Morel starts smoking, and he smokes out a huge amount of smoke—

Keith: Yup. He's chuggin' clouds.

Jack: —and then out of the smoke—he absolutely is—he summons hundreds of tiny perfect white smoke rabbits that go darting—well first they just gather around him in like a crowd of these white rabbits, and then they go darting off through the forest, kind of like puff of smoke blowing out behind them. It's such a cool image.

[1:00:13]

Dre: Gandalf only wishes he could be this cool with his pipe tricks.

Keith: [laughs] Uh, Jack, what uh, what Nen type is Knov, do you think?

Jack: He is a Conjurer.

Keith: Why, because he conjures?

Dre: [laughs]

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Nope. He's an Emitter.

Jack: Why?

Dre: [laughs]

Sylvia: He's emittin' all that smoke. He's emittin' huge clouds.

Keith: No, no, not Morel. Not Morel. Knov.

Sylvia: Oh, sorry.

Jack: Oh, Knov. Is an Emitter...

Dre: Oh, Knov. Okay.

Jack: Why is he an Emitter?

Keith: Because he can detach aura from the body.

Jack: Wh—why?

Keith: By making a portal. That's Nen. That's Nen that he's detached from the body. He emits a portal.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Oh, the like, room is also his Nen.

Keith: Right. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Dre: Ohhhhh.

Jack: Right, right, right, but you could just say that Hisoka emits Bungee Gum, which has the properties of rubber and gum.

Sylvia: Huh.

Keith: Yeah, he does.

Jack: No, Hisoka is—Hisoka is a Conjuror.

Keith: Well, he—he's a Transmuter. [**Sylvia** laughs] He transmutes his aura into gum and then emits it.

Dre: Mm-hm. Also Morel's a—a Manipulator.

Jack: Is Manipulator a type?

Sylvia and Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Manipulation, yeah.

Jack: He's not a fucking Conjurer?

Keith: No.

Dre: No.

Jack: The Nen wheel isn't real.

Keith: The Nen wheel *is* real!

Dre: I mean—yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: [cross] It's—Manipulators control animate and inanimate objects.

Jack: [cross] The Nen wheel *is* real because of the—

Dre: Maybe—oh yeah. And maybe the Nen wheel is more real in terms of like, the personality stuff than it is the like, only a Conjurer could do this kind of power.

Keith: I'll—I'll say—I'll say this. This is what—so, Manipulator and Conjurer, y'know, he might conjure the rabbits, but he—to move them he has to manipulate them.

Dre: Mmm.

Keith: And I—and it's—it's a sort of—I think it's a—it's a, uh, it's a coin flip, like which one is his base, and which one is his stretch, you know what I mean?

Dre: Sure. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, and—and like, we know Kurapika is a Conjurer, and like, he conjures those chains, but then his Nen doesn't like...

Keith: Manipulate them.

Dre: I guess his Nen does manipulate the chain, though. Hmm.

Keith: Just a bit. Not a lot. [cross] That's the—

Jack: [cross] Do you—

Dre: [cross] Yeah, like he's—he is like throwing the chain. [cross] Like his physical movements. Yeah.

Keith: [cross] That's the thread. Right, the thread is that—that Kurapika is conjuring a very powerful thing, and then maybe slightly manipulating it? Versus the conjuring of the rabbits is the small thing, and the actual like, controlling 1000 rabbits is the big thing.

Dre: Sure. Yeah, Shalnark's a Manipulator.

Sylvia: Makes a lot of sense, yeah.

Dre: Which I guess is a way more like, direct one-to-one of like, the word, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Do we know what Netero's position is on the wheel?

Keith: I w—I won't tell you.

Jack: Okay.

Sylvia: Yeah, I won't ei—I have a guess...

Dre: I don't think we have been explicitly told yet.

Keith: Yeah, we have no idea what Netero can do.

Jack: I think...

Dre: Do you wanna guess? Jack, would you like to guess?

Jack: Yeah, we'll get—Uh, I think he is an Enhancer.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: Although, I—I think it would actually be Chairman Netero-y to be showing off skills that seem like Enhancer skills and then reveal that he actually has—actually has something else.

Keith: Yeah. Could be a Specialist.

Jack: Could be a Specialist. I—it would be kind of a bummer if they just gave all their most special characters the Specialist, y'know?

Dre: Mm-hm.

Keith: Sure.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: Um, I've written down a note here—there's some really arresting imagery in this episode. I wrote down here, Pitou sees the Ants approaching like stars across the sky. I have no idea what image I am talking about there. Is there a shot of Pitou looking up to see Ants?

Sylvia: I think you're thinking about the rabbits approaching.

Jack: Oh, I'm thinking about the rabbits. Yeah, Pitou looks up—

Sylvia: Yeah, I think you just wrote "Ants" by accident.

Jack: —and they're like—they're like—they're like flying like geese in a— [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] in like a formation across the sky.

Dre: Mm-hm.

Jack: Really, really good.

Sylvia: It's like, oh but they're not—he can tell they're not alive, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Am I misremembering that? Okay, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: No, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Um...

Jack: And they're ready to—Pitou is ready to be like—Pitou knows what Nen is, you know? Um, he says, "They're not alive," but the implication is that he's thinking like, "That's Nen. Y'know, we're being attacked."

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: We meet a new character here.

Jack: How does this character actually get introduced? What—what actually happens between Pitou looking up and seeing the bunnies and then...

Keith: Does—I can say if—if no one else has the—the words for this.

Dre: Hmm.

Keith: ‘Cause it is quick.

Sylvia: Uhhh, I don’t remember the exact—

Keith: It’s quick.

Sylvia: It’s very quick. I don’t remember the exact words that Pitou’s thinking, but, I do remember how this happens which is a very fruity voice replies [**Dre** snorts] to—to Pitou’s inner monologue, and Pitou’s like, “Huh? Was I speaking out loud?” And then he goes, “No, I...I just so happened to hear your thoughts.” And then we see a li’l fairy man.

Keith: [laughs]

Jack: Yeah. This is like a tall...

Dre: So—so many uses of the word “fairy man”.

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah, I didn’t mean it in—I meant it in a literal way. Sorry.

Dre: [laughs] Sorry, Jack.

Jack: This like a tall, beautiful, butterfly-winged, sort of like, bishounen boy.

Keith: Mm-hm.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: He has like, loose blond hair, he’s wearing like a suit, like a—like a shirt, like a flowy shirt [**Keith:** Yeah] um, and long pants. And when we say he has beautiful butterfly wings, he sort of has like, stained glass wings, almost.

Keith: Yeah. They’re—they’re—they’re like, psychedelic. They like, glow.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hm.

Jack: Yeah, he looks great. Um, and he introduces himself as...Shaiapouf? Shiapouf? How do you say this guy's name?

Keith: Shaiapouf. [pronounced shau-a-poof].

Sylvia: Shaiapouf.

Dre: Shaiapouf, yeah.

Jack: Shaiapouf.

Keith: Shaiapouf and Neferpitou. Or, uh, and Pouf and Pitou.

Sylvia: Calling him Pouf feels the—is the thing that feels the most homophobic to me.

Keith: I know. [laughs]

Dre: It's great, though. I love it.

Keith: What is—is this *Arrested Development* we're watching all of a sudden?

Jack: [laughs]

Sylvia: Like, for real.

Jack: Um, uh, and it's great. The second Royal Guard has showed up, and is basically a—a human who is a butterfly.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: When the first Royal Guard was a human who is a cat. And we've talked a lot about the way that they have so much fun with the Ants. I'm thinking especially of um, Flutter, who is Hagya's uh, attendant. [**Keith:** Mm-hm.] Who, I don't know what bug that is. [**Keith:** Dragonfly?] Yeah, he's like a dragonfly with frizzy hair and a long collar [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] and sleeves and a weird beak. Um, and then we—

Sylvia: I feel like dragonfly is the best answer we can get there, but even then it's got a question mark after it.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: [laughs] Yes. Yeah. But by the time we get to the Royal Guards we have: human butterfly, human cat, um, and then we're gonna get to kind of the third one which I'm not terribly sure about.

Keith: [laughs]

Jack: We'll—we'll see that soon.

Dre: Mm-hm.

Jack: But, um, are we—are we just—are we just calling him Pouf? Is that what we're calling him?

Keith: Yeah, we're calling him Pouf, yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: I mean, you—I—you can say the full name if you feel like it.

Jack: Okay, so—

Keith: Oh yeah, I'm not gonna—we're not gonna write you a ticket.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Pouf explicitly says, "The third Royal Guard is awakening soon," and immediately gives his name.

Keith: Right.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: The third Royal Guard is—ooh, dear. How, um—

Sylvia: You wanna go for it?

Jack: Let's—I'm gonna go for it, and then you'll tell me how it's pronounced.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: This is Methuthuyoupi?

Sylvia and Keith: Menthuthuyoupi.

Dre: Yeah. Or Youpi.

Keith: Or Youpi.

Jack: Menthuthuyoupi, who we call Youpi.

Sylvia: Is it “th” or “t”? I always—I always pronounced it with a hard “T” sound instead of a “TH”, but maybe I’m wrong.

Keith: I think it’s a double “TH”, Menthuthuyoupi.

Sylvia: Okay.

Dre: Yeah, I think that’s right.

Jack: I love the—the Ant Queen naming them.

Sylvia: It’s really good.

Keith: It is obvious. [laughs]

Jack: These three names—yeah.

Keith: It’s so clear that someone else has named these characters.

Jack: Just these like, remarkable alien names that are like—they are like—they—they sound beautiful to say. Something I think a lot about the Queen is that so much of the imagery of her is her eating things, you know, her huge mouth, her savoring the taste of

a thing and knowing how she's gonna turn it to her advantage. So I think that it's great that not only is it that she picks that are very odd, but she picks names that are really fun to say, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] that—that have a great mouth-feel, that roll around in your mouth as you say them. I think that's really cool.

Keith: And, in contrast, every other character has either been named like, “Steven” or “Pig”. [laughs]

Sylvia: [laughs]

Jack: Yeah, and here we have “Menthuthuyoupi” and—

Jack and Keith: —”Shaiapouf”—

Jack: —and “Neferpitou”. It's really, really good. Uh, okay, so yeah. Pouf has arrived; Youpi is coming soon. Pitou is not the only Royal Guard on the block.

Sylvia: More boys are coming.

Jack: And Pitou says, “I haven't yet made a final decision about which ability to develop.”

Sylvia: It's a *crazy* line.

Jack: They turn—

Sylvia: I remember the first time I watching—watching this sitting upright when I heard that.

Dre: [laughs]

Jack: Well, the thing is, um, Gon and Killua have also chosen their abilities. It's not like—and—and Kurapika also chose their abilities.

Keith: Right.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: The—the—the telling thing here—

Sylvia: But when it's a Specialist...

Jack: Yeah, definitely when it's a Specialist. The telling thing for me is less that they are choosing their ability, and more that they are doing so with such a kind of like, teasing malevolence [**Keith:** Yeah.] [**Dre:** Mm-hm.] as they [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] turn towards the body of Kite and say, "All I need to do is fix him. I want to once again experience the dreamlike moment." And then an awful, scratchy, gestural purple skull appears behind them. This is similar to the skull that Rammot saw the moment that Pitou awoke, [**Sylvia:** Oh yeah!] [**Dre:** Mmm.] and it is also very evocative of the way—and now that I've seen Togashi's manga panels, I know so clearly that this is like—this is uh, like a, a style that he draws so well. It reminds me a lot of when Melody told us about the Devil's Sonata and we saw that sort of like, [**Dre:** Oh, yeah.] Francis Bacon image. These sort of just like, Hellish with a capital H images.

Keith: Uh, did you—you said the line, "I'll be able to experience that dreamlike moment with you." Did you say the first half of that line?

Jack: She says, "All I need to do is fix him."

Keith: Okay, yeah, yeah, yeah. Sorry, I thought—

Sylvia: Words people have uttered many times before.

Keith: [laughs]

Dre: Yeah. Mm-hm. Really into that new Taylor Swift album.

Sylvia: "I—if I fix him I can experience the one magic moment again." Yeah.

Jack: [laughs]

Dre: [laughs]

Sylvia: Sure.

Jack: And this is basically the end of the episode.

Dre: Sylvi, I just left my day job. Don't make me live through this again. [laughs]

Jack: [laughing] Oh no!

Sylvia: Sorry, sorry. I don't mean to diagnose the cat with BPD. My bad.

Jack: Um, the episode is now basically over. Y'know. Pitou turning their brain towards their awful Nen ability is—is the—the punchline that we end on. But the note that I immediately took here was that, like, okay so Gon and Killua are going to have to fight Kite, right? That's where we're going. [**Dre:** Mm.] If Pitou's goal is to bring Kite back to life so that Pitou can—can fight him, um, I could very easily see, for example, Pitou saying, "Well, I'm going to turn Kite against Gon and Killua and a test of—of his abilities." I suppose an—another way here is that we could play a really fun arc of like, trying to break Kite out of Pitou's conditioning, y'know where we say, Kite's still in there somewhere, and can we get him back? But y'know, the train is now proceeding towards the—the—the fork in the path with the trolley problem where on one side of it, it is Gon and Killua have to fight Kite, and on the other side of it, it is they somehow break through or try to break through to Kite and bring him back on-side. Because this is shounen, those two tracks might actually lead to the same destination. I think about the way that like, the way you—we've talked about it in the *Dragon Ball* episodes as like, ideology combat, shounen ideology combat, [**Dre:** Mm.] where, you—you know, you impress your ideology upon an opponent through fighting, and then by the end of it, Tien Shinhan is sort of transmuted alchemically into an ally. So it could be that they fight, y'know—Pitou sends Kite after them, they fight Kite, they get Kite back on-side. I'm really just spread betting at this point, [**Keith:** Mm.] because I feel like Togashi [**Dre** laughs] could do any of these, and I'm just putting down— [laughs] that's that great Jerma stream where he tries to play roulette by putting one dollar on every single like, square on the roulette board [**Sylvia** laughs] to see what happens. This is what I am trying to do here.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Um, I did wonder that if—if Pitou’s—Pitou— [pronounced “pee-too”] Pitou’s— [pronounced “pee-toe”] they say “Pitou” [pronounced “pee-toe”] in the Japanese dub, but I keep wanting to say “Pitou” [pronounced “pee-too”] because of how it’s written out.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Um, if Pitou’s ability brings Kite back, does it also bring back his Nen? Are we going to get evil Crazy Slots?

Dre: Oh, man.

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvia: Normal Slots!

Jack: “I’m the great mad clown, Horrible Slots!”

Keith: [continuous laughter]

Dre: “I’m the very normal and kind of sad clown, Bad Slots.”

Jack: Uh, so I don’t know. I don’t know. We know that when you die, your—

Sylvia: It’s not even a clown, it’s a businessman.

Dre: Yeah. “But doctor, I am the sad clown Crazy Slots!”

Jack: [laughs]

Dre: Uh, the other thing I just wanted to add on really quick when we were talking about like, Pitou and like, Pitou’s dialogue around like, “Oh, I haven’t even thought of my own ability yet.” A lot of the times when we see like, really strong Nen users, part of what makes them so strong and overwhelming, is like, how good their abilities are. And here we have a person who, at least so far that we have seen, is like the strongest Nen user we have ever seen on screen in action, and he doesn’t have a special ability yet.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, yeah. Yeah!

Dre: He's just that fuckin' strong and scary.

Keith: Y'know, and I was thinking about it, I totally agree Dre, and I was thinking about like what is, um—what is so sinister about this implication, of like, needing to pick an ability for uh, Pitou, and, when Gon and Killua, who also have to pick abilities like, I think Jack, you were saying, it like—Killua's was self-evident to him, like, "I have—I know that I have this electricity inside me, that I—if I can learn to bring it out, then that—that will fit with my, y'know, Transmuter nature." And Gon is like, "Mmm, punch hard." [laughs]
Uh...

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: And when Pitou says—

Dre: "I'm 12 and I like games and outside."

Everyone: [laughs]

Keith: When Pitou says it, it feels like there's this implication that there's a buffet's worth of potential. "I have all of these things—I have so much more at my disposal than Gon and Killua could ever imagine, even."

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hm.

Keith: Where—maybe it feels a little bit more like Kurapika who like, had this idea in mind and needed to work hard to execute it, but—but where instead of one idea in mind, they have 100 ideas. "I could do anything that I wanted to." And, fictionally, that's true, like, it really could be anything because it's fake.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Um...

[1:15:00]

Dre: And with Kurapika, too, we have seen someone who can, like, immensely boost their Nen power very quickly, but it's only through like, super super dangerous, like min-maxing, basically.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Dre: And—and Pitou doesn't have to do any of that.

Keith: Right. And we—and even if they did, we don't have to worry about Pitou expending life energy [**Dre:** Mm.] to become way stronger because Pitou is technically a bad guy. Like, we don't have to worry about them like we worry about Kurapika. Yeah.

Dre: Yeah, no, for sure.

Sylvia: We're not friends with Pitou.

Keith: No.

Sylvia: We're friends with Kurapika.

Episode 87 [1:15:37]

Jack: Episode 87 begins and the Ant Queen is very big.

Sylvia and Keith: [laugh]

Keith: Like, popular?

Dre: Yeah?

Keith: You mean like...?

Sylvia: She's blowing up right now. Yeah.

Keith: She's blowing up, yeah. [laughs]

Sylvia: This lady's name is on everybody's lip. Can't—can't stop talking about the Queen.

Jack: It's not good.

Dre: Uh, how many human meatballs a day does she have to eat, Jack?

Jack: Like 200 or something? How many?

Dre: [cross] 250.

Keith: [cross] 250 meatballs, yeah.

Dre: Human meatballs, please.

Keith: I've written here, the King is moving in her sac.

Jack: Yeah, it's not good.

Dre: Nice, bro.

Keith: [laughs]

Dre: Nice, bro.

Jack: It's not good. Um, Gon and Killua, after a particularly tough bout of training under Bisky—remember that was happening? We were in Ant hell in the episode [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] for like the last 20 minutes and so you might've forgotten that we're also doing a training montage with the child Nen master. After a hard training session, Bisky says—[**Sylvia:** Faux child. Nen master.] faux child—"We are going out right now. You are going to go and fight him right now." They are like dripping in sweat. They're exhausted. Bisky says—

Keith: She's got her sexy magazines.

Jack: Yeah. She says, "Whether you win or lose isn't as important as you think. Take their tiles at any cost. If it looks like you're going to lose, run away and try again." And I

think this is the place in our episode to talk about what Bisky is actually trying to do here, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] because while it doesn't come across fully until later in the episode, I think this is like a really nice moment to kind of like, get it out in the open. Which is that Bisky, frankly, views this whole NGL thing and possibly even the Chimera Ant thing, definitely the assassin thing, as a small but useful step on Gon and Killua's journey. And she is prepared to burn Gon and Killua's success here in favor of like a broader, more useful learning. [**Keith:** Yeah.] She is taking the long view of this. And I think this is really smart teaching.

Keith: It is. And it may, in fact, also be what Netero was doing.

Jack: Yeah, uh—yes. [**Dre:** Mm.] It may also be what Netero was doing. I hadn't actually thought of that. Netero might not actually have been trying to get them into the NGL. Because—

Keith: Netero might have j—because what Bisky says is, "If he said it would take you a month, to tr—to do this, it'd take you a year." [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] And so, if that is true, and that is how Netero operates, then he probably doesn't have any real expectation that they can do this.

Sylvia: We get a good image of him, like, chuckling when she says that, too.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: In the background, which I really enjoy.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Like a sort of evil Netero popping up.

Sylvia: Yeah, oh, he's a little goblin man.

Dre: [snorts]

Jack: Uh, and Bisky believes that they are going to lose this fight. But, the loss is going to teach them what it is that they lack in their Nen training. You know, Bisky has always

been a Nen teacher that is really focused on the fundamentals, uh, and sort of like, pulling out the—the—the real utilities of the fundamentals. I mean, I remember when she—god, she explained like, how enhancing worked or something, from first principles and it blew my mind. Um, and I think that she is saying, “They are going to lose this fight, and they are going to—it is going to become clear to them and me where they need to improve, [**Sylvia:** Mm-hm.] and that is extremely valuable.”

Keith: Uh, you know what this reminded me of? I think about this sometimes, because it's the only thing—it's the memory I have of my biology class from ninth grade. [**Dre:** Hm!] Uh, but do you know about—because—in it—and it wasn't actually biology, it's because I—my teacher, uh, who went on to become a comedian, shout out to Mr. Dunne, uh, uh, he was a, like, he was like a fitness major or something. He had like a degree in exercising or something. [laughs] Whatever the real—

Dre: Kinesthesiology or something like that?

Keith: Yeah, whatever the real version of that is. [**Dre:** Yeah.] That's what he did. Uh, and uh, he, for some other reason, was talking about VO2 max, which is such a funny sounding...

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Keith: It's just such a—it's such a—I don't know, something about the—the way that sounds. It always stuck in my brain, VO2 max. And that is like, the like, amount of, the smallest amount of oxygen you—your body can consume before it collapses under the strain. And it's like, one of the ways you measure endurance, is like, eventually, your ability to lift stuff or run for a really long time outstrips your oxygen's ability to deliver all of the oxygen that you need, [**Dre:** Uh-huh.] and you basically just collapse. So, you can measure your VO2 max by running on the treadmill until you physically fall. That is how you— [**Jack:** Oh my god.] [laughs] measure VO2 max. And I think about it every time I've seen these, uh, these training sessions of Bisky training is like—like, this is like, weirdly—I mean, not weirdly, it's Togashi—but like, [**Dre:** Yeah.] this really reminds me of a real thing. Like, she's trying to increase their endurance by just like, pushing them to

the limit literally every single day. [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] Like, moving where their limit is, [**Sylvia:** It's just like...] because that's the only thing she's training them on.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, that's like how you build muscle too in a lot of ways, right? [**Keith:** Yeah.] [**Dre:** Yeah.] Yeah, like you push—push to the limit, and then...

Dre: I remember seeing a TikTok about this, actually, where like a guy was like, “Hey, if you're trying to learn to run and it sucks, you should stop, and you should do this very specific like, kettlebell exercise because it'll raise your VO2 max and then running will be easy.”

Keith: Mm.

Sylvia: Huh.

Keith: Yeah, VO2 max. Funny words [**Dre:** Yeah.] that stuck in my head for, y'know, 15 years. [laughs]

Dre: I'm gonna hope that they have a way to measure your VO2 max that's not like, have a bad accident on a trampoline, or a—a—not a trampoline.

Sylvia: A treadmill.

Keith: No, I believe—

Sylvia: No, it'd be great if it was on a trampoline.

Dre: A treadmill trampoline. Yeah.

Keith: I be—I believe you're supposed to be monitored and wearing a specific harness to measure your VO2 max.

Dre: Sure. Yeah.

Sylvia: Oh, okay.

Keith: ‘Cause you also have to like, be blowing into a thing that measures how much oxygen you’ve got in you.

Dre: Oh!

Sylvia: Wow.

Keith: So you’ve got—they have to—yeah. The whole point is to measure your blood oxygen.

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah, I’ll just—I’ll just hold my run for three hours and blow.

Dre: [cross] Man, buy me dinner first, am I right?

Keith: [snorts]

Dre: Nothin’? All right, all right. [laughs]

Jack: Gon and Killua emerge from the woods to fight Knuckle who gently shoos the little dog away.

Dre: Aww.

Jack: And he—his initial response is—

Keith: Just one dog?

Jack: Uh, there’s now several dogs but he is gently shoos away the one dog that we saw earlier. Uh, he says, “I can’t believe this. It’s you two. Really?” And he almost immediately starts coming apart. First he doesn’t like being compared to a pair of snot-nosed kids, [**Keith:** Mm-hm.] and he starts sort of mocking them, to which Killua, really steelily, says, “Take this seriously!” Uh, and then, Knuckle starts crying. He says—

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvia: It’s great.

Keith: No he doesn't!

Jack: He says, "I'm not upset at all! They're tears from laughing too much! Don't tell anyone about this!" [laughs]

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvia: "I'm not mad! Don't write that I'm mad!"

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: So we now know a handful of things about Knuckle: One, we know he's a dumbass who parades down the street [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] shouting, "I'm an assassin, I'm an assassin." Uh, we know that he is well-loved by dogs and is incapable of um, not taking care of them. He is sort of—even trying to convince the dog, "I don't like you, stay away," and is not even convincing to the dog. [**Dre:** No.] [**Sylvia:** So funny.] And he's a crybaby.

Sylvia: Yes.

Jack: He's a huge crybaby. But he's kind of an endearing cry—the—taking care of the dog, et cetera, very—very sweet. And then bursting into tears in the face of Gon and Killua. I am really impressed by how—and you know, I feel like this is probably the hallmark of someone who cut their teeth on a really extensive tournament—is the Dark Tournament in um... *YuYu Hakusho*?

Keith: Yeah, the Dark Tournament's in *YuYu Hakusho*, yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Yeah, like, something that makes a tournament arc sing is "I need to very quickly characterize opponents before, during, and after a fight [**Keith:** Yeah.] and I need to give the audience something to chew on with them." And we get to—

Keith: Dark Tournament is so great at introducing five guys, and within 15 seconds you know a ton about who they are and what their deal is.

Jack: Yeah. We get Knuckle's whole deal here. It's—it's fantastic. Gon has a little, uh, like a internal voice thing, he says, "You idiot! Is what I want to say." **[Everyone laughs]** And he holds himself—he holds himself back. Um, and then he sort of begins like a weird compromised Gon's mistake. **[Dre laughs]** He comes to the conclusion that they can't overcome everything with willpower, which is like, great, Gon, this is really valuable. But he does decide to go ahead with the fight anyway. He charges up Gon's Punch, and we get some internal Nen math from Knuckle. Y'know, "I can route my Ren to whatever." And then Gon hits him so hard I thought he'd killed him. Um...

Sylvia: It's so funny.

Keith: Uh, I—I wrote here the Gon quote, "The fact is we can't can't overcome everything with—with willpower." And I've labeled it, "The Anti-Shounen Statement."

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, for real though.

Jack: [laughs] Yes. Yeah.

Keith: This is—this is like the exact opposite point that every other shounen is trying to get you to buy into. And not—not even to leave *Hunter x Hunter* out of it. *Hunter x Hunter* is also constantly cashing in **[Sylvia: Yeah.]** on the idea that you can overcome anything with willpower.

Sylvia: We've seen it happen a few times.

Keith: We've seen it. And—and—and even more extreme ways than other shows. Like, you can shit beat out of you, you can get your arms cut off, you can pass out being tortured for hours and hours and hours and hours, but as long as you don't tap out, you can still win.

Jack: Yes.

Keith: [laughs]

Jack: Yeah. And then—and then we compromise it, right? Because—well, we s—y’know, we have this anti-shounen move, but then Gon still launches the punch, beats Knuckle, [**Keith:** Right.] and then, y’know, we know how this plays. Gon doesn’t see this as a true victory. Gon has essentially demonstrated his strength to Knuckle. Knuckle, as he sort of passes out, says, [**Keith:** Right.] “I knew I could count on you, and you didn’t let me down.” But Gon—

Keith: This was the buy-in to the real fight.

Jack: Yeah, yeah. This is the buy-in.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Um, and, god. In a show about teachers and learning, I can’t help but think of how like, the first real encounter with this was, um, “Can you land a punch on Hisoka?”

Keith: Mm-hm.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Y’know, Hisoka saying, “I will start thinking of you as uh, like—” I mean Hisoka always thought of Gon as valuable, but, y’know, “You become real to me in a different way once you sort of just like, put out a statement in a violent action. You don’t need to beat me in a fight, you just need to land a punch on me.” [**Keith:** Yeah—] And I can see that as we follow this through, we get to like, Gon handily beating Knuckle, and then saying, “That wasn’t—that wasn’t a real fight.”

Keith: Right, it was not a—it was not a fair set of rules. Uh, I—I—I wrote here, Gon’s had enough taking tokens he doesn’t feel like he’s earned. [**Dre:** Mm.] Uh, I love Knuckle realizing the mistake that he’s made, but being unable to back out, deciding where to put his Nen so that he doesn’t die trying to block this.

Jack: [laughs] Yes.

Keith: ‘Cause it—y’know, fundamentally, when you’re dealing about Nen, you don’t have to be—you don’t have to be like, way weaker than someone to be instantly killed by them, you just have to make a bad decision about where [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] your Nen should be.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Um, he wakes up in a bed and goes to give them his tiles, his shogi tiles, [**Keith:** Yeah.] and of course, y’know, we know how that goes. [**Keith:** Yeah.] We talked about that. Uh—

Keith: He got all his crying done out of the way earlier, right?

Dre: No.

Jack: No, he does quite a bit of crying here too, I think.

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvia: Nuh-uh. [cross] Doesn’t sound right. Knuckle Bine? Crying?

Dre: [cross] Especially when the—welllll...

Keith: [cross] Crying?

Dre: Only when the—the little puppy like, climbs out of the blankets and Gon is like, “Oh, the puppy wouldn’t leave you.”

Jack: Good Hunters are well-looked for—looked after by animals.

Dre: Mm-hm.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Um, this is when we get a bit of Knuckle, uh, uh, backs—or, or, or, uh, ideology here.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Knuckle, quote, “Despises the blanket policy of getting rid of misfits. If you’ve never seen something then you don’t have the right to pass judgment on it. You’ve got to exchange a few blows.” Killua rolls his eyes. Y’know. Um, but Knuckle doesn’t want to exterminate the Ants. It is worth saying that um, so, we’ve had the government saying, “We want to do this as humanely as possible,” which I don’t buy. [**Keith:** Right.] I just simply don’t believe that. We’ve had Chairman—

Keith: Or that their—their version of “as humanely as possible” is very low on humanity.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yes. Yeah. Definitely.

Sylvia: Oh, yeah.

Jack: And then we have had Netero saying, “We’re gonna try and do this non-violently,” but I don’t really understand that, and that gets, y’know, sort of—

Sylvia: Thrown out the window in the next episode.

Jack: —thrown out of the window pretty quickly. But I do think it’s really telling that this is our first sort of spoke moment of, “Hey, what if we don’t kill the Ants? Y’know. What if there’s a way out of this that isn’t killing the Ants?” Uh, Killua rolling his eyes. Y’know.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Palm, however, pulls out a knife and is desperate to kill. [laughs]

Dre: [laughs]

Jack: But doesn’t.

Keith: It is funny that we’ve got one character who doesn’t wanna kill Ants, and one character who’s like, “I’m about to kill nine people.”

Sylvia: “I’ll kill anybody.”

Keith: “I’ll kill anybody.”

Dre: [laughs] Yeah.

Sylvia: “Give me a—give me a reason.”

Jack: Yeah. Uh, Ants are walking through what initially seems to be the mist, but is in fact not the mist.

Sylvia: [singing] The ants go marching one by one, hurrah.

Jack: [singing] Hurrah, hurrah.

Sylvia: Like, literally.

Jack: Yeah, they really do. And then suddenly, through the mist, they just start dropping through the floor into, um, how do we wanna des—the—the—the least interesting and easiest way for me to describe this is it’s like a test chamber from *Portal*. They go through a portal into a test chamber. But in actuality what it sort of is, is like a empty, clean, sterile white space marked with almost like wireframe drawings—wireframe squares on the walls.

Dre: It reminds me of like, like a kill room from a movie.

Keith: Mm.

Jack: Yeah, yeah.

Dre: Where it’s like—yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: It’s like, you know, the mobsters are like, “Aw man, when you’re brought back in there, like, that room exists for one reason only, and that’s to kill people in.”

Keith: What was that *Portal* game—

Sylvia: I think of it like the *Street Fighter* training room, is what it looks like to me.

Dre: That too.

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Keith: What was what *Portal* game, the—the—*Portal* game—that like, *Portal*-like puzzle game that people, uh, kept describing as “non-Euclidean” from like, 12 years ago? What was that game called?

Jack: Uh, that game was called *Antichamber*.

Keith: *Antichamber*, it looks like *Antichamber* to me.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And of course, this isn’t a kill room, is it? It’s just—Chairman Netero’s just sitting there, presumably to talk with the Ants. To interrogate them.

Sylvia: Yeah, non-violent.

Keith: [laughs] Whether or not killing happens in the room has no bearing on whether or not it’s a kill room.

Jack: [laughs]

Dre: No, that’s true, yeah.

Sylvia: We technically don’t see the actual killing.

Keith: Yeah, maybe they just popped. [laughs]

Sylvia: Maybe they just did that—yeah, their heads just did that.

Jack: [laughs] Uh...

Dre: Well maybe he tried to talk to one of the Ants, and then the other one was like, “You can’t talk to him!” and then they killed each other.

[1:30:01]

Jack: Yeah, maybe, maybe.

Sylvia: Yeah, definitely.

Jack: As the...

Sylvia: And Kite’s still alive!

Dre: [laughs]

Jack: Aw, it’s—yeah, Keith has just posted a panel from the manga of the exit route—exit door to his awful—

Keith: [laughing] No, no, this is from *Antichamber*. [laughs]

Jack: Oh, that’s from *Antichamber*? [laughs]

Keith: [laughing] Yeah, that’s act— [dissolves into laughter]

Jack: Can you see how I thought this was a Togashi panel, though?

Sylvia: No, I can absolutely...

Jack: Like putting the text in the doorway [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] is really...would be a—a Togashi move. Um, it’s a—it’s a picture of the chamber with a big exit door and then written in the black of the doorway is, “Life isn’t about getting to the end,” which I had thought was like a line of style from Chairman Netero. [laughs]

Keith: Like some kind of Knov thing.

Jack: Yeah. Um, meanwhile, Colt, remember him? Uh, Colt and Peggy are starting to get a little suspicious that Ant commanders are getting picked off one by one. They

know that the humans are doing this. This is kind of like, the tables have been turned here, because they know that they're facing a strong opponent, they don't know where they are, or what they're doing, but they know that squadrons are disappearing. Um, and Kite actually says, "Uh, if the humans target us in a long hunt, it could mean trouble." There's a—there is a crack in the Ants' armor.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, they—and then they—they're worried about going to Neferpitou, they're specifically are like, "We really don't wanna have to bring this to Neferpitou." And it's not exactly clear why, maybe like—I think the implication up front is like, they're worried that—that—that Pitou's gonna be mean about it, because Pitou's maybe cruel because they're so strong, but no, it's just because Pitou doesn't care.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Doesn't give a shit!

Dre: Mmm.

Keith: Pitou doesn't care about the safety of these ne—of these Ants. These are—

Jack: Pitou is creating a stitched together Frankenstein Kite. Very happy.

Keith: Right. Their con—their concern is solely with the birth of the King. It does not—

Sylvia: I really like this.

Keith: It does not matter what happens to the guard Ants, the guard Ants [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] can be picked off until they're gone, for all they—they mat—they care.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: I just think it's like, so much fun how we've already got, yep, there's—there's uh, bristling at the presence of the, um, the Royal Guard now.

Jack: Yeah, straight away.

Keith: And then there's another thing, it's that uh, the—the behavioral issues that seemed like they were gonna get fixed? They're not so fixed anymore.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah.

Sylvia: No.

Keith: 'Cause these—all—all—because the Royal Guard is like, it's not that they've abdicated their duty, it's just that their duty isn't exactly what it seemed like it was going to be.

Dre: Mm-hm.

Keith: And now you've got a bunch of squads that uh, of like shitty Ants that are in it for themselves, who also have powerful Nen abilities now. Um, "Ever since they discovered how to control Nen they've been—become quite arrogant." Is what they said.

Jack: [laughs] Yes. Yeah. Uh, I really like the uh, so Peggy and Colt are—are—are planning on bringing things back under control. "Nen has made the Squadron Leaders arrogant," is the—is the translation that I wrote down. It's really fun. Uh, so they do actually bring their concerns to Pitou, and Pitou says, "Look, I'll leave the outside to you." [laughs] Colt and Peggy have this great line as they're walking away, where one says to the other, "Well, this is better than getting erratic orders, y'know? Okay."

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvia: Eh.

Jack: They're—we are fully in middle management territory, you know?

Dre: [laughs]

Sylvia: I was gonna say. It is great how much they are just like, "Ugh, well at least the—the, uh, head office isn't bothering us right now."

Jack: It becomes clearer that Netero and the Extermination Crew are working a plan. The exact nature of the plan is not terribly clear to the viewer, but it relies on the portals, the kill room, the mist, and picking off the Ants. Uh, they call some Ants “bait” and some Ants “traps”, uh, and Neter—no, **[Sylvia: [quietly] You can’t talk like that.]** Knov says, “I suspect the organized and disorganized Ants are going to start pairing off.” They are playing the Ants against each other. And I really do like that we have enough of the shape of this plan to kind of put together vaguely what’s going on, but they—they are still, y’know, they had a conversation in a room somewhere before they showed up in the NGL, **[Keith: Mm-hm.]** of like, “Here is what I think we should do.” And I really love that not all of that is clear to us.

Keith: I’ve got—I love this. [laughs] This still here of the—

Jack: What’s—could you describe what’s happening in this still?

Everyone: [laughs]

Keith: This is—thi—this is in one image, the plan summed up, of uh, a hole in the ground going to, uh, Knov’s portal, a, uh, a Ant that we’ve seen before, like the weird pale ladybug man Ant, **[Sylvia: Yeah.]** who is falling straight down into this hole, surrounded by mist into the kill room.

Jack: [laughs]

Dre: Huge like, *Looney Tunes* energy here.

Sylvia: It’s really funny lookin’.

Keith: Yeah. [laughs]

Dre: This is Wile E. Coyote realizing that like, he ran off the cliff and is about to fall.

Keith: Yeah. I also love this Ant specifically, uh, because it’s one of a category of Ants that is like, too bulky and insectoid to like, emote properly.

Jack: Y’know who this Ant is? This is Austin’s favorite ladybug Ant.

Keith: Right. Yes.

Dre: Oh yeah.

Jack: Go back to the first Chimera Ant episode, you will here Austin talking about a ladybug Ant in uh, in uh, in an assault on a village who is kind of just hanging out, and then gets scared when people with guns show up. I might be wrong, but I also think this is one of Keith's favorite Chimera Ants, the Ant with the small draw straws box.

Dre: [laughs]

Keith: [laughs] The—that is like a—that one's like a grasshopper or something.

Jack: Ah, such a funny joke.

Sylvia: A fucked up guy.

Keith: But it's the same kind of Ant, the—the one who's bug-like to like, really emote or anything.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. It's really funny. Um, Knov is very confident about this. Knov is like, "This is going great." But Netero, wise, is not so sure. [**Keith:** Yeah.] The viewer has been primed after having seen Pitou kill Kite in one second, uh, to be terrified of the Ants, right? The viewer is like, [**Dre:** Yeah.] they are gonna have to do a lot of work to get the viewer on board with "things are going well in a fight with the Ants." [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] Y'know. And we can't even begin to make that uh, uh, sort of, um, distinction, until the King's born. Y'know. The humans are losing, and I don't believe any character who thinks that they are winning right now.

Keith: And—and we have like, it's—it's really Knov's word against Netero, and the show is—is not really making any illusions that you should trust Knov over Netero. [**Dre:** Yeah.] Netero said, "Pitou is stronger than me." And Knov said, "That's impossible.

[Jack: Yeah. Mm-hm.] That cannot be.” And the—the question is, who do you trust? And it’s really not a question.

Sylvia and Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. By now, we are starting to see Ants obliterated inside the kill room.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Um...

Keith: This is from—I po—did we skip over some—I did post this from a little bit further down, I think, did we miss some fight?

Jack: No, no, I think—it’s just time for another fight with Knuckle.

Keith: This is the weak—uh, uh, I mean, uh, as far as the—this—I don’t dislike the—the moment-to-moment things that are happening, it is a weak structure to me, to have like, all of this interesting forward movement on the NGL side, and then having like, this wall that the—that Gon and Killua [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] can’t climb, [**Dre:** Mm-hm.] that they just go back to, and it’s like, okay, third time to go back to go back to the wall.

Jack: Yeah, it’s like a shounen power treadmill.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: I think that’s one of the complaints I’ve heard about this part, is that this bit here kind of drains the momentum for people the first time watching it because of the jumping, uh, back and forth.

Keith: Though, there’s an obvious counterpoint to that, which is that, this is a 65 long—episode-long arc [**Sylvia:** Yes.] and this part of it is three episodes.

Dre: [laughs]

Sylvia: Oh for sure. For sure.

Keith: Like, like, we're—at the—in the next episode, we're gonna very quickly, like the—the—the dealing with Knuckle part of the next set of episodes is—is going to be very small.

Jack: Yeah. I think that um, I think that the stuff outside the NGL, as we are back on the shounen power treadmill, push to open the, uh, Kukuroo Mountain gate, et cetera, [**Dre** chuckles] really does rely on Palm, [**Keith:** Yeah.] a—a unpleasant fly in the ointment, [**Keith:** Yeah.] [**Sylvia** laughs] who uh, through her sweaty, uh, nihilistic violence—threats of violence, uh, not nihilistic actually, uh, powered by a sort of very specific animus, um, she makes this, y'know, she—she is working as hard as she can to make this thing go, and she does a really good job. But I do think it is the weaker chunk. [**Keith:** It is—] But I think your mileage is gonna vary based on how delighted you are to see Palm doing her schtick.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: There is something that we—I don't think—maybe I—maybe I've—am just already forgetting. I don't think this—that we've mentioned this. There's one thing that Palm is doing that we haven't mentioned, and that's, underneath all of this rage and fury and stabbing, she's cooking them these big beautiful feasts. [laughs]

Jack: [wheezes] Yes!

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Not poisoned, like genuinely, they're just good food.

Dre: Yeah. And also like didn't poison uh, Knuckle's food either.

Keith: Correct. Yes. Didn't poison Knuckle's food.

Jack: And in the same way that Lunch from *Dragon Ball* is kind of a play on the like, um, old, warmed-over, misogynistic works of like, this is a housewife who snaps.

Keith: Right.

Dre: Mm-hm.

Jack: Um, and, you know, will turn against the, uh, her lecherous husband, or—or whatever, y’know. Knuckle—not Knuckle, oh my god—Good Lunch is, like, y’know, makes meals, checks in, folds everyone’s clothes, makes sure everyone’s okay. Evil Lunch unloads a, y’know, an automatic weapon. These are the two frames that are sort of like, uh, uh, a woman can fall into in a loving relationship in this sort of cosmology. And I think you can see part of that being worked through with Palm here, her sort of like, all-consuming uh, vaguely infantilizing love—infantilizing her as a character, not the object of her affection.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Right. Yeah.

Jack: Um, and then her cooking them these big meals, and then her also plotting with this—with this knife. I think that’s all there. I think the work that is being done, not necessarily to resolve those character tensions, but what sets them apart is that her physical demeanor and her affect is so um, unusual and extraordinary. She really is like, what if those warmed-over tropes of the housewife—of the—of the violent housewife were filtered through literally the girl from *The Ring*. [**Keith:** Right. And then on—] Um, and that is, like, an aesthetic train crash that is entertaining to see.

Keith: It’s entertaining, and then—and then again, like, uh, like Lunch, underneath it all, she is a comedy character. [**Jack:** Oh, yeah.] Like, she is the comic relief. [**Dre:** Yeah.] [Jack: Yeah.] She is the a—she is the—the—the—the—uh—the funny light backbone of these episodes, like watch—

Jack: And the twist of, “she is like a malevolent supernatural murderer” is what makes it go for me.

Keith: Right.

Jack: That's the—

Keith: Yes. Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Totally.

Jack: That turns the engine on.

Dre: It makes it so absurd that like—yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: You can tell that this is not meant—like these tropes are being put on display for a reason, [**Keith:** Yeah.] not just like, lazy writing or whatever.

Keith: Mm-hm.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Even if also there is the—playing with—playing on the same thing that Lunch does.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Sure. Yeah.

Keith: Um. It's really—

Jack: Love Lunch.

Keith: Lunch is not—I love Lunch, and uh, uh, Palm is really funny.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: [laughing] I just like—they're just having like a normal talk about training, and then like, focus will shift and you'll see Palm is in the kitchen in the background, like, stabbing something repeatedly with the knife. [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: [laughs]

Sylvia: It's so—just the—the amount of her glowering in the background every time is so...

Jack: Yeah, she has great animation loop she does where she like, holds—she's got a big kitchen knife, and she will hold the kitchen knife really close to her face, as though she's focusing on it, [**Sylvia:** She trembles.] with the blade pointing away from her, and will just vibrate, like, angrily.

Dre: [laughs]

Sylvia: Like, it's barely contained within her, her killing—her killing urge.

Keith: Yeah. It's—and also she's warning them the whole time, "Be careful. I don't wanna kill you, but I'm going to fucking kill you. I really am gonna kill you."

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: "I'm gonna kill you. I'm really—"

Sylvia: "This time I'm gonna do it. Don't come to Nen school tomorrow."

Jack: This— [wheezes] this second fight with Knuckle does not go well, but it's a really beautifully animated shounen fight. They are doing this for real this time, he is blocking their blows, they are leaping about, eventually Gon and Killua uh, don't beat him, and back off. They—they retreat. This is a first—well no, we did just see them do a—a mega retreat. This is a first retreat in a fight where they wouldn't die if they—if they didn't retreat.

Dre: Mm-hm.

Jack: Um, I can't remember who says it, I think it's Knuckle who says, "Their bodies are tired out. [**Keith:** Mm-hm.] All that's moving them now is sheer willpower." Which I picked out because of Gon's line earlier about like, "We can win purely on willpower." It's, y'know.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Those are the words of someone who's scrolled up inside the script document and went, "Ohhhh."

Dre: [laughs]

Keith: Uh, it is funny, this is the part where Knuckle is like, becomes fully aware that—that he is basically their teacher. He is willingly training them at this point. Which is counterproductive—

Jack: Yep. It's—it's the consensual—consensual Scissors Pervert. Whereas the Scissors Pervert was thrown into the roll of a teacher, [**Keith:** Right.] uh, uh...

Sylvia: [laughs]

Keith: [laughs]

Jack: ...unintentionally, this guy is now...

Keith: And yet accepted it.

Sylvia: "It's the consensual Scissors Pervert."

Jack and Keith: [laugh]

Sylvia: Oh my goodness.

Jack: Um, as Gon and Killua start walking home, they're limping, they're like, holding themselves up on like a big stick, um, the other assassin, Shoot, watches Knuckle,

suspicious that he will reveal, uh, uh, this other assassin's identity, and he says, "My opportunity will be on their way home." And then we move to 88.

Keith: Uh, "Hegemony of the Food Chain" here.

Jack: Oh, really? "Hegemony of the Food Chain" starts playing?

Sylvia: So funny.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: [cross] That's really a really good bit.

Jack: [cross] Why would you give that cue—I mean that's just—that's just soundtrack joke, right? You're not gonna give that to Shoot. Because Shoot—

Keith: They do. They absolutely give it to Shoot. At the very end of 87, before we learn what happens at the beginning of 88, uh, he's watching them menacingly, and is like, y'know, "I can't trust Knuckle because he'll just fall in love with these kids. Uh, but he probably won't give me away, and I'm going—I'm going to defeat them." "Hegemony of the Food Chain."

Jack: [laughs]

["Hegemony of the Food Chain" begins playing]

Keith: It's very funny considering what comes next.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah. What does come next?

Episode 88 [1:44:21]

Jack: Absolutely beautiful opening line from the narrator here. This is a—this is a—a mode that I don't think I've heard the narrator in, which is he's telling us a little story. The

narrower—the narrower—the narrator says, “There is a man targeting Gon and Killua, and his name is Shoot McMahon.”

Sylvia: I would love to.

Keith: This is our first time hearing that name, right?

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: We’ve heard Shoot, but he is not being called Shoot McMahon. This should be your first clue...

Keith: Oh, had we heard Shoot? I didn’t realize that we had heard Shoot.

Jack: [cross] Yeah, we’ve heard—

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah, we had heard Shoot, yeah.

Dre: [cross] Yeah, we have heard Shoot.

Keith: Shoot McMahon. Can you believe that? [laughs]

Jack: [laughs]

Sylvia: It’s a funny fuckin’ name.

Keith: [laughing] Can you believe that his name is Shoot McMahon? Knuckle and Shoot. It’s great! It’s just—

[1:45:00]

Sylvia: Knuckle, Shoot, and Palm, yeah.

Keith: Yeah, Knuckle, Shoot, and Palm.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: There's a naming convention here.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Eh, uh, dice games, right? Uh, are we talking—they're like, um...

Sylvia: [makes skeptical noise] Not quite. We talked actually a little bit about the thing they're named after uh, before the recording, and I'm not talking about pygmy hippos. They're uh, pitches, right?

Jack: Ohhh!

Dre: Oh, yeah!

Keith: Baseball pitches?

Sylvia: Yeah. Knuckle ball...

Dre: Knuckle ball—well, you can also like, I think like, palm serve [**Sylvia:** Shooter.] is like a volleyball serve.

Sylvia: Yeah. 'Cause my other trivia thing [**Keith:** Oh.] is that Gyro's part of this naming convention, too.

Jack: Huh.

Dre: Ohhh yeahhh.

Jack: It's all games, astronaut shooting other astronaut, always has been.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: [laughs]

Keith: I always thought that they were—

Sylvia: Wow, I just started goo—sorry, I was googling Shoot McMahon to double check my—this, and the first autocorrect was “Shoot McMahon x Reader”, uh, godspeed.

Keith and Jack: [laugh]

Keith: I—I hate anime.

Sylvia: Yeah. “Shoot’s name is derivative from a commonly thrown baseball pitch known as the shootball. Knuckle, Palm, and Gyro are simi—all similarly named.”

Dre: Ohhhh.

Keith: Oh yeah, palmball, I totally forgot—

Jack: That’s really cool.

Sylvia: I’ve never seen it called a shootball though—

Dre: No, me neither.

Sylvia: I’ve always just heard it called the shooter.

Keith: I totally forgot about the—the palmball—

Jack: Shootball.

Keith: —which is funny because that’s a pitch that I throw in uh, the show.

Dre: Is that like a slider?

Keith: It is the—it is—

Jack: The show that Keith is talking about is Friends at the Table, [**Keith:** Yeah.] which you can check out at friendsatthetable.net.

Keith: Uh, it—it’s a changeup that breaks the other way, basically.

Dre: Ohhh, interesting.

Sylvia: Oh, it is called shootball. Anyway.

Keith: Um...

Sylvia: I just thought that was a fun little thing to point out.

Jack: That's really great.

Dre: Yeahhhh.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Uh, we can just say Shoot's whole deal.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: He is uh, a coward. The narrator says he "is very faint of heart." And he really is just a punchline to a really great joke at this point, the joke being that he sees Gon and Killua coming by, and he's like, "This is my moment," and he gets ready for the moment, and then he just can't bring himself to—to act.

Keith: Right, he's literally quivering

Jack: Yes.

Sylvia: He's the Cowardly Lion, like...

Dre: [laughs] Yeah.

Sylvia: Like, that's his whole deal. Shoot McMahon is very faint of heart.

Keith: It's uh—and—and now it starts to make sense why this game exists at all.

Jack: Yeah! Oh yeah!

Keith: Because Chairman Netero is seeing uh, flaws in the plan to bring Knuckle and Shoot. [Dre: Mmm.] Knuckle, who is too kind to [Dre: Yeah.] be an effective murderer of Ants, and Shoot, who is too cowardly to be an effective murderer of Ants.

Jack: And Palm, who is an effective murderer, but in the wrong direction.

Keith: [wheezes] But of people, not of Ants. [laughs]

Jack: Um, yes. This is when we get a little bit more—

Sylvia: [wheezes] Hunter grads are not sendin' their best this year.

Dre: [laughs]

Jack: They really are not.

Keith: I can see—I can see Netero, like, let's say—okay. Netero's hanging out with Beans, and they know that they're gonna—

Sylvia: Okay, I'm listening.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Green Green Jellybean Man.

Keith: —they're gonna go on this—Green Green Jellybean Man—they know that this trip is coming, where Netero's gonna go to the NGL, and they're—

Jack: He's on one of his stupid airships.

Keith: Yeah. And they're deciding—they're deciding which—they're deciding which two Hunters to bring along to do this, and Green Green Jellybean Man goes, "Well what about Knuckle and Shoot? They're really strong and they have a great power that'll work, and you can sit in that room and kill them all day." And Chairman Netero goes, "Well they've got those stupid fucking students that can't do shit."

Jack: [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: “That’s clearly not what I wanna do. I wanna bring someone else.” And it—but—and is eventually convinced, “No, I guess we can bring them, but I want a backup plan. Gimme two shogi tiles.”

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Well then Beans is like, “Well, uh, y’know, we could check to see if there are any good, uh, good recruits from this year’s Hunter Exam!” And Netero says, “What, you mean Killua Zoldyck, the only person who got through?”

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah. Right.

Jack: “I already have him! We have no new Hunters!”

Keith: [sighs] No new Hunters...usually they have at least a couple.

Jack: Well, yeah. How many get out of the end of the Hunter Exam? Quite a few, like eight?

Keith: I think—I think that they said four—usually it’s like four.

Dre: Hmm.

Keith: I could be totally making that up.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: But that makes sense based on the one that we saw.

Jack: I love the Hunter Exam.

Keith: Yeah, it was great.

Dre: Hey, is Killua the only Zoldyck who’s a Hunter?

Sylvia: Uh, no, Illumi.

Keith: No, uh, Illumi made it.

Dre: Oh, you're right, you're right, you're right. Yeah, right. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Very importantly, Illumi.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: We don't—we don't know whether or not—we don't know whether or not Zeno or Silva are or aren't.

Dre: Or if any of Killua's—but I guess not any of Killua's siblings, but like, Killua's other— **[Keith: Right.]** Milluki...?

Keith: Yeah, Milluki. Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Who's Killua's horrid brother, the small scary one? K—Kalluto.

Keith: Kalluto, yeah, right.

Sylvia: Who's with the Troupe.

Dre: Mmm.

Keith: Uh, seems like Kalluto is not. Kalluto is hangin' around with his mom.

Jack: Kalluto is six.

Sylvia: No, K—didn't we see Kalluto during Greed Island?

Jack: Yeah, we saw Kalluto uh, no, not during Greed Island—oh, uh, oh yes—

Sylvia: Yeah we did.

Jack: Had teamed up with the Spiders, briefly.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: So—right, I meant that, until the team up with the Spiders—

Sylvia: Oh, okay.

Keith: —would've been too busy hanging around with his mom to go become a Hunter.

Sylvia: Yes, that is correct.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: And then too busy hangin' out with the...

Keith: The Hunters—the Spiders.

Sylvia: Those miscreants.

Keith. Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Uh...

Jack: Those miscreants.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Uh, this is when we get uh, uh, Bisky sort of like, spelling out to the viewer if not to Gon and Killua what she's actually trying to do here. We covered this earlier. Bisky's seeing this as a sort of broader, holistic practice—

Keith: Fuck!

Jack: Uh...yes?

Keith: I forgot a song! I forgot an important song!

Jack: Oh, no, no! We can go back!

Dre: Oh, shit.

Keith: Okay. Okay. Because, it's got a companion song later, and they're two very important songs, it's the theme song of uh, the, of uh, of Shaiapouf.

Sylvia: Oh.

Keith: It's called uh...

Jack: Oh yes.

Keith: "In the Palace"—there's two, there's one for, uh, I mean I guess there—it is two different sort of Royal Guard songs, is really what it is. One—thi—this first one is called, "In the Palace ~ Lamentoso."

[“In the Palace” ~ Lamentoso begins playing]

Keith: These are interesting, 'cause they're like, semi-diegetic. Shaiapouf has a violin
[**Sylvia:** Yeah.] and is seen playing these songs.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: These are—this is a massive—

Sylvia: Oh, it's really good.

Keith: —massively important track for this season. And the next one even more so. Oh, when the second violin kicks in. Oh, it's really good.

Jack: It's again, this like, very uh, capital R Romantic sort of like, violin technique. Very showy. Kind of mournful.

Keith: Shai-y.

Jack: Shai-y? [laughs]

Keith: Shaiapouf. [laughs]

Jack: 'Cause of Shaiapouf.

Dre: [laughs]

Sylvia: Boo.

[music fades out]

Keith: Anyway, so that—that is what is playing when uh, Pouf first shows up. And I should've—should've played that. Sorry, what I—Jack, I interrupted you, fully, in the middle of some totally unrelated thing.

Jack: No, no, no. We were just talking about Bisky's philosophy we've talked through.

Keith: Okay, okay.

Jack: What I do actually want to highlight here is how Palm uh, works as a kind of lethal manifestation of the broader desperation. You know, we talked about Palm as a—as a—as an effective joke character, y'know, her desperation to get into the NGL, [**Keith:** Right.] and she adds this kind of like, ticking clock, y'know, she'll kill them all if they don't beat the assassins.

Keith: Ohhhh.

Jack: But she's also a really nice uh, manifestation of the like, dread and anxiety in the room as the Chimera Ants continue to grow. We don't even get a training sequence anymore without a horrifying, uh, uh, dread girl hanging out in the background with a knife, y'know?

Keith: Yeah. And—and also, um, Gon's sort of suppressed anxiety about wanting—*needing* to go back to save Kite, like, uh, y'know, the boy who's always smiling.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: A—and, like, the thing that he’s smiling about now is, “We’ve gotta save our friend!” Aaaaand, that is not—that cannot be, like an uncomplicated emotion.

Jack: No. No. And so—

Keith: This is a—this is like the first time where Gon’s happiness feels like a front to something else.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Mmm.

Jack: And you literally put a specter in the room with them, you know?

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: Uh, at this point—

Keith: Aw, there’s some good stuff. We gotta remember that for next time we’re recording, ‘cause there’s some really crazy stuff with them.

Sylvia: [laughs]

Jack: Uh, at this point—

Sylvia: I guess that’s something to write down.

Keith: Uh, yeah, yeah, I’ll put it in the scratch doc. Although it’d be—it’ll be impossible to not see it as it’s happening.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Palm decides to, y’know, come clean to Bisky. And she says, “Look, the situation clearly hasn’t improved at all. Y’know, Gon and Killua are not beating Knuckle, as it stands. They’re not getting any better.” And she looks and says, “Lately I find myself looking at my knife.” [laughs] Which is such a good line. And then in order to—

Sylvia: She's so real.

Jack: —calm her down and say, y'know, "We're going to be able to do this," Gon does a pinky promise with Palm.

Sylvia: Oh my god. The—there is a sound effect, when he reveals his pinky that made me laugh so hard I had to pause the episode and—'cause I was like, crying. [**Jack** laughs] It sounds like when you use the home run bat in *Smash Bros*.

Jack and Keith: [laugh]

Dre: Oh, yeah!

Sylvia: Like it just goes like, [makes noise] [cross] Like it sounds like there's a critical hit.

Keith: [cross] Oh the—the fuckin' *Dragon Ball*, the *Dragon Ball* critical hit.

Dre: Uh-huh.

Sylvia: Yeah. It is so—like, it killed me. Like, I can't even begin to describe like—[wheezes] It added another ten minutes to my watch today at least.

Keith: That's really funny.

Jack: It just—going! Uh, this is our—

Sylvia: I don't know why.

Jack: —second pinky promise. The first pinky promise we saw wayyyy back in episode one.

Sylvia: Mm-hm.

Jack: When Gon promised uh, Aunt Mito that uh, uh, he would, what, come back and see her? Uh, and again, y'know, we're tying together these sort of like, the way the

show is viewing housewives, and housewives' anxiety, or the anxiety [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] of a particular kind of conception of a woman, right? Where it's like—

Sylvia: I mean worth mentioning, during this, they're also eating a meal that she cooked to put—

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mmm.

Sylvia: Like, to reinforce the sorta housewife parallel thing.

Jack: Yeah, so we see—

Sylvia: She is kind of put in that role.

Jack: Yeah, we see the pinky promise as a vector for, uh, making a vow with this sort of like, pseudo-mother figure. Um, and I think that that is...interesting writing. We talk a lot about Gon being 12-year-old, [**Keith:** Mm-hm.] y'know, and the ways that he's not a 12-year-old, and the—and the ways that he is, and I do think it's interesting that we see rendered out on two separate occasions, like, the relationship between a child and a sort of mother-like figure, as being this like, game-like contract that is drawn between one and the other. We've seen contracts drawn in the show before very distinctively; I'm thinking about Kurapika's Nen contract in the heart. But I don't know, there really is something about like, kids and pseudo-parents, and then Palm and Mito filling this role of like a troubled, anxious take on a series of old housewife tropes, and then a bond between those two character being sold through this kind of like, playful ritual act, is—is notable that—that's the occasion it happens twice. Uh, this causes Palm to fall in love with Gon.

Keith: Yes.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hm.

Keith: Uh, can I try—I'm gonna try something, I think that I've made it so that I can just play this VLC file and we can hear what Sylvi was talking about [**Sylvia:** Oh.] with the —with the finger.

Jack: Oh, please!

Sylvia: I hope so.

Keith: I—I don't know that this will work for sure, but let's try.

[sound effect plays]

Gon: We'll win!

Keith: Did you hear that?

Sylvia: No.

Keith: Ah, fuck.

Jack: No, no.

Keith: I—I now heard it. [**Sylvia and Dre** laugh] It was pretty intense.

Jack: [laughs]

Keith: Okay, well, uh...

Sylvia: Somebody did.

Jack: More and more Ants are falling through Knov's portals in the fog. The Ants are trying to, uh, beat this. Baital, uh, uh, an Ant who looks like—this is a really unhelpful note, I wrote down here, he looks like a sort of elf alien. What does that mean?

Sylvia: He looks like Piccolo.

Jack: Ah! Ah! My boy.

Sylvia: But Piccolo from the live action *Dragon Ball* movie.

Jack: Fiddle-dee-dee.

Dre: Ooh.

Keith: He looks like the people—he looks like the people that hang out in the Home For Infinite Losers.

Sylvia: Ohhhh.

Jack: Keith, do you have a screencap of Baital? ‘Cause I have completely forgotten what this Ant looks like.

Keith: Uh, I do. Yeah, I do have that. Um, let’s see, I have it right here. Baital. Under B for Baital.

Jack: He appears in the death room, and narra—and Netero says, “So, you’re next.” [laughs] It’s just...

Sylvia: It’s—it’s scary.

Keith: There you go.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Oh, yeah, he’s the one on the left there.

Jack: Oh, yeah yeah yeah. There he is.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: He really does look like a sort of elf alien. He has a bald head. He’s almost like what if like a classic gray alien was uh, 15 percent more skull [**Sylvia** laughs] and 20 percent more elf.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Oh.

Jack: He is joined by another senior Ant who is just a chicken. [laughs]

Keith: Yeah, really just a chicken man. Like, almost like a—

Jack: Wearing a turtleneck.

Dre: [chuckles]

Keith: Almost like someone like, um, in a mascot costume for a restaurant.

Jack: Yes. Yeah. It's great. Um, Morel and Knov are debating whether or not this is even fair. Uh, not just—not really fair to the Ants, but fair to them. Um, or—or fair—I can't—they don't seem to be caring for the Ants so much as their own internal structure. They says, "We find the enemies, and the old man takes care of them." They're not sure about how this split is happening, right?

Keith: Uh, sorry, say again Jack? I—I—

Jack: Morel and Knov are like, they're not sure whether this is fair, what is happening, they say, "We find the enemies, and the old man takes care of them." They are like—
[Keith: Ohh, okay.] they want to be doing more, I think.

Keith: Right. Sure. But he's gettin' his groove back!

Jack: He is gettin' his groove back, and, y'know, it's—it's down there, we see Netero surrounded by just—we've hinted at this, endless Ant viscera. He has been training—

Sylvia: It's gotta stink in there, right?

Keith: [laughs] It's gotta smell really bad.

Jack: Oh, god.

Sylvia: Like it has to smell *crazy*.

Dre: [laughs]

Keith: Yeah, you ever kill one stink bug?

Sylvia: No, actually no.

Keith: Oh, really?

Sylvia: Yeah, no, I'm—I'm a friend to animals.

Jack: Yeah, I don't kill bugs. Other than the spotted lanternfly.

Sylvia: Yeah, I take 'em outside.

Keith: Sometimes it still happens.

Jack: I'm sort of a—

Keith: Maybe it's 'cause I live in the woods.

Sylvia: Oh, yeah.

Jack: I'm sort of a, um, a Knuckle in that way. I think that we should be friendly with the—actually, if there are lots and lots and lots and lots and lots and lots of ants in my house, I will begin a program. I will engage with the—

Keith: Oh, like an after school thing?

Jack: Uh, like an after school poison.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Um, but if I see an ant outside—

Keith: Some marijuana? Mary Jane?

Dre: Ooh!

Jack: Actually, it might be. I don't know what they use to get ants. If I see an ant inside, I say, uh-oh. I better not see more of you or there's going to be trouble. If I see an ant outside, I say, what a delight. We're compatriots outside in nature's realm. If I see a spider inside my house, I say, kind, good-hearted soldier.

Keith: The anti-ant.

Jack: The anti-ant.

Dre: Mmm.

Jack: The anti-fly. Working hard. If I see an ant—a spider outside, I think, what a delight.

Sylvia: Please make sure not to go to—don't go to Anti-Ant's Pretzels, they're not good.

Jack: [laughs]

Keith: Ant inside, run and hide.

[2:00:00]

Jack: Yeah, ant outside—

Keith: Ant outside, let it slide.

Jack: [laughs]

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvia: Weirdly enough, though, in the second one, aunt is spelled with the U that time.

Keith: Yeah. [laughs]

Jack: Centipede in, what a sin. Centipede out, dance and shout.

Keith: [laughs]

Jack: Uh, I'm tryna think if I have any other bug uh—this is from our bug almanac, the Friends at the Table bug almanac.

Keith: Mm-hm.

Dre: Mmmm.

Jack: Which you can buy at friendsatthetable.shop, along with our anniversary merch.

Dre: Yeah, it's called, "Can I Bug You for a Few Minutes?"

Jack: [laughs] And then in parentheses underneath, it says, "(The answer is different if you're inside or outside.)" Um, let's see. The Ants, meanwhile, are—oh, actually, I really love the flip that has happened here, which is that the Extermination Team is now taking Ant squadrons for the purposes of training Chairman Netero in the same way that the Ants harvested villages for the purposes of sustaining the Queen.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Mmmm. Mm-hm.

Sylvia: Mm-hm.

Jack: I think that this is an obvious parallel that is delightful. Um, if, y'know, if we've talked about the Chimera Ants as basically just being an enjoyable and um, sort of like, morally rigorous breakdown of the differences and—and frank similarities between y'know, what is the difference between an Ant and a human? Answer: not all that much. It stands to reason that we would also have one of these parallels of like, harvesting the other team to bolster your leader. I like it a lot.

Sylvia: [inaudible]

Dre: Mmm.

Keith: Yeah, Netero's the human King.

Dre: Mmm.

Jack: [laughs]

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvia: I mean kinda! Like...

Jack: No, no, no, no, Gon is the hu—no. Oh well, 'cause like, Netero would be the analog for the Queen. Netero would be the human Queen, right?

Sylvia: Oh.

Dre: Mmm.

Jack: Who is trying to like, birth the King in his awful chamber.

Keith: You think Netero is trying to birth something?

Sylvia: He birthed Gon?

Jack: Maybe ideologically.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: Maybe sort of like, in his...

Sylvia: No, Ging already did that. Ging gave birth to—

Dre: [laughs]

Keith: I think his—if he's trying to birth something, it's a stronger version of himself.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, which, you know...I think Jack's on the money.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Uh, the Ants—

Keith: I think Benjamin Franklin's on the money.

Sylvia: Shut the fuck up.

Jack: The Ants are pretty confident that the King's birth is going to turn the tables. They're like, "We are losing. But—" Or—I—I firmly don't think the Ants are losing. The Ants are like, "We're losing more than we were, but when the King, it's gonna be whole new deal." And we can see the King now, the outline of the King very firmly inside the egg sac. He is the figure that we have seen in the past. He has a very distinctive tail with like a, um, it almost looks like a—you know the way that Chimera Ants have like a big arm with three fingers on the end? [**Keith:** Yeah.] This could be that his tail is an awful prehensile arm, that's also a possibility, but that's what his tail looks like. Uh, and he moves inside the egg sac, as the Queen says, "Do you want to come out now? Not yet. It's still too early."

Keith: Mmm.

Jack: Um...

Keith: And then something does come out, right? Or is that in a little—in—in a minute?

Jack: Yeah, pretty much. I mean, Gon and Killua show up for the fight with Knuckle in a shared cloud of Nen, and Knuckle says, "You boys mean business tonight." I think it's a really expeditious little arc they've had with Knuckle. [**Keith:** Yeah.] Uh, similarly, they've been holding their, uh, their Ren out for three hours, and, when Bisky tells them that they've done it, y'know, previously they couldn't do it for 20 minutes or whatever, Gon and Killua say, "That seemed fast." [**Keith:** Yeah.] Y'know, we—we've been on a really nice truncated little training arc.

Keith: Yeah, their original—I think it was 54 minutes is when Killua's Nen gives out, and then Gon's had—they imply it was like, just before Killua's. Uh, and then now they're—they got to three hours without breaking a sweat, basically. She gives them half an hour to rest, and then they go try to fight Knuckle at full strength.

Jack: Yeah. They're ready to go. But, then, violin music plays as the final Royal Guard is born. Uh, Pouf is playing the violin with red sort of energy burning behind him, [**Keith:** Yeah.] as like, the collected Ants listen and then, in silhouette we see, uh, who I'm calling Frankenstein Kite fighting Ants, just tearing through them, uh, with a gigantic red Nen puppeteer piloting him [**Keith:** Mmm.] like a marionette. It's awful.

Keith: Seems bad.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: This song, by the way, this one's called, "In the Palace ~ Agitato".

["In the Palace ~ Agitato" begins to play]

Dre: Ooh.

Jack: Yeah, it is agitato.

Sylvia: Really fucking good.

Keith: This is a very important track.

Jack: And this is mixed like a live violin because it is—y'know, we have the reverb of the Ant castle playing around us. Um, any, y'know, the dread promise of like, Pitou is going to resurrect Kite, has just come true. Y'know, we've—we've—we have moved into that space where Kite [music fades out] is back and he's—he's bad news. Um, we're there now. What weapon is he fighting with? Is he fighting with the scythe?

Sylvia: He's not fighting with anything.

Jack: He's just tearing through them with his bare hands?

Sylvia: It's all fistfighting, yeah.

Jack: Woof.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Okay.

Keith: Mm-hm.

Dre: Mm-hm.

Keith: So I can't remember, did we decide that was good or bad?

Jack: This is not good.

Keith: [laughs]

Jack: And then the final Royal Guard is born. This is Youpi, [**Sylvia** laughs] an immensely strong—why do you laugh when I say Youpi?

Sylvia: I just—it's—im—im—imagine waking up being this sort of like, super yoked red man, and the first thing anyone says to you is, "Youpi!" and that's your name.

Jack: Yes! Pitou—I—I think it's Pitou, just very brightly says, "Good morning Youpi!" as he shows up.

Sylvia: [cross] And he just goes, [in a deep voice] "Youpi?"

Keith: [cross] And he's like, "Who? What?"

Dre: [laughs]

Jack: Yeah, he arrives by like, kicking his way through a wall or something.

Dre and Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: I don't know what animal he is. It might become clearer in a wide shot. [**Keith:** Mmm.] My guess is that he's like a devil. He's like an ox or like a goat. [**Sylvia:** Mmm.] Um, is it obvious and I just haven't noticed it?

Keith: No.

Sylvia: No.

Keith: But you—it's just that you're pretty much—that's pretty much it. That's—that's what it is.

Jack: I think he's like a—I think he's like a devil. Um...

Keith: I wrote uh, that he, let's see, where did I write what he looks like. Um, Youpi is a giant red monster man that looks like a Frankenstein was a wealthy yakuza, [**Jack** laughs] inste—and instead of—and instead of neck bolts he has Frieza-style ear craters.

Jack: Yeah. He does.

Keith: yeah.

Jack: Um, I like him a lot. He—he—the—the three Royal Guards being a violently malevolent catgirl, a bishounen violin butterfly— [**Sylvia:** Catthey.] catthey, sorry, and a—the strongest man you have ever seen in your life is—that's—that's a good spread as far as I'm concerned.

Sylvia: It's fun.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: I'm...

Jack: You can have—you can have a he/him catgirl.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: This is true. My bad.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: I'm bein' regressive now.

Jack: Catgirls—

Keith: I was—I wasn't gonna say anything.

Dre: [laughs]

Jack: Catgirls—any pronoun catgirls.

Sylvia: Yeah, nah—I'm done—[cross] I'm gonna leave the show now.

Jack: [cross] I'm just out here defending— [laughs]

Dre: Problematic alarm.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Um...

Sylvia: The queer community is coming for me.

Jack: Oh no. The uh, Extermination Team, however—not knowing this, uh, has locked themselves in place. They're just gonna keep training Netero. They say, "We don't move from here until we know how our pupils did." I think this is really interesting. They want to bring in the best of the best before they—before they make their second play, y'know?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Uh, and this is probab—

Sylvia: There's a real sense of need to it, right?

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Like it is like—if—if our—like, "We don't have the personnel for this; we need our pupils to get better."

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: [cross] Here is what I would do—

Keith: [cross] But then Morel is like, “We don’t actually need our pupils, uh, because they’ll be a little help, but if the other fucking ones show up, then the best they’ll do is be a distraction.”

Jack: [laughs] Yes.

Dre: Mmm.

Keith: “Like, we’ll just use them as bait.”

Jack: Yep!

Keith: Morel doesn’t seem like a nice guy.

Jack: Here is what I would do. I would get the world government to give me a huge amount of money, and I would go to Kukuroo Mountain. I would bring in the best that the Zoldycks have to offer.

Keith: Huh.

Jack: I would then go and try and recruit Chrollo, and then I would find that I couldn’t, and I would bring in as many...eh, do I want—how many Spiders do I want? Two?

Keith: Well, is it inside or outside?

Everyone: [laughs]

Jack: I’d get Hisoka on board probably. I think Hisoka is proba—would probably be useful here.

Dre: Oohh.

Jack: I don’t know. I think that—I think that there’s—there’s a really interesting thing happening with the Extermination Team, which is that they’re like, “We want to bring in the next generation of Hunters,” which, y’know, I can kinda see where they’re—the—the function of the Hunter Organization isn’t just, “We need to win,” it’s like, as grim as it

sounds, “We want to like, foster new good Hunters.” So I can understand why they’re thinking that way.

Dre: Mm-hm.

Jack: But I think I’d just be like, get me Silva and Zeno and possibly Chrollo if he can use his Nen. We’ll—we’ll sort this out by Tuesday.

Sylvia: Um, this is kind of a—I have a—does anybody else have stuff on this, ‘cause I have a—

Jack: You can’t catch me powerscaling, though, by the way.

Sylvia: You can’t. No.

Keith: Right.

Dre: No no no no no.

Jack: That’s not about powerscaling.

Dre: It’s about efficiency.

Sylvia: I just have like a little thing that I wanted to mention that I completely forgot to, um, I think it’s in the...at the beginning of the second episode we watched this week, or even the first. Um, they keep showing the Chimera Ant like, um, hive, I guess, nest?

Keith: Fortress.

Jack: Castle. Citadel. Yeah.

Sylvia: Castle might be more appropriate at this point. And it looks like a hand reaching out of the ground up towards the sky—

Keith: Ooh.

Jack: It does.

Dre: Oh.

Sylvia: It's an image that's a lot clearer in the manga up until they have that sort of like, slow panning shot from the like, ground up in—in this set of episodes, [**Keith:** Mm-hm.] and I think it's like, really, like, a really cool image, and like really like, ties into the, like, hor—horror nature of everything. [**Jack:** Yeah.] [**Dre:** Yeah.] Like, you can—like, it's like a hand reaching out of the grave like a zombie.

Keith: Damn.

Jack: Yeah. Definitely. Um...

Keith: And they are zombies!

Sylvia: Yeah, if you think about it.

Dre: [cross] Damn. Yeah.

Jack: [cross] Wait, why are they zombies?

Sylvia: [cross] Really make you think.

Jack: [cross] They aren't zombies.

Keith: [cross] Because they are literal, one-to-one human consciousnesses—consciousnesses inside them.

Dre: Eventually.

Jack: Yeah, but that's—that's not quite what a zombie—that's—all—

Keith: Well they are—they are—they are—in a—I mean, we have—we have that frog who had like, a recollection of his previous life, we have Hagya who has—like they are in—they are, like, the living dead in a way. They literally are living dead people.

Dre: Yeah, I guess they're more reincarnated than they are like, undead though.

Keith: I mean sure but, that's what a—I mean you know, metaphors are not meant to be...you know what I mean?

Dre: Yeahhh, but I feel like—yeah, but there's like a—like zombie implies a lower like, level of like, intelligent functioning, I feel like.

Jack: Mmm.

Keith: Hey, some of them are dumb.

Dre: That's—you know what...

Keith: Some of the Ants are dumb.

Dre: Yeah, you know, you're right.

Jack: Mm. Like that Ant we saw falling through the portal.

Dre and Keith: [laugh]

Keith: Fuckin' idiot.

Sylvia: Stupid Ant.

Keith: Stupid Ant.

Dre: Stupid Ant.

Jack: Um, I've never met a Chimera Ant—no that's not true, I was about to say I've never met a Chimera Ant I don't like, but then I remembered Pike.

Sylvia: [laughs]

Keith: What about uh...

Jack: I think I like Pike in a sort of awful grotesque way.

Keith: Junju.

Jack: Pike is—

Keith: Did you like Junju?

Jack: Junj—Yunju.

Keith: Did you like Yunju?

Jack: Yunju was fucking great. He was terrifying.

Keith: Oh, but do you like him?

Jack: I'm not talking about "like", uh...

Keith: [cross] Like you *like* like him.

Dre: [cross] You don't wanna hang out with him.

Jack: No.

Keith: Okay.

Sylvia: Like, like as a character in a piece of fiction.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. I think all the Chimera Ants are great.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Meanwhile, in the fight with Knuckle and Gon and Killua, if it sounds like these cuts are kind of clunky, I think in play...y'know, we've talked about how having to cut between these two things is kind of a weakness of this batch of episodes, but I actually think the editing itself feels pretty good, y'know.

Keith: I agree. Y'know, the weakness isn't the cutting, it's in what one of the two halves is.

Jack: Yes. Definitely.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Um, I think that the—the way they’ve edited this is actually really nice. We are left on either interesting cliffhangers that suspend us until we come back, or a really nice little moment of rest at the end of one side before popping back to the other. Um, it sounds clunky in our—

Keith: Just the ability to stitch these things together so coherently is really impressive. Yeah.

Jack: It’s really ambitious editing, I think.

Keith: It’s ambitious—there’s no—the funny thing is like, why are you doing—there’s no reason to do this, like there’s no—like, you’re—like, it’s like, Togashi, you’re making it too hard on yourself, why are you doing this? And it’s just like, because he’s kind of a madman. He’s just like a weirdo.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. I think also it’s a real um, it takes a lot of skill in the editing room, it takes a lot of skill in the script stage [**Keith:** Yeah.] to get stuff like this feeling good and coherent, but I also think a lot of it does come down to the ambition of the idea. Of like, “Can we have something as compelling and high stakes as the Chimera Ant arc and can we keep cutting away from it? What does that look like?” And the answer might’ve been, in early drafts or in early edits, y’know, “That actually doesn’t work.” But I think that to have that ambitious idea and then put it through writing and editing that pulls it off, is—is really commendable.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Um, and we’re just, uh, four weirdos talking into a microphone [**Keith:** Not me.] on a podcast, so it’s a little clunkier when we do it.

Sylvia: Keith’s normal.

Keith: Yeah, I'm normal.

Dre: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

Jack: Mmmm. Mm-hm.

Sylvia: No, Keith's actually not talking.

Keith: [laughs] Right, yeah.

Jack: Oh! Oh-ho-oh!

Keith: I'm actually like, way less normal because I'm not talking.

Sylvia: Yeah, this has all been...

Keith: Psychic.

Sylvia: Yeah, like—like Ant mindwave stuff.

Keith: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. Ant mindwave stuff.

Dre: [chuckles]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Uh, I—this is where and—and—and listeners who are viewers of the show, uh might start feeling this way, if you've never seen the show before, this is where a lot of people fall off of the show.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: A lot of people—

Dre: Mmm.

Jack: What, here? Or do you mean in Chimera Ant generally?

Keith: Here. Like—

Sylvia: Here.

Keith: Here in Chimera Ant ge—yes, both. So, like, these episodes of Chimera Ant are I think where some people’s willingness to follow, like, three separate storylines in two and a half separate locations with all of these characters that just go like, “Where’s Gon and Killua? How come we haven’t seen Kurapika? I’m done. I’m out.”

Jack: I think that’s really interesting. **[Dre: Mmm.]** And I think I can—I can understand...I—I suspect I will have more to say about that as we get further into this marathon arc. **[Keith: Yeah.]** But it is really interesting to me that a show that has on...I think two real occasions dropped the ball for me pacing-wise, and I have gone, this feels like a slog. The first of which being Heaven’s Arena, **[Keith: Mm-hm.]** and the second being some sort of like, uh, circular thinking towards the end of Greed Island. Um, I think the show has tested—in terms of its pacing, I think we’re in a really interesting place right now. **[Keith: Yeah.]** Y’know, the stakes are so high with the Ants, that I’m sort of ready to go, okay right, send Gon and Killua back onto the treadmill for a bit, y’know. But I understand that there is something happening where, when the stakes inside the NGL are so high, and there are so many moving pieces, and the viewer is then forced to cut away to Vienna over and over again for a training sequence...because—

[2:15:33]

Keith: The beautiful Italian city. **[laughs]**

Jack: The beautiful Italian city of Vienna. When the stakes are so high, I think it would be so much easier, sort of, to go, “All right, look. I don’t have it in me here. Either I’m gonna come back in ten episodes, or I’m just—I’m kind of done with this for now.”

[Keith: There’s another—] As opposed to, in Heaven’s Arena or Greed Island, where it’s like, well, this arc’s gonna wrap up soon, and y’know, it’s sort of just like, **[Keith: Yeah.]** shuddering along.

Keith: There’s another part to this, though, too, which is like, for as much as I—it’s a genre that I care about and have been watching since I was a very young kid, like,

y’know, six, seven years old, uh, shounen is not a challenging genre. [**Jack:** No.] [**Sylvia:** No.] And the ways that—that parts of Greed Island and the way that uh, the—Heaven’s Arena are slow or are poorly paced or are not wildly engaging, they’re very familiar and very consumable to the shounen fan, to the, y’know, the battle shounen fan. These are—

Jack: Oh, they’re like, “This is slow, but this is—”

Keith: Right.

Jack: I think this is sort of what I mean about the show kind of just like, puttering along in— [**Keith:** Yeah.] in its usual shape.

Keith: It’s the ex—it’s—it is in—in fact, those—those—those sections are largely still relatively, um, y’know, they’re like a C plus or B minus in like, in shounen—battle shounen-scope terms. Like, as far as what people are willing to put up with in that kind of show, those thi—those bits barely even stand out, um.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Uh, they—

Sylvia: People put up with a lot [**Keith:** Yes.] in their battle shounen that—

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: [chuckles]

Sylvia: —is wild to me.

Keith: Right. And so—

Jack: Sorry, could we really quickly talk about what we mean when we say “battle shounen”? We’ve talked a lot about like, tournament arc stuff, [**Keith:** Yeah, so—] but I don’t think we defined that term before.

Keith: Broadly—we've been saying shounen most often to mean battle shounen
[Sylvia: Yeah.] because it's the most important section of the genre. **[Dre: Mm-hm.]**
 Shounen speci—really is just like, for boys. And then—

Jack: Oh, sure. Okay.

Keith: —battle shounen is the *Dragon Ball* genre of shounen.

Jack: Right like, but when we do volleyball shounen, that's also shounen—

Keith: Right, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: —when we do chess tournament shounen, that's also shounen. Yeah.

Keith: Right. And in a lot of ways also influenced by battle shounen, and so like, okay—like, okay, here's like, *Doctor Slump* is—is a shounen, it's comedy, and it's not really a battle shounen even though there is fighting in it, and so, it's for kids, it's mostly for boys, but it's a comedy and not a battle show about powering up, you know what I mean? Um, uh, **[Jack: Yeah.]** so, the thing is that, we're now in a part that—that does have some like, pacing—it's not that it's bad pacing or slow pacing, but it is challenging pacing specifically to like, the shounen palette, which is sort of like, the butter noodles and chicken nuggets of television.

Sylvia: Oh my god, you're so right.

Dre: [giggles]

Keith: And it is like, it is—

Sylvia: The dino nuggies of media.

Keith: It is dino nuggies.

Dre: [laughs]

Keith: It is like those horrible potato smiley face fries...

Jack: Hang on, wait, are you thinking about this because that's what you ate while you were watching shounen when you were seven?

Keith: No, no. I've always been a big **[Sylvia: No...]** uh, uh, an exploratory eater.

Sylvia: Nah, I'm thinkin' of this 'cause I've seen *Bleach*.

Keith: Right! [laughs] But it is—it's a genre of like, like, it's—it's an easy genre. It's a junk food genre for—that—that— **[Sylvia: Yeah.]** for people who like, get upset—I'm sorry to people who watch this stuff...

Sylvia: No, roast the shit out of them; it's fun.

Keith: I—I watch this stuff—it's, y'know, you're like, like [cross] we're having—we're having—

Sylvia: [cross] We're doing an anime podcast, like, it's glass houses all the way down.

Keith: It's like, we're having grilled chicken for dinner, and you're like, "But where's the chicken nuggets?!" **[Jack laughs]** **[Dre: Mm-hm.]** And it's like, it's chicken. It's chicken. Eat the chicken. It's the same thing. It's got like a sauce on it, y'know, it's got a sweet sau—it's like, it's barely any different, and it's like, "No, I—"

Sylvia: "Where's ketchup?"

Keith: "Where's the ke—I want ketchup and I want dino nuggets! What are you givi—" Or—or, y'know, spaghetti and meatballs, "No, I want buttered noodles." It's like, no, we made spaghetti and meatba—that is the—and not that anybody's qualms with these episodes are like that, **[Sylvia: They're not unfounded.]** but that is the root to a lot of, I think uh, i—issues with uh, the Chimera Ants start here, and it starts because it's—it's a—it's an unfamiliar way of pres—presenting a show like this **[Dre: Mm-hm.]** in a genre that is defined by not having anything unfamiliar in it.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Or at least shows that get to the success and mainstream like, [**Keith:** Yeah.] recognition of *Hunter x Hunter*—

Keith: Totally. Totally.

Sylvia: —do not have that going on.

Keith: I was a little too mean there, but [**Sylvia:** It's fine.] I also meant every word of it.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: [laughs]

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvia: That's right! Stand on your truth!

Dre: [chuckles]

Jack: Um, let's see, okay. In the fight with Knuckle, which by the time, y'know, we—we reach this fight, we can tell that we're gonna do, for the first time in a while, a Togashi mo—oh, actually, sorry, this is not a Togashi move. This is a anime team move, of cutting a fight midway through an episode. Um, they do this a lot. They do this a lot in Heaven's Arena, actually, where we would often, y'know, begin a fight midway through an episode and then break halfway through and then—and then come back again.

Keith: This also—this is a key part of the genre. This is the half-fight—or, episode ends halfway through a fight is a— [**Dre:** Oh yeah.] is shounen as hell.

Jack: You got yourself a pre-made cliffhanger ready to go.

Keith: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

Jack: Um, yeah, uh, and so, my first question here is, is Gon visually getting stronger? I don't know if he's been like, drawn to be more muscular in these episodes?

Keith: They both have, yeah.

Jack: Yeah. They—they both have?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I think that's really interesting. They—y'know, we know that they're training their Nen, but Nen is a sort of, an expression of your body, and so your character [**Dre:** Mm-hm.] is gonna get drawn more sharply. [**Keith:** Mm-hm.] I like that a lot. I think that that's—that's nice. Especially when...it—it is always, um, I always like it when characters' models change beyond their clothes. Bisky losing her uh, one of her pigtails was really good. Um, I like it when you can see characters get older, or characters develop muscles [**Keith:** Yeah.] after training or something. I think that's really neat.

Keith: She comes back with a whole new outfit, which is great.

Jack: Yeah. I just think that so often, especially in um, animated shows, the like, the distinction between your character models across episodes is in their costuming, [**Keith:** Yeah.] and it's really cool when the model itself, y'know, changes.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: *Hunter x Hunter's* so great with this because, I mean, Killua, until this arc, is changing his clothes every four and a half scenes. Uh, Kurapika comes back with like, one really distinct outfit, comes back with a second of that—version of that outfit, and then comes back like, wearing a suit a lot.

Jack: [laughs] Yeah. Yeah. Um, Gon is taunted into using his Rock ability here, because Knuckle thinks that he can counter it. He's figured out a way to counter it in a one-on-one fight. And as Knuckle looks at the camera and says, "Your technique has two major flaws." Which is perfect; this is exactly what Bisky was hoping for, right? Like, "Don't just reveal a—a—a weakness, actually like, enumerate it. Y'know, spell it out as clearly as possible and then we can work on it." Um, their faces—whose faces is it?—as, as he this, we cut to Chairman Netero, and then behind him, um, in sort of like, the bright uh, saturated color sort of pop art, sort of Roy Lichtenstein, [**Keith:** Mmm.]

sort of like the beginning of *Cowboy Bebop*, the faces of Gon, Killua, Shoot, Knuckle, and Palm? Is it them?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: I think—

Jack: And maybe Morel and Knov?

Keith: [cross] And Morel and Knov, yeah.

Sylvia: [cross] Knov and More are there.

Keith: And Morel and Knov.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Appear as Netero says, for the first time, “I’m not sure we’re going to be able to complete this mission without sacrificing someone.”

Sylvia: Yeahhh.

Keith: Premonition.

Jack: Yeah! Although a fairly thin premonition at this point, because outside of Gon and Killua, all of these are new characters, and with the exception of Knuckle, very little attention has been paid to getting us on-side with those characters. In fact, often quite the—well, maybe Palm. [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] Quite the opposite, y’know, if Morel and Knov bite this, I say, that’s hubris. Y’know?

Keith: Sure.

Jack: If Shoot bites it, I say, Shoot McMahon is a man with a faint heart.

Sylvia: A frail heart, yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Um, but yeah, we got a premonition.

Keith: Do we see this last dog, uh, image in the manga?

Jack: Let's see. Oh, this is...these beautifully drawn dogs [**Keith** laughs] make the goblin dog [**Sylvia:** Oh my goodness.] just seem so funny to me.

Keith: I know. [laughs]

Sylvia: Well that's—that's the dog that's gonna eat Killua.

Keith: It's Knuckle that's the goblin in this one.

Jack: [laughs] Sorry, not the dog that's gonna eat Killua, the dog that kills Killua.

Sylvia: Sorry, my bad, my bad. I got the name wrong.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: He has a name.

Dre: [laughs]

Jack: Um, I wanna go back and look at the dog that kills Killua.

Sylvia: [laughs]

Keith: Sorry, did I—did I take the wind out of the sails of us talking about uh, this last frame here?

Jack: No, I—I don't think we have anything more there.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: I think—I mean other than it's a striking little piece of art.

Keith: It is. Yeah.

Jack: We haven't seen this look—I nearly said it's a striking little piece of image. It is 10:26 and I am becoming sleepy.

Dre: Mmm.

Sylvia: I feel you.

Jack: Umm, but yeah. I th—and—and this is where we're at. I am really looking forward to—if I'm being honest, I am looking forward to getting this business in Vienna done with as soon as possible, so we can get back into the NGL. I think we got a wee bit to go, y'know? I think that we have to have this fight with Knuckle, we have to finish it, we have to resolve something with Shoot and Palm, [**Keith:** Mm-hm.] and we have to have Bisky um, kind of like, teach the lesson, y'know, Bisky say, "All right, here is how you could act on the lack." Um, alternative—

Sylvia: Some reason you said that and I—my brain went, Bisky needs to teach the controversy.

Dre and Jack: [laugh]

Jack: Bisky needs to teach the controversy that [**Keith:** Well—] Gon's punch—Rock punch is not actually as good as it seems.

Final Thoughts [2:25:14]

Keith: If it—if it—I don't know if this is going to affect how you feel about what's gonna happen in the next set of episodes, [**Jack:** Yeah.] uh, but uh, we have four episodes next time, [**Jack:** Ooh.] and Austin's gonna be back.

Jack: [warily] Oh.

Dre: Ooh.

Sylvia: [laughs]

Jack: That doesn't—

Keith: I won't—I won't—I won't tell him that you said that. [laughs]

Sylvia: Why'd you say—that's so funny! [mimicking Jack] "Oh."

Jack: No, I just—that feels like a—like a portent—I said "oh" because...

Sylvia: It's like Chairman Netero showing up. Oh!

Jack: ...why is—why is—why is Austin coming back? Why is Austin coming back?

Keith: It's great 'cause I meant it as a portent.

Sylvia: Mm-hm.

Dre: Mmmm. Mmm.

Jack: Yeah, I wanna be that—my—my—my—my disconcerted and distasteful reaction was not at a—the thought of talking to my dear friend Austin, but at the—at the dread that what Austin might bring with him.

Keith: Right. Yes.

Sylvia: [cross] That could pop out.

Keith: [cross] And it is always the dread with Austin. [laughs]

Jack: [laughs]

Sylvia: [laughs]

Jack: You're going to read out the, like, what is coming in the next episodes, and it's going to be like—we're watching four, and they're gonna be titled, like, um, "Defeat x and—"

Sylvia: "The Murder x of x Killua Zoldyck".

Dre: [laughs]

Jack: Brackets, (By x Dog). They're gonna be called like, "Defeat x and x Lesson",

[**Keith:** Uh-huh.] the next one is gonna be called, um, like, uh, "Ambition x and x

Return”, [**Keith**: Mm-hm.] the next one is going to be called like, um, uh, like a—like, um, “Skirmish x and Test”, [**Keith**: Yeah.] and then the next one’s gonna be called like, “Royal x Awakening”.

Keith: Wow, you actually got it one-for-one.

Jack: [laughs]

Keith: That’s exactly right. That’s unbelievable.

Jack: Woah! Right off the dome!

Keith: Does he know? [laughs]

Jack: [laughing] Does he know?

Sylvia: Does he know?! Oh my god! Get Paul Dano in here right now!

Keith: Uh, actually they are called, “Compassion x and x Strength”, “Slow x and x Cursed”, “The Strong x and x the Weak”, and “One Wish x and x Two Promises”. Those are episodes 89 through 92.

Jack: I don’t know if we’re getting back! We shall see. We shall see.

Keith: Uh, do we have anything else on these episodes [**Jack**: Yes!] before we end here?

Jack: I had a thought in the equivalent of like, waking up in a cold sweat a cold sweat a couple of nights ago, where like, I have been talking about, y’know, like, where is going to break bad beyond the King showing up? Y’know, the King showing up is gonna be the moment that the pedal hits the floor, I think. And—and—and I don’t know that it’s going to—I don’t know that we’re going to go down the full drop of the roller coaster at that point, but I do think that we’re gonna kinda come over the top and begin to see more of the shape of the roller coaster beneath us, and be like, oh god, it goes into a cave at that point, and I don’t know what going to happen over there, but like, we’re dropping. But I can’t work out what, like, latitude this arc is gonna move on. And it might

be nothing, but I did suddenly remember that there was a lot of business at the beginning of this arc about how the NGL are manufacturing drugs.

Keith: Mm-hm.

Jack: Um, they're manufacturing—and the drugs were named, DD—and they have this kind of like, operation that allows them to distribute drugs all around the world, and initially, it could be read, as that is Togashi just doing the sort of like, the NGL was a criminal conspiracy masquerading as a country, and that allowed the Ants to take root. But you could do that just as easily by saying, they are like a technophobic Luddite country, and so the Ants can't take root. So there's gotta be something there [**Keith:** Mm-hm.] about like, why was there a con—criminal conspiracy masquerading as a government, and why were they specifically drug dealers that had reach out into the rest of the world? And I don't know where we're going here, or even if this is relevant at all, but part of my brain is like, is, sort of like, part of Ants' spread, or is part of the global politics going to—like, the large-scale global politics gonna start getting worked through if the Ants like, corrupt the DD supply, and like, can start, y'know, [**Sylvia:** Oh my god.] influencing people all around the world through a sort of like, widespread—

Sylvia: Pitou we have to cook.

Keith: [laughs]

Jack: Pitou we have to cook!

Dre: [laughs]

Jack: Y'know, and that'd be fun, to see Ants like, hooking into a [**Sylvia:** Oh my god.] preexisting evil infrastructure and starting to turn that against their enemies. I don't know if—

Keith: [cross] Using the marionette to control Kite to make drugs.

Sylvia: [cross] Her name is Pitou Bricks because she's pushing brick cocaine!

Keith: [laughs]

Jack: [wheezing] Ah, Pitou Bricks!

Keith: Well, this is Togashi's trick, of the like, I don't know if he's gonna do something normal, or something weird. I don't know if he's gonna like do something—reference something from a little bit ago, or from a lot a bit ago, or just invent something new from whole-cloth. And it's—

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Genuinely I cannot tell whether we have seen the enormous stack of dynamite that is about to go off. [**Keith:** Yeah.] Like, I don't know if it has been shown to me onscreen, and I haven't seen it yet.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: So we'll see.

Keith: We'll see.

Jack: But as—

Sylvia: What has the Wile E. Coyote been up to?

Dre: [laughs]

Jack: What has the Wile E. Coyote been up to? Oh, down there.

Keith: Uh, do we have anything else before we call it here?

Reading Reviews & Outro [2:30:05]

Sylvia: We have a little bit of business before we go.

Keith: Oh, okay.

Jack: Ah!

Sylvia: Recently, we asked—

Keith: I hate business.

Sylvia: for some very specific iTunes reviews, or, sorry, Apple Podcasts. I'm stuck in 2012 apparently.

Keith: Yeah, me too, I can't stop saying iTunes.

Sylvia: It's fine. Um, we're of an age.

Keith: Yeah, but I do say "x.com" because it's funny.

Dre: [giggles]

Sylvia: Yeah, I—

Keith: If Apple Podcasts wanted me to say the new thing they should've made it funny.

Sylvia: Yeah, that's true. Um...

Dre: Oh, what is the new thing for Apple Podcasts?

Keith: No, that is the new thing. [**Dre:** Oh.] The old thing was iTunes.

Dre: Oh, okay, I see. Yeah yeah yeah, sorry.

Keith: Yeah. The fact that [cross] you didn't even register—

Dre: [cross] I thought they changed it again—

Keith: No, no. See, that's how in the past me and Sylvi are, is that to you, [**Dre:** Yeah, sure.] Apple Podcasts is already the old thing.

Sylvia: [chuckles] Before I begin, would the—uh, I believe Keith and Jack, you set the parameters for—you set the Nen conditions for reviewers last time? Um...

Keith: Yes. The conditions were that if your name was Emily or you were born in January, you must leave a review.

Sylvia: Yes. Um, so, we have here a five star review titled “Hey, it’s Emily”.

Keith: Hi Emily!

Sylvia: “and I’m here to”—and the text is, “and I’m here to give this podcast the 5 star rating it deserves.” Thank you Emily.

Keith: Thank you Emily.

Dre: Thank you Emily.

Jack: Yeah, and we verify this based on Emily’s username, which does seem to imply that they’re not just calling themselves ne—

Sylvia: [cross] No, they’re erinemilyb, I hope you don’t mind me reading that.

Jack: [cross] I almost said “Nemily” because I keep saying “Nen”.

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvia: Nenily, ohh.

Dre: Nenily! [laughs]

Sylvia: No, that’s the sister from *Code Geass*.

Jack: Mmm.

Sylvia: Joke for nobody. Um, we also had a—another parameter given, Jack, I think you gave this parameter.

Jack: No, I think I said [**Sylvia:** Oh.] Emily, [cross] and I think Keith gave January.

Keith: [cross] Jack was Emily, I—

Sylvia: Did we mention Januaries already though?

Keith: I—yeah, I mentioned January, yeah.

Sylvia: Okay, my bad. I was too busy reading.

Keith: That's okay.

Sylvia: Um, yeah, we actually got a couple January, um, reviews. I am going to be reading one from GreenIntern: "January Ants," five stars. "As a January listener of this show, I have many feelings (positive) about the content contained within." Oh, uh, "therein," my apologies. "Also just like a chimera any," sorry, Chimera Ant, that was not me, that was them, you typo'd, [**Keith** laughs] I'm sorry to put you on blast.

Keith: Okay, so it's one to one, [**Dre:** Wow.] you—you did one mess up—

Sylvia: "I have become"—yeah, we—we balanced it out, so I read this perfectly.

Keith: [cross] Right, but you combined to make you seem insane.

Sylvia: [cross] "I have become an all consuming—"

Jack: [laughs]

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvia: I don't need help!

Jack: [laughs]

Dre: [laughs]

Sylvia: "Also just like a chimera any, I have become an all consuming wave of terror and gore after listening to this podcast."

Jack: Oh no!

Keith: Oh no!

Dre: Oh!

Keith: Probab—probably why they typo'd.

Jack: [cross] Mmm, probably. It's hard. Yeah.

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah. Probably. It's hard to type when you're a all-consuming wave of terror and gore. So I would like to say thank you to everybody who reviewed, we got a—we got a few more, and I'll be reading more as we go on. I'm gonna—don't worry, if you left a five star review and I didn't read it, there's still a chance. But hey, if you didn't leave a five star review, if you write something funny enough, you'll jump the line.

Dre: [laughs]

Keith: Yeah. Or, if you were born in F—

Sylvia: I—listen, I'm—I know me, I'll read the stuff that's funny.

Keith: Or if you were born in [Dre: Yeah, fair.] February, it's now the Februaries' turn.

Sylvia: We're goin' just straight to February, we're not jumping around at all?

Dre: Ohh, does that—can I leave a review? I was—I was born in February.

Sylvia: Do it.

Keith: I think that you're allowed to leave a review, I don't think that's against—

Sylvia: That's not insider trading.

Keith: I don't think that's against the law.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: [wheezes]

Keith: I think it—I think it makes sense because, here's what will happen, we will absolutely forget which month we're on, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] and which month we've done, so we should go in order.

Jack: [laughs]

Dre: [laughs]

Sylvia: But that's why I think it's funny. 'Cause then we'll get to the 13th episode of doing, and be like, uhh, fuck.

Keith: Ahh, but does it—

Sylvia: Or we'll get to the sixth episode and it'll be the third time we've said March.

Keith: Uh, well Jack, you had—you had a name before, do you have another name, or does anybody have a name? 'Cause we're gonna—

Jack: I do, I do.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: Mitchell, listen up.

Keith: Mitchell. Okay.

Jack: Mitchell, I am talking to you.

Sylvia: Or if you go by Mitch.

Keith: Jack is not min-maxing names.

Jack: [laughs]

Sylvia: No.

Keith: [cross] [bleep] How about the [bleep]s?

Jack: [cross] Mitchell.

Sylvia: [cross] I respect that.

Jack: No, no, it's not fair like that.

Keith: No, no. [bleep]s, do not review. Mitchell.

Sylvia: I mean, you can.

Jack: No.

Sylvia: Just don't—don't make it the reason.

Keith: Oh sorry, but don't do it name-based. Right. Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: It's not—this is—

Sylvia: Do it 'cause you feel like it.

Jack: Mitchell.

Keith: I'll actually—hold on, I'll uh...[beep] There we go. [**Dre:** Oh, there it is.] I don't even need people to know what I said, so I'll just move that over.

Sylvia: Okay.

Jack: Mitchells, today's the day. Go to Apple Podcasts, [**Sylvia** laughs] and leave us a five star review. Mitchell.

Sylvia: Mitchell, I'm speaking to you inside your mind; go to Apple Podcasts right now and leave a five star review of us and mention *Bambi Two* for the PS2.

Keith: [speaking very closely to the microphone with very crunchy audio] Mitchell. Mitchell, this is your dad.

Jack: [laughs]

Sylvia: Oh no. Don't do that. We don't know that they have a good relationship.

Keith: [still close to the mic] You must leave—you must leave a five star review.

Dre: Hey, Mitchell.

Jack: Mitchell, do not adjust your set.

Keith: [as Mitchell's dad] Or you're grounded.

Dre: Mitchell, this is—this is the man that you saw when you were five and no one believed you, but it's me. I'm here. You know what you have to do, Mitchell. Yeah.

Jack: [wheezes]

Keith: [as Mitchell's dad] This is the man you saw drown [cross] in that river, and no one believed you.

Sylvia: [cross] This is the first person you killed.

Dre: [cross] The only way anyone will believe you is if you leave a five star review on Apple Podcasts.

Jack: Okay, Mitchell, listen carefully, [**Sylvia** laughs] despite what they said, do not change your rating.

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvia: No, give it five stars, even though we are haunting you. Um...

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Unless you've already reviewed, and it was lower, then do change your rating to five.

Sylvia: To five stars. [cross] Anything below five stars will result in more haunting, Mitch.

Jack: [cross] Mitchell, Mitchell, Mitchell, Mitchell, this has all gotten too complicated. I'm gonna start again.

Sylvia: Okay.

Jack: Mitchell, are you listening to me?

Keith: [normal voice] This is your dad.

Dre: [laughs]

Jack: [laughs]

Keith: Wait, was that part of what was too complicated?

Jack: [laughs]

Keith: [wheezes, then laughs]

Dre: It's always too complicated when dads are around.

Jack: Okay. I think that's it. I think I'm there.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I think I've got it all.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: I've said everything I need to say about *Hunter x Hunter*, and the podcast's over.

Sylvia: [cross] Bye forever!

Dre: [cross] Mitchell!

Keith: [cross] It's funny—it's funny I—that I ended up insulting that uh, that watch shounen and didn't like this part of the Chimera Ant. I did genuinely mean to bring it up as a—to—to talk about how weird this part is and why some people don't like it.

Dre: Mmm.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: But I—but in the middle of—of trying to genuinely explain it, uh, to like, to make a more well-rounded show, [**Sylvia** giggles] I realized how insane that is. What are you people talking about?

Sylvia and Dre: Yeah.

Keith: This is so good.

Jack: [laughs]

Dre: What's—

Sylvia: Yeah, I'll—also my latent hater energy was—was too much. I was gonna [**Dre:** Yeah.] jump on that even if you were nice about it.

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvia: Don't worry dude. Like, no matter what happened, I was gonna shit talk uh, like a lotta mainstream shounen.

Keith: I was tryna be even-handed.

Sylvia: Fair enough. I'm never.

Dre: Mmm.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Never even-handed.

Dre: Listen, if—if someone has bad opinions about *Hunter x Hunter*, they probably also like *Fire Force*, which means they don't get rights, so...

Keith: Oh no!

Sylvia: Ohh.

Keith: Not *Fire For*—what's *Fire Force*?

Sylvia: *Fire Force*...

Dre: [cross] I—uh, is it called *Fire Force*?

Sylvia: Yeah, it is, it is.

Dre: Okay.

Sylvia: *Fire Force* is just a bad fire—they—

Keith: Is it the one with the little gay one?

Sylvia: There's a lot of—noooo.

Dre: It has such a cool premise [**Keith:** No?] and they just immediately ruin it.

Sylvia: *Fire Force* I mostly just know because it's got a famous, like, panel of just like, epic child destroys woman feminist with facts and logic, is like, my understanding of it.

Keith: Oh nice, I actually love that kinda stuff.

Dre: Yeah. Uh, it's basically like, firefighter shounen, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] [**Keith:** What is the one...there's an—] but like, the fires are like, demons or whatever.

Keith: Uh, someone can write in and tell me what the fire anime with the little gay one is.

Sylvia: Is that *Demon Slayer*?

Keith: No, no, it's—it's—

Sylvia: Is that *My Hero Academia*?

Keith: No, fire. It's—there's—there's firefighting in it.

Sylvia: Is fire in the name?

Keith: No, I dunno if it's in the name, but there's like, a firefighter, and it may be slightly futuristic-y?

Sylvia: Is it *Promare*?

Keith: Oh! It is.

Dre: Ooh, it might be *Promare*.

Keith: That's what it is. It's *Promare*.

Sylvia: *Promare's* great.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: I was about to say, I—it's been awhile since I've seen *Promare*, but I remember liking it.

Sylvia: Responsible for one of my relationships. Good movie.

Keith: I—we just were—we were just talking—we were just talking about—about [**Dre:** [ominously] For now.] firefighting anime, and that's the only one I know, [**Sylvia:** It's a movie.] and the only thing I know about it is that there's a little gay one.

Sylvia: You should watch that, that's a fun time. [**Keith:** Okay.] [**Dre:** Yeah, *Promare's* cool.] It's— [**Keith:** Okay.] sit down for like an hour and half, two hours, and you—you got a good evening.

Keith: Okay.

Dre: Like—

Sylvia: It's by, uh, Trigger, so it's well-animated even if the story doesn't grab you.

Dre: Yeah, it's like, one of the few times where it's like, Trigger's animation lives up to the—the content of the show.

Keith: Mm!

Sylvia: Now we're gettin'—now the takes are gettin' too spicy. We've come for Trigger now, people are gonna—gonna...

Keith: I don't even know who Trigger is, so.

Sylvia: They made...

Dre: Trigger did *Darling in the Franxx*, right?

Sylvia: *Darling in the Franxx*, um...

Dre: Yeah, that's all you need to know.

Keith: That's...

Sylvia: Uh, *Kill la Kill*...

Keith: Oh, okay.

Dre: Uh, *Kill la Kill*, famously— **[Sylvia: It's...]** that's the one where the guy bounces the sniper rifle on the girl's boobs? No.

Sylvia: No that's...

Dre: That's *Highschool of the Dead*?

Sylvia: *Gurren Lagann*.

Dre: *Gurren Laga*—

Sylvia: No, that's—yeah, you're thinking of *Highschool of the Dead*.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Which is not related, as far as I know.

Keith: Jack, I hope that you're—I hope that this is helping—helping you [Sylvia: Yeah.] know how stupid shounen is.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: It is—it is—

Jack: [laughs]

Keith: Because we've talked up shounen a lot, and—and I really want you to know that actually shounen also plumbs the absolute depths.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Oh, what we're doing is like, we're like the people who're like, the—talking about how like—like, we're not quite to the extent of people who're like, “The Marvel movies are ci—are cinema,” but like, we're kinda doing that a little bit.

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Dre: Yeah, but we're also picking like, the one Marvel movie that you could maybe argue is cinema. I don't know if those exist.

Sylvi: Yeah, we're talking about the Sam Raimi Spider-Man.

Dre: No, never mind. Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, it's—it is actually—it is Sam Raimi Spider-Man, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Um, what's my hot take? Um...

Keith: More Piccolo.

Jack: More—I think it's disgusting that you haven't shown me Piccolo.

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvia: Again, we have, he's—he's just—we haven't shown you breathing Piccolo.

Keith: Right.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: And I—

Keith: I think—I think Jack is saying something about when the hu—when the body stops becoming itself.

Jack: [laughs]

Sylvia: Ohhh.

Keith: When you're dead, that is meat. That is the—

Dre: Wowwww.

Keith: That is not—

Sylvia: How Ant of you.

Jack: Oh!

Sylvia: We gotta end this.

Jack: [starts singing "The World of Adventurers"/"[The Boy in Green](#)"]

Dre: Yeah. [wheezes]

Keith: [tunelessly continuing the song] Bum-ba-bum-ba-bum.

Jack: Play us off, Jack de Quidt.

Sylvia: [laughs]

Keith: [using a robotic voice modifier] Okay.

Sylvia and Jack: [laugh]

Jack: Oh no!

Sylvia: Oh, it's the real Jack!

Keith: [robotically] It is I, the real Jack de Quidt.

Sylvia and Jack: [laugh]

Keith: [robotically] Can't you tell, because of my accent? Innit.

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Innit.

Keith: [robotically laughs] Boy...

Dre: Hey, hey, hey real Jack de Quidt, what's tomorrow? What day of the week is it?

Keith: [robotically] Uhhhhh...

Dre: Or actually no, what's today? Sorry, not tomorrow.

Sylvia: [laughs]

Keith: [robotically, in a garbled English accent] Today is Tuesday.

Sylvia: [in the faintest wisp of an English accent] Chewsday. [normally] I don't know why I did that.

[["The Boy in Green"](#) begins to play]

Keith: [robotically, still attempting an English accent] It's Chewsday, innit?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: I don't even—I don't even know what—I don't even know what it is.

Keith and Sylvia: [laugh]

[music plays out]