

Greed Island - Hunter x Hunter ep. 59-62: Media Club Plus

S01E19

Transcriber: robotchangeling

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Introduction

Keith: Okay, how does this sound? Let's see it. Let me press an old familiar...

[clip of "Chain Bastard" plays]

Sylvia: YEAH!

Dre: Yeah!

Keith: How does that—? Volume is good?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: That button still works. Everybody's jazzed when "Chain Bastard" gets pressed.

Sylvia: It's 'cause it's a fucking banger.

Keith: It is a banger. Okay. Ready? We're gonna do this. For the first time ever, we're

doing it live.

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

Sylvia: I'm grooving. I'm getting it.

Keith: Welcome to Media Club Plus, [Sylvia laughs quietly] a podcast about diving into the media that interests us and the stories that excite us. As always, we are brought to you by Friends at the Table. This season, we're watching 2011's *Hunter × Hunter*, based on the manga by Yoshihiro Togashi. My name is Keith J. Carberry. You can find me on [Twitter](#) and [Cohost](#) at @KeithJCarberry. You can find the let's plays that I do at youtube.com/runbutton.

[song ends]

Keith: You can review this podcast on iTunes. You can tell your friends about it. You can post about it on Reddit. [Sylvia laughs] You can ask your whole family. Say, “Please listen to this show. It’s so good.”

Sylvia: Please!

Keith: Please! And hey, you can go to friendsatthetable.shop to find the merch that we do for our other show, Friends at the Table. With me, as always, is Jack de Quidt. Hi, Jack.

Jack: Hi, Keith. I’m Jack. You can find me on Cohost at [@jdq](#), and you can get any of the music featured on the show at notquitereal.bandcamp.com. If you've been a regular listener, you will have heard, over the last weeks and months, me bemoaning that spring is approaching the town that I live in [Sylvia laughs] and that I have to sit inside and write music. I had dinner outside this evening.

Sylvia: Whoo!

Dre: Whoo!

Keith: Whoo!

Jack: I had sliced tomatoes with salt on them, goats' cheese.

Dre: Ooh.

[Keith plays cheering audience sound]

[Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Agh. We're doing this in front of a live studio audience.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah, it's...

Keith: They've always been here, and that's just the first thing that they've liked.

Dre: Yeah. [Jack laughs]

Sylvia: They're usually just staring daggers at us.

Keith: [laughs] Yeah, they're usually staring. They show up every week, but they just stare.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: But they like tomatoes or whatever you said.

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] It's really upsetting. [Keith and Jack laugh]

Keith: Jack, is that everything? Should I move on? [Dre laughs]

Jack: That's all that I have. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: Okay. Andrew Lee Swan.

Dre: Ah, hey. You can find me on Twitter at [@swandre3000](https://twitter.com/swandre3000).

Keith: Great. And Sylvi Bullet.

Sylvia: It's so good to be back. Hey, I'm Sylvia. You can find me everywhere at [@SYLVIBULLET](https://www.instagram.com/SYLVIBULLET). You can check out Keith and I playing the video game 999 on [youtube.com/friendsatthetable](https://www.youtube.com/friendsatthetable).

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: I think that there's a lot of crossover between people who like us talking about *Hunter × Hunter* and people who will enjoy us playing those games.

Keith: I think that's true.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Because I think everyone enjoys both. I can't see why you wouldn't like both of those.

Sylvia: I don't know. Yeah.

Keith: They're both really good.

Sylvia: They're both great things.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, exactly. And we stream that on [twitch.tv/friendsatthetable](https://www.twitch.tv/friendsatthetable) sometimes.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: I think that's— those are the plugs that I needed to get in.

Keith: Yeah. It's been so long since we've recorded a real episode of Media Club Plus.

Sylvia: Oh my god, I miss it.

Keith: I know. I was happy to get back into it. I was happy to watch more episodes of the show. I was watching it, and I was just like, "Yes, I'm happy to watch it!" I was very—
[Sylvia and Keith laugh]

Sylvia: “I'm loving this!”

Keith: “I'm loving this!”

Sylvia: “Yahoo!”

Jack: That's what the studio audience sometimes holds up cards saying. [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: But they don't speak or make a sound.

Keith: They're too polite.

Sylvia: And their expression does not change.

Jack: No.

Sylvia: It is stock still.

Keith: I think they're dead. I think that they're, like, zombies.

Sylvia: Hmm.

Keith: *Hunter × Hunter*-loving zombies.

Jack: Are they gonna react to this?

Keith: Uh...

Jack: No.

Keith: Yeah, hold on. Yeah, they're gonna say...

Keith: [spooky zombie-esque groan through voice modulator]

Sylvia: Aah!

Dre: Oh! [Jack chuckles]

Sylvia: Aah, they're eating me! [screams]

Keith: [modulated] *Hunter × Hunter*! Like it, yeah!

Sylvia: Hi, guys. I'm a ghost now.

Dre: Oh. [Keith and Jack laugh] I'm glad that your Nen to do a podcast was so powerful that it lived on past death.

Sylvia: Yeah, my residual Nen will last until the end of Media Club Plus the series.

Keith: Yeah, we've got— that's, like, 14 months of residual Nen.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Well, I didn't say the *Hunter × Hunter* season. The whole show.

Keith: Oh, the whole—

Sylvia: So, like, when...

Keith: Oh, that's great.

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So I'm good as long as we keep talking about shit.

Keith: Oh, that's nice. That's gonna work out, I think.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Summary [0:04:32]

Keith: So, because we haven't recorded in so long, we're out of backlog. Our famous backlog, it's over. This episode is being recorded, and then it's coming out, which is crazy. I don't like it, but...

Sylvia: Fucked up. We gotta get on it. [laughs quietly]

Keith: Yeah, we'll get on it, but I'm excited to be back with it, and so, for the first time ever, we're coming to you from barely the past. I really enjoyed these episodes. I couldn't remember, like, what the vibe was of the early Greed Island stuff. There's a vibe shift, an important vibe shift that I think happens in these episodes that we'll talk about, I'm sure. But the main thing is that we're back with our best friends, Gon and Killua, as they put into action Gon's much talked about but little discussed plan to get themselves into Greed Island, the game that, if you remember, costs 10 billion jenny. [Sylvia laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And actually, we learn, costs something more like 25 or 30 billion.

Sylvia: It depends on the specific auction.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: It keeps changing.

Keith: It basically amounts to the plan: finding the rich guy buying up all the copies of Greed Island and asking nicely. [Sylvia laughs quietly] Nicely isn't quite good enough to get them in, and they spend a week getting strong enough to be impressive to Tsezguerra, the Jackpot Hunter. Once they get inside Greed Island—which they do get inside; they sort of pop out of in front of the console and into this big green field—it's back to school. We learn all about Nen. Or, sorry, not Nen. This other thing. It's magic that nobody understands, and they're just like, "Wow, I guess there's spells here in the game." We learn about books, gains, [Sylvia laughs quietly] spells, items, maps, monsters. We learn about a group of players, player-killing evildoers, and we meet our first ever girl of all time in *Hunter × Hunter* outside of the Phantom Troupe, [Jack chuckles] whose desire to destroy Gon and Killua's friendship for fun turns into a desire to destroy their friendship for revenge turns into a desire to become their teacher for fun turns into a desire to become their teacher for revenge. [Jack and Sylvia laugh]

Sylvia: She's amazing, by the way.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Oh my god. I watched the fourth episode of this chunk, in which she is sort of, like, properly formally introduced, today.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: And I spent the whole day with— the fourth episode of this run of episodes is just, like, a mindbogglingly good *Hunter × Hunter* episode.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: If we spent the Yorknew City Arc watching Togashi and the adaptation team deliver, you know, home run after home run of, like, interesting *Hunter × Hunter* episodes because they were tense or because they played out interesting character dynamics, the fourth episode of this slot, episode 62, is a fantastic episode of *Hunter × Hunter* just because of its, like, visual imagination and its interest in its world and its characters.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It was a joy. So, I spent a lot of today being like, “I resent that we are going to have to talk about something other than, you know, once we’re in Greed Island and we’re meeting this strange girl,” but then I looked back on how far we’d come in four episodes.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Because we’re given a lot of information here, and a lot of it is delivered, I don’t want to say elegantly, but I will say successfully.

Keith: Sure. It is definitely placed more neatly inside the plot of the show than Nen school with Wing.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Oh, yeah. And it's interesting, because it is— you described it as going back to school, Keith. They really do go back to school. But we'll get there.

Episode 59 [0:08:23]

Jack: I think the place to start is to talk about— ooh, wait, actually, literally...

Keith: I think— okay.

Jack: I want to talk about the title sequence.

Sylvia: Oh, yeah!

Keith: Oh, yes, title sequence, yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: We have a new title sequence, and...

Sylvia: It's really good.

Jack: I wrote down, like, "Oh, here comes a new title sequence," and then immediately was just overwhelmed by new images. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: New striking images.

Sylvia: Yeah, there's a lot in there.

Keith: There is a lot in there.

Sylvia: They pack a lot in there.

Keith: Yeah, there was so much that I started just a list of the different things that we're seeing.

Jack: Yeah, karate girl on rooftops.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: I wrote down here: *Pokémon* cards in a big book.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Men in uniform. Completely unknown people. Weird things floating in the sky.
[Dre chuckles] Woman with crazy hat. Dodgeball shows up. That's interesting.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: We see a man throwing a dodgeball, which means he's coming. You know who.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Hisoka is here, [laughs quietly] and we also see Gon in a distinctive green necklace. Those are the things that really stuck out for me in the opening title sequence.

Keith: Yeah. There's a...also the ring, the special ring.

Jack: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Where he's, like, looking up.

Jack: Which it turns out that everyone has.

Keith: Everyone has, but it was very special that he had one without being given it by the rich man.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, that's true.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: But there's the cool shot of his hand blocking out the sun, looking up at the

ringed finger, from the opening.

Sylvia: Yeah. We got the anime shot of reaching your hand up towards the sun and then closing it.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Is that a classic?

Sylvia: It's, like, a very famous— like, not famous, but it's a very tropey, like, thing to see. I feel like it's a very common, like, thing to have your protagonist sort of wistfully looking up at the sun and reaching towards it.

Keith: Or the moon.

Sylvia: Or the moon.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: It's just towards the sky, really.

Keith: Yeah, towards the sky.

Jack: A celestial body. [Keith chuckles]

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah, exactly.

Keith: There is one thing that we get before the intro. We get Mr. Battera, the tycoon who's been buying up all the Greed Island copies. He says that it is for love.

Sylvia: For love.

Keith: When you fall in love with something, you want to it all to yourself.

Sylvia: This man adores video games. [Keith laughs quietly]

Jack: And this is...

Dre: He's the only real gamer.

Keith: Only real gamer.

Jack: The more time we spend with Mr. Battera...also, firstly, I was a little disappointed that this mysterious man buying up all the Greed Island games just looks like another mafioso.

Keith: Just looks like a rich guy, yeah. He looks like a rich guy.

Jack: This is Togashi reserving his freaks, 'cause this is a really interesting freaks arc.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Togashi usually loves to introduce freaks in the form of humanoids. As Greed Island gets going, Togashi introduces freaks in the form of mechanics, playing cards, and monsters.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And also just regular people.

Keith: Couple great names for these monsters too.

Jack: But by the time we get a little further into the episodes, if Battera really is doing this for love, he has a very interesting idea of what love is.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: He has turned his hunt for Greed Island into not just, you know, an immensely financially expensive pursuit [**Keith:** Billions.] but also sort of his life's work.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: By the time we get to see the sort of Greed Island setup, you know, it's a room in a castle full of hundreds of consoles. You know, this thing that— I love the context of him saying, "I do this for the love of the game," [laughs quietly] early on, when we see

quite how intensely he feels this.

Keith: Yeah, just to get a quick tally, we're in the neighborhood of 10 to 35 billion jenny per console/game setup.

Sylvia: And there were seven?

Keith: And there's, I think he says that he—

Sylvia: Sold at the auction.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Seven at the auction.

Dre: I think that's right.

Keith: I think he said that he had, like, 20. Plus the 50 billion that he's gonna pay whoever wins, plus the people that he's actually, like, got on retainer, like Battera is not—

Jack: Oh, Tsezguerra.

Keith: Oh, yeah, yeah. Sorry, Tsezguerra, yeah. Tsezguerra I think is also competing for the 50 billion but is being paid to, like, do the job of, like, being the chief of...

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: The sort of operations head of the Greed Island game.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: He gets a bonus, 'cause he has three different hair colors on his person. [Keith and Jack laugh]

Keith: Oh yeah, Battera does pay by hair color.

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah, yeah. [Dre laughs]

Keith: Gon gets a small bonus for being a little green. Mostly black, a little green.

Sylvia: Yep.3.....

Jack: Yeah, the mafiosos say that this is about sum total of half of his wealth, which is very funny, because, you know, he spent this massive amount of money and he still has half of it left, [**Keith:** Yeah.] but it is also still, you know, he's put in a gigantic stake here.

Keith: Mm-hmm. The next thing that we get is we cut right back to Kurapika though, after the intro. Kurapika has— looks like shit and has slept for two days.

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] Kurapika, like— [Dre laughs] We joke about Kurapika being Gon and Killua's, like, mom, but this is the most exhausted 40 year old mom vibe in the fucking world. [Keith and Dre laugh]

Keith: Yeah, yeah. .

Sylvia: Like, she's got a newborn and is just struggling.

Keith: Even down to when he interacts with Gon briefly and is like, "So, I heard you're looking for some expensive game?"

Sylvia: [laughs] It really is!

Keith: And it's like, can't even be bothered to learn about what's really going on. [Sylvia and Keith laugh]

Jack: It's really sweet. It's really charming. Kurapika— I sort of— the Yorknew City Arc ended so...I don't know. It ended so long ago for us that when we came in and Kurapika was in the bed, I was like, "What happened to Kurapika at the end of that?" [Sylvia laughs] He just got so exhausted, right?

Keith: He just got exhausted from—

Sylvia: Why's he so sleepy?

Keith: Yeah, he got—

Sylvia: He used Emperor Time too much, I think is the... [Dre chuckles]

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: The thing that's implied at the end of those episodes.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Please, Sorcerer Time.

Sylvia: Sorry, Sorcerer Time. What?

Jack: [laughs quietly] I called it Sorcerer Time in one of the earlier episodes—

Sylvia: Oh, okay. [Dre laughs]

Jack: And everyone was like, "It's Emperor Time, idiot."

Sylvia: I forgot about that. No, it's Sorcerer Time now.

Dre: It is.

Sylvia: Demon World Theory and Sorcerer Time.

Keith: I promise this, like— now that I'm looking at it, I'm like, I don't know if this is worth how much it struck me at the time, but there is this very funny shot of Leorio looking at a passed out Kurapika, and I'm just like, he looks so odd here. This is my— he just looks, like, so smooth, and his glasses look extra small and extra low.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: It's that his forehead is also being cropped out. You know, we usually see the, like, spiky hair. [Sylvia and Dre laugh]

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Who knows how tall his head is in this shot?

Sylvia: He's got a Costanza cut in this picture, to me.

Keith: Well, and the other thing is, look— if you scroll up, Sylvi posted the picture of him smiling lovingly at Gon, and like, look at how, like, much eyebrow he has there, and that looks right to me.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: But down here, for some reason, he has, like, very soft eyes [cross] and really thin eyebrows.

Sylvia: [cross] He just got them plucked. Yeah, he just got them plucked. [Keith laughs quietly]

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Let him live.

Jack: He just got them plucked. Let Leorio live.

Keith: They grow in so fast, 'cause an hour later, he's got big bushy eyebrows again.

Sylvia: Can I—? Honestly, that's how it feels. [Jack laughs quietly] I don't know how much you guys pluck your eyebrows, but fucking christ.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Twice a day, I think, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah. [Keith and Sylvia laugh]

Dre: This image of Leorio really looks like it would be, like, a meme reaction image that you post to someone who posts something, like, foul on Twitter.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, I could see that.

Sylvia: Wait, which one?

Keith: The weird face one.

Dre: The smooth-faced Leorio.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, smooth face thin eyebrow Leorio.

Sylvia: [laughs] Botox Leorio. [Dre laughs]

Jack: There's some business with Kurapika and Melody. Kurapika exits this arc really gracefully in the next episode, and you know, a lot of his appearances in this one are not only to set up the tireddest mom in the world but also to make that exit in the next episode work nicely.

Keith: It's also, it's very sad. I thought it very tragic.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Like, Leorio leaving to do his own thing, that was, like, bittersweet. Like, good for Leorio going off to be a doctor.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: But for Kurapika, like, slinking off without saying goodbye to, like, [Jack: Yeah.] not distract them, like, makes me feel like maybe he didn't learn his lesson about what friends are like it seemed like he was going to.

Dre: Yeah, and he has to go back and work for the mafia, right?

Keith: Yeah, and he honestly—

Dre: And he does not want to do that.

Keith: Yeah, but he's so dedicated to this fake mission. It was almost the first thing out

of his mouth when he woke up, was like, “What’s going on with Neon? Like, is Neon okay?” and it’s like, dude, did you forget that you hate her?

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: He is in the wake of reconfiguring his revenge, right?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: He is, you know...he’s clinging to the paycheck, as it were, in the sense of, like, “Well, I have to do something here.” Now, could that be looking after my friends Gon and Killua? No. Meanwhile, at the auction, this is not an auction— this is how the auction should go. You know, we saw how it went when the Phantom Troupe were involved, but this time it’s—

Keith: Yeah, we've seen a real auction now.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Yes. Someone comes out and plugs in— they demonstrate that the console is working, and there's a man playing it right now, and there's this kind of ripple of excitement around the room.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And this was really exciting—

Keith: And so we get a video feed of inside the game, or what happens?

Jack: No. We just see a man— we just see a man on screen. His name is Jeitsari. He has signed a contract allowing the console to be auctioned off while he’s in it.

Sylvia: Can I—

Keith: So there's gotta be some way to prove that someone’s actually in there.

Sylvia: Oh my god.

Jack: Well, so, here's the thing. [Keith and Dre laugh]

Sylvia: I...go ahead.

Jack: Then a man comes out with a big hammer, like that bit in *Midsommar*, and he just swings the hammer at the console.

Sylvia: I wrote, like, a whole paragraph about this man, because he just sent me down a little... [laughs quietly]

Jack: Please.

Keith: A little what?

Sylvia: A rabbit hole. I'll just say it.

Keith: Okay.

Sylvia: Imagine being the big dude who hits the JoyStation with a hammer. Imagine that being your job. I'd kill for it, bro. That's the dream.

Keith: Look at his face.

Sylvia: I wonder if it ever keeps him up at night that he's never going to break it. [Jack laughs] Do you think he wakes up and goes, "This is it. This is the day I finally kill that fucking video game," [Keith laughs] only to fail once more because of his complete ignorance to the existence of Nen? Does he know that he's a truly impressive specimen, the peak of the human body's capabilities, and the only reason he fails to do this action he's trained his whole life for is the unseen magic forces swirling around him? [Jack laughs] I hope he does. I hope he's happy.

Keith: He looks like a putty man.

Sylvia: That is the most in depth note I have for all these episodes, by the way. [Jack sighs]

Keith: [laughs] He looks like he's made of putty.

Jack: Oh, and it's a banger note.

Sylvia: He looks like the Goombas from the Mario Bros. movie, the old one.

Keith: Yes, he does sort of look like the Goombas. He looks like what if their face was made out of clay, but like, not well.

Sylvia: No. I love him.

Keith: He's massive and has hammers almost as big as he is, and he cannot— he can't do anything about— he breaks the table underneath the game.

Sylvia: Yeah, no, dude's yolked.

Keith: Yeah, he's yolked.

Sylvia: Like, don't...

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. Gasping audience, like: [gasps]

Sylvia: Speaking of gains, am I right?

Keith: Yeah, speaking of games.

Jack: Now, we will learn some—

Keith: Gains. Sorry, I was...

Sylvia: Gains, yeah. I said gains.

Keith: I was reading the word "games," and it overrode my mind.

Sylvia: No worries.

Jack: We will learn some stuff over the next few episodes that raise questions for me about the games consoles [**Sylvia:** Sure.] and raise questions for me about the games

consoles being destroyed. [Sylvia laughs] We can't talk about that yet, otherwise it will be all we talk about.

Keith: Yeah. [Dre laughs]

Jack: Gon accidentally bids. This is great.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Sometimes I love it when Gon acts so perfectly in character that it's like they woke up— in the writers' room, they woke up, they drank a coffee, they went into the office, they wrote the first thing on the whiteboard directly into the script, and it's like, "Gon Freeccs accidentally bids billions of dollars."

Keith: Yeah. The universal force that decides how good Basho's poems are is in the writers' room saying how much like Gon they've described something that Gon does, [Dre and Jack laugh] and the little green light goes like, "ding ding ding."

Jack: The tycoon wins the game in the end. It's worth saying that Milluki is outbid completely and is steaming.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: So pissed.

Jack: And Gon and Killua—

Keith: Oh, one really funny thing about this, really quick, about Gon accidentally bidding. This is just a pet theory that I have that the reason why they show up with 7 billion— or trying to get 7 or 10 billion dollars to bid but then every machine sells for between, like, 25 and 35 billion is because, on the very first console, Gon ups the bid from 12 to 24 by mistake, and so that is...

Jack: [laughs quietly] And then it artificially...

Keith: Yeah, artificially inflating the price of that first console and thinking— [Dre laughs]

Battera knowing that someone out there has a minimum bid of 24 billion.

Jack: The other Gon Freecss one would be that he gets excited and keeps doing it, and we only saw one of them. [Keith laughs] Every new console that shows up, Gon accidentally bids more on it. They offer their services to help clear the game to Battera. It's worth saying, if you would like this little recap, Greed Island is a game created by Hunters for Hunters that nobody has ever cleared, and it has sort of taken on a cultural position, that like, get it done, you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: There will be glory.

Keith: It's a known game. It's, like, a whispered about rumor, since there's only 100 copies of the game or something like that.

Jack: Yeah. "Do you have a license?" says Tsezguerra, Battera's man.

Sylvia: It's so funny.

Keith: And Gon says, "Yep, I sure do."

Jack: And Killua says, "You don't."

Keith: You don't.

Jack: "It's at the pawn shop." [Sylvia, Keith, and Dre laugh]

Sylvia: There is so many good Gon and Killua, like, jokes in this.

Keith: There is. God, they're so good.

Sylvia: I've missed them so much.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: It's like they know that they're back in the show, and they really have to sell it

again, 'cause they do. Everything they do, I'm just like, "They're so good." It's great. Actually, one of my favorite things from Battera, because Gon can't prove that they're Hunters 'cause of the license thing, and then Battera says something that 80 other characters could have said and haven't. "The fact that you're here at the auction proves you're no ordinary children." [Jack laughs] First normal-thinking man so far. [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah. Finally.

Jack: This guy is gonna go home and telephone his wife and be like, "There were two really fucking weird children at the auction today."

Keith: Yeah. And then they're like, "We already have our own memory card and ring," and his eyes are, like, popping out of his head.

Sylvia: Yeah, no.

Keith: He's spending billions and billions of dollars to do this, and suddenly two kids pop up and they're like, "Oh, yeah, yeah, we're, like, 90% of the way there on our own."

Jack: Yeah. It's great. We get some information here that sometimes people just apparently give up returning to the real world and choose to live inside the game. This is the first time I rang Jack's bell of *Hunter × Hunter* is a show about games and the people who play them.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Jack: And the bell didn't stop ringing throughout all the episodes I watched.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Guess what?

Jack: But sometimes it rang—

Sylvia: It's gonna be going ding dang dong all through Greed Island.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Oh, yeah. It rang more in certain spaces than others, and those'll be the ones that I talk about. I just wanted to flag it to the listener that all I am thinking about, watching this, is the sort of sweet vindication.

Keith: That bell might be moving for the whole rest of Media Club Plus. I don't think that there's going to be a significant stretch of time where it's not ringing.

Sylvia: You're right. You're right! Huh.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: This bell cannot be unrung.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Yorknew City was barely about games. There was, like, no games happening that whole time. It's games here til the end.

Sylvia: Should call this Gamer × Gamer.

Keith: Yeah, Gamer.

Jack: Gamer × Gamer.

Keith: Gamer X Gamer. [Dre laughs]

Jack: At this point, as a new viewer, I am starting to...what's interesting is that I am feeling the rollercoaster of Greed Island clicking up and up and up. It's worth saying we have never seen what it looks like inside it, and for all the talk about the game, we actually don't know anything about what it is, how it's played, what it involves, how you win, what you do.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: All the stuff that we are getting is sort of, like, procedural stuff. It's information

about how the memory cards work. It's information about whether you might need certain items to leave the game. You're not told how you enter the game. And this kind of, like, split in information is so enticing at this point, right? Where it's like, it feels like I'm walking through the lobby of the theater before I sit down, and I'm seeing the posters for the thing, [**Keith:** Mm.] and I'm seeing the popcorn machine, and I'm seeing the usher who points with the little torch to where you want to go and sit, but I have no idea what the play's going to be about or what it involves. That's a really cool feeling.

Keith: So, they're testing Gon and Killua on their Ren, to be like, are they even worth thinking about? They're children. They're impressive that they're here. They have a memory card. They put on their Ren show, and Tsezguerra's like, "No, no. They'll die. They'll go in, and they'll die right away. And surely four days couldn't change my opinion on this." [Keith and Dre laugh]

Jack: This has happened exactly before.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: This is the tired woman in Heavens Arena.

Keith: Oh, yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Saying, "If you go down this, you'll die," and then Wing saying, "Okay, I can protect you from it, but there's no way you're gonna do this in four hours, unless..." and then he teaches them.

Keith: Unless they're one in 10 million or whatever Wing says.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: One in 10 billion, maybe?

Jack: But Battera obviously knows that this is the case, 'cause he is wise and knows these are weird freaky children, and he's like, "Oh, they'll probably be fine." Phinks and

Feitan have overheard. [Jack and Dre laugh]

Keith: Great shot of them too, like, just sort of...like, shooter game cover against the wall, like, listening in.

Jack: Yeah. I just spent an entire arc with the Phantom Troupe and got so into their, like, interpersonal sort of schema that I completely forgot what the job of the Phantom Troupe is, 'cause I wrote down, "Phinks and Feitan overheard and are also going to participate in the screening." [Sylvia and Keith laugh]

Sylvia: Yeah, absolutely.

Keith: They do, like, a really good joke about it, 'cause you could posit right after they're like, "Huh, a screening. What should we do?" and they go, pause. They're gonna be in the screening. Cut immediately to: they've murdered a man and stolen the game. [Dre laughs] And then Feitan goes, "Steal it. We're bandits, after all." [Jack laughs] It's so funny.

Dre: It's great.

Keith: And they really lean into, like, recasting the Phantom Troupe as villains again.

Jack: Yeah. And they do a really good job, actually.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: And then Feitan, you know, takes the game back to headquarters, and with absolutely no fanfare whatsoever, enters the game.

Keith: Poof.

Jack: When you enter Greed Island, you disappear. There is absolutely no messing around with where your real body is. There's no, like, your body lies sleeping while you disappear into the game.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: This might sound like a piece of stylization from Togashi. It is deliberate. We will talk about it later.

Dre: Hmm.

Keith: We get— actually, around here— it might be a little earlier than this. We get our first taste of what is called the Greed Island Theme if we want to hear the Greed Island Theme.

Jack: Oh, yeah, I would love to hear that.

Sylvia: Yes, please.

Keith: Here we go.

["G.I Theme" begins to play]

Keith: It's really good. I think it's a lot of fun.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Keith: It's really cool.

Jack: Does it come to a melody line, or is that...?

Keith: This right here?

Jack: Oh, yeah, yeah. It's this very sort of, like...

[music stops]

Jack: Oh, and this singing and bagpipes.

Sylvia: Bagpipes are great.

Jack: Yeah, it's almost like a sort of World of Tomorrow Disneyland flourish **[Keith:**

Yeah.] combined with, like, **[Dre: Mm.]** PlayStation era JRPGs. Which is, I think, consistent with kind of Greed Island? We'll see.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Some of the Phantom Troupe are not interested in playing the game. Phinks says, "Feitan's gone into a game, and I'm gonna play. Do you want to play?" And a bunch of people are like, "No."

Keith: No. "Maybe later," they say. [Dre laughs] Although, more of them end up in there.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: We get, I think, five or six total by the end of these episodes.

Jack: Yeah, because he can't let go of them. He loves the Phantom Troupe, and so do we. I'm not complaining.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: But, you know.

Dre: Is this...this is also another time where one of my favorite bits around Greed Island is that every time someone talks about Greed Island and playing Greed Island, they're like, "Well, you gotta get a multi-tap, man."

Keith: The multi-tap is really funny.

Dre: "If you want to get everybody in here, **[Keith: Yeah.]** you gotta get a multi-tap." [Dre and Jack laugh]

Keith: Multiple players reference multi-taps. They explain it. Feitan is like, "Look, I have a multi-tap," and then plugs his thing into the thing, [Dre laughs] and is like, "Now we

can have up to eight.”

Sylvia: It’s the funniest shit in the world.

Dre: It’s so good.

Sylvia: Togashi— you know Togashi was like, “You can play eight players on a PlayStation—” or on a Super Nintendo— or PlayStation. I think they both have multi-taps.

Dre: PlayStation. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah. It’s just like...

Jack: Are they gonna play, like, *GoldenEye* or something when they’re not playing Greed Island?

Sylvia: Oh my god. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Man, I think—

Jack: The Phantom Troupe hangs out.

Dre: PlayStation One had both a multi-tap and then also a way to, like, link two consoles together so you could do, like, eight player 4v4 on each TV.

Keith: Oh, yeah.

Sylvia: That’s what they’re doing.

Keith: That walked so *Halo* LAN parties could run.

Dre: That’s true. That’s true.

Jack: Gon is so mad about his Nen not being strong enough.

Keith: Yeah.

[0:30:00]

Jack: And Killua says, “We should start thinking about taking this to the next level,” which is just absolutely distilled shonen power vibes, right? [Dre laughs] Where it’s like, there is always another tower to climb, however far you think you’ve gotten in your power and ability.

Keith: Yeah. Gon is freaking out, and Killua’s like, “He’s right.” [Keith and Jack laugh]

Jack: Yeah, Killua is really—

Keith: “Yeah, Tsezguerra was right. We need to be stronger,” while sort of thoughtfully eating his bunny rabbit lollipop again. [Dre laughs]

Jack: I have a question about shonen power, because based on my understanding, that is absolutely true, right? Like, part of the engine that drives this genre is, you know, you work really hard to attain a level of power that is sold to you as being if not supreme but really transformative, and you sit at that power level for a while, and then you’re told you can go even higher. You know, we can get even better than this.

Keith: Yeah. This is a classic trope, yeah, for sure.

Jack: Is it the case that the people at the very top of the pyramids, your Master Roshis, your Neteros, your...who’s that little fucker who looks like a catfish and lives in heaven?

Keith: It’s so funny, Jack, to say Netero at the top of the pyramid, like, not knowing if that’s true or not.

Sylvia: [laughing] Did you mean King Kai?

Dre: [laughing] Yes, I’m pretty sure they meant King Kai.

Keith: Oh, sorry, I tuned out everything after the thing that I wanted to comment on. What happened? [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: Guy who looks like a catfish and lives in heaven? [Keith laughs]

Dre: And they're right.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: They're right.

Sylvia: They nailed it.

Keith: King Kai. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Are those guys genuinely at the— let's set aside Netero, because he's in this story, and we don't know if he's at the top. You know, we can set that aside. Are Roshi and King Kai and co. genuinely at the top of the pyramid, or is a key part of their character work their own realization that still they have room to climb?

Keith: Oh, yeah. Roshi is, like, after the stuff that we watched from *Dragon Ball*, very almost immediately sidelined and doesn't become relevant for 30 years of real life time.

Dre: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Jack: [laughs] Yeah.

Keith: So yeah, Roshi is, like, the strongest human on Earth, basically, until Krillin and Yamcha become stronger than him, and then Goku's obviously not from Earth, technically. And then every major threat is extra-Earth. They're not human, so.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: He's still allowed to be the strongest human, basically, but none of the villains are like humans, so that's the workaround.

Jack: But Togashi has paced this kind of nicely, because we know where the clear next step is to go. You know, every Nen character other than Gon and Killua has done...we call them, like, Nen abilities. I call them Nen tricks in my note, but that's not quite as friendly, right? You know.

Keith: Yeah, they call them special moves in this one.

Jack: Special moves.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Special moves. Again, like it's a video game. Like they're in a fighting game.

Jack: Like they're in a fighting game.

Sylvia: And they will be soon! [Keith and Sylvia laugh]

Jack: Gon can't think of a move, bless his entire heart.

Keith: Oh my god, the steam.

Jack: Killua tries to help him, and it's a disaster. [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: It's really cute, and also this is when I first noticed that the animation quality's kind of improved between Phantom Troupe and now.

Jack: Oh, huh.

Sylvia: I don't know. Maybe it's just me noticing them playing with styles a bit more or, like, doing a bit more inventive things with— like, there's just more facial expressions, is what it feels like.

Keith: I think—

Sylvia: There's, like, a closeup on Gon here that feels really smoothly animated. Same with all the Nen energy, feels really smoothly animated.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: And it might not be a budget thing. It could just be, “Hey, we've refined our style between seasons.”

Keith: Yeah. I think that they're trying to do a lot of stuff that is sort of unstated or vaguely stated relationship things.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Keith: And you've really gotta focus on characters' faces if you're going to, like, have them feeling things that they're not saying.

Sylvia: Yeah, it's great.

Keith: Yeah. And they do it well. I think it works good. It's almost like they do it so well that it's...I don't want to say heavy-handed, but it's, like, not subtle.

Sylvia: Oh, no. And it shouldn't be.

Keith: No.

Jack: I described this in our groupchat as it felt like whatever happens when we need to come up with bonds and beliefs in a game. [Sylvia chuckles]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And we just flail around, and Austin says, "All right, well, hang on. Let's think this through." There's a great bit where [laughs quietly] Gon says he wants a strong power. That's sort of as far as he gets. He'd like power that is strong. And then Killua says, "Can we be more specific?"

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: You know, this power is too vague. We need to—

Keith: Strong in what way?

Jack: And Gon just can't do it. I thought there was something really interesting about Gon, an impulsive, you know, very powerful figure, and he's not necessarily impulsive in the sense that he doesn't think about his friends.

Keith: Mm-hmm. Thinks too much of his friends.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: He can't really conceive of power in a way beyond "I want to be really strong."

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Or "I want to care for the people around me," whereas—

Keith: But he is kind of justified very shortly after that.

Jack: Yeah. So, Killua immediately goes off and starts tasing himself. We'll talk about that in a second.

Keith: Yes. Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Gon telephones Mr. Wing, who gives— Mr. Wing's in really good spirits. He's really—

Keith: On the advice of— this is classic— sorry, Jack. This is classic Kurapika— or Gon and Kurapika stuff to me, where Kurapika shows up, and Gon is like, "Well, Kurapika's the guy who gave us the idea to get special moves to begin with. I should ask him to be my mentor and get the two-for-one deal of preventing Kurapika, distracting Kurapika from the Spiders, so that he doesn't go off and do something dangerous." Gon, again, like, sort of making decisions based off of, like, trying to do the best thing that he could do for his friends, thinking less about almost anything else.

Dre: Yeah. [laughs]

Keith: But then Kurapika's like, "No, no, I'm out of here anyway. I got a job to do. I gotta go be a mafia guy again."

Jack: Before he leaves, though, Kurapika has this amazing little aside, as Gon asks him how he learned how to summon chains.

Keith: Oh, yeah, yeah. Right.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's phenomenal. So, Kurapika describes something called imagery training.

Keith: Imagery chaining.

Jack: Imagery chaining. He started just, like, holding chains, smelling chains, listening to chains.

Dre: Tasting chains.

Jack: Tasting chains.

Sylvia: It's so funny.

Jack: He says he drew thousands of sketches of chains. At one point, like, his master locked him in a room full of chains, and that was it. And then eventually—

Sylvia: And then took them away?

Jack: And then took them away! And then eventually he started hallucinating chains, and then he was able to turn those hallucinations into the conjured chains, which is extraordinary. I mean...

Keith: Yeah. It sounds bad.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: It sounds— hey, there's, like, multiple moments in these episodes that are like, "Oh, hey, learning Nen is not good for you."

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: You have to torture yourself to get good at this.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Hey, look at the bright side, though. It let him be a good murderer.

Jack: [cross] It let him be an extremely good murderer.

Sylvia: [cross] You know what? You make a great argument. [Keith laughs]

Dre: A really good murderer.

Keith: Yeah, a really good murderer.

Dre: One of the best, maybe.

Keith: Hey, Kurapika, good murder.

Sylvia: Hey, great murder, Kurapika.

Jack: Wing is cheery. Zushi is training in the background.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: He's got sort of the Ren sort of rippling around him as usual.

Sylvia: Still in Heavens Arena, the fucking scrub.

Keith: Yeah, scrub.

Jack: Still in Heavens Arena. [Sylvia laughs] They really did just...

Keith: Hey, I'll say this. That Ten? Not even that impressive.

Dre: Wow.

Keith: Sure, it was still. Sure, it was still.

Jack: Wow.

Sylvia: This fucking 10 year old loser! [Jack laughs]

Dre: My poor son Zushi.

Sylvia: Nah, I love Zushi. I was really happy to see him and Wing again. I think the

phone call with Wing is very cute.

Jack: It's great. Wing tells Gon that Enhancers don't really need a special attack, since they are the most balanced, and he also warns Gon not to emulate Kurapika, and I have— I really do think you were onto something, Sylvi, when you were not quick to absolve Wing of the same kinds of compromised teaching that we see from other teacher characters in the show.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: But I do think a moment like this, where he explicitly says, you know, “That person that you know who worked so hard with chains to hallucinate them, [Sylvia: Mm-hmm.] to create Nen chains to let them go on a dreadful path of revenge, maybe you don't need to do it like that.”

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: That was pretty good Wing.

Sylvia: It's a really nice little moment of him being, like, caring about his students, you know?

Keith: The spoken part of it is, “It's not gonna do you any favors to go in there with a power that you haven't thought very hard about and try and impress them with something that's not finished.” And then the unspoken part of it is, “Kurapika put a chain around his heart that would kill him if he disobeyed the rules. Don't do that.” [Sylvia and Keith laugh]

Sylvia: Please don't do that, Gon.

Keith: Don't go making any Nen contracts, you idiot.

Sylvia: Yeah. [Dre laughs] Oh my god, if anyone should not be making Nen contracts, it is Gon Freecss.

Keith: Yes. He is, more than almost anybody in this show, likely to do something rash.

Jack: Well, remember that the moment Gon learned about Nen contracts, he basically said, “Sick! Can I have one?”

Keith: Yeah. [Dre and Jack laugh]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: But Wing does sort of offer Gon a little hint. He says, “You should try doing everything at once.” This causes Gon’s brain to short out again.

Dre: Mm-hmm. [Keith laughs]

Jack: And he keels over with an audible sound effect that Killua can hear from another room.

Keith: Right. Of course, 'cause do everything at once means: use Ten to manifest your aura, Ren to strengthen it, but also Zetsu to close it off, and this is not an easy problem to solve.

Jack: No. I wrote down here that this feels like trying to do a magic eye picture. [Keith and Sylvia laugh]

Dre: Oh. I can do those. Those are easy.

Jack: Those are easy for—? I can do them, but they—

Sylvia: You’d be a great Enhancer.

Jack: Yeah. [Dre laughs] They require me to, like, focus. My guess here, at this point, was: [laughs quietly] Gon’s going to make a very powerful fist, question mark? And I will say, based on what I’ve seen so far, I was right. [Sylvia and Dre laugh]

Keith: Yeah, pretty right. So, the trick was that he needed to use Gyo to see that when he concentrated his aura somewhere—which he already knew how to do, because that’s what Gyo is—that he wasn’t fully closing off the rest of his aura. He was like, “Oh, when I, you know, when I concentrate my aura in my eyes, there’s still some left. I gotta

get rid of that,” and that lets him further enhance the already enhanced thing.

Jack: Gon Freeccs and Killua Zoldyck neglecting Go— sorry.

Sylvia: Gyo.

Jack: Neglecting Gyo, the Nen technique for looking at things, is going to become a foundational part of this little crew of episodes.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Oh, you genuinely have no idea.

Jack: [laughs] It’s really telling that we have seen a lot of Nen action, and almost none of it has been that crucial technique: look at what your opponent is trying to hide from you. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Well, I think something that I think is worth mentioning is like, a lot of the Nen stuff we’ve seen has been between experts, right? Like, we have not had a lot of rookie Nen users stuff. Gon and Killua were so, like...they were the backdrop for a lot of the last arc, or like, **[Keith: Uh huh.]** they weren’t in the actual conflicts. Meanwhile, you get, like, everyone in the Phantom Troupe and then Kurapika are already so competent at it, you don’t necessarily think about the actual mechanics of what they’re doing—

Keith: But Kurapika’s sort of—

Sylvia: Until we get a scene like this.

Keith: Kurapika’s sort of stuck in that phase where you’ve, like, learned the beginning of something, and you’re overestimating how much you actually know about it.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Which leads to what I think is one of the funniest lines of the series, where Kurapika taunts Uvo by being like, “Oh, so you *can* use Gyo. Like, I didn’t even think

you could probably even use that, idiot.” And it’s like, you’re talking to the Phantom Troupe. [Jack laughs] You are the one that just learned about Gyo!

Dre: Yeah. You just learned this, like, two months ago.

Jack: Yeah, exactly.

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] It’s like when you learn a combo in a fighting game and your friends don’t know it yet, [Keith laughs] but you don’t want them to know how recently you learned it.

Keith: Even Gon and Killua knew Gyo. Zushi!

Sylvia: Even Leorio learned Gyo. [Dre laughs]

Keith: Zushi learned Gyo. Wait, Leorio didn’t learn Gyo, did he?

Sylvia: I thought Leorio— oh, no. He learns—

Keith: No, he only knew Ten.

Sylvia: He only knew Ten. You’re right.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: The funniest one to only know.

Keith: [laughs] Yeah, the habit one.

Jack: Yeah. And then, you know, we move into the closing credits, as Killua sort of begins to...and they really are teasing the thing Killua is doing. He’s testing lightning on himself and crackling electricity.

Keith: As a Transmuter, trying to turn [Sylvia: Yeah.] his Nen into electricity Nen.

Sylvia: And how does he do this? How does he go about training for this?

Keith: Normal way.

Jack: Oh, he tases himself with a taser.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Jack: Doesn't seem too bothered.

Sylvia: There is a lot of— I'm just playing the flag now. There's a lot of self harm shit with Killua's arc.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Interesting.

Sylvia: And this, I think, is a big part— his Nen power, I think, is just a big part of it.

Jack: Yeah. This is—

Sylvia: I mean, he's tasing himself to be able to visualize this thing that was used to torture him by his family.

Jack: I was going to say, actually, and I'm so glad that you sort of— that you brought the idea of self harm into there, Sylvi, as a way to, like, lock it together.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Is that Killua and electricity and electrocution has come up multiple times. It's come up when he was fighting that man who shot electric snakes at him.

Sylvia: Yes.

Jack: Do you remember?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Yeah, he's resistant to it.

Jack: He was like, “This is not a problem to me.” He had that great line where he’s like, “It hurts, but, you know, what are you gonna do?”

Sylvia: “All it does is piss me off.”

Keith: Yeah. [laughs]

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Yeah. And there was another instance of Killua getting electrocuted and not really being bothered by it.

Dre: I mean, when he was— when he went back home after the Hunter Exam and was, like, chained to the wall, wasn't Milluki, like, poking him with a cattle prod or something?

Jack: He was whipping him, I think?

Sylvia: He was whipping him.

Dre: Oh, you're right. He was whipping him, yeah.

Jack: But, you know, my read on it had always been, you know, that there was some sort of abuse or exercise of control within the Zoldyck family.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: You know, being subjected to electrocution is not something that Killua is unused to? And—

Keith: Yeah, he specifically says that during that fight, but I can't remember if then they show it.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Or if they'd already shown it or if that was...yeah, I can't remember the specifics of the actual torture.

Jack: And so it is very interesting that this is the thing that he's exercising as his Nen power. We'll see more of that as it comes together.

Keith: And that he claims— he was like, “This was, like, always my plan.”

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: You know what I just—

Keith: He describes it as, like, something he's been waiting to do for months.

Dre: What I just realized too is that I guess I had always been assuming that it doesn't hurt you when you're using your Nen, but now I'm wondering, oh, does this hurt every time Killua does it, and he's just used to it. And that's sad.

Keith: Like Wolverine?

Dre: [laughs quietly] Yeah. Exactly like Wolverine, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, that has kind of always been my read on this.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: It's something that I've considered and have no answer for.

Sylvia: Yeah. And we'll talk— the main reason I bring it up is 'cause I think it'll come up frequently.

Jack: Yeah. It's worth— it is a useful flag to keep an eye on, in the same way that *Hunter × Hunter*, from this point on, will never stop being about games.

Sylvia: Yep.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: It'll never stop being about games. It'll never stop being about the trauma that our parents inflict on us.

Jack: Yoshihiro Togashi! Greatest of all time. No, that's Akira Toriyama.

Keith: [sarcastic] Gon doesn't have any trauma from parents. He doesn't even have any parents. [Sylvia, Keith, and Jack laugh]

Sylvia: [sarcastic] How can I be traumatized if my dad was never there?

Dre: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Jack: And I'm willingly, uh, I'm wilfully ignoring anything about my mom. That was weird.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: She basically does not exist to me.

Keith: Normal stuff.

Sylvia: Ahh.

Dre: Yeah, it's normal kid stuff.

Jack: More and more characters show up in the outro, including wild landscapes, strange balloon or floating buildings floating in the sky. This is really funny to have this opening and closing title sequence bookending an episode about hanging out in Yorknew City and trying to improve your Nen. It feels like they moved the title sequence over wrong, like one early. [quiet laughter] We also see a girl with springy pigtails and a pink sort of, like...

Sylvia: Lolita style, I think.

Jack: What's the name of that? Like, a dress with a very wide sort of, like, bell bottom?

Sylvia: I don't know.

Dre: Hmm.

Sylvia: I bet Janine would know.

Jack: I know.

Keith: Yeah, I don't know.

Jack: And then—

Dre: Do you mean a hoop skirt?

Sylvia: I think it might be a hoop skirt.

Jack: It might be a hoop skirt.

Sylvia: It's got the, like...ring-like structure to it, I guess is...

Keith: Yeah. But it's also a cartoon, so it's hard to tell if it's just drawn like that or if it's meant to be...

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Does it have structure because it's not animated or because they've animated it to have the structure? I don't know.

Jack: There's also a horse with a weird nozzle for a mouth.

Keith: Oh, you mean bubble horse?

Jack: I mean bubble horse. I didn't know what that horse's deal was. I was thrilled to see it.

Episode 60 [0:47:46]

Jack: Episode 60.

Keith: Yeah. [Dre chuckles]

Jack: Kurapika and Melody leave, and Melody [**Sylvia:** Aw.] tells Leorio that he has the

most pleasant heartbeat: “Soft, uplifting, and very warm. I think you'd make a great teacher or doctor.”

Sylvia: He's Dr. Warm-Hearted Miser!

Keith: He is Dr. Warm-Hearted Miser.

Sylvia: Aww.

Jack: He's Dr. Warm-Hearted Miser.

Keith: It was very nice of her to not include that he sounds like a miser.

Jack: [laughs] He is, though. You know.

Sylvia: I mean, he is.

Jack: The read is, uh...you can't really fault that. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: Yeah. “Of all the heartbeats in the city, yours is the most pleasant. It's soft, expansive, and very warm.”

Dre: [sighs] Melody's so nice.

Keith: Yeah. This was because Leorio's like, “Melody, please keep an eye on Kurapika. He's not dumb, but he does dumb things.”

Jack: And that's also a correct read.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Uh huh.

Jack: Zepile returns Gon's money and gets him a little more, having got the Hunter License back from the pawn shop. And Zepile, in just like a really funny aside, sees how much worth the Hunter Licenses hold and immediately decides to become a Pro Hunter so he can sell his license.

Sylvia: I love it.

Keith: He thinks this is such a good idea he runs off skipping, basically.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: He runs away like John Lennon in that one picture. [Dre laughs]

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Doing the funny walk.

Jack: He's going to do his own Hunter Exam arc offscreen. I think Zepile would be a pretty good Hunter, you know? I have faith in that weirdo.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Lots of talk on the news about, you know, what happens if you win Greed Island? This is like a media object. There's speculation.

Keith: Yeah, he's famous for being rich, and he's brought a lot of attention to this weird mysterious game.

Jack: Maybe you get a treasure map, or maybe a giant dragon appears to grant you a wish.

Sylvia: [sarcastic] Huh. I wonder what that could be. [Jack laughs quietly] I wonder what that could be referencing. [Keith and Dre laugh]

Jack: I mean, on one hand, that is a reference, and that was the first thing I thought, but the second thing I thought was, "Oh yeah, I don't know what you get if you win." What does everyone want? You know? The people who are being employed by Battera get the money, but what's the— what do you get if you win?

Keith: Two really funny things, before we talk about what you get if you win, is about Battera and his group and their process here, because this— what we just talked about. There's, like, a media circus surrounding this game now because of Battera, and they

are so not subtle about the Nen thing. Again, which is meant to be, like, a secret thing that nobody knows about.

Sylvia: Yep. [Dre chuckles]

Keith: Not even Hunters know about Nen, unless they've learned it somehow. But when Gon and Killua first meet Battera, a guy shows up and goes, you know, like, "Wait there! I assume you know Nen. Let's see a demonstration of your Ren." And it's like, what a crazy thing to say in a world where Nen is secret. And then they show up to the screening, and a guy with a microphone is like, "You've gotta know Nen to participate! So if you don't know Nen, go away!" [Dre and Keith laugh] It's just very funny. It's obviously just meant to facilitate the show, like, not having to dance around the main thing the show is about basically, but it is very funny that...

Jack: It's great every time people talk about Nen. Everyone's queued up for the screening, hundreds and hundreds of people. You need to do a demonstration. The camera lingers on the girl with the curly pigtails, [**Sylvia:** Yep.] who, through my notes, I have called "pigtails girl." [quiet laughter]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And a man in a purple jacket with a very square jaw and very round pupils to his eyes.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: He looks like a muppet.

Jack: He does look like a muppet.

Keith: His name is Puhat, but I wrote— 'cause I can never remember his name, I wrote throughout, his name was "sleazy man."

Dre: He is a sleazy man.

Jack: He's a sleazy man, but he's also kind of charming. I find him—

Keith: He's kind of charming. He's extremely wide-jawed blond man with a Yakuza suit on. He's, like, wearing the suit of—

Sylvia: Kind of feels like an alternate palette-swap— not 100%, but like if you picked a, like, player 2 color scheme for Leorio.

Jack: Yes. Yes.

Keith: Yeah. He's a little wider than Leorio, but he does have—

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Leorio also kind of has this, like, you know, D-tier Yakuza, you know, thug kind of quality to him. [Dre chuckles]

Sylvia: Oh, absolutely.

Keith: Nice purple suit.

Jack: And then we get into, like, a classic sort of, like, Togashi digression about, [laughs quietly] like, how you can deduce people's personality and how you can read the sort of effectiveness of a situation by noticing things about it. It mostly—

Keith: Killua has a panic attack self powerpoint.

Jack: [laughs quietly] He does.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: There's no one around to give the powerpoint. You know, Kurapika's not here. Who's the Phantom Troupe's powerpoint leader? It's Shalnark.

Keith: It's Shalnark, yeah.

Dre: Yeah, it's Shalnark.

Jack: And then—

Keith: And he gives one later in these episodes.

Sylvia: Yeah. [Dre laughs quietly]

Jack: And then Melody is a B-tier powerpoint player, but yeah, you're right. Killua looks for the person who can give him the powerpoint, comes up short, and immediately starts delivering one himself.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, he's overanalyzing, stressing about— so, they go, like, "All right, time's up. We're ready to start the thing. Everybody line up," and some people line up immediately; some people are, like, hanging back a little bit; and then some people are, like, hanging back even more; and then some people are in their seats. This is where Killua's like, "Oh my god, are we doing the right thing? Are we being watched now? Is this part of the test? Should I have lined up right away?" And Puhat [pronounced poo-hat] is like... [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: It's Puhat [poo-hot].

Keith: I know.

Sylvia: Please.

Dre: Got 'em. Got 'em.

Keith: Is like, "These chumps all lining up. What a bunch of idiots." And...

Sylvia: What a bunch of maroons. [Dre laughs]

Keith: Sort of lets—

Sylvia: He talks— like, he has that type of voice in the dub. Like, he has a real "nyehhh" voice in the dub.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: He does. He does, yeah.

Dre: He does, yeah.

Keith: Lets Sleazy Man kind of explain to him why he made the right decision, sort of by accident, because they're like, "Of course they're gonna see everybody. The people who are confident got up right away. Everyone else is gonna get— if you weren't confident enough to line up right away or stay seated, then there's no way you could win." And then Gon was like, "Yep, I also thought of that." Then Killua's like, "What, even Gon? Fuck." [Dre and Jack laugh]

Jack: It's a lot of business. This is kind of where the episode felt a little slow to me. What it does get is [Dre: Yeah.] we get a little bit of Silva warning Killua. So, Killua eventually is like, "Fine, I'm gonna..." you know, I'm gonna join the line. I'm gonna take a dangerous path. And we hear Silva warn him in flashback to act only when success is guaranteed. Silva says, "Waiting is our most crucial job," and Killua, and I noted this down, says, "I am no longer an assassin. I'm a Hunter."

Sylvia: I cheered.

Dre: Mm.

Sylvia: I, like, cheered when that happened.

Keith: Yeah, that was great. It's funny, because Silva speaking into the world the same things that Illumi is saying, which is so funny.

Sylvia: Yeah?

Dre: Yeah. But what was interesting to me, a note that I made, is that, like, in the past, when Illumi has said that kind of stuff, Killua is, like, arrested. He is stopped in place. Like, he can't even think about, like, pushing back.

Keith: Yeah, he gets the purple fuzz, and he can't move.

Dre: Yeah. Whereas this, he very— like, his dad gave him an explicit instruction at some point, and he's like, "Hmm, no, that's not how I do things anymore."

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: I wonder if that's also tinted by that conversation they had before he left the Zoldyck Estate.

Dre: Sure.

Sylvia: So he thinks his dad's, like, supporting him. [laughs quietly]

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Instead of being like, [Silva voice] "Someday my son will betray his best friend and come home." That's my Silva impression.

Dre: [impressed] Mm.

Jack: That's a good Silva impression.

Keith: That's not a bad Silva.

Sylvia: Thank you.

Keith: One funny thing about this Puhat thing from before, [Dre chuckles] from before Silva shows up.

Sylvia: That's just his name!

Keith: It's just his name. [Dre laughs] Is after—

Dre: Now I only hear "poo hat" when you say his name, though. [laughs]

Keith: After Puhat goes, like, "Okay, time for me to go line up," Killua says, out loud enough for him to overhear, he says, "People who act smart are the ones who usually fail," just to throw him off and be mean, [Dre laughs] but then thinks to himself, "He was

right, though.” [Keith and Jack laugh] It’s so funny. He’s just, like, sort of revenge for being friendly when Killua was feeling insecure.

Jack: Yeah, it’s...

Sylvia: Oh, hey, I have— sorry. I just got some good Puhat trivia about his voice actor.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: Oh, yeah, please.

Dre: Oh.

Sylvia: Because he does voice someone that we’ve heard a lot in this show. Anyone have any guesses?

Keith: Oh.

Jack: What, it’s a joint voice actor?

Sylvia: Yeah, this guy is— hold on.

Dre: Is this for the sub or the dub, Sylvi?

Sylvia: This is for the Japanese voice acting.

Dre: Okay. Okay.

Keith: Is he one of the Phantom Troupe?

Sylvia: No.

Keith: Fuck.

Dre: Is he—

Sylvia: Been around before the Phantom Troupe.

Dre: Oh! Oh, fuck!

Keith: Leorio.

Dre: Uh, whatshisname.

Sylvia: No, you guys are not gonna get this. It's really funny.

Dre: Who's the asshole from the Hunter Exam? Who's the asshole from the Hunter Exam?

Jack: Uh, Tonpa.

Dre: Tonpa.

Sylvia: It's not Tonpa.

Dre: Ah.

Jack: Is it a main character? Is this someone we've heard a lot of?

Sylvia: In a way. You have heard them a lot. Can I say?

Keith: Is it the announcer?

Sylvia: It is the narrator!

Keith: Yeah! Yes!

Dre: Oh, wow!

Jack: Oh, wow! That's so cool.

Keith: I read through your hints. I saw through your hints.

Sylvia: Thank you. I kept dropping my little breadcrumbs [**Keith:** Yes.] while you guys wandered into my devious trap. [Dre laughs]

Keith: And I pecked them right up like a hungry little bird. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Killua summons a tremendous amount of electricity.

Sylvia: [continues laughing] Sorry.

Jack: Just thinking about Keith as a hungry little bird?

Sylvia: Keith as a little gosling, yeah.

Dre: Uh huh.

Sylvia: It's really funny.

[Dre and Keith make cartoonish eating noises]

[Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Killua summons a gigantic amount of electricity, wowing Tsezguerra, who says basically, like, well, first Tsezguerra says, "You're in," and we get a little tiny Killua, like a little chibi Killua, who either says, "Yes," in English, or he says, "Osu," like Zushi does, and I don't remember which it was.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Oh, there's a great "osu" in the, when Gon finally figures out [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] how to use Zetsu and Ren at the same time.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Keith: There's, like, a big crash, and we just see it from Killua's perspective in the other room. Like, big crash, look at the wall kind of concerned, and then hear the "Osu!" like, yell, and then he's like, "Nice, he figured it out," and then goes back to being competitive and whips up some big lightning to not be outdone.

Sylvia: It's so funny.

Keith: It's really good. Two good "osu"s in this.

Sylvia: So good.

Jack: Tsezguerra is surprised at how quickly Killua has learned this, and he's sort of masking that surprise, kind of. Killua, you know, says, and we've spoken about this, that he was exposed to strong electricity, quote, "from birth," and then with a real smugness, with a real sort of, like, relish, he says, "It's a family business, you see." [Keith chuckles] And I was really interested by the ways that Killua will sometimes play the "I'm a Zoldyck assassin" card, even immediately after saying, "I'm no longer an assassin, I'm a Hunter."

Keith: Yeah, he really does find it, like, a useful intimidation tool.

Jack: Yeah. Because then—

Keith: Even if he's not actually into it.

Jack: Then Tsezguerra says, "Honestly, these kids are scary." [laughs quietly]

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: Which was really funny.

Keith: Oh, one really interesting thing is Tsezguerra's, like, looking at the lightning, and he has never seen anything like this before. He says, "In theory, it's possible." Like, he has the—

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Killua has done something that this guy who calls himself or is called the Jackpot Hunter and is heading up this, you know, 50 Hunter wide, hundreds of billions of dollars project to win this game, is like, "I've never seen shit like that before."

Jack: In the room on the other side of the screening room, Killua sees, for the first time, some of the people who he is going to be going into Greed Island with. I am going to read out the descriptions. Keith, do you want to hit me with some names from the doc as I read them?

[1:00:00]

Keith: Yeah, sure. I don't have all of their names, but I could get you a list of all the names, 'cause you're probably going to say more people than I have. Do you want to give me a second to get the names?

Jack: Ooh. No, I think...uh, actually, yeah, no, I'm seeing this now. There is a Black guy in a blue and white suit, [**Keith:** Okay.] like a suit with white piping on it.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: This man's name is Abengane, or how's that said?

Keith: That's my memory of it too, but I'm not 100% sure, because they don't actually say it in these episodes.

Sylvia: I believe that is correct.

Dre: Yeah, I think so too.

Jack: There is pigtails girl, currently unnamed.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: There is a fat lady with red hair and green eyes, her hair up in a ponytail, I think?

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: There are two, I wrote down, bandit-looking fellows.

Keith: Uh, yeah, yeah.

Jack: And then there is a man with big eyebrows and sideburns, who is not long for this world. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: Oh, that's Jeet.

Sylvia: Yeah, he gets jeeted out of the story.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: The gangsters are Zetsk and Gashta Bellam.

Sylvia: Oh my god.

Jack: Great names.

Dre: Wow.

Sylvia: Is Gashta Bellam the little cat guy?

Keith: Yes, yeah, the one who's waiting for his brother.

Sylvia: I knew it.

Dre: Great.

Sylvia: I love them.

Keith: And then the woman you mentioned, her name is Mikli.

Jack: Really good names in this show. Really good names.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Then the room shakes with an explosion, and Gon enters and is like, "I did it."

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And it's revealed that he just punched a massive hole in the wall. [Dre, Keith, and Jack laugh]

Keith: It's funny, because I really feel he already could have done that, even before the training that he did. Like, if he was allowed to punch a wall before, I think they probably would have said, like, "Okay, you're in."

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Maybe.

Keith: Maybe. But it was probably a more impressive Ren, is the thing. He probably gathered his Ren better.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: 'Cause of his little training.

Jack: Everybody gets a contract, which they immediately wisely go and show to Leorio. Shoutout to Leorio.

Keith: Very funny joke.

Dre: Contract lawyer Leorio.

Sylvia: It's so funny.

Keith: So, the contract is: one, if you get hurt or die in the game, you can't sue us.

Jack: Yep. Really funny.

Keith: Two, any item you bring out of the game, you have to give to us. We get the items. And three, if you win the game, you get a 50 billion jenny reward. And then Leorio looks up, and he goes, "Looks good to me!" [laughter] and it's just so funny with a contract that says, "You can't sue us if you get hurt or die." [laughs]

Jack: It's so funny. I have to imagine the thing Leorio was looking for was a more clandestine loophole or something.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, like a trick?

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, like a trick. Although, you know, this is the first clue that we have of Battera's game, right? I think the fact that item two is "any items that come out of the game belong to Battera" started to make me think: is Battera looking for a specific item? Is Battera trying to get an item out of the game?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Beyond just can I be the first person to clear it.

Keith: And Killua also makes note of the item thing. He's like, "Shouldn't we...maybe the items are really good. Maybe we shouldn't...maybe we should try and get some items."

Jack: Yeah. And as context here, as soon as you, viewer or listener, know how Greed Island works, you are going to start thinking about items in a very specific way. So it is worth saying that, at this point, when I didn't know what the game was about, hearing all this talk about items, I was like...or rather, I was being asked to imagine the kind of game that might give me items that I would take out of the game. And I sort of got to the point where I was like, "Oh, I think it's just going to be like an RPG." You know, it's going to be like a fantasy-ish RPG where you assemble an inventory, and if we can make it out of the game with, for example, the battleax or whatever, or if we steal the dragon king's crown, we can get that out of the game. I bring this up because we're about to learn quickly that items, how items work and what they do, is Greed Island, essentially.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And so it was interesting to hear that sort of be, like, slow rolled here with this first mention of, like, you can collect items in the game, and you might be able to bring them out. And I mention it on the podcast, because the three of you, it has been a long time

since you were in a world where you didn't know what Greed Island was.

Sylvia: Yes.

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Don't even know what my life was like back then.

Jack: [sighs] Worse, probably.

Keith: Who was I? It was worse.

Dre: Ooh, yeah.

Sylvia: I mean, yeah, it was pre-transition for me, so it was worse. [laughs]

Keith: Wow.

Jack: Explicitly worse. [Sylvia and Dre laugh] Wow!

Sylvia: Like, that's just, like, empirical.

Jack: Do they coincide, learning about Greed Island?

Sylvia: I did watch this show, like, when I just started hormones. [laughs quietly]

Dre: Let's go.

Jack: Whoa. What a transitional joy.

Sylvia: Yeah, literally.

Jack: And *Hunter × Hunter* accompanies me.

Sylvia: I was practicing my Nen. [Keith laughs]

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Jack: Girl Nen.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Uh huh. [Dre laughs quietly]

Jack: Nen: it's a thing for girls.

Sylvia: Ah, truly.

Jack: Well, you would think that— based on Togashi's previous output, you would think that Nen is, in fact, not for girls, but we can't talk about that. We gotta get to that. And Leorio leaves.

Keith: It's so sad.

Jack: It's so sad.

Sylvia: Aw!

Jack: He, like, crouches down to talk to them. I always think it's really sweet. He's so much taller than them that whenever—

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: He's so their dad.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: —like, he's having an emotional moment, he, like, crouches down.

Sylvia: It's so cute. I love Leorio so much!

Keith: I said, "Saying goodbye to Leorio is so sad. I wish they could all be together, but also, wishing they could all be together is part of the show."

Sylvia: Yeah, no! It is, like...

Dre: Yeah. [Jack chuckles]

Sylvia: Ugh!

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: There's something about *Hunter × Hunter* that makes you desperately wish that it could have been the Hunter Exam forever, which I think both would have been a worse show, a happier show, but also, like, wanting that back is, I think, a major feature of, like, where *Hunter × Hunter* goes.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Can you remind us to talk about that a bit later in the episode, Keith? The, like, feeling of wanting to go back to the Hunter Exam? Because once Greed Island begins and the tone shifts, I think it's a topic that I'd like to talk a bit about.

Keith: Yeah, totally. I'll write that down.

Jack: Hey, everyone's splitting off, and now it's just Gon and Killua. Asking with no judgment: remind me again what happens when the Phantom Troupe finishes a job?

Sylvia: Oh, interesting. They sure do split up.

Keith: They split up, yeah.

Sylvia: They sure do— hmm, interesting.

Dre: Hmm.

Jack: They sure do scatter to the four winds.

Sylvia: They're almost like some sort of dark mirror to our friends here. [Keith and Dre laugh]

Keith: Sometimes darker than others.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Sylvia: But they love their friends.

Jack: And then we have a little montage, a little travel montage. It's great. God, the building tension of what is the game, what's it gonna be like. Gon and Killua sleep on a train that rumbles through the night to a huge castle. The contestants are led down the stairs to a locked room in the basement, and there are a hundred—? Maybe 50 or 60 consoles turned on in the locked room, and faces on the screens indicate that people are already playing the game. Or rather, you know, some of Battera's team is already inside Greed Island.

Keith: Multi-taps everywhere.

Dre: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Jack: Multi-taps left and right.

Keith: Another instance of rock paper scissors.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: Yeah, this is the first of the rock paper scissors encounters that we're actually going to have in this little clump of episodes.

Keith: Yeah, I said that Gon is following in Leorio's footsteps by winning an important game of rock paper scissors. [Dre chuckles]

Sylvia: Oh my god, he really is.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Wow.

Sylvia: I think Killua follows in his footsteps too.

Keith: I know. They all get their turn winning at rock paper scissors.

Sylvia: They're just like their dad.

Keith: I know.

Jack: Now we just need Kurapika to win rock paper scissors, and then the main group's all won rock paper scissors. They could all play each other.

Keith: Yeah. We just need Kurapika to win.

Sylvia: Kurapika won eyes spiders chains, so it's... [Keith laughs]

Dre: Mm.

Jack: You need to play rock paper scissors to choose the order that you're going to go into the game. This is mostly for nice story staging. They do some sort of, like, business about how the game doesn't let multiple people go into it at the same time because you have to sort of be briefed.

Sylvia: Yeah. There's a server limit.

Jack: Yeah, there's a server limit. Gon goes in first, 'cause he's Gon Freeccs. That's how it works.

Keith: You're the boy who had a save file.

Jack: Yeah. And Killua goes in 17th, and he is told by Tsezguerra that his save file, his existing— so, they actually ask him if he wants to use it, and Gon is like, “Absolutely I want to use it.”

Keith: Yeah, he says, “Ging gave me this, and I trust him.”

Jack: That's a huge error, but.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Hey, we don't technically know that.

Jack: I know it in my soul, Keith.

Keith: Yeah, you can feel it.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: I have strong feelings in my soul about Ging Freecss, and they're not good.

Keith: Well. Okay, we'll talk about it.

Jack: Gon's save file is going to give him something, but the place he's going to go, the place you enter the game will be the same. I think some new music starts to play here, Keith, or this might just be, like, the...

Keith: So, there's two things. One is "Go On!", which is a reimagining of one of the earlier tracks. I wish I had it, but I can—

Jack: It's the one that goes, [imitates music]

Keith: Yes. So, there's an electric guitar version of that that's "Go On!" Here, I'll put it in there, 'cause I don't have a button for it right now. Sylvi, I think this what you were talking about.

Sylvia: Yeah, the—

Keith: And then it plays the Greed Island theme again.

Sylvia: There's...oh, wait, hold on. No, this isn't what I was talking about.

Keith: Oh, okay.

Sylvia: There is...I think it's the next episode. There...

Dre: Is it the fiddle music, Sylvi?

Sylvia: No, they add, like, a choral aspect to one of the songs that we've heard before.

Dre: Hmm.

Keith: Huh. So, there's actually— there's only two new songs in these four episodes. There's the theme, and there's an unreleased theme of a character that has no name, but I got the thing, so I have it.

Jack: Cool. Gon disappears into the game.

Keith: What?

Jack: It has happened. This has begun. Shock from the people in the room, but in a kind of really fun Togashi move, it's not a shock to the audience, because we saw the Phantom Troupe do it.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah. This does have some music that I want to press, because it's one of the two songs that shows up every time there's, like, Nen stuff happening. There's "Latent Power" and "Auras". "Auras" is the really creepy one that starts off the next episode, [Dre: Mm.] but "Latent Power" is the one that ends this episode, and they both play on the same sort of opening landscape, or actually it plays for the whole time that Gon is getting the lesson of "hey, what is Greed Island" from the Greed Island girl that we meet. Here we go.

[clip of "Latent Power" plays]

Jack: It's really nice.

Keith: It's really fun. Lots of, like, weird sort of glass-like harmonies.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah. Playing synth pads is a headache, [Keith laughs] because you think that they are going to be so straightforward, and you have to be so circumspect in your composing with them, so whenever I hear really lovely simple synth pads, I'm like, "Oh, that must have been a lot of work." Right. [laughs quietly]

Keith: Do we want to talk about what happens when he gets sucked into the game?

Jack: Yeah. Okay. Gon is in a sort of bizarre shimmering white loading space. It's mostly white. It is high tech, but it's a sort of mother of pearl or crystalline high tech. There's this sort of, like, symbol work etched in shimmering colors on the white walls. And he passes through a door to meet a young woman sitting in a sort of, like, egg desk? [Dre laughs]

Keith: Yep.

Jack: Wearing a really weird headset.

Sylvia: I love this design. It's so good.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: She has gray hair. Yeah. She's...let me see. What's the easiest way to, like, actually describe...? This is a woman with gray pigtails, young woman with gray pigtails and a black dress or shirt.

Keith: Her helmet looks like the prince from *Katamari Damacy*.

Jack: Yeah, it's very, very wide and is covering her ears. [Dre laughs] Her pigtails are kind of, like, peeking out the top. And she has this, like, motif of eyes all over her helmet and over her shirt. We get a view of her from behind her desk at one point, and I can't tell whether she is either sort of sitting cross-legged in a sort of bony chair or if everything below her waist is this sort of, like, bony sort of skeletal structure.

Keith: You're saying she might be the chair.

Jack: Yeah. What did I write? "This woman is either sitting in a chair or her lower torso is a strange bone-like construction." Does this woman have a name?

Keith: Yeah. Her name— I can't look at it without reading "ETA", but I believe that her name is Eta.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Okay. Cool. 'Cause I didn't know if— her character design is so singular that I didn't know if she would be— I expected that she would be more than, for example, Heavens Arena attendant three.

Keith: Heavens Arena, yeah. Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Now, we're gonna have to tell you how this game works, or at least how it is presented to us in this episode.

Keith: I've got a list. I have a list of all the stuff she says, if we want to just go through it quickly and then comment on stuff that needs commenting on, or we can really tease it out.

Jack: Let's go through it quickly.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: It is, as I understand it, going to be this arc, is this mechanic.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah. Anyone who's wearing a ring has two spells available to them. Book—

Jack: And they say spells. This is not Nen.

Keith: Spells.

Jack: In fact, it's crucially not Nen.

Keith: It's crucially not Nen.

Dre: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Keith: Book and Gain. Your task is to seek out and collect certain cards. That binder is for storing the cards you've collected. That's what Eta says to Gon and then explains the two parts of the binder. There's the front part for specified cards. You have 100 specified card slots. Each slot is labeled with a number. You may only place a card if its number corresponds. There's also 45 free slots. That is for things like spells that are not

for winning the game but for— spells that you need to win the game but spells that you need to get other cards to then win the game. You must obtain—

[1:15:08]

Jack: Yeah. Like, a brief...

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: A brief example here is, like, a numbered card would be, like, the dragon king's crown.

Keith: Right.

Jack: And a non-numbered card would be, like, rock you throw.

Keith: Yes, exactly.

Dre: Mm-hmm. Or, like, town portal.

Keith: Right.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Or, crucially, Leave. You need to get a card called Leave to leave Greed Island.

Dre: Uh huh.

Jack: Yes.

Keith: You must obtain 100 items and transform them into cards to win the game. You must use a card as the item by using Gain to turn it back into an item. Sorry, *may* use a card as an item by using Gain to turn it back into an item. So, you get an item and it turns into a card. You can then turn that card back into the item, but once you've done that, the card is gone. That's it. It can either be used as a slot card or used as an item.

Jack: Steam starts coming out of Gon Freecss's ears. [Keith laughs]

Keith: Once you've used Gain, it can't transform back. Every item in the game has a limit to the number of times it can be converted. So, let's say that three people have the dragon king's crown, and the dragon king's crown lets you jump twice as high, and three people have used that card to get that crown. You can now no longer use your card to turn it into the crown that lets you jump twice as high. Also, if you...there's two rules I didn't write. Let's see if I can remember them. If you don't put your card in a slot for 60 seconds after getting the card, it turns back into an item, and then it's done. It automatically uses Gain on. And then there was a second thing. Did anyone remember the second rule?

Jack: Yeah, this is really...this rule cements where Greed Island starts getting really interesting for me.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: If a player dies, [**Keith:** Right.] their book and ring disappear and cannot be recovered.

Keith: Right.

Jack: You can't kill someone and get the contents of their book.

Keith: No.

Jack: And Gon says, "I don't think it matters to you, if you're dead," which is such a great piece of Gon belief, [Keith laughs] where it's like, Gon can't conceive of the possibly that the—

Keith: Right, the motivation.

Jack: Yeah, exactly. The book being valuable after your death, it's like, "Well, I'd be dead."

Keith: Yeah. Right.

Jack: It's not going to matter to me.

Keith: And then has to, like, learn this in the next episode, which is really funny.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Like, him not getting it then means that, later on, Killua's going to have to explain it to him, which is very funny.

Jack: Okay. Listener, if, like, Gon Freeccs, steam is coming out of your ears, here it is in one sentence: Greed Island is a game about collecting 100 numbered cards representing items and storing them in a book that you carry with you.

Keith: While having to protect that book from hostile Hunters who are also trying to do that.

Jack: Yep.

Keith: In order to make \$50 billion and get a magic item for real.

Jack: And as Gon descends the stairs into the game—sort of stairs appear in the floor and Eta is like, “Go down that,”—something happens.

Keith: Oh, yes. Lights everywhere. It's an arcade all of a sudden. The white circuitry everywhere sort of starts turning into a multicolor rainbow thing. Looks like a modern computer with all those LEDs everywhere on rainbow mode. We get a message—

Sylvia: They also...

Keith: Oh, go ahead.

Sylvia: Oh, I was saying a lot of this stuff also looks like the— I think it's worth mentioning, because it's in the title sequence too. There's a lot of— remember the writing on the Nen thread that Wing put on his...?

Keith: Yes, yeah.

Sylvia: On Gon's finger. There's a lot of characters that look like that in some of the, like, architecture and stuff. Like, it's pointed out on the ring, but in this, like, study area

around the room.

Keith: Oh, yeah. Is it *Hunter × Hunter* writing?

Sylvia: I genuinely don't know. I think it is different.

Keith: Okay.

Sylvia: I think Nen writing is a different thing, but if I'm wrong, I'm sure someone will correct me.

Keith: I have the message here, if you want me to read it real quick, or if someone else wants to read it, that's also fine.

Sylvia: Nah, go for it.

Jack: Yeah, we should just hear it verbatim. It's heartbreaking.

Keith: Yeah. "Glad to see you made it in, Gon. This is the game I made with my friends. Hope you like it. If you thought there'd be a clue to help you find me though, well, too bad. I just wanted to show off my game. It doesn't matter what brought you here, because you won't be able to leave until you obtain a certain item. So, go ahead, play your heart out."

Sylvia: This deadbeat motherfucker.

Jack: This motherfucker.

Sylvia: This deadbeat shithead game designer. I'm gonna strangle him. [laughs quietly]
I'm gonna kill Ging Freeccs!

Jack: Well, either way you cut it, it is sinister.

Sylvia: He sucks!

Jack: Either—

Keith: I can't talk about— I cannot say what I want to say about this.

Jack: Okay. Yeah.

Sylvia: Ugh!

Jack: I'm gonna commit what I think to the recording so that we have it. Either Ging Freeccs set up this whole, like, the Nen box, the box to be given to Gon when, you know, the old woman— Mito keeps throwing it out, and the old woman keeps bringing it back. Learning the Nen to open the box. Getting the money to buy Greed Island. All of this, and it ultimately amounts to Ging just being like, “I made a game with my friends, and I guess I want you to see it, and I know you're looking for a clue to find me, but I warned you that it wasn't going to be easy, so, you know. [clicks tongue.] I'm doing what I said.” It's that kind of thing where it's like, “Well, you can't be hurt by me. I told you I'm an asshole,” you know?

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Or he is lying, he's lying in this moment, and there is a clue in this game. And either of those is sinister in a different way.

Keith: What I'll say is: five, six episodes ago, I was like— when we were on Whale Island the last time, I said, “There's going to be a time where...if I don't say it now, you're going to think I'm defending Ging, but I'm not. [Sylvia laughs] But I'm telling you now that I'm going to explain what I think Ging is doing, but it's not defending him,” and that is still true. This is part of that whole thing where I'm like, I totally get— I think. I feel right about what's happening here, which, you know, is definitely partially up to the imagination, I think. And the explanation of what's happening, I think, sounds like a defense but isn't, and we will talk about it later. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Yeah. I mean, the thing that— you know, this is a show, to quote that great tweet about the boy whose dad goes out to find cigarettes [**Sylvia:** Yep.] and he follows him to see if cigarettes are all they're cracked up to be.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: You know.

Sylvia: Dear Gon, I'm sorry that your father is not active inside your world. [Jack laughs]
We have a full Kendrick about this right now. Deadbeat motherfucker.

Jack: Setting aside my— you know, what I mean to say is we are going to keep talking about Ging, and I have to imagine that it must be frustrating for the three of you to not be able to talk about the long view, and it's frustrating for me to feel that there is this kind of, like, there's stuff happening here that I don't have full access to yet—

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: —that I would love to talk about, but we can't get there.

Keith: We can talk about Ging. I can spend an hour talking about Ging, easily.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Easily could spend one full hour just talking about Ging.

Sylvia: He is one of the most interesting characters in the series.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Like, I'll give him that.

Jack: Oh. I believe Ging is the first face we see in the new title sequence. Is that correct?

Keith: Oh, yeah.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: That is absolutely correct.

Keith: We actually—

Jack: Yeah, he's standing on a mountain in a robe.

Keith: We see him a lot in these couple episodes. We see him at the beginning of the opening. We also see him because Gon is thinking about him when he decides to use his own save file. And then, only a few minutes later, we're hearing his voice, like, for only the second time.

Jack: Yeah. That's a lot of Ging.

Keith: It's a lot of Ging.

Sylvia: Yeah, he's becoming, like, an actual presence in the show.

Dre: Oh, that is only the second time, huh?

Keith: Yeah, only the second time.

Dre: It's that and the recording, right?

Keith: Yep. Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: My fury at Ging Freeccs, deadbeat dad, leader... [laughs quietly] Deadbeat dad leader of the Freeccs family.

Sylvia: Leader of the deadbeat dad club.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Deadbeat dad thought leader, Ging Freeccs.

Jack: Yeah, exactly.

Sylvia: That is spelled not the way you think.

Jack: My fury at him briefly eclipsed. Useful piece of information: I know where Greed Island came from. It was built by Ging Freeccs and his friends.

Keith: Yep.

Jack: We know that— uh, what's the thing we knew Ging Freeccs kind of was? He's kind of like a historian, right?

Keith: Yeah, he's an—

Jack: Or like a—

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: He's an archeologist that goes from country to country, excavating destroyed and forgotten ruins and then granting—

Jack: And, like, making them accessible.

Keith: Making them accessible to the public and granting them to the people that live there.

Jack: Interesting. And he also constructed Greed Island.

Keith: Yep.

Dre: And also abandoned his only child. [laughs]

Jack: And also abandoned his only child.

Sylvia: You know? [laughs quietly]

Jack: I've never—

Keith: Asterisk around that. There is also the manga canon trial [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] to take custody away from him by Mito.

Sylvia: That's true, but I'm just saying, I think it's really funny that he's a game dev who abandoned his son. [Sylvia and Jack laugh] Like, that's really funny!

Jack: Ah, god. Gon steps out onto grass in an enormous plane, a grassy plane with

little lakes and ponds, and the camera pans out to reveal— pans, Jesus. The camera pulls out to reveal [Sylvia laughs] that he has left a colorful red building with a thatched roof and, like, a tower room bolted on the side of it.

Sylvia: I love these shots.

Jack: Yeah. I think—

Sylvia: There's a couple in these episodes of, like, wide shots of Greed Island, and I think it looks really pretty.

Jack: Yeah, let's talk about this now. Greed Island has a really distinctive look that we haven't seen in the show before. There is something very toylike about it. There is something very— it's video-game-like, but it's also kind of surrealist. Really strange use of color, not in the way that JoJo uses color, where it's like [Sylvia: No.] the camera has painted things in this way, but it's as though the inhabitants of this place have. There's a great bit later where they leave this, like, brightly red and white painted building that looks like a cross between a lighthouse and a buoy, and they were just hanging out in there for some reason. There's this thatched roof building with the red paint on the side. There is also an amazing sequence later in a canyon full of enormous towering stone rocks. The show's doing a lot of work where it's like— during the Hunter Exam and prior to Yorknew, the show was so colorful and so expressive in its art.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And then it got so visually dark and gray during Yorknew, for the most part. The Phantom Troupe are very colorful. And then, in moving out of it, it's as though it hasn't quite returned to the sort of colorspace of the main show but has even gone a little further, has gone a little stranger and more— I keep thinking of Dr. Suess.

Sylvia: Sure.

Jack: I keep thinking of, like, naïve art, the history of naïve art, and I also think of, like, the way children draw landscapes and towns.

Sylvia: [laughs] Yeah.

Keith: Oh, yeah. [Dre chuckles]

Jack: Is, like, a lot of the way Greed Island looks to me.

Dre: Yeah. That's true.

Keith: As we move out of episode 60 and into episode 61, I do want to say one more thing about Ging we have. It's easy to overlook just because of how little we have, is our first time hearing Ging's voice is because he's put a message into that cassette tape, he Nen-ified a cassette tape, and now we have learned for sure that he made Greed Island with his friends and Nen-ified all of these games, which I think is just an interesting thing. The only thing that we know about Ging's abilities as a Hunter is that he seems to do something that only Wing has done before, which is, like, put some Nen into an object and just, like, let it hang out and, like, be a Nen object. Ging is, like, doing that all over town.

Dre: Hmm.

Jack: Yeah, we've seen a couple of Nen objects. Computers keep showing up as Nen objects as well. There's that bit where they get sucked into the computer to go in the website. [laughs quietly]

Keith: Oh, right, yeah, sure.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: But I think you're right.

Dre: And specifically we're saying here something that has been intentionally infused with Nen, not, like, the artifacts and stuff that they bought [**Keith:** Right.] at the auction that were just...

Keith: Right, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Dre: Unintentional Nen, I guess?

Keith: Unintentional Nen, yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Nen seepage.

Jack: Don't say that. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Yeah, don't.

Sylvia: I don't mind it. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Yeah, you wouldn't.

Sylvia: Wow. [Dre laughs]

Episode 61 [1:28:26]

Jack: As the players arrive in Greed Island, they can tell immediately that they are being watched. Almost everybody comments on this.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Gon notices it first, and then more and more people notice it.

Keith: As Gon's sitting there waiting for Killua, number 17.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Killua's noticing it is so funny to me.

Jack: Oh, yeah. How does it work?

Keith: He walks out the door, and then, like, before he's even fully in frame, he goes, like, [quickly] "We're being watched." [Keith and Jack laugh]

Dre: “Hey, in case you didn't know. I knew, though. I knew.”

Jack: The pacing and delivery on a lot of the jokes between Gon and Killua is so funny. You know, this is a show without a lot of overlapping dialogue. In fact, I think there's very little overlapping dialog, and very often the lines are very precise in their delivery, are very, you know, metered, even when they're really interesting, well delivered lines. But the way that Gon and Killua will either banter with each other or will deliver information very bluntly to each other, almost as though they're stepping on the heels of each other's lines, never stops being funny for me.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: I wonder if...I don't know much about how shonen anime or anime in general or even *Hunter × Hunter* here was produced. What are the odds that Gon and Killua's actors were in the same room when they were recording? Very very low, right?

Keith: Probably pretty low.

Sylvia: I don't know.

Keith: That's just my guess, though.

Sylvia: I don't know enough about the production. Yeah.

Dre: Yeah, I don't know either.

Sylvia: I don't feel comfortable saying either way. [laughs quietly]

Keith: I know that a lot of voice actors work from home.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: They have recording booths in, like, a closet or a corner with some sheets. I know that's very common, especially for dubs, so.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: But with the— I have no idea what's going on in Japan.

Jack: But they have great chemistry, and whether that chemistry is a result of skilled writing and performance or whether it's a result of, you know, being in the same room with each other. I imagine it's the former. And we know really— oh, Killua is disappointed that Ging didn't leave any items in the book.

Sylvia: Understandably so.

Jack: He was sort of hoping that they'd have items in there, and Gon is like—

Keith: Yeah, 'cause it was a save file.

Jack: Yeah. Gon is like, “No,” and he doesn't mention that he also didn't leave any clues. At first, I thought this was because he was trying to hide that from Killua, but my read on it now is actually that he hasn't internalized that, that he's so excited to be here in the game on the hunt for his dad, that he's sort of just brushed past “oh, there were no clues.”

Keith: My read on it is it's similar, but it's almost like it's not important to him that there aren't any clues.

Dre: Yeah. Or he's just used to it, at this point.

Keith: Yeah, or that he's decided he can make his own clues.

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] My dad wasn't there for the first 12 years of my life.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Why would he be here now? [Jack chuckles]

Keith: And Gon is also so honest that getting the message from his dad— and then this is sort of discussed later on in the episode. Getting the message from his dad and his dad saying, like, “I hope you like my game. Please enjoy the game.” To me, it feels like

Gon accepts that and, like, literally sets off to go do that.

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Which is why he gets mad about it when it seems like other people aren't enjoying Ging's game.

Jack: Yes. [Keith laughs] God, that's bit's great. Immediately, the people that are watching them sort of begin to make an appearance, as a man leaps from the sky in a ball of light. He is wearing a headset. He has short purple dreadlocks, he has facial piercings, and he is holding a book. This is another player, and he—

Keith: This guy's name is Latarza.

Jack: Latarza. Great immediate character design. Also not long for this world.

Keith: No.

Dre: No.

Keith: Not long at all.

Jack: He uses a card on them, and...god. This was sort of the moment when I— you know, even having had the rules explained to me, this was the point at which I went, “Oh, we're doing this. We're really doing this? This is—”

Keith: It does a great job of showing you [**Dre:** Yeah.] what an encounter in this game means.

Jack: Yeah. I mean, I loved it, but it was with a sort of, like, yawing pit opening up in my stomach, [Dre laughs] as I foresaw, you know, oh boy, this is the show. Because we get full screen art of a card. They look a bit like *Pokémon* cards. They look like *Magic: The Gathering* cards, *Pokémon* cards.

Keith: They look like *Magic: The Gathering* cards, yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Right down to they have, um...I'll say it now. We can get it out of the way. They have a number in the left, which indicates that card number. You know, it could be numberless, or it could be a number that fits into one of those 100 slots [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] that we talked about earlier, the special items.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It also has—

Sylvia: Or if it's, like, higher, it just means it's not one of them.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Oh yeah, that's true.

Sylvia: Like, if it's beyond 100, it means it's a card that isn't— it's a free slot card, and you can use it for stuff. They get some in, like, the next episode, I think?

Jack: Yeah, they get some fish.

Sylvia: Or maybe this episode? Yeah, when they eat their spaghetti. [Dre laughs]

Jack: Then there's the card rarity, which runs, I believe, from F to triple S or double S?

Sylvia: I think it's triple.

Dre: Yeah, I think so.

Jack: And then there is a number that—

Sylvia: So, wait, no, I think it runs from...doesn't it run, like, from H?

Jack: Oh, it might run from H.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: There's some really funny...we see a character later with—

Keith: Oh, yeah, H to double S, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: A card that's just Rock that you pick up and throw at someone. [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: And that is a very low rank one. So, then, the final number on the card is its— Keith sort of referred to it earlier as, and I think we'll probably call it in the show, like, the cap number?

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: This is the number of times that it can be converted into an item. You know, if you've exceeded that, if the cap number is five and five people have turned the card that is the dragon king's crown into an item, I don't know what happens, but you can't do it. I don't know what the outcome is.

Keith: It's the conversion limit, I think is what they call it.

Jack: The conversion limit. That's what they call it.

Dre: Yeah, that's what it's called.

Jack: Yeah. Also on the card is a title—the card that is immediately deployed here is Steal—and its power, which reveals all free slots of the target player that you have met in the game, and this Hunter is using it to test whether or not these are new players. of course, they do seem to be new players, because they just climbed out of the new player zone.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: That could be a trap. But Steal reveals that it doesn't work, because there are no cards in the binder, and therefore the person is like, "Haha! Confirmed!" And Gon and Killua are watching this with the same vibe that I watch, you know, like, a fighting game, which is mostly confusion and then a kind of, like, mild curiosity about what all of this is implying. [Dre chuckles]

Keith: Yeah, it's nice. We see him do a little bit of strategy and choose one card over another card, 'cause he's like, "I know these guys are new to the game. I'm not gonna waste my better card," and then the second that happens is when he uses Trace, the card that he shoots. He, like, targets it on Killua, and it shoots out, like, an energy beam that Killua tries to avoid, and we learn the very important thing that you can't run away from spells in this game. They are 100% hit rates. And what Trace does, the text of Trace is that, like, it lets you know whatever that player is in the game. It's just, like, on you now.

Jack: This is such joyful bullshit to me. Any of the kind of resentment and frustration that I felt about seeing Nen boil— do what I believed to be a boiling down of magic

[**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] to, at that time, what I thought were, what, six archetypes?

Keith: Yeah. [Dre chuckles]

Jack: And I suppose there are six archetypes, but, you know.

Keith: They're just very broad tents.

Jack: I find this just wildly joyful. It's something about the combination—

Keith: Sorry, this was, like, my next question, so I'm glad we got there naturally.

Jack: Yeah. It's something about being in a game. It's something about Gon and Killua being up against someone who knows how to use it really well, and they don't, and that is an antagonistic position. You know, it's not like I'm teaching you this. It's like, look, you gotta figure this out. It makes it feel much more like a puzzle. I think it also feels less...two things. I think it feels less foundational, in the sense that it's not Nen, the magic that underpins the universe, and is instead a series of mechanics for a video

game. And I also think that it's not being delivered drily, and that's kind of a failing on—not failing. That's kind of a result of my own feeling about being like, "I'm not interested in just watching these fuckers learn Nen." [Sylvia laughs] But I am interested in trying to figure out the rules of this weird game.

I think it's also, like, a personal taste thing, where one of my favorite sort of archetypes of play in video games is a box of mechanics that I don't understand and that are only barely explained to me that I am having to figure out through context clues. That is, like, a kind of play that I really enjoy in a game, and watching *Hunter × Hunter* sort of imply that, like, that's what this arc is about was so exciting to me.

Keith: We talked a little bit about this kind of thing, not so specifically, in the Q&A episode that we did a couple weeks ago, if you want to listen to that. I think it turned out really well.

Sylvia: It's great.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It was great.

Keith: But yeah, we do— there is, like, a ton of Gon and Killua, just in these couple episodes in Greed Island, Gon and Killua, like, trying to figure out what Greed Island is and what it means to, like, live there.

Jack: Yes. There's a game that's been released recently called *Animal Well*, which on the surface of it is a sort of metroidvania platformer set in this sort of, like, strange underground flooded cave.

Keith: Yeah. And it is a vania.

Jack: It—

Keith: It is a— you can't— undeniably a vania.

Jack: I don't know what you mean by that.

Keith: It's just a dumb Run Button joke.

Jack: Oh. [Jack, Dre, and Sylvia laugh] See, Keith, this is why I've been building my defenses and you have— Keith has actually been trying to do the— what is it called? Subscribe to Run Button May Or Else?

Keith: Oh, yeah, Subscribe to Run Button on YouTube Or Else Month.

Jack: Yeah, the update on that is that Keith got stuck in the circular eel trap [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] that I laid in my back garden, for about three weeks.

Dre: Ohh.

Jack: And then, using methodology that he had worked out for a year before, escaped my eel trap and freed all my eels.

Keith: Yeah. And I'll say this: watch out for those eels.

Jack: I'm afraid. We are in a sort of temporary truce in order to record both this and the PALISADE finale, but, um...I'm looking out my window right now. Keith's drawing his thumb across his throat.

Keith: Yep. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: He's holding a flaming torch above his head.

Keith: I've got the Rodecaster Pro plugged into a portable power bank.

Jack: And you're sharpening a bowie knife.

Dre: I was gonna say, you sound great, Keith.

Keith: Oh, yeah, it's my exact same setup. I'm just walking around in Michigan.

Sylvia: The zombie audience is right behind him.

Keith: Yep. [Jack and Dre laugh]

Sylvia: (??? 1:39:36)

Keith: I took a train to Michigan.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: And I just sort of walked barefoot from the train, covered in knives, with the Rodecaster on, a power bank ready.

Jack: Defeated 400 eels.

Keith: Yeah. So, if you want an episode in two weeks, you better hope Jack subscribes to Run Button. [Jack and Sylvia laugh]

Jack: To my point, the thing that *Animal Well* ends up revealing that it's about is, like, these complex mechanical interactions that are barely explained to you, and you know, you're just sort of, like, figuring out what the game is as you're playing, and that's always been something I've loved. I love *Dwarf Fortress*. Greed Island is what if *Dwarf Fortress* was— well, *Dwarf Fortress* is made by a maniac.

Keith: [laughs] That's almost its main feature.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: That is almost its main— *Dwarf Fortress* is made by two maniacs, please.

Sylvia: Greed Island was made by a maniac.

Jack: Yeah, that's absolutely true. Killua says, "What did you just do to me?" and the camera goes into Killua's horror movie monster mode, where he's suddenly lit like a...

Keith: Yeah, scary Killua mode.

Jack: It's great. And this poor fuck, who has gotten so reliant on Greed Island spellcraft that they've forgotten just sort of, like, sheer outside of game power, immediately

teleports away to a town called Masadora. We don't follow them. He just says, "Masadora, away!" and uses a card to teleport.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, if you're not watching along, how dare you, but when they do the travel spells, they turn into, like, *Dragon Ball Z*, like, ki blasts.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Yeah, it's great.

Jack: Are these cards Togashi's illustrations from the books? This seems like a place where you could get, like, his direct drawing of how he drew the cards.

Keith: Oh, that's a great question.

Sylvia: I don't know.

Dre: I don't know either.

Sylvia: I will say, I do— this is, like, a minor thing. Eventually, there is, like, a chapter in the manga that just has the description of, like, all of the hundred cards.

Keith: Wow.

Dre: Ooh.

Sylvia: My girlfriend's been reading, and she told me about it. I haven't looked ahead.

Jack: [chuckles] You know what happens!

Sylvia: I do know what happens, [Keith laughs] but if, for some reason, you know, I just gotta say. It's different when I start reading the manga, though, because if I get too hooked into that, I get to the point where I don't know what happens.

Jack: Yeah, that's true.

Sylvia: And I want to keep it that way until we are all there.

Jack: Thank you, Sylvi.

Sylvia: Of course.

Keith: Huh, weirdly, the *Hunter × Hunter* wiki has a screenshot of the 2011 and 1999 anime, but they don't have the image from the manga.

Dre: Hmm.

Sylvia: I have the chapter written down.

Keith: They're slightly different.

Jack: Okay. Yeah. I wonder if, on some level, that's a licensing thing, of just like, we're not using the exact image from the manga.

Sylvia: Also probably just a practicality thing too, adapting, like...

Keith: Okay.

Jack: Yeah. We might need them to do a slightly different thing, or...

Sylvia: That type of linework. Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: You know what? I've now looked at three different cards, and one of them didn't have a comparison with the manga, and the other two were both the same in all three basically, except for colors.

Jack: Hmm. Interesting. We talk about Togashi's drifting camera so often that it might as well be a joke. You get to tick it off in the bingo of Media Club Plus.

Sylvia: He's just a little Lakitu like in Mario.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: He is just a little Lakitu.

Sylvia: He's just floating around on his little cloud, got a little fishing rod with a camera on it, and he's just bebopping around the city.

Jack: Now he has established his drifting perspective and has sort of introduced a bunch of core players. He has revealed that he is the absolute master of "meanwhile..."

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And over these episodes, Togashi starts exercising "meanwhile..." [Dre laughs] in some really really joyful ways, including a sad one. Meanwhile, in the Phantom Troupe headquarters, the Spiders have made a shrine to Pakunoda.

Keith: Mm.

Sylvia: Oh my god.

Jack: There is a Christian cross.

Sylvia: Yep. [laughs quietly]

Jack: And her gun.

Keith: Right side up or upside down?

Sylvia: [voice] Catholicism confirmed!

Jack: It's right side up, right?

Sylvia: I think it straight up is, like, hard to tell. [Sylvia and Jack laugh quietly]

Jack: Catholicism confirmed. We know that Judas is real, and, you know.

Sylvia: I'm just saying.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Dre: Yeah. Satan or the Devil.

Jack: Yeah. And her grave is covered or her shrine is covered in white lilies. Really, really pretty shot, immediately moved over by the fact that Shalnark has had an idea. Doesn't tell us what this idea is yet, but he is assembling a crew to go into Greed Island, and I believe he asks for them by name, right? He brings in Kortopi deliberately, and then, does he ask for Shizuku, or is she just like, "I'll come"?

Keith: Well, he does end up delivering an important thing about Shizuku in the powerpoint, so I think he's asked deliberately.

Dre: I think so. That sounds right.

Jack: And as soon as I knew that Kortopi was going into the game...I'll just let you, the listener, start drawing some conclusions here, in a brief moment of silence. I thought to myself, "This game is not balanced for Kortopi." [Keith and Dre laugh] And I was sort of right, but Togashi is thinking of this, both in the sense of—

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Togashi has nerfed Kortopi. [laughs quietly]

[1:45:00]

Jack: Togashi has both nerfed Kortopi and made it really interesting for Kortopi to be in this game, but part of that is what Shalnark wants to test, and that's about as much of that as we see. I don't think we see them go into the game, but we do just get, like, more and more of the Phantom Troupe are now starting to rock up to Greed Island.

Keith: Yeah, we cut later to them already in.

Jack: I wrote down a note here, and I don't remember where it came from, but I noticed that Killua is completely unconcerned by the magic in this game.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I think it might be because this spell that the person has put on Killua, which allows him to be tracked indefinitely, doesn't bother him.

Keith: Yeah, he basically says, "I don't feel any different. It's probably some magic that only works in the game, and we'll figure it out later."

Jack: Yep.

Keith: For now, they're hungry.

Jack: And they arrive in a large fantasy town. This is a fantasy town drawn by Studio Ghibli or children? Sort of a cross between the two, I think. Prizes are pinned up on sheets of paper everywhere. The town is absolutely bustling. This is Antokiba, the Town of Prizes. This also reminds me a lot of the old— as well as obviously being, like, a JRPG reference or an RPG reference in general, it reminds me a lot of the, like, Steve Jackson's sword and sorcery adventure game books, where you're like, this is the city port of traps, you know, this is the town of whatever.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: And, you know, you come over the hills into the town of prizes. There's a rock paper scissors tournament in September, which was interesting to me. There are months in Greed Island. Weird.

Keith: Yeah. And it must be September, because they do that.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Well, yeah, 'cause Yorknew City Arc was in September.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Oh, right, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah. Come on.

Keith: Sorry, yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Sorry, Sylvi, I forgot—

Sylvia: I did a whole bit about wanting to figure out when September 11 was in *Hunter × Hunter*. [Keith and Dre laugh]

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: It could be— this could be the day. We don't know.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It could be.

Keith: It could be.

Jack: But Yorknew City and Greed Island are in the same day. Oh well, lots of video games sync their server clocks to the real world.

Sylvia: Yeah. [laughs quietly] I mean, we find out why.

Jack: Yeah, we sure will.

Sylvia: You know.

Jack: They're giving away a grand prize: the Sword of Truth. This is exciting. This is our first sort of, like, clearly numbered card.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: But not much is sort of focused on it. They go to the restaurant. Even in the

restaurant, there is a speed eating competition that lets you win a card that is—help me out here—just an edible fish?

Keith: Yeah, it's a fish, yeah.

Sylvia: There's something about its eggs being, like, part of a thing to help with long life.

Dre: Mm, yeah.

Sylvia: In the description. I didn't write it down, unfortunately.

Jack: What's the function of the card in the game? Rations?

Sylvia: Uh...

Keith: Yeah, could be. Healing.

Sylvia: They sell them, so...

Jack: Oh, they do sell them.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: I think it's more of an economy thing with a lot of that stuff. They also talk about, later, going and fighting monsters to earn money in Masadora.

Keith: Right.

Sylvia: In the last episode we watched this week.

Jack: The chef is a cat man.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: I love him.

Jack: Well, he's not quite a cat man. He is— put it this way.

Keith: His name is Cat Diner NPC.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yes, he is a cat man in the same way Green Green Jellybean Man is a bean.

Sylvia: Sure.

Keith: Yeah, what if you gave a man slightly pointy ears, whiskers, two little fangs, smiley cat eyes, and a chef hat with a cat on it.

Jack: And he's an NPC, in that he has limited information. He, like, doesn't under—

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] You just described what a furry is.

Jack: [laughs quietly] He doesn't understand—

Keith: No, furries are people who dress up.

Sylvia: Okay.

Dre: Hmm.

Jack: And not chefs inside Greed Island. What's the word that he doesn't know the meaning of? It's, like, "danger" or something.

Sylvia: It's "magic".

Jack: It's magic?

Keith: Yeah, he doesn't know spells.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: He's like, "Magic? What's that?"

Keith: He's like, "I don't know about magic."

Jack: "I just make food."

Dre: He looks kind of like a *Dragon Ball* character to me.

Sylvia: Little bit.

Keith: He does look kind of like a *Dragon Ball* character, yeah. He could show up somewhere in original *Dragon Ball*, for sure.

Sylvia: He cooks for president dog or whatever the fuck its name is. [Dre laughs] His personal chef.

Jack: Wait, there's a dog? What?

Keith: Yeah, the president of the world is a dog, yeah.

Sylvia: We talked about this, didn't we? The president of the world being a dog?

Jack: No, we didn't. We did not mention that.

Sylvia: When did— did we not—?

Keith: All right, I'll get you...

Sylvia: Maybe we talked about this with Austin?

Dre: Oh, his name is King Furry.

Sylvia: Oh! You know what this is? This came up on a stream that I did with Austin, Ali, and Janine.

Jack: Oh, no, we did talk about that guy. We did talk about that guy.

Sylvia: Okay.

Jack: I don't think I knew that he was the president of the world. [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah, Ali tried to make him in *Dragon's Dogma*.

Keith: You can't tell just from looking at him?

Jack: [chuckles] I can't tell. Yeah, I tuned into that stream late, post- the revelation that

he is the president of the world.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: He's got— his fit is immaculate.

Sylvia: Yeah, this is NPC Chef Cat's dad. [Jack and Dre laugh]

Jack: President of the World Dog.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Then a man explodes outside. Explodes using a spell? No. Explodes in, like, a burst of gore that we don't see, but he's lying in a massive pool of blood. Most of the NPCs either just, like, crowd around silently, but other players in the game are, like, freaking out.

Keith: Poor Jeet. We hardly knew ye.

Jack: This is the man with eyebrows and sideburns. His body disappears after it explodes.

Keith: It sort of, like, vaporizes away like, you know, like in a video game when it's done with a dead body [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] and it just sort of pops away.

Jack: And then a man comes up, and he says, "This guy died because someone killed him with Nen."

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And we are introduced to the idea of Player Hunters, and I sort of knew that this was going to be the case, that there would be this sort of PVP element, but I'm so interested by the fact that— there's a detail here that comes up in a bit that will really sort of click it together. They're not using spells to do this. You know, people have brought Nen into the game, a thing you need to play in the game, and are just using it murderously against each other.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: This man's name is...

Keith: Nickes.

Jack: Nickes. He has shortish spiky, ooh, what color would you call that?

Keith: Red.

Jack: Dusky purply red hair?

Keith: It's like a purply red, yeah.

Jack: He's an older fellow. He's, like, an adult.

Keith: Right.

Jack: He has a sort of chiseled face. He is wearing a hoodie underneath a blazer. He has a sort of calm stature. And he says, "Listen. Do you want to team up? There is a way. We have figured out a way to clear this game, and we are recruiting members to do it."

Keith: Yeah. He and his crew are specifically going around to the new crop of players and being like, "Look: You can get out of here in three months, IF you team up with us, OR you'll be stuck here forever like we have been."

Jack: And not just you can get out of here in three months. You can get out of here with the victory.

Keith: Right. With, like—

Jack: You can clear the game.

Keith: With, like, you know, your— with, like, a billion jenny.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. Killua doesn't super care for this, but Nickes says, "Once you realize how hard, frightening, and foul this game is, you'll be more than willing to accept our offer." Ging built this and lured his son here, which is...cool. [Dre chuckles] But speaking into the episode that something has gone wrong in Greed Island, that there is something underneath this genuinely very bright and, even with the cards, very playful facade, the words "hard, frightening, and foul" really got me really excited about this arc.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And as people begin to talk about what has happened...oh, let's talk about it now.

Keith: Yeah, Nick makes an argument for why this has happened.

Jack: Yeah, because Greed Island has essentially broken. Not broken in the sense that the game is bugged, but broken in the much more interesting sense that you sometimes see in online games, where the meta has become [Dre: Mm-hmm.] so violently toxic that the game has kind of turned into something different, because...let me see if I have this right. Players are killing other players in order to deliberately destroy their books in order to deliberately lower the card cap on the cards so that they can play the game better. They're essentially farming players' books to overcome the mechanic that Ging put in place to stop people killing each other.

Keith: Right. Yes. Like, the length of time that the game has gone on has created an environment where instead of discouraging violence it has started encouraging it.

Jack: Now, these motherfuckers don't know about how the philosophy of mechanical design is ultimately a political expression and how in designing mechanics, you know, you can ultimately build in situations like this, even if you're not consciously doing it. I would say that Ging is not faultless here.

Keith: No.

Jack: He is either...

Dre: Yeah, no shit. [laughs]

Keith: Well, it's because there's— at a level, what has happened is you, intentionally or unintentionally, created a situation that he believed would discourage people from killing, [Dre: Mm-hmm.] instead of making killing against the rules.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Yes, which he could just as easily have done.

Keith: Right.

Jack: This is a very Gon Freecss solution.

Keith: It's also a very Netero solution.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: This is absolutely delightful to me. This realization that Greed Island is a sort of corrupted game, corrupted by the players that have been trapped in it, [Keith: Mm-hmm.] for decades, maybe? And that Gon and Killua are in this sort of, like, weird facade that, on the face of it, is still operating as a colorful, playful card battler set in a world of weird magic and mysterious monsters, and the sort of core meta underpinning it is a lethal death game is just such a joy. This is exactly my kind of shit.

There's a thing that I love in all kinds of fiction is when characters have to do something for so long or are trapped in doing something for so long that their understanding of what it is and how it works and why they're there just sort of falls apart. There's a really great film by Buñuel called *The Exterminating Angel*, which is about a bunch of people who go to a very wealthy party and then suddenly find that they can't leave. Sometimes they can't leave because the doors open. Sometimes they can't leave because they are just— they find themselves not compelled to leave. They're like, “Should we go? No, no, we should just stay.”

Dre: Mm.

Jack: And over the course of this movie, the party not only sort of, like, falls apart into,

like, an orgiastic Bohemian sort of debauchery but also, like, the individual underpinnings of the society of these people start to come apart. They start, I think, sacrificing animals or sacrificing people, all trapped in this gorgeous upper class party. And that has been a kind of model of story that I've always loved. There's a—

Keith: Sounds like someone's turned the insane dial up on *Rules of the Game*, is what it sounds like.

Jack: Yeah. Oh, yeah. Absolutely. There's one called *High Rise*, in which much the same thing happens in a tower block. And so, going into Greed Island and being like, "Oh my god, it's one of these," was just so delightful.

Dre: What's the book about, like, the— I think they're British kids, who like...I can't remember if they're on a boat or a plane, but basically a bunch of, like, kids, like, middle schoolers get trapped on an island.

Jack: Yeah. It's called *The Lord of the Flies*.

Keith: Oh, *Lord of the Flies*, yeah.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: And they sort of, uh, come apart.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: I'm sorry. Dre, I thought you were doing a bit!

Dre: No, I couldn't remember the name of the book! [laughs]

Sylvia: No, it's fine. It happens to me all the time. It happens to me all the time. I'm sorry.

Keith: That was required reading for me. I had to read that book.

Sylvia: Yeah, same.

Dre: Yeah, no, yeah.

Jack: *Lord of the Flies* is good.

Sylvia: It is good.

Keith: Yeah, it is good.

Jack: There's a really great—

Dre: I have the conch.

Jack: [laughs quietly] There's a really great companion piece to *Lord of the Flies*, which is a similar kind of thing. It's a film called—

Sylvia: Oh, *Yellowjackets*.

Jack: Yeah, ah, *Yellowjackets*. [Sylvia laughs] What if it was girls? [Keith and Dre laugh]

Sylvia: Good show.

Jack: No, the one that I'm talking about is what if it was girls. It's an Australian film called *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, [Sylvia: Mm.] which is about a group of wealthy Australian girls at the turn of the 20th century who go out on a day trip to a sort of, like, rock formation, and something really weird happens at the rock formation and causes this sort of, like, very neat girls' school setup to just start tearing itself apart, which is great.

Keith: So...

Jack: All this is to say: this is my shit. [Keith and Dre laugh]

Keith: So, Nickes, he's pitching Gon and Killua on this thing. He's already sort of proven to them that he knows that they're new by whipping out his book, and they, like, jump back, not knowing what to do, and he's like, "That's all I need to know. Like, you don't even know to call your book out instead of, like, get ready for a real fight."

Dre: I do love how, like, constantly people are like, “Oh, you're new,” and Killua’s like, [defensively] “You don't know if we're new.” [Keith and Dre laugh]

Keith: He’s so defensive. And then their pitch is basically like, we're just going to go around and play the game the way it’s meant to be played by using, you know, Trace cards to track people, Steal cards to steal their cards, and Defense cards to block, and the way that we're going to do that is by, like, monopolizing these cards, getting more of them than anyone else so that we can’t lose. And Gon is like, “No. Bye.”

Jack: Yeah. He gets steamed.

Keith: He gets really steamed.

Jack: He turns away.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: He says, uh...Gon decides for the both of them to set out for their own, because they had nothing but bad things to say about the game that Ging made. He apologizes to Killua for getting him attacked with a spell just to help him find his dad. He’s feeling all guilty. I feel like this is a massive shift in their relationship in this scene.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: This is like...Killua’s so uncomfortable with, like, vulnerability, in a lot of different ways, and he’s also uncomfortable with Gon’s ability to be— to speak his mind and, like, just sort of plainly state his emotions. And they have this extended moment where Killua, like, can't deal with this and is, like, looking away from the camera, looking down, like, thinking to himself about how much he likes Gon and how happy he is to be there with him, not able to express these, and then just goes like, “You're being embarrassing,” and walks away.

Jack: But then he says, “Actually, Gon, you know, you have it wrong.”

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: “I’m grateful that, you know, you’re my friend. I’m the one who’s glad.” We get a little—

Keith: And someone’s watching this.

Jack: Yeah, I do just want to say briefly that we get a little watercolor style, [**Keith:** Yeah.] as they have these tender thoughts about each other, prefacing... [laughs quietly] prefacing the arrival of a *Sailor Moon* character, is the only way to put it. [Dre laughs]

Keith: Yes. Yes, this is a...

Jack: I described— the first time I saw this car, back on the screenshot stream—this is pigtailed girl—I said, “She looks like a *Sailor Moon* character.”

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Looks like the way Takeuchi draws...

Keith: A tribute to his wife.

Jack: Yeah, a tribute to his wife. Of course, Naoko Takeuchi, creator of *Sailor Moon*, is married to Togashi. And what I didn’t know at that point was that they often sit working next to each other, and they read each other’s stuff.

Keith: It’s very cute.

Jack: And the more I’ve watched *Hunter × Hunter*, I have seen bits of things that she is interested in, not in the sense that, like, “Oh, she’s writing this shit,” but in sense of two creative people who are talking about the stuff they are making in the same room at the same time, there’ll be some kind of a bleed.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Boy howdy, because the first thing that this pigtails girl says is, “The friendship and innocence of two young boys is such a beautiful thing. It makes me want to ruin it!”
[Keith laughs]

Sylvia: She’s my queen. [Dre laughs]

Keith: I want to say: that’s actually the second thing that she says. The first thing that she says is, “Oh, that’s how it is.” She’s following them, because she’s—

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] I know what you are.

Keith: Yes. [Dre laughs quietly]

Jack: Yeah. [Dre sighs]

Keith: She’s like, why did this happen? She was there at the meeting with Nickes and his allies during the pitch, because she’s also new to the game, and when they leave, she leaves to be like, “What’s going on with this?” And this is my contention: she’s like, “I want to understand what’s going on with these two,” and sees that exchange, and goes, “Oh. Gay.” [Jack laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: That’s what it is.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: And she’s right.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And she’s right, and she’s so smart to have noticed. I just, “The friendship and innocence of two young boys is such a beautiful thing. It makes me want to ruin it,” is just a *Sailor Moon* line. [Dre sighs] That is all people talk about in *Sailor Moon* but for girls being friends with each other. There is an entire arc about...hmm. They need to—

right. The villains need to make the Holy Grail. It's fine.

Sylvia: Of course, yeah.

Jack: Jesus's Holy Grail. And the way that they can do that is by finding a pure heart, a pure girl's heart, and so they just start extracting hearts from kind people that they think will be pure-hearted girls, but of course none of the hearts are pure enough, and Sailor Moon and the crew have to go and, you know, beat them up and restore all the hearts, often one by one. And so, "The friendship and innocence is such a beautiful thing. It makes me want to ruin it," is just what a villain says midway through pulling someone's heart out. [Keith chuckles] I did not realize, in making this note about how pigtails girl is a *Sailor Moon* character, how right I was going to be proven in the next episode. [Dre chuckles]

Keith: Yeah. [sarcastic] And surely you're at the limits of how right you could be.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Surely I'm at the limits of how right I can be. I want to go back really quickly just to make sure that I've got everything. Gon's frustration that people say bad things about the game his dad made is both Gon's classic idolization of his dad: you know, Ging Freecss is the best. Why would you think otherwise? And then also a kind of version of the thing he constantly accuses the Phantom Troupe of, [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] of like, this game is made for having fun and playing, and you're using it for killing and stealing. Why are you doing that? And there's a kind of sadness that he feels. He really genuinely believed that players we're playing Greed Island because they thought it was fun?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Sorry. He says the scary thing isn't the game but the players. Gon's Mistake.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: One more interesting thing about the Gon and Killua bit is when they are leaving the pitch meeting and Gon sort of storms off, and Killua's like, "Hey, sorry, but I'm going with him."

Sylvia: You heard the boss.

Keith: Yeah. There's a really interesting inversion of the first, you know, the first episodes with Gon up through the end of the Hunter Exam, where [Jack: Yeah.] Killua is desperately trying to turn Gon into his sidekick.

Jack: Yeah. [Dre laughs]

Keith: And gets, like, really visibly upset with Gon when he doesn't just, like, listen to what Killua has to say and go where Killua wants to go and, like, gets so mad when Gon's like, "No, no, I'm gonna stay here and keep trying to get the ball" or whatever. It happens multiple times over the course of that arc. And Killua is now just like, "I'm gonna follow. I'm gonna follow him. I'm the sidekick. It's fine."

Jack: What's the thing they said about Gon during the Hunter Exam? I can't remember who it was.

Keith: It was—

Jack: It was Kurapika, I think. They talk about Gon being, like, shining, or like you can't take your eyes off him or something.

Keith: That is Illumi.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Illumi talking to— saying that he's a—

Sylvia: Compares him to the sun or something, doesn't he?

Keith: Yeah. He says he he's so bright that you don't want to look away.

Jack: Yeah. Really some real maturity coming from Killua in the last few episodes. I want to throw back real far real briefly, because I think this is an important note. When they're trying to learn their Nen abilities, back before they enter the video game and the entire season changed. [Dre chuckles] It feels crazy, by the way, to be like, the first episode was just in Yorknew City, and now we're in game hell. [Sylvia laughs]

Killua says to Gon— what's the line? I wrote it down specifically. He says, dah dah dah...thank you for your patience. He says, "I already know what I want," about his Nen power, "That's why I'm helping you." And I kept thinking about that great scene on Whale Island at night where they're talking to each other, and Killua admits that he is kind of just completely absent of any desire, any desire to do anything [Keith: Yeah.] other than just sort of, like, be with Gon. And I thought this moment of Killua saying, "I know what I want with this Nen power, and that's why I'm helping you," was a nice little bit of growth in Killua's character there. Back to hell. [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: Back to hell.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: There's so much good Killua coming up. I will eventually be making the case that Killua is the protagonist of the show now.

Jack: I would hear you, Sylvi, but for the fact that I could write a list of names and pull them out of a hat [Sylvia: Yeah.] and make a case that they are the protagonist of the show.

Sylvia: No, for sure. I'm just saying: I will be talking about this boy so much. [Jack chuckles]

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Dre: He's a great boy.

Jack: He's great.

Sylvia: Possibly the best?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: He didn't have a lot to do in Yorknew. He mostly, like, pissed about and grumbled about other people's plans.

Keith: Food fight.

Dre: Uh, had sick clothes.

Sylvia: We got a few perspective episodes of Killua, I will say.

Jack: Oh, that's true. He did have sick clothes, Dre, and yes, he did intuit half of a hostage situation he was not currently in to see, [Dre laughs] which was, that was big. Good work.

Keith: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Jack: He's very, very clever. I mean, I feel like we give Kurapika a lot of credit for being the clever one. Kurapika is very articulate, and Kurapika is very patient. I don't think either of those are Killua traits particularly, but Killua is very quick on his feet.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Absolutely.

Keith: He's always thinking about where the danger is and so gets a lot of mileage out of that.

Sylvia: [sarcastic] Damn, I wonder if his upbringing had anything to do with that. [Keith and Jack laugh] Man, I wonder—

Dre: Hmm. Who's to say?

Sylvia: I wonder if that's got anything to do with the fact that he's always silent when he walks around.

Keith: I don't know.

Sylvia: That's crazy.

Keith: [sarcastic] His parents let him go on a big adventure with his friend. They're probably nice.

Sylvia: Yeah, they're super nice. Treated him great.

Dre: [sarcastic] Mm-hmm. It's just like *Pokémon*.

Keith: His dad had a really good heart-to-heart with him once.

Dre: About the importance of friendship, and...

Keith: Yeah.

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

Sylvia: Yeah. They signed a blood oath. [Keith laughs]

Episode 62 [2:08:57]

Jack: Watch this. I'm going to do the first five minutes of the next episode really fast. Gon and Killua play rock paper scissors, and Killua wins the Sword of Truth.

Sylvia: He redeems himself!

Keith: Wins and then loses the Sword of Truth.

Jack: It cuts through anything false and breaks if it meets the truth. It's a specific card.

Sylvia: I am—

Jack: They are immediately— oh, go on.

Sylvia: I was just going to say: I wrote down earlier that Gon is a rock paper scissors master. Killua's stuck in loser's bracket, 17th place. [Jack chuckles] And then, with this

episode started, I was like, “Oh, okay, Killua’s redeemed himself.”

Jack: He’s done it.

Sylvia: He’s made his comeback.

Jack: They are immediately mugged by a weakling, who fails to take the card from them, after Gon just... [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: [pathetic voice] “I’m gonna steal your card!”

Dre: [imitating character] Oohooohooohoooh.

Jack: He says, “I’m gonna steal your card,” and he pulls out the Steal card, and Gon just dashes forward and takes it by hand. These people have gotten soft inside the game.

Keith: It’s so important that that was a card that that guy could have won anytime by playing rock paper scissors.

Dre: Mm-hmm. [Keith and Jack laugh] Which I think does kind of, like, lend some credence to Gon’s perspective of, like, people are just ruining this game.

Sylvia: Oh.

Dre: Like, we could talk about, like, how bad of a game dev Ging is, and he absolutely is, but...

Keith: Oh, yeah. The guy with the worst shirt in the world is like, “Only babies play the games.”

Sylvia: I was about to say, yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: I think that’s, like, a really telling quote, and that really backs up some of what Gon— like, at least backs up Gon’s point of view for him.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Does he say, “Only babies play the games,” in your version, Keith?

Keith: Mm...sorry, I was—

Jack: For me, he says, “Only fools participate in tournaments.” It would be so funny if they... [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: Keith editorialized.

Dre: Potayto, potahto.

Keith: I was editorializing, yes. Poetic license.

Jack: But yeah, that’s, I think, part of the genius of the way this has been set up is that, sure, only babies play the games, [Sylvia laughs quietly] but it’s not like the death game has completely swallowed Greed Island.

Keith: Right.

Jack: Or rather, it’s not that it’s visibly swallowed Greed Island. You know, the cities aren’t on fire, you know? I mean, people are blowing up in the streets, but there’s a real creepy element to it, which is that, like, oh, also all the NPCs are gathered around to, [Sylvia: Yeah.] you know, play rock paper scissors.

Sylvia: I wonder if there’s some sort of ideology being portrayed here. [laughs]

Jack: Mm...

Dre: Hmm.

Keith: It’s important, I think, that...oh, did I lose it? That the game is called Greed Island.

Jack: Ha!

Keith: And everyone sort of lands on the fact that it's most efficient to be, like, stealing cards and trying to take them all for yourself, because that is what the cards do. The game is about getting the cards, and the cards are about getting more cards from other players that they already have. So, it's not a— it's a pretty coherent trip from, "Hey, we're in this game, and there's NPCs doing contests or whatever. Hmm, maybe we should just take the card from the guy that played the stupid game."

Jack: Well, this is also the philosophy of what— I didn't know any of these people's names, so I called— Nickes's team I called the Clear Team, because they want to clear the game.

Sylvia: Oh.

Jack: This is also kind of the—

Keith: And they're Scientologists.

Jack: And they're— [Jack and Sylvia laugh]

Dre: Jesus.

Jack: Which is weird.

Keith: Yeah, it's a weird note.

Jack: Well, Catholicism exists, so, you know, so does...

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Yeah. [sarcastic] So does the true religion.

Sylvia: Equal evils. [quiet laughter] Keith, fuck off. [Keith laughs]

Jack: Nickes's team also basically believes that only babies play the games. You know, the game they actually want to play— they want to avoid killing, but they are saying, you know, "We're gonna steal cards from people."

Keith: Yeah. They want to do it nonviolently, but they want to use the cards to win.

Jack: Yeah. Gon and Killua are like, “Well, we need cards, so we have to go to Masadora,” which they've been told is, like, that's a city of magic. There's a lot of cards there. And as they go to set off, Pigtails comes up and basically says, “Pwease, pwease let me come.”

Keith: Pwease.

Sylvia: I need help! I'm a baby!

Jack: Oh no, I'm such a baby! [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: A wittle baby! I need help! [Dre laughs]

Jack: And of course, you can see this joke coming from a mile away, which is, as soon as Killua says, “No, you'll be a burden,” we get her internal monologue, and it's like, “I'm gonna fucking crush these babies.”

Sylvia: This fucking brat.

Jack: She says, “You don't know I could pummel the floor with you with one hand tied behind my back.” And then, you know, you play the joke out to the hilt, right? You have you her begin to retort [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] vocally to Killua by being like, “Hey, come on—! Oh, pwease, let me,” you know, et cetera.

Sylvia: I'm just a little guy, and it's my birthday.

Jack: Yeah, doing puppy dog eyes. And so off they go, pursued by Pigtails, who sort of gamely runs along behind them, with every step sort of being powered by...it's like, Keith, what did you say at the beginning of the thing? First she's powered by a desire to ruin them, then she's powered by a desire for revenge? [laughs quietly]

Keith: Yeah. She wants to ruin them for fun, and then she wants to ruin them for revenge.

Jack: Now we've moved into Pigtails's revenge era.

Keith: Yeah. She's in revenge mode. She's no longer like, "I want to destroy them, because it's funny to destroy friendships."

Jack: Meanwhile, Nickes's team, in a cave hideout, elucidates the plan.

Keith: Yeah, they have to explain to the people who took them up, like, what they're actually about to do.

Jack: They are looking to get a rare card, a very rare card, called Angel's Breath, which is required to complete the game. We're not told really what it does. The way you get Angel's Breath—they know no one's ever got it, through some various card shenanigans that let them, you know, learn if it's in anybody's hands. The way you get Angel's Breath is you trade in all 40 spell cards for it, but of course everyone is trapped in the viscous cycle of playing this game so is constantly expending the 40 cards to, you know, hold onto their own shit. This is the dread ideology of the death game being played within the game, right? Where it's like, you are so close to victory, but you have to scrape by with the very thing that would buy you the victory, you know, as you're sucked back into this cycle of violence inside the game. But the Clear Team has got 40 cards. They've got them all.

Keith: God.

Jack: And they are going to trade them in to get Angel's Breath, but they need one specific card on top of that, a card called Prison—they essentially need two copies of it, one to trade in and then one to have—which will protect Angel's Breath from being stolen from them. Now, this sounds like a lot of business, and it is, but it is really cool to encounter these characters and this unit 90% of the way through a plan. Isn't it neat?

Keith: It's neat.

Sylvia: Yeah, absolutely.

Jack: You know, like, they've got it figured out.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: They know how to win this thing. This is episode two of Greed Island.

Keith: And they've been in there for years.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: They've been in there for years, and they're like, "Three more months is what we need," which is like nothing.

Sylvia: It really makes you feel the, like, enormity of the game too.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: God, there's something...

Sylvia: Its plays into the myth of Greed Island that we've been told throughout the rest of this series.

Keith: There's something that I want to talk about, and I...involving the game and Ging, and I don't know whether it's the time to bring it up now.

Sylvia: Is this a groupchat check-in? [laughs] [Dre laughs]

Keith: Yeah, maybe. Hold on.

[brief pause]

Jack: If it's about the thing—

Sylvia: When we're done this, we need to invite Jack to the...

Jack: Oh, yeah!

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Sylvia: The DMs, so they can see it all. [laughs]

Jack: If this is about Shalnark's discovery, we should wait to talk about Shalnark's stuff until the very last moment. I think that stuff—

Sylvia: I don't know if we can talk about that yet, Keith.

Keith: Yeah, it's definitely something that you could infer, just from—

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Oh, but I'm Gon Freecss. I'm just watching these things.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: And, you know, they're bouncing around the inside of my head.

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

Keith: Anyway, now, Sylvi and Dre now know, like, what I think the cruelty at the heart of the game is.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: And it has less to do with one thing than you'd think.

Jack: [laughs] Is that one thing Ging Freecss?

Keith: No.

Jack: Okay. Cool.

Keith: No.

Jack: Okay. So, the Clear Team's goal is, "All right, you sit over there with 40 cards. You hold onto them. We go out and get Prison. We trade the 40 cards in for Angel's Breath. We use Prison to protect Angel's Breath. We clear the game." Plus some other maneuvers that they haven't gotten yet. Prison is the place to start. Prison is the name

of a card, not a place they're gonna go.

Keith: Right, yeah.

Sylvia: [laughs] I mean, they already were in Trick Tower.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Sure. There's this really funny thing where Gon and Killua learn that the path that they need to go on is full of bandits and monsters, and they're, like, so excited by this.

Sylvia: [excitedly] "Bandits? Monsters?"

Keith: Yeah. [laughs]

Dre: Oh, they're jacked.

Keith: The guy that sells them the map is like, "Beware the bandits and monsters!" and yeah, they're, like, shitting themselves, because it finally started to sound like a real video game.

Jack: Well, it's starting to sound—

Sylvia: Killua literally says, "It's starting to sound like a real RPG."

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It's starting to sound like the fucking opening narration of *Hunter × Hunter*.

Keith: It is. [laughs] Yeah, it is!

Sylvia: It is. Yes, it is!

Dre: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm!

Sylvia: That is the vibe that Greed Island has.

Keith: It's a Hunter game for Hunters.

Dre: Yeah, totally.

Jack: Oh, yeah. Let's talk about this now. I have a kind of nostalgia for the...Hunter Exam? That's what it was called.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: I was like, the fucking Hunter Trial? The Hunter Exam. But this is the show, if anything, the most playful we have seen it. This is at its most colorful, at its most playful, at its most, like, mechanically expressive. And that is confirmed, as we enter just a fucking bonkers back half of the episode. [laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Well, it helps that it's there rare thing where, like, the characters are literally aware of the mechanics. Like, it's not real life to them. Like, in, you know, we were watching *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure* or whatever, or when they're learning about Nen, and they're thinking about, like, powers and strategies and where your Nen can go and, like, what kind of things you can do with Crazy Diamond or whatever.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: But that's, like, their life. But now they're in the game, and they're like, "What about the cards? How do the cards work together?" and like, "What about fighting the bandits?" and...

Jack: They get to choose between a map that has the locations marked on it or a blank map.

Keith: Oh my god. This is the most Friends at the Table-ass thing I've ever heard.

Jack: I know.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's so cool. The blank map is obviously cheaper. Both have a little blinking dot

marking your position. And Gon is like, “It’ll be fun to draw in the locations as we find them.” [Keith laughs] And they get the map, and it literally is just an outline of an island with a blinking red dot, and Killua is like, “This is fucking useless.”

Keith: He also says— he says something about how positive Gon is. He’s like, “You’re so positive, it makes me sick,” or something like that. [laughs]

Jack: Yeah. [Dre chuckles] Gon and Killua are told that the city is really far to the north, but they’re also confident that they can travel 80 kilometers a day. That’s a little fact about these freak children. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: Which we actually know that they can do more, from the Hunter Exam.

Dre: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Yeah. As they set off, we get this rare sort of, like, usually we are so locked into whatever character’s perspective that Togashi has chosen for that eight minute period that we don’t usually see what it would look like from the outside, but we see Gon and Killua running through the forest, and they’re moving so quickly they’re sort of, like, teleport dashing. But as we cut into dialogue with them, we’re moving at their pace. Pigtails is sort of, like, jogging along behind. [laughs quietly]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: This is the first time we actually see her in her sort of, like, fiery horror mode. She gets the classic, like, little angry symbol on her forehead, [**Keith:** Yep.] ‘cause her forehead’s all wrinkled, and like, flames ripple behind her. [Dre and Jack laugh]

Sylvia: She is one of my favorite characters in this show, [Dre sighs] and like, god, I’m so happy she’s here.

Dre: Her dub voice actress is just so good.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: It’s really well done.

Keith: Oh, yeah. Her dub voice actor is really good.

Sylvia: Hugely recommend at least checking it out, Jack, before the end of this arc.

Jack: Yeah. Absolutely.

Sylvia: 'Cause amazing delivery. Also—

Keith: She gets *Batman Beyond* eyes too when she gets all angry. [Dre laughs] They turn, like, big and white.

Dre: [laughing] *Batman Beyond* eyes.

Sylvia: Sure. [Dre laughs]

Jack: She's so funny, and so far, all we know about this kid is that she, you know, she's— this is the first girl child that we've seen in the show. You know, most of the female characters have been adults. Togashi is such a—

Dre: Um, whatsherface, the butler.

Jack: Oh, Canary. That's true.

Dre: Yeah, Canary.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Canary was great.

Dre: But yes, outside of that, pretty much.

Jack: But Canary was a Zoldyck assassin, and Zoldyck assassins are weird.

Dre: Yeah. [laughs] They don't count.

Jack: Togashi is such a sharp writer of children's voices and children talking to each other and bickering that it is really fun to see him writing a female character who's a kid and who can sort of, like, spar with Gon and Killua.

Keith: Right.

Jack: Gets more—

Keith: And then we'll talk more about that later.

Jack: Right. Right, we'll talk more about that later. [Keith laughs quietly] But the affect is one thing, right?

Keith: Right, sure.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: You know, it's like... [Keith laughs quietly] It's like someone who has been introduced who, at least ostensibly, is on Gon and Killua's age group and tier of power. Are either of those things true? No. [Sylvia laughs]

Dre: That is such a good point, though, Jack, that I hadn't really, like, consciously thought about, but like, Gon and Killua are written like kids in a good way, and it's so...I mean, you can watch so much anime where kids are just written to be, like, the most obnoxious creatures possible, because it's the only way that they can think to signal that these characters are kids, and that's not the case in *Hunter × Hunter*. You can very obviously tell that they are kids written like kids, but that makes them more endearing.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. And when I talk about Pigtails's affect as sort of being childlike here, the thing that I'm talking about is really all we have seen her doing so far in the show is threatening ruin on the characters, [Dre laughs] inveigling her way—

Dre: For saying, "No thanks. We're gonna hang out on our own," and she's like, "Well, fuck you too, then." [laughs]

Sylvia: She's a fucking icon. Hater queen.

Jack: Inveigling her way into their group and responding with barely suppressed violent fury [Dre laughs] or running. That's it.

Keith: It is simply a fact that Killua does not want to hang out with a girl.

Sylvia: He's a little misogynist.

Jack: It's true.

Sylvia: It's fine. [laughs quietly]

Keith: He's a little— I wrote, "gay misogynist" in my notes.

Sylvia: He is! [Dre laughs]

Jack: He's a little gay misogynist.

Keith: He's hates girls, because he's gay.

Sylvia: Yeah!

Keith: Or the other way around.

Jack: And he's also— it is absolutely the, like, playground misogyny of, like, "I don't want to hang out with girls."

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah. "They're just gonna be boring. Ugh!"

Keith: The really funny thing about it is that he has already— like, she did her little "I'm just a helpless girl; please let me tag along with you" thing, and it didn't work, and it seems like, at first, Killua's like, "No, I don't want to hang out with you, because you're gonna slow us down," because those are the words that he said.

Jack: But then—

Keith: But then, right after, goes like, "She's lying. She got through the same test we did just to be here. [Keith laughs]

Jack: Yeah, there's a bit where they are worried that they're going to get attacked by

bandits, and they're like, "Well, we'll ditch her when we get attacked by bandits," and Gon's like, "Do you think she'll be fine?" and Killua's like, "Yeah, she's clearly a powerful Nen user." [Keith laughs] But it's like, this is Killua's playground misogyny kicking in, right? Where it's like, "but she's a girl!" [Sylvia laughs]

Dre: And they're icky!

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And they're icky.

Sylvia: Gon, we're gonna get cooties.

Jack: Yeah, exactly.

Keith: Just adding another person to this dynamic, it's not gonna work. Just you and me, for no reason. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: However, what Killua doesn't know is what Togashi has figured out, which is that adding another person to this dynamic is actually going to be extremely funny.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Meanwhile, Shalnark, Kortopi, and Shizuku are now in the game. God, the creep of the Phantom Troupe into this game is so funny.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: I've written, "Hey, it's the Phantom Troupe. Good for them." [Dre laughs]

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. The Phantom—

Sylvia: That's my reaction every time.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah. [laughs]

Jack: The Phantom Troupe don't need to intuit that this is a death game, because they would play it like that even if it wasn't.

Keith: Right.

Jack: So it's not really like a revelation to them, because, you know.

Keith: So—

Jack: They're like, "Well, of course it's a death game.

Keith: Yeah, that's their standard mode.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Life is already their death game. So, Shalnark has figured out two important things about Greed Island, which is: one, Kortopi's Nen cannot be used to copy cards. The game does not recognize them as legitimate cards.

Jack: Well, not quite.

Keith: Oh.

Jack: They can be copied cards, [cross] but they do not have a game function.

Keith: [cross] Oh, sorry, they can't be used. Right, yes.

Jack: And I think that's really crucial, because we know that one of the things in the Phantom Troupe's bag of tricks is, like, masquerading or, like, false items or, you know.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: I think the—

Keith: Shalnark is interested in the items specifically.

Jack: Yes. Shalnark is very interested in the items. The second thing Shalnark notices is that Shizuku's vacuum works but won't work on items with specific abilities. This seems to have been an actually— well, it's another piece of misguided gamed design from Ging. It seems to be that Ging didn't want people to use Nen to steal cards.

Keith: Right.

Jack: But of course people are going to use Nen to, like, rip out someone's throat.

Keith: Sure. We see that.

Jack: Oh, but then—

Keith: We see that in one second.

Dre: Well, but if you kill them, you can't steal their stuff, Jack. [Keith laughs]

Jack: But it doesn't matter, because the cap is now lowered, which means that I can go and, you know. Oh, it's great.

Keith: But there's another thing that you can do, which is you can— and we see Feitan and Phinks suggesting this. You can torture someone until they give you all their cards and then kill them.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Those wacky Phantom Troupe kids.

Jack: This is absolutely what the evil players— Player Hunters, is that what they're called?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: I think so.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: I think that that, torture someone until they give you their cards and then kill them, is absolutely Player Hunter business, but again, it comes second nature to the Phantom Troupe, you know? [laughs quietly]

Keith: Right, yeah.

Jack: This is like— you know when the Zoldyck assassins showed up to hunt down Chrollo, and all the other assassins were kind of like, “Well, I guess this is a rest day for me.” This is the Phantom Troupe arriving in a game, masters of, like, figuring out rules and mechanics. Oh—

Keith: Well, the important thing is Feitan and Phinks don't yet know all the rules. They know what Eta says. They don't know what Shalnark has figured out, because they don't even know Shalnark's here yet. And they're like, they're in the game. Instead of wasting one second playing the game by the rules, they create their own game, which is kill as many people as possible.

Jack: [chuckles] Yes.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, they explicitly say that that's what they want to do.

Keith: They have a contest, yeah.

Jack: God, the Phantom Troupe is so funny.

Sylvia: They're me in multiplayer games like this, where I'm just like, “Oh, let's just go ruin somebody's time.” [Keith and Dre laugh]

Jack: They— oh, sorry, brief sidebar. Remember that man that exploded?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: There's a rumor going around that there is a player called “The Bomber”. That's

all we get, but there's a name there.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: As we start seeing the Phantom Troupe start to manipulate this game, I'm just getting such an awful feeling about Hisoka. I'm just...I just feel like...

Keith: [sarcastic] Why? It's not like he was in the opening cutscene or anything.

Sylvia: [sarcastic] Yeah, why would you ever think that Hisoka would be around?

Jack: You know—

Dre: He's not in the Phantom Troupe anymore.

Sylvia: Yeah, exactly.

Jack: Yeah, but like...

Sylvia: [sarcastic] I don't think we're ever gonna see him again.

Dre: Probably not.

Jack: You know, you—

Keith: [sarcastic] Surely he can't be in every arc. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: I think this is an environment that Hisoka would thrive in, and I say "thrive" in the most awful sense of the word. [Sylvia laughs]

Dre: Yeah, sure.

Jack: I feel like the specific skillset that this pervert has developed over his, what, 28 years, something like that, has just built him for Greed Island. He was playing Greed Island in the Hunter Exam. [Dre laughs] You know? What a legend. And then Shalnark discovers something about the nature of the universe, and this blew my mind. I don't know if this is true. Shalnark definitely thinks it's true, and it's a very exciting idea, and

when Togashi discovers an exciting idea, we can sort of— we can either assume that it's true or it's close to true. This might not be a video game. What if the consoles teleport you to a real place, a real constructed place in the world, and you have to play Greed Island there?

Keith: Wait, but Jack, there's magic everywhere.

Jack: Well...okay, so, what if the magic is... [laughs quietly] What if the magic is a very particular application of Nen disguising itself, or what if the thing that Ging has done is built a bizarre simulacra? My thinking is it's Nen. Anyway. This made me—

Keith: So you're saying that your best guess is that all of the cards are doing preprogrammed Nen.

[2:30:00]

Jack: Yes. But then why can't they—

Keith: And that the magic items are real items that have been turned into cards, not cards that have been turned into items.

Jack: No, I think Nen could turn cards into items.

Keith: Well, but they have to be, like, real things, if they're in the world.

Jack: Oh, what I mean to say is I think I could cast a Nen charm on a card that I has illustrated with my three friends that would mean that if you held this card and said Gain, it would turn into a sword.

Keith: Okay, sure.

Sylvia: That's how Jack announces that we're making Greed Island. We're the three friends with those Nen powers that Jack mentioned. [Jack and Keith laugh]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Also, here's the thing. If—

Dre: Oh. Only three of us, huh?

Sylvia: No. [Dre laughs] Jack said their three friends!

Dre: No, I know. [laughs]

Sylvia: That's you, me, and Keith!

Jack: If what Shalnark is saying is true, and I'm setting aside sort of, like, the thematic— put it this way. Jack's "everything is a game" bell is now ringing so hard that the clapper has fallen out of it.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: Setting that aside, one of two things is true. Either Ging has constructed, like, a machine world that's not using Nen but is like...it's like a bizarre simulacra of the real world, using some—

Keith: Not using Nen but made of Nen.

Jack: Maybe made of Nen. Maybe made of, like, set facades and, you know...

Keith: I thought you said "made of sex."

Jack: Made of— [laughs] He's constructed a weird world made of sex. No. He's, like, built a world out of materials that aren't Nen. I don't know how he'd do that, 'cause Nen is the most powerful thing. Or he has used his Nen to—

Keith: Wait til Jack learns about Double Nen.

Jack: To construct a world. [Sylvia and Keith laugh] This is like, you know, the cards are preprogrammed Nen. Or... [laughs quietly] I'm just realizing this one's really awful. Magic is real. I don't know how I'd feel about that.

Keith: There's a second thing next to Nen.

Jack: Yeah, there's Nen and there's also magic.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: This would be like—

Keith: Well, that's, like, Angel World.

Jack: [laughs] Yes.

Sylvia: Oh.

Dre: Oh.

Keith: Nen is Demon World, and magic is Angel World.

Jack: There's that great joke in *What We Do in the Shadows* where the vampires completely refuse to believe that ghosts exist, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] which I think is great every single time.

Keith: Oh, yeah. [Dre laughs]

Jack: And something about magic being real— or rather, “Nen is real, but magic, of course, isn't real,” gives me the same sort of feeling, where I'm like, no, magic can't be real, but Nen can be real. I mean, in any case, it seems like what Shalnark is supposing is that we're actually playing— he wrote down here, “Greed Island is a trap that sends players who use Hatsu here to this island.” Keith, I'd like you to get a little telephone effect or like a radio effect, and I'd like you to queue up the tape from when you asked me what Greed Island is and I say, “I think Greed Island is a trap.”

Keith: [laughs] Did you say that? That's so funny.

Jack: I said explicitly that.

Keith: Okay. Great. Yeah, I would love to do that.

Jack: I said, “I think someone has built Greed Island, and it's a trap.” Of course,

Shalnark's big brain figures out something really funny here, which is that if Greed Island is a real place, and we're the Phantom Troupe, what if we just rob it without completing the game?"

Keith: Mm.

Jack: He's essentially saying, like, "What if we get stuff out— what if we just heist Greed Island?"

Sylvia: It's great. It's real cool.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: I love these fucking weirdos.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah, they're so cool. I love them so much.

Jack: There was a point—

Keith: It's very important to have characters in anything whose first reaction to whatever happens to them is, "But what if we steal it?"

Jack: Oh, yeah. Yeah, absolutely.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: God, it's great. I don't know if this is true. It has earth-shattering consequences, in terms of, like...if we think and the entire world thinks that they've been playing a bizarre rare video game, but they've been, in fact, teleported to, like, a specially constructed theater arena? That's meaningful, as is the fact that "Hunters think the world is a game" theory that I keep going back and back to is it's like, Hunters think the world is a game, so they enlist in a magical video game, because they can't get enough of games, but the secret truth—you know, this is Jigsaw speaking to the person on the tape [Dre chuckles]—is that it's actually still the real world! You never escape! You know, I built the

game in the real world.

Sylvia: [Jigsaw voice] Welcome to my tiny island. You must play a game and collect the cards. [Keith and Dre laugh]

Jack: Hey, remember when we saw the world map with the mafia zones on it?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And there was an area that wasn't colored in.

Sylvia: [knowingly] Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And I said, "I bet that's where Ging Freecss is." [Sylvia laughs] What if that's Greed Island?

Sylvia: What if?

Jack: No. That can't be Greed Island. Greed Island's gotta be way smaller than that. Hmm.

Keith: Hmm.

Dre: Hmm.

Jack: Well, time for an extremely funny montage, as, pursued by Pigtails, Gon and Killua move through, uh...well, so, first they encounter some coughing bandits. They get given a sidequest. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: So good.

Keith: Ah, the famous coughing bandits.

Jack: The coughing bandits basically rob them of their money and their clothes, and Gon and Killua are like, “We’ll get some information from this.” They don’t. So, for the rest of this scene, they are, you know, wearing their little white undershirts, running through the forest.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Pigtails is just baffled by their involvement in this scheme, is not— at one point, so, they need to put up the money. Pigtails is like—

Keith: Oh, this is so funny. This is such a great escalation of the joke they’ve done three times.

Jack: Do you want to talk about this?

Keith: Right. So, they want to help the coughing bandits because of the son.

Jack: Of the son, S-O-N. He’s sick.

Keith: Right, yes, he’s sick. He’s going to die. And I think Gon probably wants to help because he’s helpful, and Killua wants to help because they might give them items or money.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And they ask for 80,000 jenny, which is exactly the amount of money they have left, and then the pigtail girl goes, “I have 80,000 jenny. I could give it to you,” and Killua just goes like—

Jack: Just, like, absolutely obsequious.

Keith: “Shut up!” [laughs]

Sylvia: You are not part of our team! You’re not in our club! Go away!

Keith: And they just go, “Yeah, I guess we’ll just give them the 80,000.” [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: They lose \$80,000 of their own money, 'cause they can't bear to hang with a girl.

Keith: In order to avoid talking to this girl. [Dre sighs]

Jack: And for the entire rest of the background of this scene, you can see Pigtails out of focus, just, like, steaming in the background. [Jack and Sylvia laugh]

Keith: Yeah. *Batman Beyond* eyes.

Jack: *Batman Beyond* eyes. [Sylvia laughs] Then there is an extremely cool fight with these massive cyclopeses.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: This was a real moment.

Keith: I've got their name, by the way. They are called cyclopeses.

Dre: Huh. Nice.

Jack: Okay, cool. This is in the sort of, like, pillars of stone I described earlier. This was a real moment for me of just, like, you can just draw anything you want, you know?

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Togashi could have been drawing, like, city-sized monsters this whole time, and he hasn't been. He's just like, you want to fight cyclopeses now, in essentially an afterthought scene? And after denying you a tournament arc, do you want to see just, like, a really well animated fight sequence with these giant monsters? Go for it.

Keith: I like that Gon punches the cyclops and does nothing, and then Killua's like, "Gotta get the eyes! It's a video game!"

Jack: That's made even funnier if it's not actually a video game. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Well, it's still made a video game, like, mechanics, even if it's in the real world.

Jack: Oh, that is true. The specific thing that I put down was, like, this is like playtime for Gon and Killua, and it does just get way funnier to me if they are essentially doing playtime in a continent that they've been teleported to.

Keith: You know what I found? I found— I just saw this in my notes while I was looking for something else, but we never read Shalnark's, like, real argument for why this isn't a game, which is...

Jack: Oh yeah, go ahead.

Keith: "This game isn't taking place in a virtual world. We're somewhere in the real world. If the players actually entered the game, their spirits would detach from their bodies, leaving their bodies behind. Sending them physically into the game would be unnecessary," which, to Shalnark's credit, is true of every movie or TV show that I've ever seen where people go into a game.

Dre: That's true.

Jack: Also...ah, we're just throwing around words like "spirit" pretty casually here, Phantom Troupe.

Keith: Consciousness.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Soul.

Jack: Yeah. Uh, we know souls exist.

Sylvia: They are— we have determined that they are Christian, so.

Keith: [laughs] Right, they are Christian, yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: We determined this earlier in the episode, that they are a youth group.

Keith: They explicitly believe in the afterlife. [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: Yep. And the biblical Jesus.

Jack: The Phantom Troupe explicitly believe in souls, right? Or is it only Chrollo who believes in souls explicitly?

Keith: Chrollo says it, but they do reference it, other characters do.

Jack: Yeah, they think that Uvo has gone somewhere good?

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: Rather than Hell, where he should absolutely go. I think they also talk about—

Keith: Well, to the Phantom Troupe, probably Hell would be good.

Jack: Whoa! To the Joker...whoa! [Keith and Dre laugh]

Keith: Well, this is their Addams Family thing, where they're just like, everything that's scary and bad is actually good and fun.

Jack: Is actually— well, except for the fact that they do genuinely like to hang out with each other and play cards and drink beer and play video games.

Keith: Well, so do the Addams Family.

Jack: Yeah, that's true.

Keith: Who loves his wife more than, uh, Mr. Addams? Why am I forgetting the Addams guy's name?

Sylvia: Gomez?

Dre: Gomez?

Jack: Yeah, Gomez.

Keith: Yes, Gomez.

Jack: Who famously—

Sylvia: Feitan is Pugsley. No, Feitan is Wednesday. Who's Pugsley? [Jack laughs]

Keith: A lot of them are Wednesday.

Sylvia: A lot of them are Wednesday.

Keith: Oh, uh...

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: I think Shizuku might be Pugsley.

Keith: Nobunaga is Pugsley.

Sylvia: Okay, sure.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: God. Would Nobunaga like Greed Island? I don't think so.

Sylvia: No.

Jack: He'd be like, "What is happening? I don't understand."

Sylvia: That's why he's not there.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Yeah.

Sylvia: "I'm too old for this shit. I miss my husband."

Jack: He would also—

Keith: [voice] “We gotta be helping the boss!”

Jack: They would tell him that if you kill someone you don't get their cards, and he would forget and just kill people constantly for no gain.

Dre: And then be so mad every time.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah, “Ah!” At this point, Pigtails is starting to move into her new thing, where she’s like, “Oh, this kids kind of have potential.” At this point, I started getting increasingly suspicious of her. Previously, I was suspicious, 'cause I was like, “She’s trying to ruin their friendship.”

Keith: Right.

Jack: And now I'm like, “This kid is a Nen master.”

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Then they—

Keith: Although you've made the mistake that some other characters have made in the past. Her being here makes her a Nen master. [laughs]

Jack: Oh, yes that is true. Yep.

Keith: I think this might not be a normal girl.

Jack: Yeah. That’s how easily it happens, Keith.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Just people in the world are making that mistake all the time. Then they get chased by a huge blue salamander.

Keith: That is called the Melanin Lizard.

Jack: Why?

Keith: I don't know.

Dre: [displeased] Mm...

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] That's a fucking crazy name.

Keith: [laughing] It's a crazy name. It's a crazy name.

Sylvia: What the fuck, Togashi? [Keith laughs] That's insane.

Keith: That's what it's called.

Sylvia: Free Twitter name for someone. I can't use it, but someone can. [Dre laughs]

Jack: Then they get chased by— or they get attacked by, like, this little tiny sort of, like, puffball, black puffball with a little tail that pings around so quickly.

Keith: It's so fast. That's called the Hyper Puffball.

Jack: Pigtails is watching sort of just with her head in her hands, going, "Use Gyo. Just see where it's going to be, rather than just—"

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: There's a great shot of Gon and Killua just, like, uselessly grabbing at the air, 'cause they can't be bothered to, like, think about how to defeat the enemy. [Keith laughs] This is me playing any game that isn't a button masher and deciding to button mash.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: Like, "I keep dying really easily!" and it's like, my brother in christ. [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah, she is me watching other people play video games, honestly. [Jack laughs quietly] I am like this, and I know it's an ugly part of me, but I will be like, "You guys are fucking doing the mechanics wrong. You need to use Ten and then Zetsu." [Jack laughs quietly]

Keith: They meet an *Ikaruga* horse.

Jack: Yep. Then they meet an *Ikaruga* horse. This is a horse that plays bullet hell by shooting bubbles from its nose. Gon and Killua essentially just poke the bubbles, which explode in a shock wave, and then shrug and go away.

Keith: [laughs] Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Pigtails knows how to beat it. She sort of is like, “You have to— these bubbles behave in different ways, and you can use your Nen to figure out the bubbles,” with the implication being that defeating this horse would give you a powerful item. Gon and Killua are just like, “Nope.”

Keith: Yeah. You have to swap between Ten and Zetsu in order to get past the horse.

Jack: Yeah, you ever encounter, like, an environment puzzle or a Korok puzzle in *Tears of the Kingdom*, and you're like, “This is gonna be too complicated,” and you just go plunging off over another hill.

Keith: Yeah, I'm busy. I have a town to get to. I'll mark it on the map and come back.

Jack: And then, gleefully, as if to say, “I'm not done,” Togashi moves into a montage of these chibi characters— or the animators move into a montage with these chibi characters. I don't know how Togashi did it. They run from a snake worm. They run from—

Keith: They kick a slime.

Jack: Yeah, they kick a slime. They pink— sorry, they pink? I was about to say they punch [Sylvia laughs] square pink lightning monster. Briefly they just get chased by bees.

Keith: [laughs] The next one is my favorite.

Jack: What is the next one?

Keith: The next one is the suit of armor.

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: So, at this point, Pigtails is like, "You are wasting your potential," but she doesn't say it. She's just running behind them. Yeah, tell us about the suit of armor.

Keith: So, they're fighting this suit of armor, and it's taking all of their punches, and they're getting really frustrated, and this is when she finally speaks up, and she's like, "Use Gyo!" and they're like, "What?" [laughs]

Jack: And then new music starts playing.

Keith: And she explains, "Look at it," and so they use Gyo, and they can see that from the suit of armor is a trail of Nen leading around the corner, and Gon runs around the corner, and there's a tiny little pink little guy that looks like what if Kirby was a mouse that's controlling it, and as soon as it sees Gon turn the corner, it gets scared and poofs into a card, and his name is Radio Rat.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Aw, Radio Rat.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Radio Rat.

Jack: All these monsters are so playful, because of course they're playful, [cross] because the facade of—

Keith: [cross] Because it's a game?

Jack: The facade of Greed Island is genuinely nice. You know? The towns are pretty.

The games are fun. The monsters are cool to look at. But yeah, as she commands them to use Gyo, we start hearing some new music. Do you have this, Keith?

[2:45:05]

Keith: Yes, I certainly do.

[clip of Biscuit's theme begins]

Keith: This is the unnamed theme of Biscuit Krueger.

Jack: Yes.

Sylvia: Fucking...

Dre: It's such a good song.

Sylvia: Agh.

[music ends]

Jack: Unnamed for us or unnamed for a spoiler reason?

Keith: Unnamed for everyone.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: It was never released on the soundtrack.

Sylvia: That's crazy.

Keith: I know. It's so good.

Dre: Oh.

Jack: Wow!

Keith: Yeah. Luckily I was able to find it, but.

Jack: This is such a great...such a great theme.

Sylvia: Does it feel piratey to anybody else?

Keith: It's very piratey.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: It feel piratey to me. It feels— it's like a roughly played folk violin. I wasn't sure if this was her. So, the next thing that happens is she gives them a Gyo test. [laughs quietly]

Keith: Oh my god.

Jack: She says, "Look at this," and she raises her finger, and the number one appears.

Dre: It's so good.

Keith: The maneuver here is so funny. She goes from the annoying girl that's following them around to "I'm your boss now," in about four seconds.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: The writing and the performance and the animating to get the character through three distinct modes: her clearly facile "uwu pwease" mode; her extremely funny but kind of thin "I will punish you" mode; and then the mode that I imagine she's going to be spending a lot of time in, this like, "Look, idiots."

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

Jack: It's great.

Keith: One of my favorite jokes in this whole thing is that Gyo— sorry, does someone want to describe the Gyo test before I say the really good joke that happens with it?

Sylvia: What, the part where she puts her finger up [cross] and there's a little number they have to read?

Keith: [cross] Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, and so they have to get to Gyo as fast as possible in order to— because she's like, "You should just be using Gyo whenever anything weird happens," which is—

Jack: And she's, frankly, right.

Keith: She's so right.

Dre: She's so right.

Keith: She's so right. It's—

Jack: The fact that we haven't heard this really before is— that is Gon and Killua brain through and through.

Keith: Yeah. It's really revealing that, like, between learning Nen and now, they haven't been able to turn their education into experience almost on any level. All of their Nen learning is, like, theoretical outside of Heavens Arena.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: And so, Killua is doing the Killua thing, predictably, and is being like, "Why should we listen to you? Who are you? Who made you the boss of me? Why should I have to do what you're saying?" And she holds up her finger again, and while Killua is protesting like, "I'm not doing what you say!" Gon goes like, "Four!"

Jack: It's so funny. [Keith and Dre laugh]

Sylvia: Fucking great.

Dre: It's so good.

Jack: This is what I'm talking about with, like, the way that when the show wants to amp up the pace of its dialogue, like, the literal pace, not the pace of, like, show pacing.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: But like, how fast people are talking, people interrupting each other. It's really good at it. This kind of mode that Pigtails is in as well is very much the kind of affect that I was talking about, about like, why it is meaningful that she is initially being presented as a child character, because it lets us into this banter of, like, how extremely funny it is that one of these kids is just bossing around the other two.

Keith: Yeah. Well, she has been studying Nen for quite some time.

Jack: Yes. Gon...she says, "Killua, drop and give me 50 pushups."

Keith: 200 pushups?

Jack: She said 50 for me.

Sylvia: Oh.

Jack: Or I was laughing so hard that I forgot what she said. [Dre chuckles]

Keith: I could be wrong. I could have sworn it was 200, 'cause 50 seems a little too easy for...

Jack: Killua says, "Who the fuck are you?" [Keith laughs] And she says, "Oh, sorry, I didn't introduce myself. My name is Biscuit Kreuger"?

Sylvia: Yep. [Keith laughs]

Jack: "I've been studying Nen for 40 years."

Sylvia: Fucking Friends at the Table-ass name.

Jack: To which Killua says, "So you're an old hag?" and then she punches him into the sky.

Sylvia: He's the best!

Keith: Yeah, he Team Rocket blasts off again.

Dre: Straight to the goddamn moon. [Dre and Jack laugh]

Sylvia: He cannot be stopped! This man hates women! [Keith and Jack laugh]

Jack: Okay.

Keith: Yeah, he screams it at her like it's a crime.

Dre: Yeah, yeah.

Keith: To be an old woman.

Sylvia: It's so fucking funny.

Jack: Then you're an old hag. Well, it's because he realizes, in this moment, that he has been absolutely outmaneuvered.

Keith: Yeah, fully.

Jack: So the only refuge he has is the lowest, pettiest child misogyny.

Keith: His best friend in the whole world has betrayed him in an instant and put himself lower than her, and he's just done.

Jack: Now this is a Nen teacher. We've been seeing various Nen masters showing up all this time. This one's the business. Punch Killua into the sky; give Gon an extremely useful eye test that he should have done for ages. [Dre laughs] she says, "Hmm!" like a *Sailor Moon* character with the sort of success as Gon looks on with a kind of awe, and the episode ends. This is just such a delight. Oh, this folk violin is playing as she's introducing herself, so I wasn't sure whether or not this was like a...something that's fun about going into new arcs is trying to identify whether I am hearing motifs for places or people. You know, whether it's like, [**Dre:** Mm.] oh, this is a Greed Island motif that's going to be coming up often, or whether it's like...

Keith: Well, the folk violin is not absent from the Greed Island theme, so it is like a similar set of instruments that's being used.

Jack: But that, like, rolling— that sort of, like—

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It's a waltz, right? Or it's a syncopated— it's in four time.

Keith: Yeah, it is.

Jack: Hit it?

Keith: Uh, yes. Sorry, I was doing something else.

[clip of Biscuit's theme begins playing]

Jack: It's a waltz. It's in three.

Sylvia: I'm doing Irish riverdance to this.

Jack: Yeah, it's got a sort of Irish riverdance vibe.

Keith: Oh, yeah, okay.

Jack: It's kind of...it's an interesting theme to give Biscuit, based on what we've seen of her so far, where she's **[Dre: Mm-hmm.]** just extremely impulsive and violent.

[music ends]

Jack: And giving her this theme that has a kind of gravitas to it, even in this sort of, like, you know, just because it's a folk violin doesn't rob the melody of the sort of, like, shape that it has. And so I'm like, is this speaking— is her theme cluing us into this is a woman with 40 years training in Nen?

Keith: Here, let me scrub through the Greed Island theme just for a second. I want to just hear...

["G.I. Theme" starting and stopping at various parts]

Keith: Yeah, it's a much different violin.

Jack: Yeah, it's played up on the other— the other. [laughs quietly] The top two strings of the violin. And I think Biscuit's theme is on the bottom two. God, this little Whoville chorale sequence.

Keith: Yeah. [Dre chuckles]

Jack: I'll tell you what this chorale part really reminds me of is, like, piece of shit Danny Elfman's composing.

[music stops]

Sylvia: Ah, yeah. It's got the bounce.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: I actually— I like Danny Elfman's composing a bit.

Keith: Yeah, sure.

Jack: But he's a piece of shit.

Sylvia: Yeah, just hate the fucking guy. [laughs quietly]

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: I don't know anything about him.

Jack: He's a piece of shit.

Sylvia: He's a piece of shit.

Dre: I believe you.

Jack: Yeah. How long have you been excited for Biscuit to be introduced in the show.

Sylvia: Oh my god.

Dre: Forever.

Sylvia: For a while, honestly.

Keith: For a while, yeah.

Sylvia: Like, since— I would say since Wing showed up, 'cause I was like, “Ah, yes, there's another Nen teacher who'll be here, and I adore her.”

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: I've been trying to get Ali on the next set of episodes because of Biscuit Kreuger for four months.

Jack: Is Ali a big Biscuit fan?

Keith: I don't know. She hasn't read it. I just think that she would be.

Jack: Biscuit is a very Ali character, I think. I think Biscuit— Biscuit, you know, not only with the name. Biscuit is the kind of character that we often keep putting in things. [laughs quietly] Weird, violent, powerful idiot with hangups.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: [sarcastic] I would never play a character like that. [Dre and Keith laugh]

Jack: I will say I'm wary of...

Dre: [intrigued] Mm.

Sylvia: [intrigued] Mm.

Jack: The Canary problem.

Sylvia: Ah. Wary like Canary. [Dre snorts]

Jack: Canary is such a great character, and she appeared and then disappeared, and I know Canary's coming back. You know, Togashi puts pieces on the board on purpose. We're going to see more of Canary. But I'll be so bummed if we get, like, two episodes

of Biscuit. If Biscuit is as much of a character as Mizuken or somebody, you know?
[Sylvia laughs knowingly]

Keith: Well.

Dre: Damn.

Sylvia: Sorry, I gave it away.

Jack: My dream— Biscuit is a funny enough introduction to the Gon-Killua dynamic that I would like Biscuit to be, like, a recurring cast member that gets occasionally graduated to main cast member.

Keith: Mm. Sure.

Jack: That's what I would like to see.

Sylvia: You know, she is in both the opening and ending theme.

Jack: Yeah. That's true.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Yeah, and you could get some look at how things are going to go if you look at the episode titles for next time.

Sylvia: Oh.

Jack: Oh, yeah, what are we watching next time, Keith?

Keith: Hehehehe. [Sylvia laughs] We're watching three episodes.

Dre: Wow.

Jack: Three episodes?

Keith: Three episodes.

Jack: It's a gift from Keith Carberry.

Keith: It is a gift. "A × Hard × Master".

Jack: Okay.

Keith: "Strengthen × and × Threaten".

Jack: Yep. Both of those sound like Biscuit's deal.

Keith: And "Evil Fist × and × Rock Paper Scissors".

Jack: What, more? [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: No, that's one.

Jack: Yeah, but more rock paper scissors?

Keith: Oh, right, yes, more rock paper scissors. [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah, more rock paper scissors.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: That's one of those titles that works so much better in Japanese.

Keith: Oh, yeah?

Jack: Oh, really?

Sylvia: Well, because I think [cross] that the "evil fist" thing is a pun, if I'm remembering right.

Keith: [cross] Oh, yeah, sure.

Jack: But all these titles rhyme, right?

Keith: They do rhyme, yeah.

Jack: And they didn't even bother to try and translate that. I mean, I don't say they didn't even bother. Translating is really hard, and translating rhyming is really hard.

Sylvia: It's, like, a real struggle with localization, I imagine.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. I'm just saying that if I knew Japanese, a thing that I don't, and if I had the skillset of a translator, a thing that I don't, and if I had the amount of time that they'd been allotted, a thing that I don't, I'd have made them all rhyme. [laughs quietly]

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Do you want to hear one of my favorite successes of localizing a pun?

Jack: Yes.

Sylvia: Yeah, absolutely.

Keith: In *Pokémon*, Gen Two, there's a Pokémon called Girafarig, [**Jack:** Yeah.] that is a weird two-headed giraffe Pokémon thing.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: It's a palindrome, and in the Japanese, it's also a palindrome, and it's also a reference to giraffes.

Dre: Wow.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: That's wild.

Sylvia: Nailed it.

Keith: I know. Nailed it.

Sylvia: Good for them.

Keith: Good for them.

Jack: That's gotta be really hard to do.

Keith: It must have been so exciting when they figured it out. [laughs quietly]

Jack: Why do we think she's called Biscuit?

Keith: First name. Parents.

Sylvia: Her name, isn't it?

Keith: Yeah.

[censor buzzer]

[Sylvia laughs]

Dre: No, yeah, take that out. Don't, yeah. Hold on. Take two. Take two. Take two. Uh...

Keith: How about I just bleep it, so everyone can be like, "What the fuck?"

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: No, everyone will— why does she have a German surname?

Keith: German.

Sylvia: Yeah, she's German.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: She's from Düsseldorf [Dre, Sylvia, and Jack laugh]

Jack: Graduated from the University of Düsseldorf.

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: Her major was Nen.

Sylvia: Yeah. Deep in the heart of the Rhineland, the Kreuger family.

Jack: Oh my god. Now Togashi's Nen games get even more fun, right? Because after the joy of meeting all the Phantom Troupe and being like, "Well, these guys are all clearly Nen masters, and we're going to get to see their power," we've been introduced to another Nen master, and we haven't seen Biscuit do any Nen, other than looking at things, which is... [laughs quietly]

Keith: Right. And keeping up with Gon and Killua.

Jack: Yeah, that's true. But we haven't seen her do [Dre: Mm.] Nen tricks, Nen abilities.

Keith: Yeah. No tricks yet.

Jack: I had so much fun with this block of episodes.

Keith: Yeah, I'm really happy now. It's been so long since we recorded, but I'm happy now with the decision to have, like, not recorded this episode and then be forced to take, like, three weeks or four weeks off recording.

Sylvia: Yeah. I think it would have done a lot of damage to [Dre: Yeah.] an arc that I kind of think is underrated, in the grand scheme of *Hunter × Hunter*.

Keith: I agree. Yeah.

Sylvia: Like, it is not...we can talk about this more [Jack: Yeah.] as Greed Island goes on, but I think it's not really done a lot of favors with its placement in the chronology of the series, basically.

Keith: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Jack: I think it coming after Yorknew, I like that. I think that...

Sylvia: I love that.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: It's because it's between Yorknew and the Chimera Ant Arc.

Keith: Yes.

Jack: Right.

Sylvia: So it kind of gets swallowed up by the two of them, because those are—

Keith: And it has one fatal flaw that makes it contrast poorly with those two seasons.

Sylvia: I think— yeah. I think I agree with that.

Jack: Interesting.

Keith: I say fatal flaw. It's not a fatal flaw, it's just like, when you're comparing the things that are SO magnetic about Yorknew and Chimera Ant, that thing isn't really in this season, and...

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: It makes it feel flat, even though I think everything that happens in it is really good.

Jack: Hey, do you think Chrollo could enter Greed Island, or would him using his Hatsu to enter the game kill him?

Keith: I believe that that is the case.

Sylvia: Who can say?

Jack: Well, Chrollo actually could enter Greed Island, in one way. [laughs quietly]

Keith: Oh, yeah.

Jack: If Shalnark's right.

Keith: Yeah, that's true. [Sylvia laughs quietly] But also, who knows what—

Jack: He could find and breach Greed Island.

Keith: Who knows what could happen? I mean, there's— we already know what the Phantom Troupe are up to, in regards to Chrollo and his Nen powers.

Jack: Well, they want to get him back his Nen powers, one way or another. I don't know how they're gonna do that in a way that is satisfying.

Sylvia: [knowingly] Yeah, I don't know.

Jack: I don't know how they're going to say this guy— so much work was put into taking this away, and now we're going to give it back in a way that's going to feel earned. I don't know.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Have they outlined a plan yet? I can't remember, and I don't want to say.

Jack: They have not.

Dre: No.

Keith: Okay.

Dre: No.

Sylvia: No. They haven't.

Jack: We've talked about residual Nen, and, oh, they mentioned briefly that there are— they say, like, "There are people in the world who can give people Nen."

Keith: Who can give people Nen?

Jack: Or something like that. Restore Nen. Here's how I'd do it.

Keith: I think what they say is there's people who can remove Nen.

Jack: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Dre: Like, remove a curse.

Sylvia: They do talk about that, yeah.

Jack: Remove the curses. They have talked about that. Yes, you're right. Here's what I'd do.

Dre: Mm-hmm?

Jack: I would, like, void it. I would, like, put Chrollo in a situation where we could safely trigger the heart.

Sylvia: [laughs] You'd find a way to annul it? [Keith and Jack laugh] I'm confused.

Keith: Just give him a second heart so he doesn't need the heart that gets stabbed.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: I mean, the way I would do it is, like, one of the ways that you could get rid of the curse is if it fires, so is there a way we can actually get it to fire safely? I don't know.

Keith: I don't know.

Jack: Oh, it's made way harder by the fact that they can't contact him.

Keith: Yes. True. Oh, yeah, very true.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Oh, I should say that these episodes that are coming next, they're the first episodes in what TheTVDB bizarrely calls the second season of *Hunter × Hunter*.

Sylvia: Weird.

Jack: You're kidding. [laughs]

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: That is really weird.

Keith: Yeah, so...

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: TVDB is, like, so terrible at numbering anime, because anime often is numbered without seasons taken into account, so it'll just be, like, episode 94 or whatever, and that causes some confusion. And so they have, like, basically two 65 episode long seasons and then, like, one, like, 12 episode long season. [laughs]

Dre: Jesus.

Sylvia: That's really funny.

Keith: But these are— this is all to say: I gave you the names, but those are episodes 63, 64, and 65.

Sylvia: I'm very sorry to ask one more thing before we go, [**Keith:** Yeah.] seeing as I didn't realize this was another three hour fucking recording.

Jack: Ha.

Sylvia: Do you guys like the new end theme? 'Cause it's growing on me, like, a lot.

Keith: Oh, I really do like it.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Yeah, I've always liked it.

Sylvia: It was not one that really stuck in my memory, but I've been listening to it just, like, on its own a lot more, and I'm like, "Yeah, this has a little groove to it."

Jack: I think it's going to grow on me. I don't think I'm there yet, but I can...I'm not ruling it out. I find—

Sylvia: I love the “wahoo” at the beginning.

Jack: I was about to say, I find the “wahoo” at the beginning to be something of an imposition [Sylvia laughs] on me experiencing this for the first time.

Sylvia: Okay.

Jack: And I suspect that that might be why it's grown on you, because I suspect that the “wahoo” is actually really fun [laughs quietly] and when you know what's about to happen doesn't feel like the guy next door has just started singing. [Dre and Keith laugh]

Sylvia: Yeah, fair. It evokes the roundabout end of JoJo's season one for me, of like, oh, the ending theme's starting, so you know the show's about to end, except instead of it being yes guitar lines, it's a guy going [singing] “Wahooo!”

Dre: [singing] “Wahooo!”

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: It's got the most sort of stereotypical shonen lyrics of any of them yet.

Jack: Oh, yeah, hit me with some lyrics. Is it “I'm pursuing two idiots. I'm going to teach them Nen properly”?

Keith: [laughs] No, it's not that. It's “What kind of world awaits us down this unexplored path? Will our silent voices just fade away without reaching anyone? Yesterday's memories are hard to forget, but let's throw them all away and focus on tomorrow. When the morning sun shines off our wounds, we'll laugh them off and continue our endless journey.”

Jack: Wow.

Keith: Yeah. Very—

Jack: I think it's true, though.

Keith: It is, like, classic shonen fare, I feel like.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: "We know the wind is blowing against us, but we have reason to keep going. It's still too early for us to just live and grow old. Things we've picked up and things we're stuck with; once we let them all go, something new will begin."

Dre: Wahoo.

Keith: Wahooo.

Jack: Wahooo. [laughs]

Sylvia: What is it? "Throw out the—" What is it? There's a line that I feel like is very *Hunter × Hunter*. It's like, "Throw out the book for—"

Keith: "Tear up this recipe for a smooth sailing life."

Sylvia: Yes, that's it.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: "And feel the reason we'll live our own way."

Jack: Sick.

Keith: Yeah, classic. This is classic stuff.

Outro [3:03:30]

Jack: Do you enjoy Media Club Plus? If you do, and I do, you should go to Apple Podcasts.

Sylvia: Oh, fuck.

Jack: And leave us a five star review. Is a four star review good enough?

Keith: No.

Jack: Absolutely not.

Dre: No.

Jack: No.

Keith: Yeah. Despicable.

Dre: Get out of here.

Jack: Is a three star review good enough? It's getting worse.

Keith: It's getting worse.

Jack: Is a two star review good enough? No.

Keith: No.

Jack: Anything below that...

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] Can I read a five star review?

Keith: Sure.

Jack: Of course you can.

Dre: Please.

Sylvia: [laughs] That is baffling to me?

Keith: Okay.

Sylvia: This is from patreon-app-user. Oh, okay. I was like, "What is—? What does this say? Patreon appuser?" [Keith laughs] And then I went, "Oh, okay." Anyway. The title is—

Keith: Classic appuser.

Sylvia: Classic appuser. God. [Dre laughs quietly] The title is, quote, “‘Real’ spoiler,” and then the text is just, [laughing] “Leorio back shots!!!” [Jack and Keith laugh]

Keith: Oh, yeah, we asked for fake spoilers.

Sylvia: Oh, right!

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: [laughing] Leorio back shots.

Keith: Yeah, we asked for that.

Sylvia: [still laughing] Sorry.

Keith: Sorry, this— when we asked for that, it was two— it came out a month ago or something.

Sylvia: Well.

Keith: But we recorded it, like, February or something, and it’s now May.

Dre: 2023. [laughs]

Sylvia: Here’s a good way to get me to read your review. Confuse the fuck out of me. [Sylvia, Keith, and Jack laugh]

Keith: Oh, yeah, new review style. Leave something very confusing for Sylvi to read.

Sylvia: Yeah. Get my attention.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Can I read a five star review?

Sylvia: Oh my god, please.

Keith: Yeah, sure.

Jack: This is a review from March 14 by caitsnowdn.

Sylvia: Oh.

Jack: Who says, “I was not familiar with Friends at the Table before listening to this podcast, but I have been a diehard *Hunter × Hunter* fan for so long, and while trying to look for more content and analyses about the show, I found this absolute gem of a podcast. I binged it all, [**Sylvia:** Aww.] and now im rubbing my hands together [**Dre:** Aww.] excited for new episodes. The hosts are incredibly smart and hilarious [**Sylvia:** Aww!] and have such insightful things to say about it. For a while, I struggled to find good *Hunter × Hunter* analyses online, but this one absolutely takes the cake for the best one I have seen. They talk about everything from character writing, visual symbolism, and use of music in the show. Listening to this show feels like getting to relive watching it for the first time. So excited for future episodes!” Thank you so much, caitsnowdn.

Keith: Yeah, that’s very nice.

Dre: That’s so nice.

Jack: It was such a pleasure to get that review. And yeah, if you have friends who like *Hunter × Hunter* but don't know who the hell we are, all the better.

Sylvia: Yeah, get them to listen!

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Please.

Jack: We think we make a pretty good show, and I think that they would have a lot of fun. Put it this way: if I loved *Hunter × Hunter* and I went online and found this podcast, I'd be like, “Hell yeah.”

Keith: Yeah, me too. You know what you should do is [**Dre:** Mm.] tell your friends. Tell

someone— go to the anime club you've heard about and tell them about it.

Jack: Also, if you like talking about *Hunter × Hunter* with your friends and you miss hearing talk about *Hunter × Hunter* online and you've listened to us and given us a five star review, you could also make a show yourself.

Keith: Yeah, it's easy.

Jack: It's a lot of fun.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: It's a huge amount of fun, and you get to—

Keith: It's almost no work at all.

Jack: Well... [Keith laughs loudly]

Sylvia: Fuck off.

Jack: [laughs quietly] I'm looking at the clock. [Dre laughs]

Keith: “Alone, vulnerable, and hesitant, you look up at the moon and wish for salvation. Our journey has made us stronger.”

[Keith's soundboard laugh plays]

[Sylvia and Jack laugh]

Jack: I genuinely can't tell when you're doing it on purpose, Keith, or when it's the soundboard.

Sylvia: I don't know if—

Jack: It is just gone now, my ability to tell.

Sylvia: We just read a review from people who don't listen to our other show, [Dre laughs] and so they don't know that that's the soundboard. [Keith laughs]

Jack: Is that the soundboard? It is the soundboard.

Keith: Yeah, that was the soundboard. [laughs]

Jack: But how adequately can you mimic the laugh?

[Sylvia mimics the laugh]

Keith: That wasn't bad.

Jack: That wasn't bad.

Sylvia: Thank you.

Dre: That was pretty good.

Keith: Here, hold on, I'll try it. [plays soundboard laugh again]

Sylvia: Fuck you!

Dre: [laughs] Now I don't know. I don't know the difference anymore.

Sylvia: No, I can tell. I can always tell.

Dre: I don't want to know.

[soundboard laugh]

Jack: That's the soundboard again.

Dre: [laughing] Yeah, that's the soundboard.

[Sylvia mimics soundboard laugh]

Jack: That's Sylvi. [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: Fuck! [Dre and Keith laugh]

Keith: Hold on. Hold on. All right, all right. I'll really do a real laugh. Here I go.

Sylvia: Mm...

[soundboard audience laughter]

[Sylvia laughs]

[someone claps]

Jack: Good night, everybody. Tip your waiters.

[[“The Boy in Green”](#) begins playing]

Sylvia: [laughs] Ah, it’s stupid. [Keith and Dre laugh]

Jack: Should we do a clap?

Sylvia: Yeah, we should.

Keith: Yeah, let’s do a clap. That’s fine. [Sylvia laughs quietly] All right. Three, two, one.

[they clap]

Keith: Sick.

Sylvia: Oh, that was so much fun.

Keith: Yeah, that was great.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

[song plays out]