

## Rubric For Creating the Devil - Hunter x Hunter ep. 27-29:

### Media Club Plus S01E09

Transcriber: Stella-Jude

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Introduction</b>  | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Summary</b>   | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>New Title Sequence [0:06:13]</b>  | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Episode 27 [0:10:20]</b>  | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>Keith's Manga Investigation [0:41:13]</b>                               | <b>27</b> |
| <b>Back to Episode 27 [0:44:00]</b>  | <b>29</b> |
| <b>Episode 28 [0:49:00]</b>  | <b>33</b> |
| <b>Episode 29 [1:45:58]</b>  | <b>68</b> |
| <b>Gon and Killua's Hunterpedia and "Hunting For Your Dream" [2:07:43]</b> | <b>81</b> |
| <b>Outro / Closing plugs [2:19:50]</b>                                     | <b>92</b> |

## **Introduction**

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

**Keith:** Welcome to Media Club Plus, a podcast about diving into 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 [Twitter](#) and [Cohost](#) at KeithJCarberry. You can find the let's plays that I do at [youtube.com/runbutton](https://youtube.com/runbutton). You can find the new Run Button store at [runbutton.shop](https://runbutton.shop). That's the—we made a bunch of shirts from like 2015-2018 and then forgot to tell people about them mostly. Uh, and so the—the store kind of languished, but since the advent of [friendsatthetable.shop](https://friendsatthetable.shop), which you should also go to, I was like, oh I should move all this stuff from Spreadshirt to Fourthwall and it's been fun and better than Spreadshirt, which is a mess. With me as always is Jack de Quidt.

**Jack:** Hi there, I'm Jack, coming to you from southeast Michigan for the first time. If you hear any notes of exhaustion and/or like, echo-y room noise in my recording that is because I am in a not-quite-assembled-yet office. But I'm here. I'm on eastern time. You

can buy any of my music at [notquitereal.bandcamp.com](http://notquitereal.bandcamp.com) and you can find me on Cohost [@jdg](#).

**Keith:** Not quite assembled, but you've got your mic, you've got your computer, you've got a desk.

**Jack:** Yeah. I've got the works. [**Keith:** Yeah?] I got—I got the works.

**Keith:** Yeah? Is that true? That you've got a desk? Jack?

**Jack:** [sardonically] Ha, ha, ha. Yeah Keith, I have a desk and I know what desk is.

[**Keith** wheezes] I'm definitely not on—wait, let me—hang on—uh, I'd like to invite—hm. Ikea glass table. So I'm on a glass table.

**Keith:** Okay. Sitting on.

**Jack:** Um, see if I can just...no, no sitting at a glass table in my actual desk chair, but—but not at my actual desk.

**Keith:** Okay, okay.

**Jack:** Ah, here we go! Let me—I'm gonna send you a picture of the—of the thing I'm at and I would like you to score it out of ten, please. [wheezes]

**Keith:** On a scale of how good [**Jack:** Uh—] it is to record a podcast at?

**Jack:** Yep.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** I'm excited.

**Jack:** It's uh, in the Media Club Plus chat.

**Sylvia:** [dubiously] Hm?

**Keith:** Five. Five!

**Sylvia:** Three.

**Jack:** [laughs]

**Keith:** It's—it's—

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Well, it actually doesn't seem wide enough for like **[Dre: Anything?]** a computer and a keyboard.

**Jack:** It's not.

**Keith:** And I don't know—do you have your mic stand on the floor or do you have it clipped onto this underside thing? This little shelf here.

**Jack:** I have my mic in a little tripod

**Keith:** Okay. So, three. I'm gonna go three with Sylvi. And Dre—Dre what was your score?

**Dre:** I'm sorry, what are we scoring this out of?

**Keith:** It's one through ten, ten being the best thing to record a podcast on, one being the worst thing **[Dre: Uh-huh.]** to record a podcast on.

**Dre:** Okay. Yeah, I think a three.

**Keith:** Three. We all agree three.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Early negative reviews **[Keith laughs]** from the Friends at the Table cast. Moving on.

**Keith:** Let's see if they can do better next week. [laughs] Uh, uh, Sylvi Bullet.

**Sylvia:** Hey, I'm Sylvi, you can find me everywhere [@SYLVIBULLET](#) and you can also check out this show's TikTok [@friends\\_table](#).

**Keith:** Um, yeah, and you can check out the Cohost [@friends-table](#) and uh, how 'bout, uh, Twitch. I would like to start doing more Twitch stuff again at— **[Sylvia: Me too.]** at Friends at the Table—[twitch.tv/friendsatthetable](#) and all that stuff gets moved over to [youtube.com/friendsatthetable](#). Andrew Lee Swan.

**Dre:** Hey, you can find me on Twitter [@swandre3000](#).

## Summary [0:04:15]

**Keith:** Uh, these were some fun episodes. I'm excited to talk about these. Uh, the boys are finally off on their own adventure. Unfortunately they live in a world that needs money to live. **[Sylvia laughs]** Fortunately, they live in a world where kids can play blood sports for money. **[Jack: Ayyyy!]** Gon immediately makes a strong new little friend who Killua immediately almost kills—not jealous. **[Sylvia laughs]** Gon and Killua fly through the first 200 floors of this battle tower while also investigating a strange new power called Nen, which they first hear from from Gon's new friend Zushi and his disheveled master Wing. It turns out Nen is actually a really big deal and the secret to entering floor 200 where Hisoka has been waiting for Gon after literally cyberstalking him. **[Sylvia laughs]** Uh, how will the boys react to Nen? Will they respond responsibly and cautiously with their new power? Or, will someone do something rash and self-destructive?

**Sylvia:** [snorts]

**Jack:** Oh, Keith, **[Keith: Yeah?]** that was you being the *Hunter x Hunter* narrator, wasn't it?

**Keith:** It was, yeah—you know, I was feeling very nostalgic for the English announcer while watching these episodes because uh, I have both versions and it autoplays the last version that I selected, and the last time I watched *Hunter x Hunter* was the dub with Isaac, and so going through watching the sub again reselecting the Japanese I

always get ten seconds of the English VO for the announcer at the beginning, and I'm like, I just love this guy. He's so good. **[Sylvia laughs]** I wish there was a version—this is a bizarre thing to want, I just wish there was a version that had the English announcer and then cut right to the—the Japanese VO with the subs.

**Jack:** That feels very 90's to me. **[Keith:** Yeah.] That sensation of like a complete mashup of different languages.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah. Um—

## **New Title Sequence [0:06:13]**

**Jack:** Do we actually wanna start from the beginning? Because we have a new title sequence.

**Keith:** We do. **[Dre:** Yeahhh!] I actually was—I was just—that is my first not here on uh, on episode 27. Uh, we watched uh—oh jeez, what was the first—"Arrival x At x The Arena", "Nen x And x Nen", and then was the last one awakening and something? Something awakening. They awake. They go awake in that one. But yeah, Jack, do you wanna talk about this new title sequence? **[Sylvia laughs]** I wasn't sure if you were gonna skip it just by default, like I skip **[Jack:** Okay.] intros all the time just by default.

**Jack:** So I have sort of been pained of late, because I don't like skipping intros in a television show.

**Keith:** Mmm.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Because I like the, uh, the ritual of sitting down and hearing the music and seeing the images. **[Keith:** Yeah.] And sometimes that is a kind of dull ritual. You know, there are def—I have watched shows in the past that have intros where I'm like, yeah, yeah, okay, fine. But I do it anyway because that's the—that's the sound that the television show makes when it starts. **[Keith:** Yeah. Yeah.] And that's—that is pleasurable. Um—

**Keith:** I have shows that I always skip the intro on and then shows that I never would, and then most shows are somewhere in between.

**Jack:** There are some intros to shows that uh, I skip sometimes—no, *Yellowjackets*, the intro to *Yellowjackets* is extremely cool. It's this mashup series of like VHS tapes.

**Sylvia:** Oh, it's so good.

**Jack:** And it features some genuinely unsettling shots that I—I feel upset that I have to sit through at the beginning of every episode, but I do anyway because of my ideals.

[**Keith** laughs] Because of my praxis. Um, but no. I didn't in fact realize that we had a new title sequence during this first episode [**Keith:** Yeah.] because I was doing other stuff. Um, and I've been moving and I've had to skip a few to just be like, get to the episode, watch the episode. This is why it has been paining me. But this time around I realized halfway through, holy shit, we got ourselves a new title sequence, and we have a new—not a new arrangement of the theme, but the theme has new lyrics. [**Sylvia:** Mm-hm!] Um, and I can't speak to the Japanese lyrics, but the um—the uh, first theme featured, y'know, a few English lines. Uh, that—they said, "You can smile", and this time it has changed to "You can try", uh, complete with different choral versions of that in the background. Um, and yeah, this new title sequence shows a lot of faces of various threatening people, including—and I can say this with confidence, because of having—

**Keith:** Someone who you've only seen from behind before.

**Jack:** Yeah! So, I got to see my first look at the face of Chrollo Lucilfer, [**Sylvia:** Uh-huh!] a character who, if you have been—if you missed our screenshot stream, you might be like, "Why does Jack know about this character?" One of the screenshots in that screenshot stream, which is in the podcast feed, featured a group of spectacular weirdos. [**Everyone** laughs] A real wei—you know, *Hunter x Hunter* weirdos with the dial turned all the way to the right.

**Keith:** I'll call it—I'm—I really would like to call it a murderer's row of weirdos.

**Jack:** It truly is a murderer's row and their boss, which uh, folks gave me the name of as Chrollo Lucilfer and I get to see his face for the first time. Like many characters in *Hunter x Hunter*, including like many evil characters in *Hunter x Hunter*, he has very nice eyes. [**Keith:** Mmm.] [**Dre:** Mm-hmm?] Very sort of—I don't know that I'd call them nice. Very sort of placid, peaceful eyes. Um. Which is a little sinister. Also, I think I'm probably just gonna come out and say it. I think this is the—the Phantom Troupe. Um, I think that what we are looking at here is the Phantom Troupe, [**Keith:** Mmm.] based on silhouettes we saw when Kurapika and—and Majitani were talking. I think—I'm—I'm making a prediction with fair confidence that Chrollo Lucilfer is the leader of the Phantom Troupe and they are the ones appearing in this title sequence. But yep! hilariously the title sequence still ends with Killua and Gon and Leorio kicking the shit out of some people, Leorio getting hooked with the fishing rod and getting sent into the sky, Killua kicking someone with his hands in his pockets. Um. Yeah, and we begin the new arc.

**Keith:** Um, and we'll get to the new outro sequence later, too, which is gonna be fun. Uh—

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

## Episode 27 [0:10:20]

**Keith:** So, the first thing that happens is sort of the tail end of what happens in the last set of episodes. Uh, Killua explaining Heavens Arena as this place where they can simultaneously train and earn money 'cause they're all broke. And uh, giving some like weirdly specific facts about the dimensions of the building. [laughing] I don't really know why. But uh—but Killua—

**Sylvia:** [laughs] Well—

**Keith:** Well, I know why he knows. I don't know why he cares or why we care.

**Dre:** [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Something—well, the reason why we care is because the Heavens Arena is taller than any building that exists on Earth. Um...

**Keith:** Oh, is that true, I actually like—I just—the numbers just sort [**Sylvia:** I ch—] of went past my head.

**Sylvia:** I checked.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** It's like 900 something and the current tallest building in the world is the Burj Khalifa [**Keith:** Yeah.] which stands at 828 meters.

**Keith:** It is a huge—251 floors I think is what Killua says. [**Sylvia:** Mm-hm.] Huge, huge, horrible, very ugly-looking tower. [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Uh, 991 meters tall, but the fourth tallest building in the world, which again is why I bring up the fact that it is taller than any building on Earth.

**Jack:** That's so funny.

**Keith:** Right, so there's three buildings even taller than this one. Um...

**Jack:** I feel like the world of *Hunter x Hunter* is sort of built on the same principle of kids trying to one-up each other with lies in the playground, [**Keith** laughs] [**Dre:** Mm-hm.] where someone's like, "My dad's the tallest dad that there is," and the other person's like, "Well my dad's taller than his dad." [**Keith:** Yeah.] And *Hunter x Hunter* is like, "This is—this is the tallest building in the world." "No actually it's the fourth tallest building in the world." [**Keith:** Yeah.] "No actually the Hunter Organization [**Dre:** Mm-hm.] employs murderous clowns now." "Uh, no actually, everybody rides airships in this world."

**Keith:** Um, this reminds me of uh, one of my favorite jokes from I think season four of *Arrested Development* is uh, is the—Imagine Entertainment has the second tallest building in Hollywood after—I can't remember what it's after, but they wanted to make it taller but it was against the law to make it taller so they just made it go further down into



the ground [**Dre** and **Jack** laugh] and then raised the ceilings of the top floor to make it seem bigger.

**Jack:** That is very good.

**Keith:** Yeah. [laughs] Um.

**Jack:** That's great.

**Keith:** Okay, so, uh, we pretty immediately get into these preliminary matches. They get kind of set up in this um, like, big arena with multiple stages going on at the same time. Just—this is—they are being assessed and put at like a starting floor. Uh—

**Sylvia:** It feels like a gymnastics meet where like you'd see like a bunch of [**Jack:** It does.] [**Keith:** Yes. Right.] people doing like tumbling routines and stuff [**Keith:** Yeah] except the tumb—it's more—they're doing rumbling routines thank you very much. Um. [**Jack:** Yeah.] 'Cause they're fighting.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Does someone wanna talk about what Killua reveals about his experience with Heavens Arena [**Sylvia:** Oh my god!] before we sta—I skipped right over that.

**Dre:** Ough.

**Keith:** Dre. Dre?

**Dre:** Just that his—it was his dad? Right? That dropped him off there when he was six years old and said, "Hey, don't come home until you reach the 200th floor of the murder arena." [**Keith:** Yeah.] I guess it's not murder arena, it's like boxing, but. 'Cause you can't kill people, but...

**Keith:** And—do you remember how long it took him to do?

**Dre:** [cross] Two years?

**Keith:** [cross] Two years. From when he was six until he was eight.

**Jack:** [long, horrified sigh]

**Sylvia:** That rules.

**Keith:** [laughs] What a childhood!

**Sylvia:** I mean it doesn't rule, but from a TV show perspective that rules.

**Keith:** Yes. From a TV show perspective it rules. And then the—they—they go on a little bit later to like explain the economics of this place. Um, you know what, we'll save that for when we get to it, but uh, they do their fights. Does anyone have anything to say about these—these sort of preliminary fights?

**Sylvia:** I really enjoy Killua's advice to Gon when Gon's nervous.

**Keith:** Oh, it's so funny, yeah.

**Sylvia:** What happens is uh, so they're given numbers, their numbers get called, and while they're waiting in the stands, uh, Killua—or Gon gets called before Killua, and gets up, and he's really nervous and Killua says to him, like, "Well you made it through the Testing Door, right?" And we get like a little cutaway before we see exactly what he says, which I guess was for a commercial, because when we get to the fight we do see what Killua says, and he tells him, "Just push hard." [**Keith:** Yeah.] And so Gon does. He pushes [**Keith:** Literally—] [**Dre** laughs] a really big man very hard and sends him flying. And it's fantastic.

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah. This is like a comically—a comical—this is a joke of a person. This is like an eight-foot-tall, y'know, 600-pound wrestler guy. Uh, and yeah, sends him absolutely flying. And this is the sort of mo—Gon—Gon like looks at his hands like, "Oh my god." He literally thinks to himself, "When did I get so strong?" Because he's been, y'know, a fish in—in this very large pond of the Hunter Exam, uh, y'know, slowly getting bigger. And then it's like, "Okay, let's take you into this much littler pond." Um.

**Jack:** Yeah. And it's—

**Keith:** And j—literally doesn't know his own strength. It's fun to watch him have to be around normal people basically again.

**Jack:** You sort of get a sense of—of why Killua is the way he is on some level. I mean, first you get a sense where he was like, "My dad dropped me off here age six, and I fought for two years." But it's also like, if Killua exists in a world where the challenges that he faces are so monumental and he has to rise to overcome them and then, like you say Keith, he finds himself in this much smaller pond and is constantly reckoning with his own strength, and has sort of come to terms with that, and has this kind of disaffected, sort of, "Well, look, I'm just better than everybody here." We are seeing the—the—the earlier end of that, of Gon realizing for the first time, "Oh wait a second, I have actually been in this environment that has caused me to become so much stronger than all of these quote-unquote 'normal people.' Like an eight-foot-tall wrestler."

**Keith:** Yeah, these are—they—they go to pretty great lengths to show you, like, uh, in—on Earth, these would be the strongest people around. Like, that is who—that is who Gon like hits. Gon hits someone who would be like a world champion weightlifter or something. Or like, the tractor pullest iron man competition kinda guy. That's who Gon sort of sends flying in one push. And then he takes that push thing so literally he pushes everyone. That's his whole— [laughing] that becomes his only move, is pushing.

**Jack:** The tournament is sort of—the tournament announcers are like, "Oh, here comes Gon with Gon's special push! [**Keith** laughs] A move he has invented." [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Oh, it's great.

**Keith:** His patented push move, yeah. And this is—this is another—this sort of—Jack, you brought this up like two or three episodes ago, like, people underestimating Gon for being a child. And it's like, well what do you mean? Like, all—we meet so many strong children in this show. We've met another [**Dre:** Yeah!] extremely strong child.

**Dre:** Over and over!

**Keith:** But then also we've met a bunch of people who are like, "A child?! I'm laughing that I'm facing a child right now!" And then they get, you know, their skulls crushed in.

**Jack:** Imagine if—'cause it doesn't need to happen very often. It's not like all children are extremely strong. [**Dre:** No!] But imagine you tune in to the Summer Olympics, right? And in the sprinting it's nine adults and one twelve-year-old. [**Keith:** [laughs] Yeah.] And the twelve-year-old just—just destroys them. You would immediately be living in a—you would wake up and be like, "Well, I guess— [cross] I guess this is a world in which children can do this."

**Keith:** [cross] Sometimes a twelve-year-old—yeah.

**Dre:** [cross] Yeah. Uh-huh. Or yeah, you wake up and you turn on the news and they're like, "Hey, last night a small child murdered an army of 250 men [**Jack** laughs] that tried to break into the Zoldyck mansion."

**Jack:** [laughing] Yeah, exactly.

**Keith:** So the reason that we focus in on—on uh, Gon's new friend Zushi is because he is also in their preliminary matches, and he also easily defeats an extremely large man. And he actually—the largest of the three, um, that they have to fight.

**Jack:** What does Zushi look like? Should we describe Zushi's appearance as he makes his first—as we encounter him for the first time on this project?

**Keith:** Yeah, sure.

**Sylvia:** He's the most—he—I got it.

**Keith:** Okay, go for it.

**Sylvia:** [with great fondness] He—he's just a little guy with a like—he's got a little brown— [**Dre:** Yeah.]

**Keith:** [cross] He's really the ultimate little guy.

**Dre:** [laughs]

**Sylvia:** He's got a little brown, like—closely cropped brown hair, [**Keith:** Yeah.] He's wearing a like, karate gi. Um, there's like a—he's got like a like, turtleneck or like, rash guard or something underneath. And um, yeah! He's—

**Keith:** He's very—he's serious. He's very humble.

**Sylvia:** He—

**Dre:** Yeah!

**Sylvia:** He's very like committed—he's very disciplined—

**Jack:** He's very nice.

**Sylvia:** Y'know, like he—he really wants to like follow the teachings of his—his master.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Um...

**Keith:** But he's also like—like—he learned this discipline somewhere else because they make—they take great pains to be like, his master is kind of a mess. Like, Zushi is disciplined beyond his training.

**Dre:** [cross] Well he's just a lil sloppy!

**Keith:** Say again?

**Dre:** He's just a lil—he's just a lil sloppy with his shirt.

**Keith:** Well he's got—he's got messy hair that Killua calls out, I don't know where Killua comes off saying that someone else's hair is disheveled.

**Jack:** [laughs]

**Sylvia:** [snorts]

**Keith:** Um, but uh, yeah he's got messy hair, his shirt keeps coming untucked. He just kinda looks like, uh—he is—he is very serious about the training, but his attitude is very like, he's uh, kind of a—I mean he's like um—he's casual and kind of gentle-seeming.

**Dre:** Mm-hm!

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** That's—that's Wing—that is—that is Zushi's master. They are practitioners of—did anybody write down the name of uh, their style?

**Jack:** Yes, it is called Shingen-ryu.

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah. The Shingen-ryu fighting style. That will like, weirdly come back up in another, like, in basically flavor text towards the very end of the show. **[Sylvia laughs]** So keep an—keep an eye out for people mentioning Shingen-ryu. Um, uh, but yeah.

**Jack:** And ssss—

**Keith:** Go ahead, Jack.

**Jack:** So the time comes for kind of our first—mm. Less than pushover match. 'Cause we know going into this first match how Gon and Killua are going to do, right? The—the match where **[Keith: Yeah.]** Gon pushes the big guy and Killua chops, like a hand chop, chops another big guy. Um, but our first kind of plot-critical match is Killua versus Zushi. And Killua—

**Keith:** And he is such a brat about it, too.

**Jack:** Killua is such a brat.

**Sylvia:** Oh, it's the best.

**Dre:** Uh-huh!

**Sylvia:** It's the best!

**Jack:** He turns to Zushi, who they've been kind of hanging out with, 'cause they're—they're like these three children, they've sort of introduced themselves to each other [**Keith:** Yeah.] Um, you get the impression that—

**Keith:** Killua's going, "Oh, this is that thing that Gon does where he has other people be around me."

**Jack:** Yes.

**Dre:** [laughs]

**Jack:** "Oh, yeah, this again, huh?"

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Um, I actually wanna talk about this a bit later, this specific feeling that Killua has. Uh, but—they like—they like Zushi and—and he's nice, and when their match comes up, Killua turns to Zushi and says—

**Keith:** Can I really quick—can we rewind just for a second 'cause there's [**Jack:** Oh yeah.] one of my favorite moments when they meet Wing. I almost forgot about this. They pick up very—uh, very—very quickly on Zushi's sort of martial arts affirmation to his—his master, the uh—he like, sort of slightly bows, puts his fists by his side, and uh, yells, "Osu!" And they pick up on it immediately. The first thing that Master Wing says to them, they turn to him and then they try and imitate Zushi's little affirmation. It's so funny that they're immediately like, "Yeah, let's do it!"

**Jack:** And they do it together.

**Keith:** Yeah, in unison. Perfectly in unison. And they look kind of like a—like—it's not that they look uncomfortable doing it, they—they just don't look as natural making the motion because they'd never done it before. But they look unnatural in the exact same way as each other. It's very funny.

**Jack:** It's great animating.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** That's really good animating to pull that character out.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Um...yeah, Zushi turns—Killua turns to Zushi and says, "Well, can't win 'em all! Better luck next time!" [laughs]

**Keith:** [laughs] Yeah, way before the fight starts.

**Jack:** As the—but as the fight begins, Killua says, I think to himself, I can't tell if this is just a thought he has and we hear it. He says, "I'm sticking to one chop per match until I reach the 150th floor."

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** It's great.

**Jack:** Which is just so funny. **[Dre:** Mm-hmm.] Uh, and immediately—well, so, ugh. There's stuff we don't need to get into. There's a points-based system for fighting here that—you know. It—a TKO is worth one, one kind of point, knocking someone out is worth another kind of point. This is not terribly interesting to me, unless folks kind of want to dig into what the show is doing with that?

**Keith:** Uh, no, I think that they only set this up to then use it against Killua. I think that they—it becomes more important later. But yeah, it is just like, there is a way—depending on the severity of your attack you can score one to three points per hit, and the first one to ten wins unless there's a knockout.

**Jack:** Yeah. Exactly. Killua chops at Zushi who goes flying and then gets up, and then takes a stance and to Killua's I think kind of abject terror **[Keith:** Yeah.] the same purple glow that we last saw Illumi use comes rolling off him. **[Dre:** Mm-hm.] And uh, Killua is just terrified. We cut away from—

**Keith:** Yeah, takes a huge step back.



**Jack:** [cross] Yeah, like vaults back, right?

**Dre:** [cross] Like jumps back to the very end of the arena.

**Jack:** Yeah. Yeah. Um, and we cut to later. Killua is very sour in describing to Gon that he ran into some trouble but that Zushi will be great one day. Zushi is, “Just target practice for me. Punches that weak, I could knock him around easily. But I couldn’t beat him.” And what’s interesting is Killua won this match. He won on points. But he couldn’t knock Zushi out. And it is so funny, and you know, so characteristic of Killua that he’s like, “Well I couldn’t beat him even though I won.” **[Keith:** Right.] The thing he wanted to do was—was knock Zushi out clean.

**Keith:** There’s also this really great moment where it shifts from that confidence of being like, “He’s just target practice.” And you see him like having to stop to admit like, “I was”—he’s very proud of his ability to judge how strong someone is, and also of his ability to be strong himself. So like, he sounds really defeated but you—you watch him like decide to admit like, “I couldn’t do what I wanted to do, which was just knock him out.” Even though he tried like four times.

**Sylvia:** The stance stuff is very classic anime to me.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Oh yeah.

**Sylvia:** Oh I di—I linked an old Vine from CalebCity where it’s just a parody of the—the stance has no weaknesses thing. **[Keith** laughs] And I could—I couldn’t stop thinking of it when Killua like, like sees Zushi do his little pose. **[Dre** laughs] ‘Cause it’s like oh my god.

**Keith:** It’s really funny.

**Sylvia:** Um.

**Jack:** But yeah, this is great. This is a very good Vine.

**Keith and Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Um.

**Keith:** Um, so do we—I think we skipped past it. What happens when, uh, when Zushi does this stance?

**Sylvia:** There is the—we get the sort of same screen effect that happened when Illumi confronted Killua. Am I right in that? Or does that come up later?

**Keith:** No, no, you're totally right, you're totally right.

**Sylvia:** Cool.

**Keith:** Well, so the—after that happens, after Killua has his sort of reaction to this, Wing shouts Zushi's name from the stands. Just like, shouts his name kind of angrily, and Zushi drops it. [**Jack:** Yeah.] And then they sort of continue the fight. They don't show the end of the fight until later [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] for plotting reasons. Um, but whatever Zushi was doing, Wing stopped him from doing it and then we see him reprimanding him after the fight like, "You're not supposed to do that until floor 200." And this is what sets Gon and Killua off on trying to figure out what the hell that was, because every time they encounter this Killua's like terrified of it. Um—

**Sylvia:** It's also more so Killua that wants—I feel like—I don't know. Maybe this is my bias showing through—

**Keith:** [cross] No, totally, you're right.

**Sylvia:** —and you guys can tell me if I'm wrong. It does feel like Killua's a little more of the main character um...in these couple episodes.

**Keith:** No, I—you're right. This is—this is something—what—what happens is we—we come here because of Gon needing to get stronger for the Hisoka fight, but then immediately this sort of becomes about Killua and um, like the power that Zushi has and his brother and stuff like that for—for most of this time. [**Dre:** Mm-hm.] And even at the

end of this episode, just to jump forward very quickly, at the end of this episode the—the narrator’s sort of recounting like, uh, y’know, “Killua wants to investigate the mysterious powers of his terrible brother!” [**Jack:** Ha!] And then waits a beat and says, “And Gon also wants to know!” [laughs]

**Dre:** [laughs]

**Sylvia:** [laughs] Yeah! “And Gon too!”

**Keith:** [laughing] Yeah.

**Jack:** [laughs]

**Keith:** Like super funny. And yeah, I think it’s pretty clear, this is like—this is very important kind of—this is personal—this becomes a personal issue for Killua.

**Jack:** Yeah. Because, you know. [pause] How much of this is Killua going, “If I know how to—I will never be able to overcome Illumi face-to-face with no practice, but if I can meet someone who can fight in a similar way to him, I might be able to—” You know, like this is the way in [**Keith:** Right.] for Killua on some level.

**Keith:** Because he doesn’t understand his brother’s power, and we also don’t.

**Jack:** No. Although we I—

**Keith:** And so how can he fight him if he doesn’t even know what it is?

**Jack:** And to do so directly against Illumi would be a death sentence. [**Keith:** Yeah.] Well, I don’t know. I don’t know if Illumi would kill Killua.

**Keith:** Mmm?

**Dre:** Ehhh?

**Jack:** I have to imagine it would be something— [laughs]

**Keith:** No, I think that that would be really bad for him personally.

**Jack:** I think that—

**Dre:** Yeah, I think you're right. It would be the closest thing possible, probably.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah. The Zoldyck family would do something awful to Killua.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Illumi would do something awful to Killua but would probably not kill him. But yeah, so they overhear Wing telling to an apologizing Zushi that he is not ready to use this technique, which Wing calls [cross] Ren.

**Keith:** [cross] They call Ren, yeah.

**Jack:** Um, and Killua is like, "All right. New plan. We should shoot for the top of the tower. Like that's—that's our goal." Because previously they've just been trying to get enough money to, uh—

**Keith:** Yeah. And train.

**Jack:** They—they want to train and they—yes. [cross] But actually completing it is—

**Keith:** [cross] Although it turns out that they would've had to get to the top of the tower to get any training in anyway, because they one-shot literally every single person but Zushi.

**Jack:** [laughs] Yes. Um, uh, this has been Gon's plan the whole time, 'cause Gon cannot see a challenge without thinking, "I can do that."

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah. Right.

**Jack:** "I'll be—I'll be fine." Um, okay. They just straight up ask Zushi about Ren. And Zushi says—

**Keith:** Yeah, there's this cute moment where—where Killua comes up with a very bad plan, and Gon's like, "We should just ask Zushi." And then Killua's like, "Hahaha! [**Dre** laughs] Yeah!"

**Sylvia:** [laughs]

**Jack:** "Yeah, okay!"

**Keith:** "I didn't think about asking for help. That didn't occur to me."

**Jack:** Ren is one of four—

**Dre:** Eh—

**Jack:** Oh sorry, did you have something, Dre?

**Dre:** Oh, I was gonna say, and then Zushi says, "Osu!" and tells them all about—

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah!

**Dre:** About Ren, yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah, just—just opens up. It is one of Four Exercises. The Exercises are Ten, Zetsu, Ren, and Hatsu. And all of these are sort of pillars of a kind of training or metaphysical understanding that is called Nen, at which point the show becomes about Nen. Strap in everybody, it is now the Nen show for two episodes.

**Keith:** And—and Jack? [emphatically] Yes.

**Jack:** [laughs] I—I suspected this.

**Dre:** I was gonna ask Jack why do you think this.

**Jack:** Well— [sighs] The—the glee with which the show—okay. Let's not get ahead of ourselves.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** This is a kind of formal training and Killua is not at all happy about this, and this begins to press at one of the tensions that is, if not directly spoken about, kind of latent in these three episodes, which is a contrast between the formal, studious training of Zushi under the tutelage of his lanky, disheveled, [**Dre** laughs] [**Sylvia:** Uh—] but broadly friendly master, Wing.

**Sylvia:** Something I wrote about Wing is that he looks like every e-girl's boyfriend.

**Jack:** [laughs] He really does!

**Dre:** Yeah. Uh-huh.

**Jack:** He's a—also in a show that is full of like twelve-year-olds, uh, I think Wing is probably like, my age, right?

**Keith:** Yeah, well, knowing Leorio exists, Wing could be anything from twenty to 40.

**Jack:** This is the problem.

**Dre:** I'm gonna see if there—if they give an age on the Hunterpedia.

**Keith:** That'd be great, yeah.

**Sylvia:** They do not.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Dre:** No they don't.

**Jack:** It's w—I bring this up—

**Dre:** Uh, they say that—they tell us his gender, eye color, hair color, and state.

**Jack:** State? Oh, [**Sylvia:** Michigan.] alive or dead or whatever. Yeah. Michigan.  
[laughs]

**Sylvia:** He's there too.

**Keith:** [laughs]

**Dre:** [laughs]

**Jack:** I'm gonna get some training in from Mr. Wing!

**Dre:** Ah, he's a yooper!

**Jack:** Oh wow, he's way up there.

**Dre:** Uh-huh.

**Jack:** I bring up Wing's because I think it is notable that unlike the sort of masters we have seen in the past, whether that is someone like Satotz or Netero, this seems to be a younger person [**Keith:** Yeah.] who is nevertheless pretty skilled. He doesn't seem to be a Hunter, or if he is there is no indication of that, but he does seem to be extremely knowledgeable about what he does, and this is sort of—this might be our first non-Hunter character outside of the Zoldyck family of assassins, who's like, "I have specialized effective knowledge in the world." Yes. So they—there is this—this contrast between Killua and Gon who learned their skills either through a cult assassin family or simply being the best little boy in the woodland [**Keith** laughs] and then fighting everybody in the Hunter Exam. And, in almost all of their interactions, I'm thinking specifically between Killua, Wing, and Zushi, there is this tension of like, "Well why do you want me to stand in front of a whiteboard and learn all this stuff?" And you know, as the—as the arc continues we can see Zushi still hangs out around floor 50 or whatever. Um, he's a competent fighter but he loses matches, whereas Gon and Killua with their kind of firecracker nightmare power are going shooting up the tower, um, with the sort of implicit sense from the show that there is—there is a consequence to this kind of like, burning the candle at both ends.

**Keith:** Yeah. Ooh, burning the—that is a really great, I think visual metaphor, I think, for a theme that we'll see throughout the rest of the show.

**Jack:** Interesting. Interesting. However—

**Keith:** This is—this is like echoes of—this is—these are—these ep—I think—when I first watched these I found bits of this arc to be some of the weakest like, in terms of consistent interest and pacing, but in rewatching it, it is so clear how important these episodes are and foundational they are, not just in the sort of like, brass tacks mechanics of the world, but also setting up a lot of um, y'know, themes and uh, like, binary questions on like, ways to do things.

**Jack:** Is that something that you feel as well, Dre and Sylvi, having seen this through, both in terms of them feeling like the weakest, and then—and then sort of revealing themselves to be more structurally important?

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Sylvia:** Um...

**Keith:** I should say, I never disliked these episodes, but in my mind, y'know, coming off the Hunter Exam, and then going into some really exciting stuff that happens after this, in my mind [**Dre:** Yeah.] this sort of stuck out as kind of like, a boring arc. Um, and I—

**Sylvia:** Ahh...

**Dre:** Okay, I—I disagree with it being boring for sure.

**Sylvia:** Do you mean Heavens Arena as a whole?

**Keith:** Um, ah, well I would—

**Dre:** Or do you mean these episodes?

**Keith:** say kind of like the first—this set, and not the middle chunk, but sort of like the beginning and the end of Heavens Arena.

**Sylvia:** Mmm.



**Keith:** Um, again it is just sort of like the like, y'know, the like—every student gets an A, somebody's still gotta get the worst score in the class, you know what I mean?

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah. I guess—I don't know. I feel—I think that this, especially these three episodes do a lot of good work in terms of continuing to explore like Killua's worldview [Keith: Mm-hm.] and what happens to Killua when his worldview gets like, turned upside down in many ways. Like, I mean in these first two episodes, basically Killua realizes that like, "Oh actually maybe I'm not as good at figuring out how strong people are, [Keith: Yeah.] because this guy who seemingly cannot hurt me also immediately made me terrified in a way that only my big brother has." [Jack: Yeah.] And I think like, watching Killua come to grips with him both not being as strong as he thinks he is, but I think in some ways maybe more importantly, that he's also not as good at understanding the world as he thought he was. Especially like, he goes so hard into trying to be cool with Gon and being like, "Oh yeah, I've been here. I know how this works. [Keith: Yeah.] Just listen to me and you'll make it through just fine, Gon."

**Keith:** This is definitely—

**Dre:** And then it's like, "Oh shit. I know as little as Gon does about something that is suddenly very important."

**Keith:** This is definitely like echoes of what we've seen in, like on the airship and in other parts of [Dre: Yeah.] the last season where like, Killua's trying to make Gon his sidekick. [Dre laughs] It's very funny. It's very funny, and Gon is just like so resistant to it. And I—we talked about this already, but the part where Killua's like, "Change of plans. We're going to the top of the tower," and Ki—and then Gon's like, "Yeah! Let's do it!" And then thinks to himself, "I wanted to do that anyway."

**Dre:** "I was already gonna do that."

**Keith:** We have to hear that—that Gon’s not being influenced by Killua actually. He was already planning to do that.

**Dre:** And I guess—I don’t even read it as Killua trying to make Gon his sidekick, as—as so much as that like—like Killua just truly believes it is a fact that in some ways he is just smarter and knows better than Gon. [**Keith:** Yeah.] Not in a way that makes Gon like, inferior to him overall, [**Keith:** Yeah.] but just like in this specific thing, Killua is so confident—

**Keith:** I think it’s that—

**Dre:** —that he knows and Gon doesn’t.

**Keith:** I think that’s true, but also like, Killua likes Gon, and is his friend, and isn’t—doesn’t have the sort of social skills to have a friend, really, and uh, or—or like, has bad interpersonal instincts for relationships. [**Dre** laughs] Um, and—and so he ends up treating Gon in ways where like, he’s, um, like someone who works for him, which is the—or, y’know, someone he can boss around, which is like the—everyone he knows in his life are either his parents or someone he can boss around, which is why you get things like on the airship where he’s like, “C’mon, Gon, we’re outta here.” And Gon’s like, “No, I’m gonna stay.” And then Gon’s like, “Grr!” Or sorry, Killua’s like, “Grr! He’s supposed to listen to me!”

**Dre:** [laughs]

**Jack:** [laughs] “My very low-key request!”

**Keith:** And, you know. We’ll see how that progresses. Yeah, I definitely have a much better—this is not new, this is the last time I rewatched these episodes I like, drastically changed how I value them. Um, and I like them even more, I think this time. But there was definitely this like—I had these two weird moments where I was like, the show starts off a little slow, and then there’s bits of the Heavens Arena arc that are slow too. And then I rewatched them—last time I rewatched them I was like, oh, that’s basically not true at all. The show starts off really quickly, um, and Heavens Arena is like really

short and fun and quick and good. **[Jack: Um—]** Um, but that was sort of a derail. Where were we actually?

**Jack:** Uh, Mr. Wing has said, “Okay, look. Only knowing a bit about this stuff might increase your ignorance, not decrease it.” And Killua says, “Nope! Don’t care! **[Keith laughs]** I wanna learn!” **[laughs]** He asks—

**Keith:** Yeah, he says, “I’ll do the slow training if you tell me.”

**Jack:** Yeah, which is really interesting. Uh, and—and I think that— **[sighs]** Keeping in mind this tension between these two ways of thinking, I think it is worth keeping an eye out for how that goes. It is—it is notable here at the end of the first episode we’re watching today that Killua says, “Okay. Let’s do the slow training. I have to learn.” Um, and Wing—everybody heads to Wing’s house in a sort of like a—Wing has this like little townhouse. It’s—it’s on a street, connected to a bunch of other houses. And the episode ends. Is there anything we want to talk about here in 27 that we have missed?

## **Keith’s Manga Investigation [0:41:13]**

**Keith:** Uh, I’ve got a couple things, from ages and ages ago, editing episode two, I realized that I had promised to investigate something from the manga and never did, uh, because it was in the ‘99 anime and I wasn’t sure if it was canon or not. Um, it’s about Mito and uh, it is a huge difference between the ‘99 anime and the manga and the 2011 anime, and I just wanna say it now, because I’ll forget again, ‘cause I forgot last time, too, to bring this up. Um, Ging in the 2011 anime, leaves, comes back, um, leave—y’know, gives Gon to Mito and then leaves again. In the ‘99 anime this is a lie that Mito tells Gon. **[Dre: Oh.] [Jack: Huh.]** And actually in—in the—again, in the ‘99 anime what she says is, “I actually like sued in court for custody of you and kicked him out, basically.”

**Dre:** Woah!

**Keith:** Yeah. And so I was like, I gotta see if this is in the manga. It kind of is. Uh, in the manga she doesn't say, "I sued in court for custody of you," she just says, "I made him give you up." Um, so just an interesting—

**Jack:** That is such an interesting distinction, though. [**Dre:** Huh.] [**Keith:** It is.] Y'know, from the character of Ging who—the Ging who willingly leaves Gon behind and disappears is very different to the Ging that—

**Keith:** Yeah, and I—

**Jack:** God, like what has happened there, yeah?

**Keith:** I have to assume that the context for this is that he was—he was already sort of an absentee father, and the—going to the courts was like official, making it official.

[**Jack:** Mmm.] Based on things that we will see in the show later, I think that this is like kind of gotta be the story of like, either he already wasn't around, or was extremely sporadically around, or something, or maybe he immediately showed up and she, y'know, was like, "You gotta go. You're terrible. Gimme the child." Uh, but yeah. I wasn't sure if that was just in the '99 anime, or if it was also canon in manga, and it seems to be a little bit of both, because the—the '99 anime specifically says like, "I took him to court," which is very funny thinking of Ging going to court. [laughs]

**Jack:** Yeah, 'cause the judge, and the court in the world of *Hunter x Hunter* as well, the judge is like twelve feet tall.

**Dre:** [laughs]

**Sylvia:** It's a Frog-in-Waiting!

**Jack:** Like has the head of a goat. Yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** [laughs]

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

**Keith:** Um—

**Jack:** The defendant stands there, the judge just goes, [makes chomping noise]

**Sylvia:** [laughs]

**Keith:** Uh—

**Dre:** It follows *Phoenix Wright* rules, too, [**Jack** and **Keith** laugh] that's how—that's how the courtroom works.

## **Back to Episode 27 [0:44:00]**

**Keith:** And there—there's one more thing that I wanna mention, just the economics of Heavens Arena we get a quick explanation of that after they make it up to floor 50 and they—they win um—they get—or Killua gets 500 dollars, or 50,000 jenny for this win, um.

**Dre:** Oh we got exchange rate numbers?

**Keith:** We actually have exact exchange rate numbers. A jenny is equivalent to about point nine yen. So the—

**Dre:** Okay.

**Jack:** So how much did Killua win when he was eight? He was making millions of jenny.

**Dre:** So he won 200 million jenny.

**Keith:** [cross] Which is 2,000,000 dollars. It is about 2,000,000 dollars, yeah.

**Dre:** [cross] And spent it all on snacks because he's a fuckin' real one. Hold on.

**Keith:** Maybe a little bit—it's either a little bit more or a little bit less than that.

**Dre:** [quietly Googling] Average...price...of...a...bag...of...Doritos.

**Keith:** Pfff.

**Jack:** Mm. Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Um...wow. Man, Doritos are expensive now, y'all.

**Jack:** Yeah. Everything's going up but the wages.

**Dre:** A party size—yeah, a party size bag is—let's—let's round it up to five dollars and 50 cents. You said 2,000,000?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Okay. I gotta—I gotta do some math. 2,000,000 divided by five point five. [**Sylvia** laughs] Um, that's about 363,636 bags of Doritos.

**Jack:** Hm.

**Keith:** And that is Killua—Killua says. He says he spent it all on snacks and this is—this is horrific to Zushi and Gon, who cannot—they say— [**Dre** laughs] they have a horr—they have a terrified face and they go, "What kind of snacks?" [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Killua's the goat man.

**Jack:** These are the snacks that we see—yeah. [laughs]

**Keith:** [laughs]

**Dre:** [laughs]

**Jack:** We've seen Killua eat these snacks before when he was, um, oh god. D'you remember?

**Keith:** Yeah he was at the—the guard house. He was in the guard house of uh, of—

**Jack:** I—so—I've been moving house now for what feels like, y'know, [**Keith:** Eternity.] four or five months. Yeah, this is—this is—this is just a dream of my life. I've—I dreamt I was a butterfly. My butterfly dreaming I'm a man moving house, et cetera. Um, I just now remembered. The last recording we did I was also moving house, but I was back in Long Beach, and I watched the episodes in a kind of fugue state, in like a kind of haze.

[**Keith** and **Dre** laugh] And I literally just remembered that stupid man doing the like, find the coin trick?

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Jack:** Do you all remember that?

**Sylvia:** Uh-huh!

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I'd forgotten about that. [**Dre:** Yeah.] I thought I'd dreamt it.

**Keith:** You forgot about Gotoh?

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Gotoh.

**Keith:** Gotoh?

**Jack:** Gotoh. And Killua was hanging out, uh, eating—eating snacks. Eating these little snacks that are like a—like a yellow robot-type thing?

**Keith:** Yeah, I just pulled up the picture of it. [laughs]

**Jack:** Um, he loves these snacks. I think it's a extremely good *Hunter x Hunter* joke that—these snacks sort of unfold into a little mech, uh and seem to be Killua's favorite and have now showed up twice, which is great.

**Keith:** Yeah, and it—the image of it from this episode is just him in a room full of hundreds of these snacks. Um, just saying, "Spent it all on snacks!"

**Jack:** Yeah. Did you have a note about this Sylvi?

**Sylvia:** Uh, not really. I just love that Killua does this. Um.

**Keith:** [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Like, I'll be real. There's just a lot of Killua hijinks in this episode. Or in this—the—we get like a good balance of like, serious motivations with [**Keith:** Yeah.] Killua wanna be—Killua wanting to be stronger, and then we also get um, kitty cat gremlin Killua, which is [**Dre:** Uh-huh!] all I can describe him as. [**Jack:** [laughs] That's true.] Which is just like, "Yeah, man, I love candy. Whatever. This is no big deal to me."

**Jack:** [cross] 'Cause he's twelve!

**Keith:** 'Cause he wants to spend 2,000,000 dollars on candy and eat it all?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Nyahh!

**Sylvia:** I think it also kind of betrays the um, his upbringing a little bit.

**Keith:** Oh, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Um, the fact that money just doesn't really matter to him.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Right, every—any money [**Jack:** No.] that he could possibly make is just bonus candy money.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, exactly.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** He doesn't even need it to buy all of his fashion.

**Jack:** [cross] "I don't buy anything." No. I—we—uh, I was about—I was about to say we haven't really seen anybody else dress like Killua, but Killua's costume designs are [**Dre:** Ough.] right in line with *Hunter x Hunter's* weird freaks.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.



**Sylvia:** Mm-hm!

**Jack:** I think that they're—that they probably come from the same high fashion labels that the weird freaks get their costumes from.

**Keith:** Yeah, the difference is that Killua has like fifteen different out—of them over the course of the show. Everyone else gets one, basically.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Are—are all the straps on this outfit from his backpack?

**Keith:** Yeah, they're from the backpack.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Jack:** Oh that's his backpack?

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Mm-hm!

**Dre:** But there's like eight of them!

**Jack:** God.

**Dre:** It's sick.

**Keith:** Yeah, it's—it's great.

**Dre:** It's very good. Huge *Kingdom Hearts* aesthetic.

**Sylvia:** [cross] Oh, incredibly so.

**Keith:** [cross] Um, all right, so is that the—that is the—that's the end of 27? I know I spent a lot of extra time there in the end.

**Jack:** Yeah, I think so.

**Sylvia:** Think so.

## Episode 28 [0:49:00]

**Jack:** 28 begins as the narrator explains the rules and reveals that above floor 200, uh, there's 250 floors in this tower? 215? How many floors are there?

**Keith:** 251.

**Jack:** 251. I was wrong on both counts. Uh, they will fight fearsome floor masters. And at this point I sort of began to suspect that we—we haven't really escaped the Hunter Exam, really.

**Sylvia:** [laughs]

**Jack:** I mean, we might've escaped it like, narratively, **[Sylvia: Mm-hmm.]** I don't think this is the kind of thing that Satotz was talking about when he said, "Ohh, the—the Hunter Exam isn't actually over." Y'know, I don't think that there's a twist coming up where it's revealed these are all—this is all still the Hunter Organization or whatever. **[Sylvia: Yeah.] [Keith: Sure.]** But I think in terms of the way the show structures uh, sort of problems and puzzles and games and um, sort of quests for the characters, it is done so transparently, and of course a show is going to put conflict in the way of its characters, that's how stories work. But I think that something about saying, you know, "Climb the floors ten at a time, and then when you reach 200 you're gonna start facing fearsome floor masters," is like, we're fully back in the gamified, y'know, bloodsport of the Hunter Exam. And this is so interesting because—something I think a lot about is when you were like, "This show is Togashi taking a real swing at how shonen tends to function and pulling it apart in some ways, and interrogating some bits of it, and leaving other bits intact." **[Sylvia: Mm-hm.]** And sort of, um...uh, what's it called in like, fancy cooking? **[Sylvia: Deconstructing?]** Like a—deconstructed shonen! Like, yeah, yeah, yeah. He's presenting to us a deconstructed, y'know, uh, uh, chicken and waffles in the form of—

**Keith:** Yeah, this is explicit. Togashi actively talks about his desire to be deconstructing his characters and his—the shonen tropes. Uh, way back when he's still writing the *YuYu Hakusho* manga and being stopped from doing so by his editors.

**Jack:** Hm.

**Keith:** And—

**Jack:** And so going into—oh no, sorry.

**Keith:** Oh just—just something—so this is something that's been on his mind and uh, specifically in the context of like, kind of being unsuccessful on a personal level, or unsatisfied in writing a successful long-running series, talking about how—this is something that I think we can go over in more detail like, in a bonus episode or something one day, uh. But talking about how he like—he—he has—he doesn't have a lot of success um, when he has to stick with the same thing for a really long time, and he gets bored, and he wants to end things, but his editors are like, "Please for the love of god don't end them, [**Jack** laughs] but also don't do these interesting things you wanna do." And that sort of is like what causes him to kind of intentionally crash and burn *YuYu Hakusho*. [laughs]

**Jack:** Oh, wow.

**Keith:** Yeah. Um, anyway.

**Jack:** And so I was—I was sort of primed to—we're at a really interesting point, because we have come out of one essentially very long tournament arc, in the form of the—the Hunter Exam, and then we have uh, y'know, fooled around with the rescuing Killua for a few episodes. And then we suddenly find ourselves right on the precipice of another tournament arc, so the question that I had kind of going into episode 28, is like, is this going to get deconstructed, and if so, how is it going to get deconstructed? Or, y'know—are we just gonna spend the rest of the arc watching them uh, y'know, slowly learn how to—slowly train, slowly figure this out, climb up the tower bit by bit, like you might expect. And that turns out not to be what happens, because as these two

episodes kind of continue, it is sort of revealed that—that this tower is really just sort of um, a side thing to what is actually happening here, which is Gon and Killua and Zushi and Wing learning about Nen. And the tower is the sort of little side arena that they dip into occasionally to practice what they have been doing [**Keith:** Yeah.] in pursuit of their—in pursuit of their goal.

**Keith:** We watch um, two full fights really, well I guess the fact that they're—they're fights for the first hundred—or first 200 floors take one second each. Uh, in any other show—not any other show, but in so many shows, this would be like—it would be luxuriating in these tournaments. Like, this is like where characterization happens in a lot of shonen. Is like, put them in a fight, test them against someone that like, understands the world differently in a way that challenges them, and also fights in a way that challenges them, and then like tie how they understand the world with how they fight together, and sort of make this like, one—sort of like a—a turn—slowly turn the clashing of their physical strength with the clashing of their like, worldviews. And this is like, the kind of recipe for, y'know, a traditional shonen. And, this is now the second time that in—in 30 episodes that Togashi is like, “No, the tournament is essentially unimportant.” They skip it. They basically skip it both times. They—they show it in montage and flashbacks and—it's very funny.

**Dre:** [laughs]

**Sylvia:** They do a really good job of playing with expectations, because they build up the getting to the 200th floor thing a couple times, and then it's basically done in five minutes.

**Keith:** [laughs] It's so funny.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Um, like, it is genuinely like, it really brought a smile to my face remembering how they paced this all out.

**Keith:** And Killua's mad about it. He's like, "When I was here it took me two months to get to floor 150 or something." And then Gon's like, "But you were six!" [laughs]

**Jack:** [laughs]

**Dre:** And Killua's like, **[Keith:** "Fine, yeah."] "Well that's why—that doesn't matter."  
[laughs]

**Keith:** There's another—there's another moment where—where they talk about Killua's past here, and Gon's like, "You were—" Oh, I think it actually is this conversation, like uh, Gon's like, "You were only six," and at first it read to me like, Gon kind of empathizing with having to do this at only six, and it was like, "No, you were only six, of course you were weak, when you were six!"

**Jack:** [laughs] Yeah. "Weak child."

**Keith:** [laughs]

**Jack:** Um, so Wing is like, "I'm gonna try and train you."

**Keith:** Yeah, they're at Wing's house now.

**Jack:** And he—he breaks down the kind of the Four Exercises, which briefly involve sort of focusing your mind on a single point, putting into words your goal, identifying your resolve and making a kind of resolution to not lose, and then releasing it. And Wing says, "I—for this demonstration, I would like to kill you. Is that all right?" **[Sylvia laughs]** And Killua says, "Yeah, yeah okay."

**Dre:** "Yeah, whatever. It's Tuesday."

**Jack:** Uh, at which point Wing immediately sort of enters this Ren state, this—this purple malice that we have seen from Illumi, and also I think we have seen from Hisoka before. I believe this is the awful purple miasma that rolled off Hisoka when he didn't kill Kurapika and Leorio? Is that correct?

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, totally.

**Sylvia:** It's definitely represented similarly, yeah.

**Jack:** Um, yeah. And of course as soon as Wing does this, Killua has the same response. He leaps backwards with such force and terror that he wedges himself in the upper corner of a room like a demon possessed child in an 80's horror movie. And he just looks down. He—he—he is—he is not at all happy. He's afraid. Wing claims that the plan with Ren is essentially to bluff so hard that your opponent backs down. Am I understanding that correctly? [cross] This is Wing's claim at this point.

**Keith:** [cross] Yeah, he says it's connected to—it's connected to bluffing. But yeah, it is like, bolstering and projecting your willpower.

**Jack:** And then, notably, he says, "It requires a matured soul to execute correctly. Because—" And he explained this in one way and I didn't quite catch it down in time, but I think he's saying, "If it's not executed correctly, it can cause a bad soul to stick." Like a sour face when the wind changes, you know? Like that old saying, you know, if you frown the wind'll change and your face will get stuck like that. It's like if you have a bad soul, and you do Ren, your soul might sort of solidify bad.

**Keith:** Intense.

**Jack:** Um, which is interesting because, heyyy, souls are real in this show, I guess.

**Keith:** Um, yes, souls a—well. The way that they use it is more like the way that they use um, ki or chi in other shows, or like they use uh, chakra in *Naruto*, where it is sort of like—

**Jack:** Is this a shonen staple?

**Keith:** Oh, deeply, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Oh yeah, absolutely.

**Keith:** Yeah. Foundational.

**Jack:** Can we talk about—

**Keith:** Spirit energy in *YuYu Hakusho* functions very—

**Sylvia:** Chi in general. [**Keith:** Yeah.] Just like the idea of chi is like ver—or energy in *Dragon Ball Z* is kind of like, a very archetypical, [**Keith:** Yeah.] um, example.

**Keith:** It is—yeah. Shonen, again, like, the more traditional line of shonen is like, deeply involved manifesting your life energy into offensive power in some way that is like, y’know, very loosely tied to, y’know, old school martial arts, but like supernatural-ified.

**Sylvia:** Jack, have you ever seen—have you ever seen Goku like, charge up before, or like just a GIF of it or anything like that?

**Jack:** That’s like when his—his—his hair goes all fiery, right?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah. That—

**Sylvia:** But specifically—go ahead.

**Keith:** That is Ren, basically.

**Sylvia:** Basically, yeah. They were very much playing with the visual language of that specifically. The like, um—I’m trying to get a decent GIF of it. Um, specifically of like, when the aura starts swirling around them and stuff like that, I think it really looks like *Dragon Ball Z*. I don’t—it’s obviously not the only thing that they’re going for here, but like—I kinda keep bringing it up as an example because it is the most broadly known [**Jack:** Mm-hmm.] series in the genre [**Keith:** Yeah.] space so I’m hoping that the listeners also have that as an easy touchstone

**Keith:** *Dragon Ball* and *Dragon Ball Z* are like very casual with this, like, this stuff just exists and that’s just kind of the end of it. Shows like *Naruto*—similar—is so—chakra works so similarly to Nen because of how inspired that show is by *Hunter x Hunter*. But, they even, you know, they talk about nodes across your body for how it works in the

same way that this does. But yeah it is, you know, lots of shows dealing with ways of accessing your life energy, amplifying it into offensive and defensive power.

**Jack:** And this is, y’know, rooted in real-world traditions of martial arts and thinking about the body, right? [**Keith:** Yeah.] Except it’s—it sounds like what you’re saying is, in shonen those real-world roots are turned so explicitly towards—you said offensive, is it—is it almost always combat? It’s like this understanding of yourself [**Sylvia:** Eh.] and your soul to fight people?

**Keith:** Pretty much.

**Sylvia:** A little bit. There’s also—there—there’s some different aspects of it, but like, we’re—like—most of these are also termed as, “battle anime” and it—y’know—it also, like we said, ties into martial arts stuff. [**Dre:** Mm-hm.] So it very much tends to be a combat thing.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** It’s so interesting that—that this didn’t come up *at all* in the Hunter Exam.

**Keith:** Not at all! It’s so funny!

**Dre:** No, why would it?

**Keith:** Yeah, and it is—it is really like—I mean these—this—this arc is really like, y’know, like lifting the veil on, y’know, on, “Hey, there’s like this secret part of the world.” [**Jack:** Yeah.] Uh, do you remember—it was in this same part, I think it might—um. Is it a little later? Um, I think it might be the next episode where—because, Jack you sort of, uh, alluded to this after this quick explanation of Nen and the demonstration from Wing, they kind of like leave in a hurry. Killua leaves like, drags Gon out in kind of a huff, and immediately accuses him of lying about how— [**Jack:** Yep.] about his explanation of how Nen works. Um, does anyone have like a good handle on that, wants to talk a little bit about it?



**Jack:** Yeah, he accuses him of lying in a really classically Killua way, which is he's like, **[Dre: Mm-hmm.]** "Okay. So Wing says people's power is based on their strength of will, but I think there's something more, there's something additional that he's hiding, because Zushi couldn't have caused me that much trouble if it was just strength of will." It's a real sort of like backhanded compliment from Killua by being like, "Well, you know, in order for that guy to have caused me a problem, there must've been something more to it, **[Keith: Right.]** because otherwise I'd have just walked all over him."

**Keith:** And this is where they show the flashback of the end of that fight, where Killua hit Zushi with the intent to kill him, essentially. And then you kind of watch the panic on his face when he realizes that he sort of impulsively attacked Zushi with lethal force. And then Zushi's like right back up almost straight away. He's ah—he's hurt and, y'know, covered in dirt and scrapes and stuff, but is, uh, y'know, largely unharmed.

**Sylvia:** It's a really good moment 'cause it also shows Killua—a lot—this stuff is still second nature to Killua. It's not like it's just solved now that he's away from his shitty family. **[Jack: Yeah. Yeah.] [Dre: Yeah.]** Even though he is trying to sort of like contain that nature a little bit.

**Jack:** Well and there's something else happening here too, which is—I wonder if this is the first time Killua has ever made a friend who then subsequently makes a friend. **[Dre laughs]** Because Kurapika and Leorio—

**Sylvia:** [cross] It has to be.

**Jack:** —and Gon kind of came as a package. **[Dre: Mm-hmm.]** And so I think on some level—and you know, they're all slightly different ages and Gon and Killua bonded really quickly, and so, I think that on some level, Killua doesn't really see Kurapika and Leorio as a threat to his friendship with Gon, because he's like, "Well, they all kind of came together." But this is probably the first time in his life that he has ever gone through the experience that you do as a kid of being friends with someone and then your friend making another friend. **[Keith: Right.]** And you thinking, "Wh—hang on. I—I'm their friend!" Um, and I think that especially that the friend that Gon has made, or is—is sort

of making overtures of making in Zushi, is such a studious, and careful, and good-hearted person who has a responsive and kind mentor figure, whom he looks up to, I think is just this real like, uh, mélange of complicated feelings for Killua.

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Keith:** Yeah, he really is the opposite character to Killua.

**Jack:** Yeah! And so I think Killua is thinking, y’know—actually, hm. I don’t know if Killua is able to sort of form these thoughts, but I’m sure he is thinking of it in one way or another, “Who’s this fucking guy?” [**Keith:** Right] And I think that some of that comes out in him deploying lethal force against the child martial artist. But it’s also deeply sad, right? This is the sadness of Killua as well, is that, [**Dre:** Yeah.] y’know, we get to see—there are a couple of lovely moments, and I’m—I’m sure I’ve written them down but I can’t call them to hand, we get to see the ways in which Gon opens Killua up to the experience of childhood, of running around, of being goofy, of being a twelve-year-old [**Keith:** Right.] in the way that Gon knows how to do so sort of totally. But what Gon also opens him up to are all the uh, uh, frustrations and tensions and confusion of being a twelve-year-old. And I think it’s really nice storytelling that we—we sort of got that first with, “Oh, isn’t it great to be a twelve-year-old?” And then, “Oh actually, twelve-year-olds are having lots of complicated feelings about themselves [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] and the world that they’re in.” That Killua is completely ill-equipped to address in any way, other than through violence.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** I mean, Gon is also the first thing Killua has ever had in his life that is like, would actually be really sad for him to lose.

**Sylvia:** [sadly] Yeahhhh.

**Jack:** Yeah! Yeah! You’re right. Um, maybe—

**Keith:** “It was much easier when I was a child assassin and the only things I needed to feel were malaise and terror.”

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** [laughs]

**Dre:** And boredom!

**Keith:** Yeah, and boredom. [cross] Yeah, malaise and terror and boredom.

**Jack:** [cross] Yeah! And—and boredom! It was so—so rough!

**Keith:** [cross] Ennui. It was ennui and terr—and terror.

**Dre:** [laughs]

**Jack:** ‘Cause he wanted to be friends with Canary, right? We—we saw him [**Keith:** Yeah.] asking Canary, [**Dre:** Yeah.] and then Canary realizing, “Oh, no, no, this is not a good idea.”

**Keith:** But then when that doesn’t happen it’s sort of like a shrug of the shoulders, it’s sort of like—like, “Okay.” Like, “Whatever, back to missions and—”

**Jack:** Well he’s making a bid and that bid is—is rejected, right?

**Dre:** Shut down.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And—and I think he is in—hm. I’m about to say he is in a formative point in his life, but I don’t just mean because he’s a twelve-year-old, I mean because he’s a child assassin [**Sylvia** laughs] exiting his family and into the world, you know I mean that in a much broader sense.

**Keith:** [cross] Right. It's a tough time for a career change.

**Dre:** [laughs uproariously]

**Jack:** It's a tough time for a— [wheezes] But I think he's definitely at a point where making that kind of overture of friendship, and then having that bid rejected is going to have a consequence, and is going to produce the kind of—the kind of like, shoulder shrug, disaffected Killua that we all know and love.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Bless him. I want the best for that lil weirdo.

**Keith:** Um, do we straight away sort of get sort of Zushi's side of this accusal? From—

**Jack:** We do. This is Togashi's trick as well. Drifting the perspective again. Togashi will so often—

**Keith:** Oh we—we get a very interesting moment. This is very quick. In that fight between Zushi and Killua. First of all, the show is getting more comfortable. I made a note in like episode four or five that like, we've never gotten inside Killua's head the way we've got inside other characters'. [**Jack:** Mm.] Like, even randos like Tonpa we get whole episodes that are where they're the main character, but Killua's been around, y'know, ten episodes right now—like so far, we've never gotten that sort of—that sort of breaks down at some point. I don't remember when the first time was, but I think it was an episode or two ago from—of this show. The fight between Zushi and Killua, we get inside both of their heads during this. [**Jack:** Yeah, it's great!] We get internal monologues from both of them, and I think that's the first time that happens, where we're hearing from both characters kind of simultaneously.

**Jack:** Is this a shonen thing too? I mean I—I've encountered it in the past of like, often in a fight cutting to a character's face and hearing their inner monologue. But I think specifically this thing that Togashi does where uh, protagonist characters will pose a question, or will wonder about something else, and then we jump to a secondary character, and then following their perspective, have the answer revealed, often over a

long period of time, has happened enough times to be notable, and I'm curious if that in itself is also a hallmark of shonen.

**Keith:** No, I think this is very unique to Togashi. It's definitely fairly common to get—to get it from the main character, [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] or the char—the protagonist of focus, like will—you'll get, y'know, if we're—if we're watching *Naruto* and we're—we're watching Rock Lee fight, and he's like the good guy of the fight, so we get inside his head for a little bit. I think that happens, like, fairly common? But uh, the—the ability for Togashi's writing to like, get inside people's heads, hear their thoughts, jump around, bring in the narrator, and for it to all feel like one big thing, it's something that like, he's really good at, is sort of unique, I think, and also kind of expands as the show expands. This is like something that grows with the show I—I feel like.

**Jack:** Hm. That's great. Um, yes, so we see, uh, Zushi say, "Wing, why did you—why did you lie to these people?" And it turns out that Wing has not been—has been truthful about the Four Exercises but has lied about what they mean, which is classic Hunter logic, of like, [**Sylvia** laughs] [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] one—what you see is not actually the truth and you need to sort of dig deep. What appears to be one thing is always actually another thing if you look closer at it. The real path is just slightly obscured rather than completely obscured. He redraws the Nen character to mean, "mind force," and then he does the classic teacher thing where he says, "If the true Nen were taught to someone who wasn't one of my pupils it would be a terrible weapon."

**Keith:** [laughs] Well, o—I sort of interpreted this a little differently. I heard him saying like, "Because Nen is a terrible weapon you have to be careful who you teach it to, and I don't know them."

**Jack:** We've heard this before, haven't we? We've heard the Hunters say, "Being a Hunter is a spectacular privilege and affords a great deal of power, so we need to make sure that only really good people become Hunters." Something that they fail to do at literally every turn.

**Keith:** And structurally actually enforce kinda the opposite thing.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And Wing is—

**Keith:** It's sort of like set up to be—we've talked so much about this—if you're bad, you better be really strong! [laughs]

**Jack and Dre:** [laugh]

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah, if you're bad, you better be the worst, and capable of beating everyone.

**Keith:** The good people can get by on teamwork and cooperation. The bad people better be so talented that they're able to do it all on their own.

**Jack:** [laughs] Netero's out there like, "I've invented a kind of rubric for creating the devil! [**Keith** and **Sylvia** laugh] Would you guys like to hear about it?"

**Keith:** "Aren't I the nicest friendliest old guy that you just wanna hang out with? [**Jack** laughs] Aren't I so fun and funny?"

**Jack:** Notably, Wing demonstrates the kind of evil power of Nen by tearing a page from a book that Zushi has not finished reading—

**Keith:** It's so funny.

**Jack:** —and forming it into a blade. [**Keith:** Yeah.] Like a—like, for example, a weaponized playing card.

**Keith:** I know, yeah.

**Jack:** And I think that as this has been going on, and this sort of becomes extremely apparent in 29, actually, no, towards the end of this episode. Yeah, we're gonna get to this. Uh, the implication is that Hisoka knows Nen. Fully. [**Keith:** Yeah.] [**Sylvia:**

Mm-hm!] And a lot of what we consider to be Hisoka's magic is just Nen weaponized. Um, and this will—this will—

**Keith:** Which I think is so cool. I just love that.

**Jack:** It's great. There is something really satisfying and—hm. The idea that your nemesis has gotten to the technique before you is a really cool piece of storytelling, right? This—this feeling of like, Gon and Killua are hearing about this for the first time, they're getting the wool pulled over their eyes by Wing, Wing and Zushi are discussing whether or not to actually teach them the true thing. [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] Hisoka has known about this from the word, "Go." Y'know, before the viewer even heard about it, Hisoka was weaponizing Nen. Uh, and I think it sort of embeds it in the world in a really great way, that not just the Nen masters are out here knowing it, but like people who we have encountered in the past were out here using this technique that we have only just now learned about. [**Keith:** Um—] It's really neat.

**Keith:** This—this might—this might be—this might be something you've thought about or maybe it's self-evident, or maybe this is a good question, but Jack, who else do you think that we've seen that knew about and can make use of Nen?

**Jack:** Uh, Illumi.

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** Uh, and that might be—oh. Hmm. It's Hisoka, it's Illumi, it's probably Netero, but I don't have any evidence for that beyond he's just very powerful, [**Keith:** Uh-huh.] y'know. Uh, and that might be it [**Keith:** Okay.] from my guess. It's two awful nightmares and a third awful nightmare in a different way.

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

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Jack:** The jolly old man.

**Keith:** Okay. Well that'll—that'll—

**Jack:** D'you think that the gorilla from the screenshot stream can use Nen?

**Keith:** It's—that is such a funny question [snorts] and I won't tell you why. [wheezes]

[**Jack** laughs] It is—it is a [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] outrageously hilarious question. [laughs]

**Jack:** [laughs]

**Dre:** [laughs]

**Keith:** Oh, that's so good.

**Jack:** Well, Wing says anybody can use Nen [**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah.] if you— [**Dre:** Sure.] y'know, with enough work, anyone can use Nen, which is why you must be very careful who you teach it to. [**Keith:** Um—] The tournament cont—oh.

**Keith:** This is—I—Jack, are you also sort of confused and—because I know how little experience you have with the—with the genre. Are you also confused and have a barely activated understanding of what people mean when they talk about stands in uh, *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure*?

**Jack:** Uh, here's what I think a stand is. I think a stand is a sort of soul power that you call upon that is like, what if my true self could be turned towards creating a guy [laughs] who fought for me? That's what I think it is. So I think I would say, oh my stand is, y'know, man with axe that fights you, [**Keith:** Sure.] and then he would appear behind me and then kill you.

**Keith:** Okay. Asked and answered. That's all I had.

**Sylvia:** You know what, yeah, actually, a—not—not the worst to—good grade.

**Keith:** No, no, and I hadn't seen enough of the show to know—to have like a better definition than that, Jack, I just know enough to know that I wanna draw a line between that and what we were just talking about. And that's all.



**Jack:** Yeah, I mean I will say between my unfamiliarity with the jes—with the genre, and the fact that I am moving house, all this Nen stuff is sort of like a fever dream for me. I think obfuscated by the fact that Wing lies about it the first time he teaches them it, so the show actually kind of presents two sort of models of Nen. Uh, and—and there are these four steps that—that, y’know, I could say, oh, this is the one about, y’know, sort of conjuring your aura, this is the one about sort of stilling your aura within you, this is the one about sort of projecting it out to defend against another attack or whatever. I could do that stuff fairly fine, but it all sort of slides around in my brain like vegetables in a pan with too much oil in. **[Keith: Yeah.] [Sylvia laughs]** And I’m sort of content with that? I don’t—I’m—I get what I need to know here, um, but I will say the experience of this like, very sort of like, Nen teaching section has been like—a fairly confusing one.

**Keith:** Yeah. I—I think eventually those veggies’ll crisp up nice and be extremely delicious. **[laughs]**

**Jack:** Nice.

**Sylvia:** A delicious sofrito, yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah, the—my favorite thing to do when I am watching a piece a media is go, I don’t understand what’s happening, but I’m just gonna kinda keep—keep watching and figure it out.

**Keith:** We—I can’t be a hundred percent sure if this is new music. I think it is new music, but this section has some new music. It has these like—these sort of ominous sort of synth pads that I think are like the Nen song. It’s like, it’s like, **[imitates a wailing, humming synth]**

**Sylvia:** Wow! Really good synth pad noise!

**Keith:** Thank you.

**Jack:** Keith! **[Dre laughs]** You had a—like an attack on that. **[Sylvia: Yeah!]** You figured out how to make the envelope with your mouth.

**Keith:** [wheezes] It's—it's just volume! [laughs]

**Jack:** [laughs]

**Keith:** [coughs] An envelope just describes the—the electrical process of emulating your voice.

**Jack:** So you just—you really just skipped ahead.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** You, on the whiteboard, [**Keith:** Yeah.] crossing out “electrical process” and writing, “Haha! It's actually my voice!”

**Keith:** [laughs] It's not me that sounds like an envelope, it's an envelope that sounds like me.

**Jack:** [laughs] Okay, Killua. Um...

**Sylvia and Dre:** [laugh]

**Jack:** Uh, lemme see. Uh, I want—

**Keith:** Oh we get a couple good—before this episode ends, we get a couple good thing—lines from uh, Wing. Oh, no. No, no, no. Sorry. I skipped. I skipped forward. We have this whole—

**Jack:** Yeah, we got a ways to go.

**Keith:** We have this whole hallway scene.

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Jack:** Well, the—the tower continues. Floor 190, Gon and Killua fight a kung fu guy and a wrestler, lots of big talk. This is just a extended gag. [**Keith:** Yeah.] It's funny. In which the kung fu guy and the wrestler are specifically like, “Your chop won't beat me! [**Keith:**

Yeah.] I'm too sturdy! Your push won't beat me! I'm too fast!" And then they just get beaten.

**Sylvia:** "I'm slippery like a snake!" is what he says.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** "Slippery like a snake!" [**Dre:** Woo-woo-woo-woo.] And then he makes his hand into a little snake. Yeah, exactly.

**Keith:** And then how many chops and pushes does it take to beat them?

**Jack:** [cross] Well...it's one!

**Dre:** [cross] One.

**Keith:** [cross] Yeah, it's one.

**Jack:** One. Both win and advance to 200. Gon and Killua are [**Keith:** These—] now at 200; Zushi is still pissing about on 50 I think.

**Keith:** Every single person on these 200 floors that—that Gon and Killua encountered would have died in—either died in Swindler's Swamp, or would have flunked out just getting to Swindler's Swamp.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, wouldn't have made it through the, um...

**Keith:** They would not have made it through.

**Sylvia:** The run.

**Jack:** Yeah. Yeah. Am I remembering right, Dre? You asked us where we would fail the Hunter Exam, right? And we would all fail during the running?

**Keith:** Yeah. Absolutely.

**Dre:** I—yeah. I think so, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, we'd all fail during the running.

**Jack:** Yeah, step—step one. Uh, I like—

**Keith:** Us and every other human on Earth would fail during the running.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Jack:** I might've even failed with the Kiriko.

**Keith:** Oh yeah, I'm just assuming that we teleport to the start of phase one. But yeah.

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

**Jack:** Okay.

**Dre:** That was the spirit of the question.

**Keith:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Jack:** Oh, I see. Yeah, sure, sure. Um...

**Keith:** Yeah. I'm getting down to—honestly, I'm getting on the wrong bus. I'm getting on the— [laughs] [**Jack** laughs] the “you lose” bus.

**Jack:** Um, Wing notices Gon and Killua reach floor 200, and says, “Mm. I have no choice. I'm going to have to teach them.” Because as Gon and Killua enter floor 200, they—

**Keith:** This is Wing's—this is Wing's big failure, is of like of not having been paying close enough attention to them.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Because he ends up having to do something that he describes as very dangerous about this, where if he had been paying closer attention could have easily, easily taken the one week that he said that it would have needed to do this the right way, [**Jack:** Yeah.] uh, instead of, um, y'know, what ends up happening here.

**Jack:** A bad energy comes out of a hallway. Terrible Nen energy hallway. [**Dre:** Mm-hm.] Gon and Killua head down the hallway are uh, interrupted by a young woman who works for the place. The negative energy subsides. And she lets them know that they have to register to fight within four hours. If they don't—

**Keith:** She looks so tired.

**Dre:** She is the most tired woman.

**Sylvia:** I love her.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Do you think that it's tiring—because I—I think it's sort of revealed that it's not her energy, it's—it's Hisoka's energy.

**Sylvia:** Can we say for certain?

**Keith:** No, we can't say for certain, but I—I—

**Dre:** Yeah, I—I can't.

**Sylvia:** Eeeexactly.

**Keith:** The thing that I imagine is happening is that like, her job is to sit there waiting for people to come up, and is just constantly being bombarded by the lunatics that live here, by their malicious Nen. [laughs]

**Jack:** This poor woman!

**Keith:** And it's just like—is spiritually drained by this job. That is sort of what I imagine is happening.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Jack:** On the 200th floor—okay, so, if you—if you don't register in four hours, Gon will be sent back to the bottom of the tower again. Fine. But because Killua got to floor 200 but didn't go any further than that, because that was kind of the terms of his awful agreement with his dad, uh, Killua will have sort of flunked out of registering twice, and he will never be able to return to the tower. The—he will be—he will be banned permanently. On the 200th floor, there are 173 contestants and you can use weapons. Uh, and—

**Keith:** That's a lot. That's more than I was—'cause I was thinking about the economics of this place, and like, at first I was kinda impressed that they were paying so many—so much money, for like—for these wins, but then I was like, oh, actually, 10,000 dollars—y'know, or, ten, fifteen, maybe thousand dollars for a win, is only a lot when you can win every day and take zero damage, and actually it's a very small amount of money if you're fighting like a normal person might fight, where it takes you two, three months to heal up from getting the shit beaten out of you.

**Jack:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Dre:** [laughs]

**Jack:** Um, yeah. But from 200 up you don't actually get money. You don't fight for money but for honor and then, brilliantly, a three of spades appears behind her as a flamenco guitar cue plays, and Hisoka shows up. He was the source of the foul Nen, and—this was great. I did not anticipate this at all. This was kind of like the first twist in this arc that really got me, y'know, kicking my legs.

**Keith:** It's really good. It's really good.

**Jack:** I—I love it for two reasons. The first reason is that going to train to fight a guy and then immediately encountering him in the training ground, saying, "Oh, you're training to fight me," is fantastic. That's just—it's scary, it's funny, it's—it's—it's really good. Secondly, I thought that the whole, "We have to train to fight Hisoka" thing was pushing

Hisoka down the road to be an exciting reappearance later. You know, it was essentially—

**Sylvia:** Is this not an exciting reappearance?

**Jack:** Well—yeah, here's the thing!

**Keith:** No, it's not later. That's— [laughs]

**Sylvia:** [laughs]

**Jack:** Yeah, yeah, yeah!

**Sylvia:** No, I know.

**Jack:** Keith—Keith cut this, but this is—this is us [**Dre** laughs] doing the Stellar Combustor at the end of act one, instead of, y'know? This is like—

**Keith:** Oh, right.

**Jack:** Oh, oh you know the horrible thing is coming [**Dre** laughs] but the—the joy and the terror of it is it—that the trap is sprung way sooner than you thought.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Now I'll say that in a way that you don't have to cut.

**Keith:** No, I'll just beep the thing. I'll just beep it.

**Jack:** Oh yeah, great. Nice.

**Keith:** Hey, if you wanna know what that's about, listen to Friends at the Table.

**Jack:** Yeah, yeah, yeah! Um, and so I was just—I was, um, Hisoka is horrible, he's a real slimy piece of shit. [**Keith:** Yeah.] [**Sylvia:** Mm-hm!] I was so delighted to see him again [**Keith:** Yeah.] because he is a kind of foul machine that powers the story.

**Keith:** You're describing the experience of Hisoka.

**Jack:** Oh really?

**Dre:** Mm-hm.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Is this the universal Hisoka experience?

**Keith:** Yeah, Hisoka is a piece of shit, he's a slimy weirdo, he's horrible, he's the worst, least likable character in any show I've ever seen, and every time he shows up I'm losing my mind.

**Jack:** [laughs] This is a new [**Dre:** Okay!] Hisoka outfit as well. He is wearing a black bodice this time, I believe. Uh, he wore a pink one in his first appearance?

**Keith:** [cross] Uh, yeah, it's pink and white.

**Jack:** [cross] Or am I completely making this up?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah, that sounds right, yeah.

**Jack:** And now it's black and red? Does he have—

**Keith:** I actually didn't notice that it changed.

**Dre:** Me neither, but now that Jack has said that, you are absolutely right.

**Jack:** Does he have new suits painted on his face as well?

**Dre:** Oh.

**Keith:** Um, no. No. Those are the same, I think.

**Dre:** I'm gonna check.



**Keith:** 'Cause he has all four. He has two on the—oh maybe he—maybe they swapped, maybe the ones that are on the shirt are now on his face and vice versa. But I'm—I don't know. Um.

**Jack:** Do you think Hisoka paints his makeup every day, [**Keith:** Yes.] or do you think that it is special makeup that lasts, [**Dre:** Ah.] or do you think it's Nen?

**Keith:** I think it's real makeup and I think he does it every day.

**Dre:** Do you want the answer about the—the face makeup?

**Keith:** Yes please.

**Dre:** The symbols are the same but they change colors.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** Ohh.

**Dre:** During the Hunter Exam the star was like a pinkish-magenta and the teardrop was like a cyan, and during the Heavens Arena the star is yellow and the teardrop is like a pink.

**Jack:** Huh.

**Keith:** Different moods, just feelin' different.

**Jack:** They're not suits; [**Dre:** Mm-hm!] they are symbols.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Oh sorry, on the shirt [**Jack:** This is—] is a suit, but the—but the—

**Dre:** Oh, you're right.

**Keith:** —the symbols on—yeah.

**Dre:** Ooh.

**Keith:** Sorry, I said suits earlier, but yeah, he has card suits on his shirt.

**Jack:** Fucked up how the brain works.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I—we’ve—I have watched lots of this show, and I thought that they were—  
[laughs] that they were card suits on his face this whole time. They are not.

**Keith:** Um, hey, y’know, maybe in *Hunter x Hunter* world it’s—it’s hearts and diamonds and stars and teardrops.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Dre:** And clovers.

**Keith:** No, it’s not true, ‘cause we see him make a spade later. Uh, but uh. Anyway, then Hisoka does something—this is like the exact sort of, kind of terrible terrifying guy that Hisoka is. What is the—what is the—I mean it’s sort of a threat. What does he—oh well, first he admits to cyberstalking them. He f—he found out that they were coming here.

**Jack:** Yeah, you have a note about this, Dre?

**Dre:** Uh yeah, no, he’s the leet haxxor.

**Keith:** [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Oh my godddd.

**Keith:** He’s a—yeah, he—he basically traces their flight. He like, gets outta the Hunter Exam, goes, “What are those little boys up to?” **[Sylvia snorts]** **[Dre laughs]** hacks them, find out that they took a flight to uh, uh, to—are they in—is Heavens Arena in Yorknew City? I think it is, right?

**Dre:** [cross] I don’t think—uh?

**Jack:** [cross] No, no, no, I think it’s in Zab—

**Dre:** [cross] I think it's in a different place.

**Sylvia:** [cross] No, I don't think so.

**Jack:** It's in this—

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Zaban City?

**Keith:** Uh, well, he—he finds out where their flight went and he goes, “Probably goin’ to Heavens Arena. [Dre: Yeah.] I should go to Heavens Arena and menacingly wait for them.”

**Dre:** Mmmmm. [doing a Hisoka impression] “Gon you didn’t buy your tickets using the Signal app, so I could track you [Jack laughs] over the Internet.”

**Sylvia:** [laughs] I love your Hisoka voice, Dre!

**Keith:** [laughs]

**Dre:** Thank you. Uh also, yes, his suits did change on his outfit as well.

**Keith:** Oh, okay. Okay. Um, and—

**Jack:** It's a—it's very consistent with the way that the show has talked about the Internet, right? With the kind of [Dre laughs] simultaneous glee of, “You can learn things on the Internet,” and the vague malice of like, “But bad stuff can happen on the Internet too!” It's got real, sort of, [Keith: Right.] um...

**Dre:** Gon is just your grandpa on the Internet.

**Keith:** It's also got this like, weird—there's like—again, this is like—this...there's a lot of, um, of anime that like, is like, feels so anachronistic, like uh, y'know, if you've seen um, like *Demon Slayer* or whatever is a—a more [Sylvia: Mm-hm.] recent example. Where, uh, like it feels like it's taking place in, y'know, 1815, and then all of a sudden, like, [Dre:

Mm-hmm.] you realize like, “Oh, there’s like cars and trai—this is like 1955 or something.”

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** It’s one of my favorite things. I love that feeling.

**Keith:** Like—it’s like—

**Dre:** And really looking at the Heavens Arena building itself, like, really solidified something to me that this—parts of *Hunter x Hunter* really remind me of old, like Sega Genesis Phantasy Star assets.

**Jack:** Mmm!

**Keith:** Yeah, oh totally, very very like, kind of like weird future, but also the woods, and yeah, [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] it’s very weird, and yeah. This like—it like—y’know, *Dragon Ball* we’ve talked a lot about—about *Dragon Ball* having dinosaurs and samurai and also uh, spaceships and flying cars. Uh, and yeah, this show just reminding you that it has the Internet feels like a joke like every time, like, “Isn’t it funny that they have the Internet?” [laughs]

**Dre:** And that Hisoka of all people is like, [**Keith:** [laughing] Yeah.] fuckin’ on the dark web. [laughs]

**Keith:** He’s got a fucking—he has a, uh, what are those like—like funny Mac laptops with the—with the colors? The clamshell? [laughs]

**Sylvia:** [laughs]

**Jack:** Oh yeah, the clamshell, the iBook?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Uh-huh! [laughs]

**Keith:** That's like— [laughs] Um, yeah, that's what—that's what Hisoka uses. Um, uh so what—what is the—what is the—the—this kind of threat that Hisoka makes? And then I wanna talk about that a little bit.

**Dre:** Uh, I mean he basically says like, “You are not allowed on the 200th floor until you can handle my—my, you know, my malicious Nen energy.”

**Keith:** Yeah, uh, um, which uh, Wing shows up and describes as like, if they were standing like, with no clothes in a blizzard, like it'll just kill them if they don't be careful, uh, because they are completely [**Dre:** Yeah.] unprotected against Nen, they have literally no defense for it, but it's—it's—again, it's one of these like weird—this weird thing about Hisoka, who's like, um, a massive threat to them, but is—is—is so in control of the way that he's a threat to them, like—

**Dre:** And is also like a protector in some weird ways?

**Keith:** Yeah, that's exactly the thing, is like, he wants—

**Dre:** Or at least what he would see himself as a protector.

**Sylvia:** Yyyyeah.

**Keith:** He's a predator—he's a predator in—in that like, y'know, he is a—y'know, he is a farmer who is like, protecting his crop from um, pests—

**Jack:** It's just grotesque, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah!

**Keith:** Until the harvest. That is the—that is—

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And so like—this the weird thing about how like, Hisoka presents as a villain is that, at every turn, he's like, making things easier and less deadly. Like really, he's protecting Gon and Killua from the literal immediate danger of hazing from other people

on the 200th floor, to the ends of like, being a nasty creep who wants to kill them later when they're stronger.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, like the—I have trouble with the—even just like, defining it as protection, when the entire end goal is like, **[Dre: Oh, yeah, yeah.]** “I wanna be the one to fuck these kids over. Like, I wanna be the one to kill these kids—kill these kids, and like, beat them up and see their full potential.”

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Well, the—the reason I bring it up is because it's—

**Dre:** Or—or have these kids kill me, I think **[cross]** is probably something Hisoka would wanna...

**Keith:** **[cross]** It's so—yeah, I think there's—there's an undertone of that also, um, of like a sort of, kind of, uh, y'know, uh, a homicidal slash suicidal drive for like, a bizarre fight. Um, but, uh, it's just like such like a repeated thing where like, Hisoka is—it's, you're right, it's not protection in like a literal sense. **[Dre: Yeah, absolutely not.]** In other—in any other way except like an immediate— **[Sylvia: Yeah.]** Y'know, the same thing as like, y'know, a farmer protecting crops until he can then harvest and eat the crops. Um, uh—

**Sylvia:** There's um, there's a lot of like gamer moments in this, and honestly Hisoka—Hisoka **[Dre laughs]** sort of functioning as a skill check also feels like **[Keith: Right.]** one.

**Keith:** Yeah. **[laughs]**

**Sylvia:** Like...

**Keith:** Yeah, and this is sort—this is sort of what I mean. The th—the threat is—the threat is—is, “You will lose if you come into this area because you haven't leveled up enough.”

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Mm-hm.

**Sylvia:** He is the—he is the enemy that has the little red skull next to his name in an MMO [**Dre:** [laughs] I was j—] because you're not a high enough—like, you just can't deal with it right now, [**Keith:** But it's such—] with um...like your current skills.

**Keith:** It's such a powerful—

**Dre:** And just like in old MMOs, if you can't—if you lose, then you lose all your XP and you have to start over at floor one.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yep.

**Keith:** It's such a powerful and unique use of sort of like, narrative and flavor, to like—to be able to so accurately color who Hisoka is, what his whole deal is, why he's a dangerous person, why he's a threat to these children, uh, but also be able to like, put him in these situations, where he's able to like, control how the things happen around them. Um, like, in—in—and Sylvi, you said the—in the—as a skill check, in kind of like this video game-y way, of like, um. Y'know, giving them opportunities to level up, like that it is like his whole MO. And it is like a very unique kind of way that he is a villain. [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] That I—I don't—can't think of any—any character that I—that like functions in this particular way, in anything really, it's very—it's—he's terrible, but also very unique.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm. Yeah. Um, I guess the—the—I left off the stakes part of why it is—why it is so especially bad that Hisoka is blocking them from going down the hallway, is that if they don't register before midnight [**Sylvia:** Right.] at the registration desk, they—Gon will get disqualified and have to start over, but Killua, because Killua had made it this far before and never checked in—I think the wordage that they used was like that Killua obviously isn't like—isn't taking this seriously? Or something like that? [**Keith:** Yeah.]

And so because he isn't taking this seriously the way it deserves, they will banish him forever.

**Keith:** Which is—it's very funny when they do—they do a very funny gag when they get to—actually get to the registration. [laughs] **[Dre: Yeah.]** I won't—should we blow that now, or should we wait until chronologically it comes up?

**Jack:** No, let's wait. We're—

**Dre:** Yeah, let's wait. Let's wait.

**Jack:** We're near the end. 'Cause Wing—

**Keith:** Wing—yeah, go ahead.

**Jack:** Wing encountering the—or realizing that this is the case, Wing sort of steps in and says, “Okay, look. I'm gonna teach you how to do this. Um, I was lying to you about how Nen works.” Nen, it turns out, is the ability to sort of control your—your aura. Everyone in the world has this aura, or this energy, but most of it sort of leaks away, and the four steps, the sort of the—the big practice of Nen is about the cultivation and mastery and control of this aura. And he gets into some of the details, but, um, I think the only thing that you need to know here is—hm. “Only one thing,” says Wing, “Can protect you from a Nen user: using it yourself and protecting yourself with one of its kind of four pillars,” a thing called Ten, which is like a, uh, a sort of a shield? And he demonstrates what would happen if you didn't use Ten. He turns around and he places his hand gently against the wall, and in an extremely cool moment of just like, y'know, it's good television, a big circle kinda shatters on the wall. Uh, and Wing says—

**Keith:** While Wing appears to do nothing.

**Jack:** “Your body would be shattered—”

**Keith:** Like, he really doesn't move.

**Jack:** Yeah.



**Keith:** It's very cool.

**Jack:** "Your body would be shattered beyond all recognition." Um...and then comes the narrator!

**Keith:** [laughing] I don't know if mine said that; that's crazy.

**Jack:** It's just wild. In comes the narrator, who says, as we—as we pan down the—the evil hallway towards Hisoka who is just sitting patiently on the floor at one end, then narrator says, y'know, "Gon and Killua have to learn Nen to get up this hallway, will they be able to pass Hisoka?" And then brilliantly, Hisoka turns to the camera and says, "Not yet," responding directly to the narrator.

**Sylvia:** It's a good moment.

**Jack:** This is like a callback to something I—I noticed early in um—they've stopped doing the cute little Hunter encyclopedia—they've stopped doing the Hunter dictionary definitions, they've replaced them with a thing that we'll probably talk about maybe at the end of this episode. Um, and I miss those. But in Hisoka's one, he threw a playing card through the screen and it shattered. Y'know, sort of setting up the uh, not even the viewer is safe. Hisoka is able to manipulate the kind of ephemera of the scene outside of his story. And we see this again as Hisoka responds to the narrator, asking if Gon and Killua will be able to pass him. It's a really cool—cool little moment.

**Keith:** Uh yeah, I really like that. it was really good. Uh, I think in mine um, what he says is, "It's too early," which is not quite as good as, "Not yet."

**Jack:** Yeah, it's kind of the same feeling, but y'know.

**Keith:** Wing destroying his own wall is hilarious to me. It's so funny.

**Sylvia:** Wing just kinda keeps doing a lotta unforced errors, huh? We got the book and then the juice and then the **[Dre: Yeah.]** um...

**Dre:** Can you imagine what it's like to be Wing's neighbor?

**Keith and Jack:** [laugh]

**Keith:** I would say—

**Sylvia:** I...no.

**Jack:** Yeah, should we talk about Mr. Wing for a bit? 'Cause I feel like we sort of—we've talked around him a little, but um, I'm so curious about what it was like seeing this character this time around for people who are familiar with the show, kind of seeing his introduction. When he arrived I—hm. I have several moments in my notes where I'm like, I don't know about this Wing guy. I don't think I trust this man. And as the episodes went on I—um, I sort of became more and more on team Wing in the sense of like, I think this guy's just kind of a weird goofball who is also extremely powerful. It not so much that he's a goofball he's just—his hair is always messy, his shirt is always untucked, [**Keith:** In a—] like Sylvi said, he shreds Zushi's book, he—he [**Keith:** Destroys his juice] destroys a soda can, [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] he knocks a massive hole in his wall. He's—he's not quite the absent-minded professor archetype, y'know, he's—he's—he has a real calmness about him.

**Keith:** Yeah, he's the absent-minded grad student. [laughs]

**Jack:** Yeah, he has real grad student vibes! He's got a kind of like shabby diligence about him, and a shabby calm or patience, that I think is—is really fun. [**Keith:** Yeah.] There are several moments where um, Killua and Gon talk about how Wing sort of expressing his aura out into the world does not feel bad in the way that it does when Hisoka does it, or when Illumi does it. And this is explained by Wing having no malice in him sort of outputting this aura. Whether or not he has malice remains to be seen. I am still, y'know, [**Keith:** Yeah.] I am reluctant to take what that character says at face value.

**Keith:** Well it's—I think it's important that malice is like, an ingredient. [**Jack:** Yes!] It's not like a—it's not a um, personality trait. It is like something you can put into your Nen, not something that your Nen—I mean, your Nen can reflect it in like the uh, the Hisoka scene, where after he doesn't kill uh, uh, Kurapika and Leorio, can reflect a malice that

you're feeling, but it's more like you can choose to put it in there or not, if you're in control of yourself.

**Jack:** Yeah. Um, god, characterizing Wing as a grad student is—is really funny. [**Keith** laughs] I had not thought of that. He a—he absolutely has PhD grad vibes about him. Um, and I think that I—I hope we get to see more of this character. I think he's—I think he is fun.

**Keith:** Uh, yeah, I like Wing. Um, I was excited to see Wing again. I think Wing ends up looking really good in like, a broad view of this show.

**Jack:** Interesting. Sylvi and Dre, do you have Wing thoughts?

**Sylvia:** Um.

**Dre:** He's a great guy.

**Jack:** [laughs]

**Sylvia:** [makes dubious noises] I dunno, is he? I dunno. Wing kinda—there's something about Wing that always rubs me the wrong way a little bit. Um. Though I don't know if it's... [sighs] I don't know how intentional it is, but the whole like, constantly reminding everyone how dangerous Nen is and then also training like an eight-year-old to use it from like, childhood, [**Jack:** Mm-hm.] feel at odds with each other. Like, um...

**Jack:** He is someone who lives in the *Hunter x Hunter* world, but I do see what you're saying.

**Dre:** [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I dunno. It's just like...I dunno. There's something sinister about it.

**Jack:** Sinister in a—in a sort of, uh, the way that we have seen adult characters...

**Sylvia:** Yeah, sinister in the same way that Netero feels, I guess is the best way to put it.

**Keith:** I think that the—

**Jack:** That's really interesting.

**Keith:** The thing—that is interesting, that'll probably—that'll definitely [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] come up again. Um. The—the thing that—that I think reflects well in Wing is that, y'know, we end up seeing a lot of adults who like, are teaching very dangerous things to children, but never saying how dangerous it is, and never reminding them to be careful, uh, that like, the person who's like, "Slow down, take your time, be responsible, don't use this for evil," ends up being like, the most reasonable voice of reason in a show without a lot of voices of reason.

**Jack:** Except. They don't do this slowly.

**Keith:** No, they don't.

**Jack:** And this is really interesting.

**Dre:** That's true, yeah.

## **Episode 29 [1:45:58]**

**Jack:** Episode 29 begins and we get another one of Togashi's tricks, as he immediately, you know, slams a hammer into subverting the sort of long arc of learning that is not just a—a shonen trope, but is like, y'know, a classic storytelling trope. The character studiously focuses on a thing. And he—he telescopes this into Gon and Killua have to learn how to do this in one night.

**Keith:** [laughs] It's so funny!

**Sylvia:** Less than one night. It's like three and a half hours. It's—

**Keith:** Three hours, yeah. [coughs]

**Sylvia:** They—like, we see the clock multiple times. Like, when they're in the hallway with Hisoka I think it's like eight o'clock, [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] and then when, um, at the end of Wing's explanation of what Ten is it's like 8:45.

**Jack:** It's great. It's uh, it's so funny. It's like, I need to learn to play the piano. Okay, well now listen. Learning to play the piano is—I'm gonna give you two options. Either it takes a lot of dedication and effort over decades of practice, or I can teach it to you in 45 minutes to about the same level. Which do you choose? I wanna know what it feels like for Zushi seeing this shortcut.

**Dre:** Oh, it's gotta be awful!

**Jack:** It's gotta be awful!

**Keith:** It's gotta be awful.

**Jack:** I mean—

**Keith:** Hey—

**Jack:** Wing says—

**Keith:** Oh, sorry. Go ahead.

**Jack:** Wing says—Wing says, "This method is a cheat and is highly frowned upon." But he doesn't say that it doesn't work. Y'know, it's dangerous if—

**Dre:** I think he also says—yeah, he says it's dangerous.

**Keith:** Uh, yeah. Yeah. The—I think that what he says is that one, it can kill you if the person is untalented or untrustworthy, and I—and I m—I missed it this time, but I had it in my head that he also says that like, it can accidentally shock you—shock your, uh, your nodes closed instead of open. Like it can keep from ever being able to do the—but maybe I'm wrong, or—maybe that's something that gets mentioned later.

**Jack:** I don't think that came up, but—

**Keith:** Okay. Um, maybe I'm just totally misremembering this.

**Jack:** But yeah. And—and Wing—mm. Let me think about how I want to come at this. A lot of this is framed—

**Keith:** There's something so—speaking of how bad Zushi would feel watching this, there is something that Wing says to Zushi that is heartbreakingly sad. Like, so horrible. Uh...

**Jack:** What does he say?

**Keith:** A few epis—it's not in this episode. I'll—I'll tell you the quote. They actually do say it in this, um, but uh, but it's not really in-character, but it happens in-character somewhere else.

**Jack:** Oof.

**Keith:** Should I—should I say it? [**Jack:** Um—] Or should we wait until it comes up naturally?

**Jack:** Let's—let's wait.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Jack:** Um, everybody above floor 200 knows how to manipulate Nen and when you enter floor 200 it is a sort of rite of passage that you will get blasted by Ren, and three people—let me make sure I'm understanding this right. Three people who didn't—usually this just kills you if you don't know Nen and—and protect yourself. Three people who didn't know Nen have survived it and have become sort of like, um, lauded figures above floor 200 and are called “the chosen.” Have I got that right?

**Keith:** Um...

**Dre:** Um, I think so?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, they do refer to them as “the cho—” the like, the ones that are chosen. Um, to like join the...the upper floor.

**Dre:** Yeah, and I— [sighs]

**Keith:** I—I kind of—

**Dre:** And I feel like at some point Wing references saying that like, y’know, being blasted by Nen if you couldn’t—if you didn’t know how to protect yourself from it could make you end up like, y’know, those—those—those three. But [sighs] I’m trying to remember if it is as explicitly said as like, “Those three didn’t know how to use Nen and they went up there.”

**Keith:** So they—that is definitely true is that— [**Dre:** Okay.] that is why they’re—they’re—the three of them each have different sort of severe injuries, old injuries. Um. What I don’t remember them is—is them being complimented in any way. I sort of remember them kind of being about to like flunk out of the floor.

**Sylvia:** It’s not really like, I dunno if it feels phrased like a compliment. It’s more just like, they’re allowed—they were allowed to join and like, it’s implied that they were able to learn what Nen was because they survived [**Keith:** Right.] being attacked by it.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** Um, at least that’s how [**Jack:** Um—] I read it when I was watching these.

**Dre:** Yeah. I—I’m with you, Sylvi.

**Jack:** Uh...

**Sylvia:** Thank you.

**Keith and Dre:** [laugh]

**Sylvia:** Love that.

**Jack:** Wing blasts them with his aura and unlocks their aura as choral music plays, kind of giving this the feel of like a—like a holy rite, almost. And as he's doing it, and as he's realizing that this has worked, Wing is like, super impressed by Gon and Killua, who sort of perform the necessary next steps, y'know, containing their aura so that it doesn't escape, basically instantly. Um, and I wrote down, "This was very easy. Maybe too easy. Surely there won't be any consequences for this." [**Keith** laughs] And I don't know—I genuinely don't know if doing this fast is going to cause a problem, or if it is a piece of expeditious storytelling to get our characters to floor 200 quickly, to be like, "Oh it is actually interesting if what if they do just skip it," y'know? Or if we are supposed to go into this feeling uneasy that they might have gotten a power that they—that they did not earn, as it were.

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Keith:** Um, yeah. I think it's...

**Dre:** I mean, to me that's kind of what the end of um, what's the last episode we just watched? It's it 28 or 29?

**Keith:** 29, 29.

**Jack:** 29.

**Dre:** Yeah. To me that's what the—that's what the end of 29 is starting to gesture towards.

**Keith:** Right. Uh, and it's—it's—I think it like um...I think that like Wing's concerns are based on like, like, you wanna build your tower—like it—it's basically, "I'm teaching Zushi how to build a tower out of wooden blocks, and you're asking me to give you a tower out of cards that you can slowly apply glue to." And it's like, "Eventually this will be structurally sound, but like, you don't know how to do anything, so to like, to get you from step zero to step five, is like, you don't know how to do any of the stuff that's important." Like Zushi can use Ren, like really good. Um, and y'know, maybe isn't super strong or anything, but like—is like steadily building a solid foundation and uh...y'know,



the...the consequences to not having a solid foundation don't have to present themselves immediately.

**Jack:** Mm-hmm. Yeah. That's true. That's true. Um, so they reenter the tower and they pass straight through uh, Hisoka's Ren. Um, and Hisoka is a little sour about this, but sour in a very Hisoka way where he's sort of saying, "I'm not owned, I'm not owned."

**[Dre: Mm-hmm!]** He says, um, "There is still much to learn about Nen." And he sort of summons a flame, a sort of malicious Ren flame on his finger. **[cross]** He says, "If you manage—"

**Keith:** **[cross]** Oh that's actually a—it's a clubs.

**Jack:** Oh it's a—it's a playing card suit?

**Keith:** It's a suit of clubs.

**Jack:** Oh that's—

**Keith and Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Y'know, say you what will about Hisoka, and there are lots of things to say,

**[Keith: Good branding.]** that man knows a theme. **[Dre: Mm-hmm.] [Keith: Yeah.]** Very consistent— **[Sylvia laughs]** very consistent branding. Um, he says, "If you manage to win one single fight on this floor, I'll accept your challenge." Uh, adding a sort of a side goal to the like, "I need to beat Hisoka to give him his badge back," we now have to win one fight on floor 200 um, to—to be able to enter that fight with Hisoka. And as they leave this conversation with Hisoka, the three chosen ones that Wing talked about earlier are revealed. There is a man in a wheelchair with two—four huge double-wheeled tires on either side. There is a sinister smiling man, and then there is an extremely cool-looking sort of hooded figure um, with a—a—a tube sticking out of the hood. The—the hood covers his face completely and he has uh, one leg and a—a walking cane. And these are the people who—who survived a Nen attack.

**Keith:** Yeah. I do have the uh—I do have the words, or the the thing about this, at least for what my subs said.

**Jack:** Oh yeah, what's it say?

**Keith:** Uh, "Everyone up on floor 200—up there, everyone knows how to manipulate Nen, and they have a special greeting for any newcomer ignorant of Nen: a Nen attack. In other words, they do what I'm about to, but without restraint. They don't care even if people die. Only those who survive are allowed to pass, um, however they pay a steep price." Oh—oh, it does say, "They are the chosen, however they pay a steep price." And uh—uh, yeah I don't—I—I guess it isn't—it is weird to call them "the chosen" because the thing that they're chosen is to—is to be allowed to keep fighting, but severely injured?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Um. Anyway, that is the—I—I am glad that I read that, because now—'cause I was like, the chosen? That totally changes how I feel about these three people.

**Sylvia:** *XCOM 2: War of the Chosen* but it's these three instead of the aliens.

**Keith:** [laughs]

**Jack:** Oh my god.

**Dre:** [laughing] Jesus!

**Jack:** That'd be great. The one who cackles, the one who makes villainous sort of remarks, and the one who has the cool two—double wheeled wheelchair. [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] Uh, then we have an extended gag where they register and are treated to, basically the terms and conditions sheet on a cruise liner.

**Dre:** [laughs]

**Jack:** Someone wanna talk about what happens here?

**Keith:** Uh, I would love to describe this joke. This is so funny to me.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, go for it.

**Keith:** While they're checking the boxes and probably saying, y'know, "I relinquish any right to suing if I get extremely hurt or killed here." Blah, blah, blah, they're checking these boxes, obviously without reading any of it, while the um, the receptionist is—is—is so hard trying to wow them with all the prizes that they could win if they become a floor master, and fight in the battle arena, they have to win ten times but not lose more than three...

**Jack:** She gives a little PowerPoint.

**Keith:** And then if they become—if they come the champion at the top floor then they get a chance to fight in the Battle Olympia, and everything that she's saying, they're like, totally no-selling, and she's becoming increasingly desperate to impress them. And then Killua just looks at Gon, and is like, "Now that I know the secret of the top floor, I don't really care anymore!" [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Isn't that—don't they also—they say—she says something about the view from the Battle—like, Battle Olympia, and **[Dre: Yeah.]** Killua's like—

**Keith:** Yeah, the top floor has a—has like **[Dre laughs]** a thousand meter view.

**Sylvia:** And Killua's like, "I live way higher up than that."

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah, isn't—

**Dre:** No, Gon is like, "Wait, Killua, don't you live like three times as high as that?"

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, that's exactly **[Jack: Oh, it's great.]** it. It's so— **[Dre: It's very good.]** it's so funny. Yeah, they don't give a shit. So like, all of this work that they put into getting here, and then the extreme risk that they took to save one week of training, all for them to be like, "Oh. I actually don't even care." [laughs]

**Jack:** This is real um, this is Togashi attacking the structure again, right? This is Togashi going, **[Keith: Oh, completely. Yeah.]** "We don't even need to do the tournament arc at this point. We have a goal, which is fight Hisoka. Hisoka has given us a sub-goal, which is win one fight on this floor. Okay!"

**Keith:** Yeah. Deal. Done.

**Jack:** That's it, I suppose! Yeah. It would be like if your goal in Pokémon was to get a coffee from the vending machine at the Elite Four. [**Keith:** Yeah.] And you were like, I've gone all the way through the Victory Road or whatever, and I got there, and I was just like, oh I'll get the coffee and I think I'm done.

**Keith:** [laughs] It's nice here, bye!

**Jack:** Bye!

**Keith:** [laughs]

**Jack:** Yeah. Uh...

**Keith:** Yeah. Very funny. It's so funny.

**Jack:** This—this poor woman. The three chosen register immediately after Gon because they are hoping to um, we got a real Gon's mistake coming up here. [**Sylvia** laughs] They are hoping to fight Gon. [**Keith:** Yeah.] A useful rule that you know is that on this floor you have 90 days. 90 days! To prepare for a fight. Now keep in mind that Wing said that he could teach the boys Nen comfortably in about a week. Of course, he had to do it in about two hours so that they could meet the registration deadline, but now they have 90 days to play with. And Gon is like, "I will fight tomorrow."

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm!

**Jack:** He's so ready. He's so excited. He's—he's fairly confident—

**Keith:** And then we get a flashback—oh sorry, Jack. Finish.

**Jack:** No, what's the flashback to? I'm trying to remember this.

**Keith:** Oh, they get a flashback to Wing—Wing being like, “Please, *please* don’t register [Jack: “Please!”] for a fight for two months. [Dre: “Just be normal.”] Just give me two months.” [Dre: “Please.”] And then it cuts to—back to the future Gon going, “Sorry Wing, I gotta figure out what this shit is about!”

**Jack and Dre:** [laugh]

**Jack:** This is the—

**Sylvia:** Once again, just the—the only thing playing in Gon’s head is his theme song.

**Jack:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. [laughs] Yes, absolutely. This is—this is the Killua and Gon versus Zushi and Wing school of thought as well, right? Gon is like—Gon knows he’s going to lose this first fight, but he’s like, “I just want the experience.” You can lose four times on floor 200. Um. He wants the experience. Wing and Zushi, slowlyly working their way through the lower levels, are like, “We’re gonna do this carefully. We’re gonna assemble the tower out of brick instead of cards.” Uh, and you know. But—but—but Gon’s sort of pedagogy is such that he’s like, “Oh I can learn so much just by going charging into the fight straight away.” Gon is the one who unpacks the Ikea and just starts building, and Wing and Zushi are the ones who like, [Keith: Yeah.] read through the instructions carefully.

**Keith:** And I think [Dre: Mm-hmm.] it’s really uh, illustrative here, um, like, Killua doesn’t sign up for a match. Killua’s like, “No, lemme—I’m gonna learn about this stuff.” Like, we’re starting to see now that we’ve—we’ve found ourselves somewhere that Killua could be encountering trouble, like, that he’s not being—when he’s not being surprised with being weaker than someone, he’s actually pretty cautious. Uh, and uh, and like, hasn’t even talked about setting a date let alone set one even for three months from now. Like, didn’t just go like, “I’ll just sign up for the last day, then.” Didn’t sign up at all.

**Sylvia:** This does, to me, have something to do with how Illumi—when Illumi confronts him and he’s like, “Remember, you don’t fight an opponent who’s stronger than you.”

[Keith: Oh yeah, totally.] [Jack: Yeah.] Or something along those lines, and it feels very much like Killua sort of internalizing that. Um. There are more moments where like, stuff

that gets said to Killua becomes more explicitly like um. Like. Referenced within the actual dialogue and stuff, but I think it's also worth keeping an eye on it like—the like—I dunno. Less overt moments where Killua like, reflects that behavior.

**Jack:** Yeah. Definitely.

**Keith:** Yeah, meanwhile Gon is like charging ahead, y'know, y'know, eyes to the ground, marching forward, and like, **[Sylvia: Mm-hmm.]** “I don't care what I bump into, it'll be an experience!”

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And what he—what he bumps into is Gido, the hooded man with the—the tube sticking out of his hood and one leg. And as Gido begins the fight, we hear Wing's voice reminding Gon that Ten is only defensive and can offer no attack. Ten, if you are—if you don't remember, is the branch of Nen where you sort of form your aura around yourself into a shield.

**Keith:** Yeah, the sort of opposite of Ren.

**Jack:** This—but yes, but physical attacks will also do damage to it. If you, Keith, are practicing your Ten extremely hard and I come over and hit you on the head with a stick, it will—it will hurt. It will be exactly the same as if you weren't doing Ten.

**Keith:** Right, yes. So you've also gotta be—have a—be tough, physically. But that's where—

**Sylvia:** You also gotta be read for any sticks Jack might be swinging.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** [laughs] That's where I think Gon is already covered. **[Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.]** Having a hard head.

**Jack:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Sylvia:** We have seen Gon get uh, what would kill [Dre: That's true.] multiple people in terms of blunt head tr—like, blunt force trauma to the head, so um...

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Jack:** Oh, I love Gon. What a guy.

**Keith:** It's also—it's interesting how like, [Sylvia laughs] how convincingly little ego he has in his desire to—to like take on this challenge, like. He really does seem okay with losing. He really doesn't seem like he's doing this out of any kind of confidence. Like, all the reasons why you'd think that Killua might sign up, like uh, y'know, devaluing his enemies' skills, valuing his own strength, uh, y'know, assuming that he can win, uh, y'know, none of that, y'know, none of that is why Gon's signing up. It's—it's this kind of bizarre combination of, y'know, ambition to be stronger, zero ego, and a reckless disregard for your own, y'know, wellbeing.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Eh, he's got four losses, it doesn't matter if he loses the first one.

**Jack:** Yeah!

**Dre:** Mm-hmm!

**Keith:** But he could lose like, two legs or an arm or [Dre: Eh.] his life.

**Jack:** Uh, Gon is absolutely the—that great joke from *The Nice Guys* where Ryan Gosling's character says, "I don't think I can die. I think I'm immortal."

**Keith:** [laughs]

**Jack:** Um, and Gido uses—starts using his Nen—yes, he presumably has Nen now. He starts using his Nen to produce a bunch of dancing spinning tops, and at this point I wrote, "We're back, babyyyyy. Weird hunter freak season."

**Dre:** [laughs]

**Keith:** Uh—

**Jack:** ‘Cause I feel like we’ve kinda been missing some true weirdos with—like beehive man, snake man, **[Dre: Sure. Yeah.]** rattly pin man, **[Keith: Yeah.]** y’know?

**Keith:** Yeah. Does—did anyone catch the name of—

**Jack:** We got spinning tops man.

**Keith:** Of the—of like the move that he used?

**Dre:** [cross] Oh, it’s—it’s something spinning tops.

**Jack:** [cross] I believe the move is called dancing spinning tops, right?

**Dre:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Keith:** Uh, I—I think that he calls it his Battle Waltz.

**Jack:** Woah!

**Keith:** Pretty sure that’s what it said.

**Dre:** I’m looking this up, ‘cause that’s sick as fuck.

**Jack:** Oh my god I love it.

**Keith:** Um, yeah, it’s, y’know, it’s possible that I’m misremembering.

**Jack:** Oh, that’s really good.

**Keith:** But I’m pretty sure that it said Battle Waltz. Either—I know that it said something on the screen and then also he said something. I don’t know which one is which, but Battle Waltz is what I...

**Dre:** Uh, I’m looking at the Hunterpedia, and one of his abilities is the Battle Waltz.

**Keith:** Yup, there we go. Battle Waltz.



**Jack:** Gon is now stuck in a Beyblades fight.

**Keith:** Yes. Yeah.

**Dre:** Uh-huh!

**Jack:** As these little spinning tops bounce of each other, and bounce off Gon and hurt, and Gido laughs and is like, “You—you can’t predict the movement of my...”

**Keith:** Yeah he says, “Their movement is so complex even / can’t predict their movement!”

**Jack:** Wow!

**Keith:** Which is odd. That’s a weird brag.

**Jack:** Yeah, “I don’t—”

**Sylvia:** Ah, to be fair, Gon has a, um, a real like, intuition for a lot of things, [**Keith:** Yeah.] that this could fall under usually.

**Jack:** Yeah, but Gido’s out here like, “I don’t know what my guys are doing! I have no oversight!”

**Keith:** I’m actually surprised that we end up getting kind of a cliffhanger. The episode basically ends right here. I didn’t remember that. I thought this epis—I thought that this fight ends and then the episode ends. But no, we’re gonna figure out what actually happens here next time.

**Jack:** Yeah! Very exciting.

**Keith:** Was there—do we have anything—anything else? Any final...?

## Gon and Killua's Hunterpedia and "Hunting For Your Dream"

[2:07:43]

**Jack:** Yeah!

**Sylvia:** We should probably talk about Gon and Killua's Hunterpedia.

**Keith:** [cross] Ohh, we should talk about Hunterpedia.

**Dre:** [cross] Yeah.

**Jack:** [cross] Yes! [begins singing Gon's theme] "I'm Gon!" "I'm Killua!" It's great.

**Keith:** "We're little papercraft boys now."

**Jack:** So, at the end of the closing sequence, which is really cool, shows a bunch of new faces, has a new closing song, which is fantastic. There was, I think it's fair to say, some disagreement in the Discord earlier as to whether the first closing theme was any good. [**Keith:** Yeah.] Um, I—I won't name names, but Keith thought that the closing theme wasn't very good and Sylvi, Dre, and I liked it.

**Keith:** Yeah, I always thought that the first ending theme was not that good, and it's the only one of the six closing themes that I feel that way about.

**Jack:** But I think we all like this one a lot. This is a great closing theme.

**Keith:** Oh, this is great. To me this is like, the *Hunter x Hunter* closing theme. This is like the one that I think of when I think of the *Hunter x Hunter* closing theme is this one.

**Sylvia:** It is my favorite one. [**Keith:** Yeah.] "Hunting For Your Dream" is absolutely my favorite *Hunter x Hunter* ending theme, [**Dre:** Yeah.] I just also need to defend the uh, the—the good name of—of—

**Keith:** Poor Fear, and Loathing in Las Vegas? Or whatever?

**Sylvia:** Yeah!

**Jack:** [laughs]

**Keith:** I can't remember the name of the song but that is the band that does it.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, the—oh fuck, what is the name of the...I don't have it in front of me right now. It's fine.

**Keith:** [searching] All...*Hunter x Hunter*...ending...songs...let's see. Uh, "Just Awake." There we go.

**Sylvia:** Yeah! It's fucking good.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** By Fear, and Loathing in Las Vegas, and this one is "Hunting For Your Dream" by Galneryus.

**Jack:** Galneryus!

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I uh, I—this closing sequence is—is very colorful. It has a really nice moment where we get to see sort of like um, the characters faces sort of get drawn together in a sort of geometric shape, with them sort of positioned on various points on the geometric shape as the music swells. It's really nicely done. [**Keith:** Yeah.] There are people here who I don't recognize, but I—

**Keith:** Lots of people that you don't recognize!

**Jack:** I—I will.

**Dre:** Yeah!

**Keith:** And they—what did you—

**Jack:** Yeah, a few more of the—hm?

**Keith:** Did you catch the side shot of Kurapika next to that big ominous spider?

**Sylvia:** [laughs]

**Jack:** Oh, what do you think that—what do you think that could be, Keith?

**Keith:** Oh, I don't know. I don't know. Not sure.

**Dre:** Hmmm.

**Keith:** And then we get really studious Leorio, reading books. It's very good. It's really good.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah. Really really good. I will say this, I—I miss Leorio and Kurapika. **[Keith:** Yeah.] Um, not just **[Dre:** Yeah.] in the sense of like, they are fun characters, but they provide a kind of counterbalance to Gon and Killua that is really enjoyable and uh, is noticeably missing here. Y'know, we have really zoomed in on Gon and Killua in a way that I think is working well for this arc, **[Keith:** Mm-hmm] but it means that the kind of storytelling that having Leorio and Kurapika around opens up has been sort of—sort of removed for us for the time being. Uh, so I'm hoping we get to see them—see them again.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I'm—I mean they're in the ending thing. I'm sure we will. But, [laughs] **[Jack laughs]** I think—I think the two of them not being there helps add to the atmosphere of um—I remembered something I wanted to talk about. When we—I was listening to some of the episodes that we had out, and this ties into my point, don't worry. Um, Jack, what you describe expecting the Hunter Exam to be is a sort of like, they go to Hunter school where they have to learn things.

**Keith:** [laughs] It's so funny!

**Jack:** Did I say that? [laughs]

**Sylvia:** The stuff with Wing is kind of the closest we get to that, and I think by removing [Dre: Yeah, that's true.] Kurapika and Leorio the more like, mature, closer to adulthood characters of the um, group and adding Zushi in who becomes this sort of like, little brother figure to the two of them, it really sort of like, enhances the um, atmosphere of that, and the sort of like [Dre: Mm-hmm.] tone of this is the—this is the—the training arc. This is the coming—like—it's all a coming of age arc, that's just how the show is, but you know what I mean.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah. Totally.

**Dre:** God, I would love to see Leorio reacting to everything in these episodes, though. Just losing his goddamn mind.

**Sylvia:** [laughs] We need a Leorio reacts stream.

**Dre:** Yeah!

**Keith:** Yeah!

**Everyone:** [laughing]

**Keith:** Um, do—

**Dre:** Can you imagine Leorio trying to grapple with the concept of like, aura?

**Keith:** Does—does—

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** [laughs]

**Keith:** This is a question just for Dre and Sylvi, this does not need an answer, but does anyone remember what—what the scene—what the conversation is about the next time we see Gon and Killua talking to Leorio?

**Sylvia:** Um, yeah I do, actually.

**Dre:** I think so?

**Keith:** It's extremely funny. I'll message it to the chat that Jack isn't in that has spoilers.

**Jack:** They also will regularly, and by "they" I mean the other people on Friends at the Table who have seen *Hunter x Hunter* [Dre laughs] will post things in spoiler tags in other tags in our—other channels in our Discord, [Sylvia: I'm sorry.] so we'll—no, I love it, it's very funny, someone will be like, "This reminds me of that bit in *Hunter x Hunter* where..." and then a spoiler block, and then "Jack don't click this."

**Dre:** Yeah, I was about to say, parentheses, all caps, "(Jack DON'T.)"

**Jack:** [laughs] It's great! It's—it's—it's—I feel like I'm in a secret club that—that [Dre laughs] I'm not allowed to be in.

**Keith:** [laughs] And that you're very diligently not peering behind the curtain of.

**Jack:** Oh, yeah, no, no!

**Sylvia:** You're—this is your hazing. You're being hazed, you know?

**Jack:** Oh! Well, at least you're not bombarding me with malicious Ren.

**Sylvia:** Oh, I would never.

**Keith:** Right. And if—

**Sylvia:** Except am I?

**Jack:** We actually did a—

**Sylvia:** You wouldn't even know.

**Jack:** Keith, do you remember? We did like a *Crusader Kings* stream once or something [**Keith:** Yeah.] where you made a joke about how you were constantly like, wishing ill on me or something? [**Keith** laughs] Do you remember this?

**Keith:** Yeah, I vaguely remember that you were talking about having—you cur—you—there was a...like a Clapcast or something where you talked about cursing people or something, and then I was like, well I'm cursing people all the time, and you were like, "Who?" and I was like, you! Or something like that. Yeah. Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah. That—that was malicious Ren energy, right?

**Keith:** Yeah, that—

**Jack:** At that point? [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] You were—

**Dre:** [laughs]

**Keith:** Yeah. [cross] But fortunately your Ten is really good.

**Jack:** [cross] Now that I've learned about this—

**Keith:** And it didn't—it didn't affect you at all.

**Jack:** Oh, my Ten is really good, and—and I definitely don't get distracted constantly.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Um, at the close of this nice ending theme, we cut to the Hunterpedia, which is just so cute. It is about fourteen seconds long. Gon and Killua show up in a classroom as papercraft sort of drawings of themselves. They introduce themselves to the camera as Gon and Killua, which is really funny. And then they just do a little—little bit about a character that we met, which we see on a little projector screen next to them. What are the ones we've seen so far? One was Mr. Wing...

**Keith:** The first one was about Zushi, and the second one is about Wing. Um...

**Jack:** What do they say? They're like, "Wing's all disheveled, his shirt's always untucked, [**Keith:** Yeah.] but he sure is powerful."

**Keith:** And then the last one is Gido. [**Jack:** Oh, yeah.] And they like do a little explainer about his—his powers and stuff.

**Jack:** And they're like, "Will Gon be able to beat him?" It's lovely. And I think it's just such a demonstration of having fun with these characters [**Keith:** Yeah.] that you can take them out of the context of the main story. There's a kind of lack of preciousness about it, of preciousness about the sort of sanctity of your characters, [**Keith:** Right.] to be like, "No, they can bop around in the margins of this story and have a good time."

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** And then there's—did you talk about the—the—the whiteboard behind them? Did you mention that?

**Jack:** The whiteboard that has the images on it?

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, I can't—I just spaced and wasn't sure if you said it.

**Jack:** No, no, no, it's just got the little—

**Keith:** Yeah. Each—each one has different little drawings on it. Um, the first one has a like, an apple, and some words in Japanese, and a sun, and a little sort of drawing of Hisoka, and then something else, I don't know what. But then the—the next one, there's one that has—it's like labeled some of the things different—oh, you know what, maybe it's 'cause I have different subtitle settings on, and actually these—this is always in English when I have subtitles on. Lemme see. [pause] Oh, yep, there we go. There's my—there's the change. It's just a picture of an apple, and next to it it says, "unripe fruit."

**Jack:** [laughs]

**Keith:** And I don't really know why.



**Jack:** That's really good. [beat] Oh god, no, that's creepy. That's—

**Dre:** I'm sure it's a—

**Jack:** That's Hisoka.

**Dre:** It's a creepy Hisoka reference.

**Keith:** Oh, it is!

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

**Keith:** Ohhhh. I didn't understand. I didn't see the Hisoka—I mean I—I saw it, [cross] but I didn't connect—

**Jack:** [cross] I thought it was a cute classroom thing, but it's a—

**Keith:** [cross] I thought it was—I thought it was—yeah. [laughing] It's actually gross. Ahhh! That's funny.

**Jack:** Evil!

**Keith:** Yeah, I thought that it was just—'cause I didn't notice the Hisoka until now, but I noticed the apple labeled “unripe fruit” earlier, and I was like, oh that's funny. Why is this apple unripe? Now I get it. [Sylvia laughs] **[Jack:** Yeah.] Because Hisoka's disgusting and a monster.

**Sylvia:** Yep.

**Jack:** It was a—it was a—it was a jumpscare from the past.

**Keith:** Because the other reminder is just—it's just a reminder to brush your teeth, so I was like, this is all innocent.

**Jack:** It is important to brush your teeth. **[Keith:** Yeah.] And you shouldn't eat unripe fruit, like literal fruit. **[Keith:** I—I guess—] I'm talking specifically about fruit.

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** It's bad, and some—

**Dre:** I mean, it's varying degrees of how bad it'll go, but yeah, you should just not do it in general.

**Keith:** I like green bananas.

**Jack:** Unripe pear. It's horrible.

**Dre:** That's weird.

**Keith:** You don't like uh, fried green bananas?

**Dre:** Okay, you didn't say [cross] fried green bananas.

**Jack:** [cross] Oh, fried green bananas are nice.

**Dre:** You just said green bananas.

**Keith:** Well sure, yeah. Y'know, if I—

**Jack:** We got an—

**Dre:** I think if you cook an unripe fruit, I no longer think of it as an unripe fruit.

**Keith:** That's fair.

**Jack:** We got an apple tree in my front garden now. [**Keith:** Oh.] [**Dre** laughs] Which is so exciting, and I have not yet figured out [**Keith:** Good luck.] if they are—if they are eating apples.

**Keith:** [cross] Very likely they are not.

**Jack:** [cross] 'Cause if they're not, I'll—

**Dre:** [cross] Ohh, most likely they are not, yeah.

**Jack:** [cross] I'll make cider with them, which will be nice. Um. I'm looking forward to that.

**Dre:** I bet they're eating apples for whatever lil critters you got out there.

**Jack:** Oh yeah, we got squirrels and we got um, chipmunks.

**Keith:** Good luck—

**Jack:** Which I've never [Dre: Nice.] seen before.

**Keith:** You've never seen a chipmunk?

**Jack:** We don't have them in England, and I only lived in Los Angeles where...

**Dre:** [incredulous] Is that true?

**Jack:** What, that we don't have chipmunks in England? Yeah, no, we don't have chipmunks in England.

**Keith:** You have squirrels, they're cousins! Or best friends or something.

**Jack:** No, we have squirrels, but we don't have chipmunks. They're cousins, I think Keith.

**Keith:** And I knew—I mean this sort of familially, not genealogically. Not biologically.

**Jack:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Dre:** Um, there are apparently Siberian chipmunks in Britain.

**Jack:** You're kidding me! Where?

**Dre:** They're not very common. They're basically a species that like, people kept as pets and then they got released into the wild.

**Keith:** Oh, and they look just like regular chipmunks, too. They're on—they're not—they don't look any special. Chipmunks are just the cutest. They're so cute. Look at that. Look at that. That's great.

**Jack:** They're lovely! They bop around. It's always a bit of a surprise when I see one, [Keith: Yeah.] at this point, 'cause I'm like, what animal is that, its silhouette has not been stored in my brain yet.

**Dre:** [laughs]

**Keith:** It's an un—it just looks like an unfinished squirrel, which is very cute.

**Dre:** [laughs]

**Jack:** Yeah!

**Sylvia:** Oh my god.

**Keith:** [continuous laughter]

**Jack:** Yeah the—the squirrel that the details have not been...

**Sylvia:** The bump mapping hasn't loaded in yet.

**Jack:** Hasn't been added onto. That's great. Okay. Are we done?

**Keith:** Oh my god, this baby chipmunk is unbelievable. We're done after I link this baby chipmunk. Uh, do we wanna close on any plugs?

## **Outro / Closing plugs [2:19:50]**

**Sylvia:** I mean the big one, as always, [friendsatthetable.cash](https://friendsatthetable.cash).

**Keith:** Go to friendsatthetable.cash, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Please support the show.

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

**Sylvia:** Keep this thing going, [**Keith:** Uh—] keep—no, go ahead.

**Keith:** Oh, uh, obviously, people who were keeping up with the sort of, initial conception of this show, and the fundraising to starting it, um, remember us passing that goal and uh, uh, then we started production on the show, and then it took three or four months or something, and during that time we slipped back under that goal, but we're still doing the show, obviously. I would love to get back up over that goal. Um, so if you've—if you've been liking the show so far. This is episode—this is episode nine. There's only three episodes that are actually out right now. Um, if you've been liking the show, go to [friendsatthetable.cash](http://friendsatthetable.cash), sign up. Maybe check out Friends at the Table if you haven't yet.

**Jack:** It's a good show.

**Keith:** Yeah, it's very good, yeah. Oh my god the episode we just recorded is outrageous. It'll be long released by the time— [**Dre** laughs] it'll be long released by the time this comes out, but it is the downtime after the Stellar Combustor.

**Dre:** It is the most—like Keith, your character doesn't do that much in the downtime, but it is the most Keith-driven episode.

**Keith:** [snorts]

**Jack:** [laughs]

**Dre:** I say this as a compliment, not as like a negative thing.

**Keith:** I—I wanna ask what you mean. Just because of the—the—the—how the dominoes were lined up?

**Dre:** Your mind, Keith. Your mind. Not just how the dominoes were lined up, but how you set up the dominoes for all of us.

**Keith:** [laughs] Well, I'm—hey!

**Jack:** I'm very excited.

**Keith:** I'll say I'm glad that's how it comes across.

**Dre:** Yeah, no, I—I thought it was awesome. I—I was just—I was doing all the memes of people being aghast in a GIF was me.

**Jack:** [laughs]

**Dre:** At just like how large your brain was.

**Jack:** Yeah. I'm—

**Keith:** I'm glad. I'm glad. And uh, of course giving Ali a ton of credit, that was great.

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Keith:** So. Uh, yeah, if you haven't listened to Friends at the Table check it out. I'll figure out a way to cut that so that makes sense. **[Sylvia laughs]** Um, keep an eye on— **[Dre laughs]** keep an eye on [twitch.tv/friendsatthetable](https://www.twitch.tv/friendsatthetable), [youtube.com/friendsatthetable](https://www.youtube.com/friendsatthetable), uh, check our—our merch page, maybe by the time this is out there'll be more—oh, 'scuse me, there'll be more than one design in there. Right now it's just a Palisade episode 25-related shirt, but by the time this is up, in uh, four months or something, uh, there'll be more stuff up there maybe? [Friendsatthetable.shop](https://friendsatthetable.shop), um. Any personal plugs real quick? [pause] No?

**Sylvia:** No, I got it at the begin—we got it in at the beginning.

**Keith:** I like plugs at the beginning and the end. Tell—tell people what—I mean—

**Sylvia:** Okay. SYLVIBULLET—

**Keith:** I make money by telling people to go listen to [Run Button](#), **[Dre: Yeah, that's fair.]** and go to [runbutton.shop](https://runbutton.shop), and go to [contentburger.biz](https://contentburger.biz) to go to the Run Button Patreon. I almost never tell people about that.

**Sylvia:** Damn.

**Keith:** But uh...

**Sylvia:** You're such a pro you just did it!

**Keith:** I know. I know.

**Jack:** [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Like, wow!

**Dre:** Slid it right in there.

**Sylvia:** The technique is incredible.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I need to get better at mentioning you can find me [@SYLVIBULLET](#) on all platforms, basically, and that you should go give this show and also Friends at the Table five star reviews on your podcast platform of choice.

**Keith:** Oh, that's a huge one that I keep meaning to say.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** In the—in the thing is that, yeah. Go to iTunes and rate the show five star, because I know that you've been enjoying it. You've now listened to hours and hours of it. Each of these episodes is basically two and a half hours long. [**Sylvia:** Yep.] So, give us five stars and—and leave a very important, I think it's very important, just somethin' in there. [**Sylvia:** Hey—] Even if you only think of a couple words to say. Write somethin' in there.

**Sylvia:** I just came up with a slogan for a podcast, I don't know if it's ever, uh, been done before, but uh, five star podcast length, five star podcast. [**Jack:** Mmm!] Is that—does that make sense?

**Keith:** Sounds extremely original.

**Dre:** Sure. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I feel like it's a little too wordy, but you know. We can figure—we can workshop it.

**Dre:** We'll workshop it, yeah.

**Keith:** I think it might work better if you make it even longer.

**Sylvia:** Okay. Um.

**Keith:** Let's find a way to make it even more.

**Sylvia:** [cross] Five star amount of audio files—

**Dre:** [cross] This audio product—

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Is worth a five star rating on the podcast platform that you are listening to it on, uh, because it will make us happy.

**Keith:** Print it.

**Dre:** If you—if put the length of podcast on a scale of zero to five—

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

**Dre:** —and you correlated that to a five star review system, this podcast would be a five on both scales.

**Sylvia:** Woah.

**Keith:** Print it. Print them both. Those are—those are both going on a t-shirt.

**Dre:** [laughs]



**Keith:** Okay, bye.

**Dre:** Yeah, friendsatthetable.shop.

**Sylvia:** [laughs]

[song plays out]