

## **Magic Is What A Witch Does - Hunter x Hunter ep. 30-33:**

### **Media Club Plus S01E10**

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## **Introduction**

**Keith:** Hey, everybody, Keith here ahead of the episode just to remind you that our first ever bonus episode for Media Club Plus went live on the Patreon three weeks ago. You can go to [patreon.com/friends\\_table](https://patreon.com/friends_table) or [friendsatthetable.cash](https://friendsatthetable.cash) to find that. We talked about five episodes of *Dragon Ball* from season seven of *Dragon Ball*, and next week, next Tuesday on the 16th, we're going to release the next episode of that two-part bonus where we watch five more episodes of *Dragon Ball*. It was a great time. You should sign up and listen if you haven't signed up already, and we will have more bonus episodes in the future. We may even have one in February, but I'm not 100% sure yet. Anyway, stay tuned for more bonus news and definitely check out [friendsatthetable.cash](https://friendsatthetable.cash). Bye.

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

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

[youtube.com/runbutton](https://youtube.com/runbutton), and this'll be old news by the time this episode comes out, but we just finished the *Digimon World* let's play that we've been doing for [Dre: Whoo!] almost 11 years now.

**Jack:** Oh my god.

**Sylvia:** Wow.

**Keith:** Sometimes with a dozen episodes coming out in a single year, and sometimes we'll go a year or more without releasing an episode. It is a very funny episode or, uh, let's play, a very weird game, and just a bizarre experience overall to watch someone live a third of their lives playing *Digimon World*. [Jack chuckles] So, if you haven't gone and watched Run Button for some reason, after however much Friends at the Table you maybe have listened to or this, maybe go check some of that out. It's fun. It's good. With me, as always, is Jack de Quidt.

**Jack:** Hi, I'm Jack. You can find any of the music featured on the show at [notquitereal.bandcamp.com](https://notquitereal.bandcamp.com), and you can follow me on Cohost at [@jdg](#).

**Keith:** Uh, swandre3000. Nope. That's not your name. That's your— [Sylvia laughs]

**Dre:** Yeah. No, that's me.

**Keith:** I jumped ahead.

**Dre:** That's me.

**Keith:** I jumped to your part. [laughs quietly] Andrew Lee Swan.

**Dre:** Yeah, that's fine. Hey, this is [@swandre3000](#) from Twitter. You can find me in real life and call me Andrew. [laughter continues]

**Jack:** "You can find me in real life and call me Andrew." That's that Paul Simon song, right?

**Dre:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Keith:** Someone's going to use that as a defense. [Jack and Sylvia laugh]

**Dre:** I was hanging out. I have a friend who was visiting town recently, and we were hanging out, and she went to introduce me to a person she was traveling with, and she, like, looked at me and was like, "I've called you by three different names in the time that I have known you depending on the context, and now I have no idea what to call you."  
[laughs]

**Jack:** Ah. Wow. Caught between three poles.

**Keith:** Andrew. Dre. What's the third one? Is it Swandre?

**Dre:** Uh, yeah, Swan.

**Keith:** Swan? Oh, okay, okay, okay. That makes sense. Uh, Sylvi Bullet.

**Sylvia:** Hi, I'm Sylvia. You can find me everywhere at [@SYLVIBULLET](#), and you can check out Friends at the Table at [friendsatthetable.cash](#). That's our Patreon. It lets this show exist.

**Keith:** We've also got a shop you can go to, [friendsatthetable.shop](#). We've got some stuff up there [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] that all has to do with the Friends at the Table show.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** But if you like that show, then check out that shop. And if you don't like that show, check it out.

**Dre:** Fuck you.

**Sylvia:** Check out the show. Whoa! [Dre laughs]

**Keith:** Either check it out or fuck you! [Sylvia laughs]

**Jack:** Whoa!

**Keith:** Today, we watched three—

**Sylvia:** Winning hearts and minds!

**Keith:** Winning hearts and minds. Hey, it's that—

**Dre:** Yep!

**Keith:** Look, if the soaring popularity of Run Button has taught me one thing, it's that you need to regularly and freely insult your fans.

**Dre:** Sure. [Keith laughs quietly]

**Sylvia:** Yeah, you know what? Yeah, that's fair.

## **Summary [0:04:30]**

**Keith:** This week, we watched episodes 30, 31, and 32: “Fierce × And × Ferocious”, “Destiny × And × Tenacity!” and “A × Surprising × Win”. These episodes are really good. I really liked these episodes. Last week, we started to ask the question, “What is Nen?” This week, we ask the question, “What can Nen do?” and it's broad. In these episodes, we watch Gon see if his self-taught Nen abilities are going to help him win his first Nen fight before getting seriously injured-slash-grounded, and until Hisoka's battle [Dre laughs] against the seemingly powerful Kastro, Killua was reconsidering his desire to fight at all. Gon, of course, is literally shaking with excitement to fight again. Speaking of Hisoka, I've never seen a character in all of fiction no-sell limb loss so effectively. And then it's back to training with Zushi, after Gon's grounding that Killua sort of self imposes on himself as well, and they catch up to him in about four minutes.

**Jack:** Yep.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Poor Zushi.

**Keith:** [laughs quietly] He was upset. Any broad strokes things we want to fill in before we jump back to the start of episode 30?

**Sylvia:** Um...we only watched three this week?

**Jack:** I thought we watched four.

**Dre:** No, we watched four.

**Sylvia:** [laughs] Okay, cool.

**Keith:** Nope. Oh, no, no. you're right. We watched four.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** We watched four. I didn't make— I made a mistake telling you which ones we watched.

**Sylvia:** Okay, cool.

**Keith:** Not a mistake watching episodes.

**Jack:** The way that we all just went on.

**Sylvia:** I started deleting my episode 33 notes, because I was scared that I was gonna spoil something.

**Keith:** No, no, no, no, no, no, no. No, no, no.

**Sylvia:** Okay, cool!

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

**Keith:** We also watched "Power × To—" uh, no. "An × Empty—"

**Jack:** No.

**Sylvia:** "An × Empty × Threat".

**Keith:** "Fierce × And × Ferocious", "Destiny × And × Tenacity!", "A × Surprising × Win", and "An × Empty × Threat". There we go.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Great, yeah.

**Sylvia:** I was having a heart attack for most of that. [laughs]

**Keith:** No, no, no. Even that recap contained things from all four of those episodes.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, it did! It did, but I couldn't keep it straight.

**Keith:** Yeah. No, no, it's fine.

**Sylvia:** Because before we started, I was talking to Dre about how I take notes for the whole swatch of episodes and don't really delineate between...

**Keith:** That's exactly what I came in on too. That's so funny.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, so. [laughs quietly]

**Jack:** I think the only thing we missed is that in the final episode that we watched, episode 33, three villains sort of simultaneously manage to botch and succeed attempts to draw Gon and Killua into a fight.

**Keith:** Yeah. They botch and then succeed and then botch.

**Jack:** Yeah, and we'll get to that when we get to it.

**Keith:** All in about three minutes.

**Jack:** It was some kind of very interesting screenwriting.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** You know, the plot just sort of clunks into place one after the other. I would like to begin by saying that I am sick and tired of Nen.

**Keith:** Oh, yeah?

**Sylvia:** Oh, wow.

**Dre:** Wow!

**Keith:** Wow.

**Jack:** If we could please— please, can we get back to cool monsters and, like, killer assassins [Sylvia laughs] and, like, exciting— I want the narrator— the narrator man who begins each episode or began each episode by saying, “Wondrous creatures, deadly mysteries.”

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** He has gone away, [Keith: Yeah.] when we've gone into Heavens Arena, and he's been replaced, at least for this bunch of episodes, by him talking us through fucking Nen again at the beginning of every episode.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, reminding us of the, like, mathematics of Nen, basically.

**Jack:** This does not do it for me, and I am prepared to try and kind of unpack that over the course of this episode. My suspicion, based on what I know about Shonen and based on the kind of the way that the show has been—

**Keith:** Which, to remind listeners, is essentially nothing.

**Jack:** [laughs quietly] Essentially nothing.

**Sylvia:** You did not know who Naruto was. Or, well, you sort of had incepted who Naruto was before we started this.

**Jack:** Yeah. I can sort of puzzle my way through negative space, you know?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** That's not Naruto, this is Gon, et cetera. [laughs quietly] My suspicion is that all this Nen stuff is, if not building towards something, going to be a kind of operating foundation that the show is going to play the themes and variations on over the next hundred episodes or so, but I feel like right now, as we're essentially receiving, like, [laughs quietly] uncut Nen directly... [Sylvia laughs]

**Dre:** Sure.

**Jack:** I have gotten to a point where I would love it if we— like, do you remember Mike, the dog with eyes that looked like a ghost?

**Sylvia:** I do remember Mike.

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

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** That, to me, is—

**Sylvia:** You want a little more Mike flavor.

**Jack:** Yes, and I will say that the stuff kind of in the middle of this chunk of episodes in which Hisoka engages in one of the weirdest fights I've ever seen...

**Sylvia:** I was gonna ask.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm?

**Jack:** Just, like, you know, I was...I'm fairly patient when it comes to watching TV, so at no point am I like, "and therefore the show sucks."

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** But I sat up in my chair, and I was like, "All right, this is interesting. I'm really curious to see where this is going."

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.



**Jack:** But yeah, a lot of this Nen stuff, vis-à-vis, you know, training or abstaining from training after you get your ass handed to you by a man who turns into a spinning top [Sylvia laughs] or lots of, like, the meditating, the visualizing.

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

**Jack:** The Gyo is what it is called when Ren goes into your eyes.

**Dre:** You look through your eyes. Yeah, uh huh.

**Jack:** Uh, this is a special sort of, you know, Nen, et cetera. It's not really what I come to the show for.

**Keith:** And, Jack, you're actually a little bit talking about what I was talking about last week, if you remember—I mean, for us, it was last week; for everyone else, it was two weeks ago—where I was like, “Yeah, the first time I watched this season, I was kind of, like, not into it.”

**Jack:** Right, yes. And it could very well be that this is the process of going through it the first time, but I'm so—

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I think so. [Jack sighs]

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I don't know. This was something I actually wanted to talk about anyway, because I've been really enjoying Heavens Arena going through it this time.

**Keith:** Same. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** And it is definitely one of the arcs that I feel like has the— like, gets a bad rap with a lot of people, and I think it is kind of because it's a lot of table setting and a lot of...

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Like, infodumping? Like, we've talked about Kurapika's powerpoint presentations, and there's— it sometimes—

**Dre:** That's just this.

**Sylvia:** It feels like there's, like, full episodes that are that, and that I do agree drags, but I also think that especially the stuff with Hisoka in this chunk recontextualizes enough of the things that happened during the Hunter Exam to make it, [**Jack:** Totally.] like, an interesting watch for me.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** I also think it pays off some of the Killua stuff from the previous ten episodes where, like, we see him during the final Hunter Exam. He kills the person. Was he under hypnosis? Who knows? Goes home; is kind of resigned to, like, being back with his family when Gon shows up; and, like, leaves with Gon, and then is sort of actively being like, "I don't want to kill people. I just want to hang out with my friend Gon." He doesn't really even want to fight anymore. He's, like, not really interested in climbing the arena. Kastro's, like, taunts of, like, "Oh, I'll see you at the Battle Olympia," and Killua's, like, frustrated by this, is like, "No, I don't want to do that." I think that stuff is all— I really liked the Zoldyck family mini arc there, and so it's fun to kind of see them paying attention to what Killua is going through, which is, like, kind of babysitting Gon [laughs quietly] for being too reckless.

**Jack:** Yeah. [Sylvia laughs]

## **Episode 30 [0:12:14]**

**Jack:** Yeah. So, I mean, we should probably start here. Gon loses his fight after sort of demonstrating—his fight with Gido, the spinning top master—after demonstrating a use of Nen that Mr. Wing did not anticipate that Gon would have learned by now.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Of course, it was all for naught, as Gon gets just obliterated by spinning tops.

**Keith:** Yeah, it was also great to see that recontextualized, because we learned— we saw him learn that in the Hunter Exam. That is what he learned to do when he was following Hisoka for the first time. He taught himself Zetsu, [**Dre:** Yeah.] and we didn't have a name for it, and now we have a name for it. He was doing Zetsu.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** And the other thing is he also closes his eyes and sort of senses the Nen of the tops, which is, like—

**Dre:** Yeah, he turns off his targeting.

**Keith:** When he turns off his targeting. [Sylvia laughs]

**Jack:** Oh, he does!

**Keith:** This is kind of another thing that, like, he really wasn't taught how to do that. Not a lot of attention is paid to it by the show, but like, Gon, like, being able to sense and visualize the tops around him is, like, something that he invents for himself during that fight, which I thought was cool.

**Jack:** There's some lovely animation. You know, I've seen almost this exact beat in other shows, but Gon with his eyes closed dodging the tops very nonchalantly.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** It was just animated really nicely. But, you know, doesn't really work. We do Togashi's Trick again, where we kind of cut suddenly beyond the end of the fight. We don't actually see Gon get completely obliterated until later.

**Keith:** It's phenomenal.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** It's phenomenal how he keeps doing this.

**Jack:** He loves to do this.

**Keith:** He, like... [Sylvia laughs] He tells you through just the timeline of the show that, like, the actual action of this is unimportant. Next time you see this, you will have known exactly what happened. Gon got hit in the arm, broke a bunch of bones, and lost.

**Sylvia:** Okay. I want to push back a little on it being unimportant, because I do think that it's not to diminish, like, the way that we get to the end result. Honestly, when I was watching this episode, I was like, "Togashi really likes *Columbo*-style storytelling," where you know how the— [Jack and Dre laugh] you know what the end result is, it's just how do they get there that you, like, want to figure out, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** And it's a different method of doing it, but it's still— it's effective in the same way for me, where I'm like, "Well, shit. What happened? How did Gon's arm get fucked up specifically?"

**Keith:** I sort of see what you mean, but they, like, once they show it, once they cut back to it, like, you're right, it is about show— it's not about showing how Gon loses, because we already know that he loses. It's more about, like, showing what happened during the fight that was important anyway.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Which that is what I'm saying, [Sylvia: Yeah.] is like, it's not about, like, the— a normal tournament would be about— and we sort of see this with Hisoka's fight, but I still think it's wrong. It is still a fake fight, really.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** But instead of it being about the push and pull, like, the, you know, a Shonen fight can be like a chess board where you're, like, sort of taking the fight piece by piece

and sort of pushing and pulling, or it can be, like, really straightforward, just like a sort of one-versus-one assault that is like a—

**Jack:** A slug off, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah. But, like, that is the part that the show is consistently telling you it's uninterested in showing by skipping to the end. Like, there's no push and pull to see who wins. There's no surprising move that—

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** There's no, like, "Oh, I've been reminded of my duty or my friendship or my whatever, or, you know, to suddenly shrug off all of the damage that I've taken to become more powerful than ever and win the fight." None of that happens. It's just, like, we see that Gon loses, and then we have to go back and color in, like, okay, what do we still need to know that happened?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, okay. That—

**Jack:** And—

**Sylvia:** I think we're coming at it from the same perspective.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, I don't think that we're disagreeing.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** We're not disagreeing.

**Sylvia:** I just, it's a semantic thing.

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

**Sylvia:** That I messed up on there.

**Jack:** My favorite—

**Keith:** [laughing] No, I do like seeing it as *Columbo*, like he's gotta go back and investigate the fight.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah. My favorite—

**Sylvia:** We're Columbo, in a way. [laughs]

**Keith:** Oh.

**Jack:** We, here at Media Club Plus.

**Dre:** Damn.

**Jack:** God, Media Club Plus *Columbo*. There's so much *Columbo*, and it's so long.

**Sylvia:** I've seen most of it. [Jack laughs] Not even joking.

**Keith:** By the way, the announcer in the dub is the voice of Misty from *Pokémon*.

**Jack:** Oh, wow.

**Sylvia:** Oh, hey.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** The announcer is a woman called Cocco, I believe?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yep.

**Jack:** And she's great. We'll probably get more Cocco stuff when we talk about Hisoka's fight, which I suspect is going to form the bulk of this episode, but I want to sort of make sure that we've got the other stuff out of the way. I will say that I think the best version of Togashi's Trick that we have seen was the end of the Hunter Exam, was Killua killing the guy Boderó.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Bodorro? What was that guy's name?

**Sylvia:** Bodoro, yeah.

**Jack:** Bodoro.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Jack:** In part because he used Togashi's Trick to get us this spectacular moment of violence and mystery and deflation as we know that the Hunter Exam, you know, that we've been waiting to end so long, sort of ended offscreen. Gon is wondering where Killua is. You know, what's the deal with this body? Who has Gittarackur turned into? et cetera. Here, Togashi's Trick is mostly employed so we can have more time thinking about Nen, which is... [laughs quietly]

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** You know? [sighs] It's...here is something that was interesting, which is Gon wakes up in bed, and Killua comes in and is just furious. It's kind of a real moment of sort of...you described it earlier as Killua is babysitting Gon, and it really is this, like, "I am more senior than you. You made a mistake. You screwed up here. You could have died," right?

**Keith:** In my notes, I have it written that Killua is Gon's mom here.

**Jack:** Yes, and then... [Dre chuckles]

**Sylvia:** Sure.

**Jack:** Mr. Wing shows up and first slaps Gon across the face, which I think is really interesting.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Jack:** Just this very specific moment of violent reprisal, of sort of how dare you think

that you could have done that. You know, it really brought to mind the sort of stuff you were alluding to in the last recording, Sylvi, about the way in which Mr. Wing's position as teacher is sort of a parallel to other adults' [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] controlling influence on Gon and Killua's life. You know, Mr. Wing coming in here and, this guy with a bunch of broken arms, just slapping him across the face. The—

**Sylvia:** [laughs] He has one broken arm, not a bunch of broken arms.

**Keith:** He had 20 broken bones, though.

**Sylvia:** Okay, a bunch of broken bones, but one arm.

**Jack:** I broke my arm when I was five, and I still talk about it.

**Sylvia:** Oh, no, I've broken— how many bones have y'all broken before?

**Jack:** One. My arm.

**Dre:** One.

**Keith:** Uh, two.

**Sylvia:** Five, baby!

**Keith:** Wow.

**Jack:** Whoa! Whoa, so, what if four times that amount?

**Sylvia:** That would suck! [Jack laughs] I mean, I never had it all at once, either. The most I've broken at once is a couple toes, but...

**Jack:** Ow!

**Dre:** Ugh.

**Sylvia:** Oh, that was bad. I don't want to— we shouldn't talk about that story.

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



**Sylvia:** I mean, it's kind of funny, but...

**Jack:** What have you broken? Now I'm just curious.

**Sylvia:** Okay, I've broken both arms.

**Dre:** Jesus.

**Jack:** Sylvi! [laughs quietly]

**Sylvia:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. I broke my, like, my right arm when I was with my family on vacation in Ireland visiting, like, my uncle and stuff, and they didn't— they thought it was just sprained when I was there.

**Jack:** Classic parents.

**Sylvia:** They didn't x-ray it. Yeah. Well, no, the doctor we went to [**Dre:** Mm.] thought it was sprained.

**Jack:** Oh, that's a mistake.

**Sylvia:** Uh huh. Oh, this guy—

**Dre:** That's malpractice.

**Keith:** Famous Doctor's Mistake. [Jack laughs quietly]

**Sylvia:** I remember all he did was, like, squeeze it a bunch [**Jack:** Ow!] and be like, "Eh, it's probably just sprained." It was a lot.

**Dre:** Ugh!

**Sylvia:** So I had to fly home with a, like, hair-line fracture in my forearm.

**Jack:** Buddy!

**Sylvia:** I broke my wrist, and at the same time, I broke two toes, one of which had to be reset.

**Jack:** Agh!

**Dre:** Mm!

**Sylvia:** And...is that it?

**Jack:** We should cut all this, but it's just good to have some context to Gon getting—

**Sylvia:** We don't have to. Hey, you know what? We'll put this on the Patreon. \$5 and you learn about my weak points. [Jack laughs]

**Keith:** I broke both of my feet at different times. I broke one—

**Jack:** Ow! Shit!

**Sylvia:** Foot injuries are the fucking worst.

**Keith:** I broke the arch of my foot when I was, like, 15, and then I broke the arch of my other foot last year.

**Sylvia:** Okay, since we're cutting this, I will tell the story of how I broke my wrist and toes at the same time.

[cut]

**Sylvia:** That's that story.

**Keith:** It's a very short O. Henry.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Uh...I'm allergic. I've never had.

**Keith:** Oh no.

**Jack:** [laughs quietly] Oh no. Yeah, those candy bars are named after the short story, famously, because...

**Sylvia:** Is that a short story? I don't...

**Keith:** O. Henry's the author who wrote "Gift of the Magi".

**Jack:** Who wrote "Gift of the Magi".

**Sylvia:** Oh shit! I didn't know he was a real guy. [laughs]

**Jack:** He was a real guy. [Dre and Sylvi laugh]

**Dre:** You're gonna get real fucked up when I tell you what Baby Ruth is named after.  
[Jack laughs quietly]

**Sylvia:** Now, hold on. That's the football player, right? [laughs]

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

**Dre:** Yeah, you nailed it.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Jack:** Um, let me figure out—

**Dre:** The one that *The Sandlot's* about, yeah.

**Jack:** Is *The Sandlot* good? I've had friends, American friends, who were like, [**Dre:** Man...] "I used to watch that movie a bunch when I was a kid and had a good time."

**Dre:** Yeah, I feel like that's one that was probably—

**Keith:** No.

**Dre:** If you watched it as a kid, the nostalgia probably carries it for you. I don't know if it's...

**Keith:** Yeah, it's not good.

**Sylvia:** I also think it—

**Dre:** I don't know if it's good.

**Sylvia:** I don't know.

**Keith:** I haven't seen it since I was a kid, but I know what happens in that movie. It's not good.

**Dre:** [cross] Man, I— yeah.

**Sylvia:** [cross] I saw it when I was a kid, and I thought it sucked shit, so. [Sylvia and Jack laugh] I don't know, I feel like—

**Jack:** Okay, that's on the list with *Pitch Perfect*.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. *Pitch Perfect*, *The Sandlot*, *Little Rascals*.

**Dre:** Oh, man.

**Jack:** I'll add it to my Letterboxd rated two and a half stars, movie done. [Dre laughs]

**Sylvia:** One star: repugnant. [Jack and Sylvia laugh]

**Jack:** God. I—

**Keith:** Someone brush that kid's hair.

**Dre:** But they got that song where they sing about having a dollar, you know? [Sylvia laughs quietly]

**Jack:** Oh, right, yeah, god.

**Sylvia:** Get Alfalfa out of here.

**Jack:** Let me figure out where I want to come back in.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, we should do that.

**Dre:** Young Sheldon looking-ass motherfucker. [Sylvia laughs]

**Keith:** I'm gonna put a little note here.

**Sylvia:** Thank you. Sorry about the detour. [Jack laughs]

**Keith:** It's okay.

**Jack:** And just label it "gore." [Keith laughs] Yeah, but after Wing has slapped Gon across the face and chastised him, the scene kind of wraps around, in a way that *Hunter × Hunter* does regularly, from a fairly grim moment to a joke as he chastises Gon almost word-for-word in the same way that Killua did. [Sylvia laughs]

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** And I thought this was just a really good beat [Keith: Yeah.] of, like, these two people who, at least—mm, I can't speak for Wing as much as I can Killua—you know, hold Gon in really high regard and want the best for him, but the most they can muster—

**Dre:** I think that's fair to say for Wing.

**Sylvia:** It's a different way.

**Jack:** Although his methods are— yeah. Yeah.

**Dre:** It's different, but yeah.

**Sylvia:** It's very different to the way Killua expresses it and, I think, internalizes it.

**Jack:** But I think that that's why it's especially funny to me that they say functionally the same thing, and you're just sort of like, "Aw, give the guy a break," and I think Killua in fact says, "I just told him that already."

**Keith:** [laughs] Yeah, yeah, basically, yeah. He's like, "I told him."

**Jack:** And we get a great Killua moment as— so, Killua has determined— or maybe

Gon's doctor has said it's gonna be four months, really, to heal.

**Sylvia:** He asks Gon, and Gon says it'll be four months, and then when Wing asks, Killua says, "He said it's gonna be two months."

**Jack:** And then turns to the camera.

**Dre:** And then makes great cat face.

**Jack:** We have kitty cat Killua, who has ears and a tail this time around.

**Sylvia:** Kitty cat Killua is here to stay now. Yeah.

**Jack:** Is this gonna be a recurring— like, a—

**Sylvia:** Killua frequently, I think...

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** It happens a couple times in this run, where Killua does a little cat face. I think one of them might have been on a Huncyclopedia at the end of an episode, but...

**Keith:** Yeah, there's been a few already.

**Jack:** Well, it's fun, right? Because I don't think of Killua— Killua is such a weird character. I love that little freak. [Sylvia and Jack laugh] I don't think of him as particularly, like, mischievous a lot of the time. He is disaffected and violent and either genuinely bored or affecting boredom and nonchalance to kind of mask another emotion. He's not a scamp very often.

**Keith:** But to me that's exactly what an actual cat is like.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah. Yeah. That's very catlike, but when he has these little mischievous moments and sort of does kitty cat Killua to punctuate them, it lets Togashi highlight these little moments of kind of impishness in Killua's character.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** When so often the thing Killua is doing is going, “[sighs] Well, you know, okay. [laughing] I guess I’m gonna have to kill you.”

**Dre:** Can I...can I make a proposal?

**Jack:** Yeah, go right ahead.

**Keith:** Sure.

**Dre:** It’s not a proposal. It’s more of just a—

**Keith:** It’s a promposal.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Dre:** It’s a point.

**Keith:** Oh.

**Dre:** Uh, Kill-nya. Is this anything? [Jack and Keith laugh quietly]

**Sylvia:** Eh, it’s something. You kinda— you needed to— Killnya!

**Dre:** Killnya, yeah.

**Keith:** Killnya.

**Sylvia:** [cutesily] Killnya!

**Keith:** And it sounds sort of like “killin’ ya.”

**Jack:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Which he does.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** He does.

**Dre:** It works on two levels.

**Keith:** Well, actually, he pointedly does not do in this one.

**Dre:** Yeah, and he finds it very hard and boring.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I mean, if you were really good at killing people and you had no moral qualms with killing people, I can see how it would immediately make navigating through problems much harder for you.

**Dre:** Sure, yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Dre:** I love to play *Dungeons & Dragons*, actually. [Keith laughs]

**Jack:** Does Killua have morals? Let's table that for, [laughs quietly] I guess, future episodes.

**Sylvia:** I think so.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Killua— I think every character [**Dre:** Yeah.] has some set of morals in some way.

**Keith:** Killua definitely has morals. He was— even before meeting Gon, he already didn't like killing people.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** He just is— he just has a much, um, lower bar for crossing that line because of



his horrible family.

**Jack:** But how much of him not liking killing people was the same way that you don't like the Spice Girls because your little brother listens to them? [Keith laughs] And then, later on in your life, you're like, "Oh, the Spice Girls are actually great, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] and it was just because I was being petty to a sibling." You know, how much of not liking killing is Killua going, you know, "Ugh, god, that's what my family does, and I hate my family."

**Dre:** Ugh, there goes my dad.

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

**Dre:** It's so embarrassing when he murders people!

**Jack:** Yeah. I don't know. We'll figure that out.

**Keith:** Yeah, we'll figure it out.

**Jack:** I feel like we're in a...we're in Nen territory now, baby. But let's see.

**Sylvia:** This is Nen country.

**Jack:** [laughs] This is Nen country.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Wing says, "Don't practice Nen." Me, smiling, delighted, kitty cat Jack: they won't think about Nen. [Sylvia, Dre, and Jack laugh]

**Dre:** Jnyack.

**Sylvia:** Nyack.

**Jack:** [laughs] He ties—

**Sylvia:** For the PS4.

**Dre:** Thanks, Sylvi. [Jack laughs]

**Keith:** It's almost sort of like a self punishment, because you can tell that really what Togashi wants to do is to never stop talking about Nen.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah, Togashi loves this. He—

**Dre:** I mean, we've been talking about Nen since the Hunter Exam. We just didn't know about it.

**Jack:** And this is kind of something I love.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And I want to dig into this when we get into Killua's fight, because, you know, Killua really demonstrates— Killua. Oh my god. I do this in my own notes. I confuse Hisoka and Killua, and, you know?

**Sylvia:** Huh.

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Keith:** Hmm.

**Jack:** Hmm.

**Dre:** Huh!

**Jack:** Hmm! Interesting. [Sylvia laughs]

**Dre:** Interesting.

**Keith:** Although, this one, you might be more forgiven for comparing or for confusing Gon and Hisoka.

**Jack:** I suppose, maybe.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** We get a really interesting mirror early on where Hisoka is creepily shuddering watching Gon's fight, but then we see Gon doing the exact same thing basically, learning about Hisoka fighting and getting excited about watching that.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Yeah. Really, really interesting.

**Dre:** Even just when he knows Hisoka is fighting and he can't watch.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah. Oh, yeah, yeah, it happens then too.

**Sylvia:** We specifically get talk of— should we talk about the Gido fight? Because this kind of, like, goes into that stuff a little bit.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Sylvia:** With, like, Gon's excite— like, what Gon's— I guess we did talk about it, but the thing that Gon, like, the rush that Gon gets out of this is when—

**Jack:** The spinning top man fight?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, Gido, the spinning top man. I was trying to think of a rattly— rattly spin man. [Keith laughs]

**Jack:** Uh, spinnily top man.

**Sylvia:** [laughs quietly] Spinnily top man is better, I think. During that fight, we get the— I think it's we get the visual of Gon sort of, like, doing his dance among the tops, dodging them all.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** And something about— it's either him talking later or it's Killua talking about how he thinks that the risk of losing his life is what excites Gon. This might come up when Wing talks to him about, like, what their intentions are.

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah, for sure.

**Sylvia:** The timeline's a little fuzzy in my head.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** It's because they go back to the Gido fight twice. It makes it hard to keep it straight.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm. Yeah.

**Dre:** But, I mean, even that is— that's a throwback also to Hunter Exam, right? Where, like, Gon is talking to Kurapika [**Keith:** Right, yeah.] after the Hisoka confrontation, and Gon is like, "I was scared but also so excited!"

**Sylvia:** Yeah, no, it's a pattern now.

**Dre:** And Kurapika was like, "Hey, what the fuck?"

**Keith:** This is the feeling—

**Dre:** This is Gon.

**Keith:** —that Gon learns during that fight is what being a Hunter probably is.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** [laughs quietly] This is why my dad left.

**Keith:** This is why my dad left.

**Dre:** This is why my dad left.

**Keith:** For this, so, must pursue.

**Dre:** It's also— another part of that fight that I just wanted to highlight is when Wing is

watching it and he's like, "Ah, Gon will quickly realize he's overmatched," and it's like, my guy.

**Sylvia:** You don't know this kid.

**Dre:** You know nothing about Gon. [laughs]

**Keith:** Well, he sort of learns it during that fight.

**Dre:** Yeah, he does.

**Keith:** I think, Dre, it was you that last week had in your notes about Wing sort of being kind of afraid of Gon and Killua and their potential.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, you said, uh, "Wing is the first person to see Gon and Killua's potential and is close to understanding how terrifying it is." At the end of one of the episodes in the last episode, Wing says, like, "They're amazing and terrifying," or something, and this is really—

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** These four episodes kind of play that out. It's not over, but you really, like, he really dives deep into kind of worrying about what he's done by unleashing them. He calls them monsters, at one point.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And yeah, we get a lot of scenes, like the realization that Gon never meant to win this fight. He only meant to do, to like— he meant to lose, really. He went in going, "I accept my loss," and that is also very scary to him, because like, the stakes have been set. He could easily die. He is facing something he doesn't really understand or know how to defend against.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** For Togashi, Nen seems a lot like, you know. In a lot of shows like this, in a lot of battle anime with a sort of energy power kind of setup, a lot of them are a lot like...a lot like *MechAssault*, and this one is like *Chromehounds* or, uh, you know.

**Sylvia:** [laughs quietly] Elaborate for people who might not have played either of those.

**Keith:** Okay. Um...okay.

**Sylvia:** If it's hard, don't worry about it.

**Keith:** *Smash Bros.*, *Street Fighter*?

**Sylvia:** Okay. Okay, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah! Yeah, yeah, yeah. Sure. Now you're speaking my language.

**Keith:** Here's— this is the best one. *Mario Kart*, *Forza*.

**Jack:** Mm. [chuckles]

**Sylvia:** Oh, okay.

**Dre:** Oh.

**Keith:** So, like—

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** In *Dragon Ball Z*, you just have energy, and you can shoot it from your hands. You learn how to do it. But like, Togashi is like, “Do you want to see all the fucking insides in this car? Do you want to see the engine? You want to see all this stuff that I got in here?” [Jack laughs]

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

**Jack:** 26 times?

**Keith:** [laughs] And, you know, like, this is the first time you're loading into *Forza*, so you want to, you know, tinker around with all the stuff and see what's going on, and there just is a lot of it, and Gon doesn't know any of that. Gon is just like... "Yeah, I know about Mario."

**Sylvia:** Gon thinks he's playing *Burnout*.

**Keith:** Yeah, Gon thinks he's playing *Mario Kart* or, like, knows that he's moving from *Mario Kart* to something else, but he doesn't know what that is, and he's never heard of *Forza*, and he doesn't— he's never seen a racing wheel.

**Jack:** Ugh. Ugh. [laughs] Wing gives Gon a promise, uh...what does he call it? A promise...

**Keith:** A promise—

**Sylvia:** A promise thread.

**Dre:** Rope?

**Jack:** Thread.

**Keith:** Yeah, thread or string.

**Dre:** Oh, thread. Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Jack:** Which he ties around Gon's left pinkie to sort of help focus the promise that he has made to not practice Nen and instead work on his meditation, and just as I was getting sick of Nen, we cut suddenly and genuinely kind of startlingly to a semi-ruined city made of, like, dark clay material. We've not seen this place before, and who should show up? It's my boy, Kurapika! I was delighted!

**Sylvia:** Yeah!

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I didn't know Kurapika was gonna be in this episode. In fact, I had so sort of— not resigned myself, because I like Gon and Killua a lot. I had gotten so into my head that we weren't going to see Kurapika and Leorio until everyone meets up again that the thought of cutting to them off doing their own stuff was kind of unthinkable to me, so it was similar to seeing Hisoka in the tower. I was like, I did not think Hisoka would be involved here, so it feels like he is breaking the rules when he shows up. It was such a delight to see Kurapika, who is having difficulty getting a job.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** He's gone to see an extremely cool-looking lady in what we learn is the—

**Sylvia:** She's the best. I'm in love with her. I'm fucking— sorry, I'm in love with that lady.

**Jack:** No, do you want to describe what this lady looks like? She fucking rules.

**Sylvia:** Uh, yeah. She's got, like, purple hair, covered in tattoos and facial piercings, in this, like, dilapidated city that's built out of on the side of a mountaintop. Like, the establishing shot for this is so cool.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** It's just this, like, city built on top of, like...built on top of a hill just on top of itself over and over. This, like, elevated thing.

**Jack:** Like terraced buildings almost.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I was struggling to get the accurate words out there. [Jack laughs quietly] And she basically just, like, laughs at Kurapika for not being— she's like, "I can't give you any work here, because you can't see this," and the audience, because we've had our Nen awakening, [Dre: Sure.] we get to see this, like, spooky face that she summons from her fingertip, but Kurapika is like, "I don't know what you're talking about."

**Keith:** God, I wonder what the face does.

**Sylvia:** I know, right?



**Keith:** Yeah. See, that's— once you're properly Nen-brained, [laughs quietly] you're like—

**Jack:** Well, see, here's the thing. I had not— I'm so excited to talk about this Hisoka fight. [Sylvia laughs] The moment that Nen starts getting interesting to me is when you see people using it beyond just the mastery of the techniques, of the four sort of exercises.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Because I can hear about Ren, Hatsu, Zetsu, and Ten? Yes, that's it.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, you nailed it.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** For, you know, until the cows come home. But I want to see weirdos doing crazy stuff. [laughs] That's why I've...

**Sylvia:** You want to see the weirdos using Ren, Ten, and Hatsu.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** You know, at the start of this episode, I was a little bit worried. I'm not worried anymore. [Jack laughs]

**Dre:** Yeah, no. Yeah. [laughs]

**Jack:** Yeah, so, I had not even thought. But here my heart sunk a little bit, because I

was like, “Ah, fuck. We've cut to Kurapika so that he can learn about Nen,” and I was right, because Kurapika meets a sort of murderous vagabond, I guess? in the woods.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Who shoots an explosive acorn at him and then handily takes away his Hunter License and gives it back and says, basically, “I'll train you in Nen.” He's a sort of violent shabby Mr. Wing, if Mr. Wing is a kind of placid shabby Mr. Wing.

**Sylvia:** He kind of looks like a non-copyright-infringing Ryu knockoff.

**Jack:** Oh, he sure does. Yeah, yeah, he really does.

**Dre:** Oh, yeah, uh huh.

**Sylvia:** His gi is just brown instead of white, [**Jack:** Yeah.] and he's got a bit more stubble. Though there was that one *Street Fighter* where they gave Ryu facial hair, and everyone went fucking insane on the internet, so. [Jack chuckles]

**Keith:** Was that both of the last two? Didn't— or did he get rid of the beard?

**Sylvia:** I think so. I think it's a—

**Dre:** I don't know if he still has it in 6.

**Keith:** Hmm.

**Sylvia:** I don't know if it's an alt costume or not anymore.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Oh, he has it in 6. Nevermind.

**Sylvia:** That's what I thought. I thought that was one of the times everyone shrieked about 6.

**Dre:** Yeah, he does.

**Jack:** Are they shrieking because they like it, or are they shrieking because they don't like it?

**Keith:** Oh, they really like it.

**Sylvia:** They do.

**Dre:** Oh, they like it. They like it.

**Sylvia:** They like it, and sometimes they like it for reasons not related to the gameplay.

**Jack:** Ha!

**Keith:** He's gonna punch so hard with that beard!

**Dre:** Wait, hold on! Is that— okay.

**Sylvia:** Huh?

**Dre:** I just realized why people talk about *Overwatch* so much. [Sylvia and Keith laugh]

**Jack:** Ohh. Oh, yeah. Oh, we did get, however, the woman at the Hunter agency officially said to Kurapika, “Your exam isn't over yet.”

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** They actually— they both say it, which is great, because I know it's Sylvi's favorite.

**Jack:** Oh, both bootleg Ryu...?

**Sylvia:** Yeah! The Hunter Exam isn't over yet!

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Because fake Ryu says it too, right?

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

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Isn't that where— he, like, explicitly says, like, “Yeah, this is—”

**Keith:** Yeah, like, “Your exam is just beginning.”

**Dre:** The real Hunter test is learning Nen.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Which prompts me a question. Uh, I guess to Jack, because you all both know the answer to this. I kind of forgot the answer to this. How's Leorio gonna learn Nen, do you think?

**Jack:** Oh, god. Well, so, here's the thing. He's got to because of how the show is structured.

**Dre:** Yes.

**Jack:** Uh, I feel like part of playing the themes and variations on Nen is that we get to see the team, you know, use it in their own way, and we can already see this a bit in poor Zushi's different approaches to Nen than Gon and Killua's.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Um, so it's, yes, Leorio has got to learn Nen. I think he is going to get his aura, uh, what are they called? Pores? Aura pores? What are they called? [Sylvia laughs]

**Keith:** Nodes?

**Jack:** What are they called? Nodes. [laughs]

**Sylvia:** His paws!

**Keith:** No, there's an R.

**Dre:** [laughs] Ny...I can't make a cat Leorio name. I can't do it.

**Keith:** Pore.

**Jack:** No, no, no, pore. Pore.

**Sylvia:** Pores. Sorry.

**Dre:** No, his powes!

**Jack:** He's gonna get— Leorio—

**Dre:** [exaggerated accent] Eh, check out my cat ova' here. He's got the cutest little paws.

**Jack:** Kitty cat Leorio.

**Keith:** Thankfully, I'm pre-loaded to understand that from being from Boston, I totally got...

**Jack:** Oh, sure, this exact problem.

**Sylvia:** Oh, of course, of course.

**Jack:** Leorio is going to get his aura nodes blasted open accidentally. [Sylvia and Jack laugh] I can't—

**Dre:** Just going to be studying at med school, and someone just comes up right behind him and...

**Jack:** Well, I think it's more—

**Sylvia:** I feel like a lot of people get their nodes blasted at med school.

**Dre:** Just blast their big white aura all over his back.

**Jack:** Well, now, hold on. Now, hang on. I didn't... [Sylvia laughs] It's gonna be like when Doctor Manhattan gets made in the radioactive chamber. [Sylvia laughs]

**Dre:** Ooh.

**Keith:** Someone pushes him into the Nen room.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** [laughs quietly] Someone pushes Leorio into the Nen room. March 15: Leorio appears by the barbed wire fence.

**Sylvia:** September first, Yorknew City.

**Jack:** Screams for ten minutes. Um, I don't know. Leorio is not going to learn— eh, you know. It's like, he's not gonna be happy about it for a long time. He's not a— [Dre and Jack laugh] He's not a patient chap, and I think it's kind of definitely Gon and Killua's sort of ability to be still that has really helped them with Nen so far. Um, I don't know. Maybe this can be, like, a hot girl involved? That seems like the way you could motivate Leorio into figuring out. [Sylvia and Jack laugh]

**Dre:** Oof.

**Keith:** Also, we've seen Leorio be Leorio, but theoretically, he's trying to become a doctor, which I think trying to become a doctor requires a lot of patience, so he must have some sort of secret patience that we haven't seen.

**Jack:** [cross] Trying to be a doctor gets you a lot of patients.

**Sylvia:** [cross] I mean, I hope he doesn't have secret patients when you're trying to be a doctor. [Keith laughs]

**Jack:** Hey, Sylvi! [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Hey.

**Dre:** Jesus.

**Sylvia:** Hey.

**Jack:** Yeah, I don't know. I can't— Leorio being a doctor is, I don't know. I'm trying to think of a good sort of...he's not really a doctor.

**Keith:** Leorio trying to be a doctor is like an idiot trying to be a doctor. [Sylvia laughs]

**Jack:** Yeah, sort of.

**Sylvia:** It's like me trying to be a doctor.

**Jack:** Yeah. Well, I...no, [Sylvia laughs] I don't think you'd be a very good doctor, Sylvi. I don't think any of us [**Sylvia:** No.] would be good doctors.

**Keith:** What?

**Sylvia:** No.

**Jack:** I don't think anybody on Friends at the Table would be a good doctor.

**Keith:** I'm a— I diagnose people all the time. [Jack and Sylvia laugh]

**Jack:** Hmm. Hmm. Yeah.

**Dre:** Me too.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Well, that's— yeah, you're probably the closest to, like, a medical doctor among us, Dre.

**Keith:** No, I think it's me.

**Dre:** Listen, yeah, I got to get my COVID shot early because of that, so there you go.

**Sylvia:** Damn.

**Jack:** Damn. Are you squeamish? [Sylvia laughs quietly]

**Dre:** Like, in what way? [laughs]

**Jack:** Of, like, doctor violence. [Sylvia laughs]

**Keith:** Like, needles? [Dre laughs]

**Jack:** Doctors see, like, blood and stuff all the time, right?

**Sylvia:** Doctor violence.

**Dre:** Sure. Um, like, I'm not afraid of needles, but when you say "doctor violence" I think of, like, something like *Saw*, and I am squeamish about that.

**Sylvia:** Dr. Violence is actually one of the floor masters. [Dre laughs]

**Keith:** Yeah, when I hear "doctor violence," I hear a guy that needs to say "don't worry," before he introduces himself a lot. [Jack laughs quietly] Don't worry, but I'm Dr. Violence.

**Jack:** All this is to say [quiet laughter] that I don't think Leorio is gonna be great at Nen. Is this a sufficient answer for you, Dre?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah, no, I was just curious.

## **Episode 31 [0:43:47]**

**Keith:** So, we're on episode 31. Have we— because that was the Kurapika stuff was the end of episode 30. It's kind of brief. I was saddened by how brief the Kurapika diversion was, but we come in on Gon is healed. It took one month; not four, not two. Gon's doing pushups, Killua's like, is impressed-slash-jealous? [Keith and Dre laugh] It's like, we have something that Gon is naturally better at than Killua, which is like, oh yeah, when I get hurt, I'm just almost instantly better, unexplainably so.

**Dre:** Here's my question, though. I don't know if— that does feel like that's what the show is saying, [Keith: Yeah.] but I'm also wondering if this is also another, like, implicit example of Gon's rapid grasp of Nen, because I forget which one of the principles it is, right, but it talks about it being the one that, like, slows aging and significantly, like,



improves your lifespan.

**Keith:** That's true. That is Ten that does that.

**Sylvia:** I think it's Ten, yeah.

**Dre:** And so I am wondering if it is also— because was Ten the one that he was allowed to practice while he was recuperating?

**Keith:** No.

**Sylvia:** Well, so—

**Keith:** This is an— sorry, Sylvi, you can explain, yeah.

**Sylvia:** No, so, the thing he's allowed to practice is the philosophy that Wing explains to them.

**Dre:** Oh, okay.

**Keith:** Right.

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

**Sylvia:** The Flame?

**Dre:** The fake Ren.

**Keith:** Yeah, the fake one, yeah.

**Sylvia:** I mean, it's not— like, it does—

**Dre:** I get what you're saying though, yeah.

**Keith:** I see that Wing is not— is right about the thing that he says where the two Nens are connected.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And that the slow way of practicing Nen diligently, the meditation Nen, is a way to exercise your spirit in a way that improves your sort of actual Nen.

**Sylvia:** It's almost like the theory side of it, honestly.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Is the way I've been thinking of it.

**Dre:** No, for sure.

**Sylvia:** Where it's like, this is how you study it, and then the other— when you're engaging in the actual use of it, you're practicing it.

**Dre:** Yeah. When Gon goes to get his practicum hours.

**Keith:** But it is confusing, because they don't really go—

**Sylvia:** That is kind of what he's doing. [laughs quietly]

**Dre:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Keith:** They sort of gloss over the Ten that he's allowed to do is the other Ten, not the...

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

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Because then it's like, "study Ten, but don't study Nen," and it's like, okay, well, I can't.

**Dre:** But anyway, yeah, I wasn't sure if— because it definitely does seem like the show and Killua is saying that this is just, like, inherent to Gon, but I was just— in my head, I was like, is this also Nen stuff?

**Keith:** The stuff that it reminded me of was, like, the other times that Gon has been hurt

and immediately recovered.

**Dre:** Oh, that's true.

**Keith:** Like the poisoning, where...

**Dre:** Yeah, or when he got fucking tranquilized by Hisoka.

**Keith:** Oh, yeah, yeah, that's what I mean, by the...what was that guy's name?

**Dre:** Or not by Hisoka but by the hunter guy.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, the blowdart guy.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And I can't remember how long that guy said it would take to recover. Hisoka was like, "You'll be good in three days, hopefully," and Gon stands up.

**Dre:** And then it was, like, a day.

**Keith:** No, Gon stands up in that scene he stands up.

**Dre:** That's true, and then he goes— then he, like, crawls back into the tree.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

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

**Keith:** So it is sort of established that, for whatever reason, Gon can heal absurdly fast. This is another [**Dre:** Yeah.] sort of Shonen trope that is just I think sort of simply played into. Like, there's no, you know, interesting twist on this. It's just like, yeah, he's the main character. He gets hurt, and then he's fine one second later. It's fine.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** In part, for sort of the economics of the show, right? It's like, we need Gon to be doing stuff.

**Keith:** Right. Right, but if that's your goal, then just don't have him get as hurt.

**Jack:** Uh, no. [Keith and Jack laugh] No.

**Keith:** No, the show is about him getting hurt.

**Jack:** "I would prefer if he got hurt all the time," says Togashi. Yeah, Gon is fine, and Killua has brought him a little gift, which is a set of tickets to go and see Hisoka versus someone called Kastro. Everyone is so excited about Hisoka's match, and Killua says to Hisoka— oh my god. Jesus christ. Killua says to Gon, "Hisoka's the real deal," and he kind of breaks down his fighting record, as if we wouldn't know this already. Hisoka is the most frightening murderer in a show full of frightening murderers.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** So I don't know why it's a surprise that he...regularly just kills people in the ring? Is that how we're to understand it?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I think he said that, like, all of his wins or close to all of them were...?

**Keith:** No, he had six out of eight of his wins were KOs.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Keith:** And of his six KOs, five of them were fatal.

**Sylvia:** Right.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** And then Kastro, who we meet, is the one who wasn't— who was the KO but didn't? I guess it doesn't say necessarily if it was a KO or points victory with him.

**Keith:** Oh, I thought they said, but I could be wrong.

**Jack:** But it's usually bad when you fight Hisoka.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Jack:** It is notable that Hisoka has this very...and we've talked about it a lot, this very twisted philosophy of sort of cultivating a kill.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Of, you know, deliberately sparing somebody so that he can more effectively [Dre: Mm.] take the kill later. This does not necessary seem to apply in Heavens Arena, where he just is murdering people.

**Keith:** No, no, he straight up says.

**Dre:** No, it applies.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, he says...

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Towards the end of his fight.

**Dre:** It applies to Castro.

**Keith:** Yeah, applies to— towards the end of his fight, he was like, "Yeah, I let you live, hoping that you would, like, fulfill your potential, but you didn't, sorry."

**Jack:** So, with these people that he's killing, do you think that they are people that he just doesn't see any potential in whatsoever?

**Keith:** Yeah, I think it's like a mix of three things. One: he can't lose four times, or he gets kicked out, and he wants to go higher. The second thing is that he doesn't want to fight people that don't interest him, which is why he has three losses, and all of them are no-shows, but he has to sign up, because there's a deadline.

**Jack:** Yeah. Cocco says, talking about Hisoka's no-shows, he says— uh, she says, "Hisoka the magician is the grim reaper who's prone to taking days off," which is such a lovely Togashi line. [Keith laughs] It's so good.

**Keith:** And then the third thing is, yeah, I think it's finding people that he actually wants to fight. So, he wants to fight some of them. Some of them he has to fight. And he can't keep losing or he'll get kicked out, and that's a bummer.

**Jack:** Now, of course, he could just not kill the people. He could just KO them.

**Keith:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** Ehh...yeah, if he was a chump, but...

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Come on.

**Dre:** Does that look like a chump to you? I don't...

**Jack:** This murder clown. He's not just called regular clown.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** He's not called KO clown.

**Sylvia:** He's not gonna wimp out and go halfway unless it— I guess unless it serves him for later, actually.

**Keith:** Unfortunately, it does really seem like murder is kind of the norm at level 200 of the battle tower.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** They did spend all of that first section being like, "Yeah, these freaks up here will

kill you on purpose.”

**Sylvia:** I mean, that was the whole thing with the—

**Dre:** And, like, all weapons are allowed.

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

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Like, part of the trial is like, if you don't know Nen when you come up here, we will shoot to kill outside of a match.

**Sylvia:** That's exactly it, right? Because the Nen Initiates that they refer to, [**Keith:** Yeah.] Sadaso...god, what...? Sadaso, Gido, and we learned the other guy's name in a Hunterpedia. Riehlvelt, I think it was?

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

**Keith:** Yeah, something like that.

**Sylvia:** Those three that I'm gonna just call the Nen Initiates, because it's what they used to call them in a couple different episodes.

**Dre:** Oh, they're not the new Blowjob Brothers?

**Sylvia:** No. No. What?

**Dre:** Okay. Okay.

**Sylvia:** Come on. We gotta keep things moving. Can't live in the past.

**Dre:** The Handjob Trio.

**Sylvia:** That's a title that's been bestowed already.

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

**Sylvia:** These guys can be the Brothers Three, despite not actually being related.

**Jack:** Ha.

**Keith:** We don't know that.

**Sylvia:** Good point. But it was, like, pointed out that it was, like, exceptional that they survived without having Nen, as opposed to dying like other people who have arrived without Nen.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And I am... [sighs] There is only limited interest or a kind of critical value in sort of going, "Well, what's the deal with this world?" I am so curious what the deal is with this world. [Sylvia laughs] Death games are not allowed. They're not legal in our world, because people would murder each other in death games, and that's something that we try and avoid. Whatever government or organization in this does seem to sort of be saying, "Well, look. If you've signed the waivers and you've entered Heavens Arena, even if you're a 12-year-old, uh, good luck, I guess."

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Okay.

**Keith:** Hey, full legal rights for children. [Keith and Jack laugh]

**Dre:** That's true. You're right.

**Jack:** To get obliterated in Heavens Arena.

**Keith:** Mm.

**Jack:** Yeah, it is...in a world like this, it does make more sense why you might be drawn towards the Hunter Exam, perhaps, to sort of— ah, but it's like, well, you're probably gonna die in the swamp there too. [Sylvia laughs] Maybe I would just be, like, a baker or something in the *Hunter × Hunter* world. [laughs] Maybe I'd just run a garden center. I



don't want anything to do with those weirdos.

**Sylvia:** How many conversations do you think parents have to have with their kids being like, “Listen, if you do this, you're gonna die in that swamp.” [laughs quietly]

**Jack:** You are just going to die in the swamp! Everybody knows six people who have died in the Hunter Exams. [Dre laughs]

**Keith:** It sort of reminds me of one of the sort of interesting things about the Psychonauts games is how the Psychonauts are real, but they also, like, have this kind of bizarre comic-book-slash-, you know, fiction or semi-fiction wing to their thing.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Where it's like, oh yeah, I— it's like if America's CIA had a comic book that detailed the actual exploits of the CIA. [Sylvia laughs] Like, it's very odd that they both exist and also have comic books about them, and it is like— I'm always thinking this about the *Hunter × Hunter* world, which is like, are these people famous? Like, do people know about, like, the most famous Hunters? Like, are people writing comic books about the stuff they get up to?

**Dre:** I mean, Wing, in his monologue I think from the last set of episodes, talking about, like, people who know Nen, I mean, he said a lot of them were, like, politicians or, like, famous athletes or writers or musicians or, like, sages or whatever, so.

**Keith:** Oh yeah, that's something we didn't mention was Wings sort of thing about, like, some people just have a lot of Nen without knowing [Dre: Yeah.] that they have it, and they will—

**Dre:** Or they have a lot of aura, I guess.

**Keith:** Yeah, they'll just become famous, like, because of that, because they're, like, secretly Nen geniuses and they don't even know that that's what they're doing.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Very KOTOR II of them.

**Sylvia:** I mean, Gon is an example of that, honestly, right?

**Keith:** Gon is an example of that, yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Or would be if it wasn't for learning it very, very young.

**Jack:** But also, like, Menchi and Buhara as cooks are probably Nen geniuses.

**Keith:** Yeah, do they have, like, **[Dre: Mm-hmm.]** a Michelin star restaurant out there somewhere?

**Jack:** A Hunter Michelin star restaurant? Yeah. My aunt went to the Hunter Michelin star restaurant and got killed. **[Keith laughs]** Just don't mess with the Hunters. Don't go anywhere near them. I... **[sighs]** I don't know. I'm already a little resentful of, like, are we just gonna recontextualize everything that we saw through Nen, all that Hunter Exam stuff? I don't know. We'll see. But do we want to talk about Killua going to visit Kastro? Oh, so, firstly, Wing says, "Don't go and see the match. Seeing the match is studying Nen."

**Keith:** Yeah, they're having a conversation. They're literally being like— Gon's like, "Should we ask Wing? Like, is he gonna be okay with this?" and Killua's like, "Of course it's gonna be okay. We're just gonna watch the match." He's at the top of the escalator. "No, I will not be okay with it!" **[laughter]**

**Sylvia:** It's pretty good.

**Keith:** Very funny.

**Jack:** I've never met someone at the top of an escalator like that, because I think it would only be read as threatening, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** You're on the escalator. There's nowhere you can go.

**Keith:** And it's hard to sneak up.

**Jack:** You have to wait a little bit further back. It is hard to sneak.

**Keith:** It's hard to sneak up on someone that way. Wing had to have put a little bit of thought into it, probably.

**Sylvia:** I mean, he used Zetsu.

**Dre:** He probably used, uh, Zetsu.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Probably used Zetsu, yeah. And was just very lucky that they didn't look where they were going while they slowly ascended the escalator. [Jack laughs quietly]

**Dre:** Poor Jack. Jack is over here talking about, like, "Man, I hope we don't just recontextualize everything on the show through Nen."

**Sylvia:** Nah, sorry. [Jack laughs]

**Dre:** And we're over here being like, [voice] "Oh yeah, he's using Zetsu, right, guys? Ehh." [laughter]

**Sylvia:** You know?

**Keith:** Hey, hey, what do you think shadow step was?

**Jack:** Aaagh! Ah, yeah, it's...

**Dre:** It's fucked up. It's fucked up. You can't say that.

**Jack:** I thought it was gonna be— okay, fine. We're fine. It's fine.

**Keith:** No, no, no. What did you think it was gonna be?

**Jack:** I thought it was gonna be, like, cool Zoldyck family magic, like the Zoldycks, uh...

**Sylvia:** I mean, who's to say it isn't?

**Dre:** It could be both.

**Jack:** Yes, you're right. I suppose it could be both, and that's a bit like saying, you know, it's like the difference between music as a concept and musical instruments.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Jack:** You know, like, the Zoldycks are playing their own musical instruments, and in that sense, that's, you know, pretty interesting, but it does just come back down to they're doing Nen again. Nen seems to be just a fundamental force in this world, like gravity or...

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** It's like physics.

**Keith:** Right. And it is interesting—or I guess debatably interesting—that this is, like, a veil. It is a physical property of the world that has also been fully obscured from most people's daily life. It's literally a secret and sort of a governmental secret.

**Jack:** Yeah. Well, we have to be really wary when we say something like a governmental secret in *Hunter × Hunter*, when I don't know what—I do not know what the kind of political or social structure of this world is whatsoever.

**Keith:** No, and I want to be clear, I don't think this is a spoiler. I think that, like, we're aware that the Hunters are some sort of institution, enough to have political ties all over the world, and they have this thing that is a secret. I think that is enough to be at least akin to a government, to me.

**Jack:** Yeah, definitely.

**Keith:** I want to say this. Can I say...I want to clear it with other— I want to clear it with the rest of these— with the rest. [Sylvia laughs] Okay. Hold on. Um, let's see. I'll tell you what I want to say.

**Dre:** Oh, are we typing?

**Keith:** Yeah, I'm typing. [typing]

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, that's fine.

**Keith:** Okay. You know, it is— it could be considered mildly a spoiler. This is like a negative spoiler. But the thing I wanted to say, to see if it made you feel any better: I don't know what the Rhythm Echo is. I don't know why it works. I don't know if it's a Nen thing. I have no clue what the Rhythm Echo is.

**Jack:** Hmm. Yeah. That is interesting, because...and I'm sure we're gonna get some of this, and we've kind of been beating about the bush talking about this Hisoka fight, so I want to make sure we get to it sooner, because I think it'll—

**Keith:** It's a big bush, so.

**Jack:** It is a large, uh, violent bush.

**Sylvia:** Practically a tree.

**Jack:** Practically a tree, at this point. It's definitely a shrub.

**Keith:** Hedge.

**Jack:** Hedge. Sometimes it is fun to see people do the weird thing.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And it gets less fun to me—sometimes, not always—gets less fun to me when I have a scholar character come on screen and then talk me through it, sort of talk me through what happened step by step. And something interesting happens at the end of the Hisoka fight. He's sort of visited by a doctor who sees through his plan and talks through it, and I'm sure we'll get to that, but in that moment, it feels a little more fun to me, because it feels a bit like, uh, a con being described. You know, that moment in a heist film where someone says, "Oh, here's how you did it. Here's how you did the trick," and that's really fun. But it is a little tiresome for me when it is, bless his heart, Mr. Wing being like, [laughs quietly] "And here are the techniques that he applied," you know? And this could just be a personal taste thing. I think really what it is is encountering this arc for the first time.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** My true suspicion is that if I go through this again, I will probably be on the other side of the table.

**Keith:** I think that the way that I've really come to understand this arc is Togashi has done the sort of, like, slow rollout of something like this before. When he was writing *Yu Yu Hakusho*, this was, like, very much like you get a piece here, you get a piece here, you get a piece here, you get a piece here of like—it was much less about, like, how stuff works and just collecting new things to do with spirit energy, as it was called in that show. And I know that he had a lot of regrets about how having to write that show went and what he was and wasn't allowed to do and what he did and didn't have the time or maybe budget to do, and so I kind of see this as, like, not a copout but just sort of a loss leader that is like—

**Jack:** Mm, mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Or no, I guess it would be the opposite of a loss leader. It's sort of like let me get this stuff out, maybe it's kind of blunt and maybe it's a little dry, but I want to get the rules on the table so that I can as quickly as possible start mixing and matching things.

**Jack:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Keith:** And—

**Jack:** And hearing your three's first reaction to seeing the woman's cackling Nen skull and going, "I wonder what that thing does," is really exciting to me, if that is a way that we are thinking about kind of the application of Nen. What weird things are we going to get to see Nen do?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** That is fun, although that's very similar to the way I've been enjoying the show prior to this point, which was just framed as what weird stuff am I going to see Togashi do.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I just didn't know it was Nen kind of powering those engines.

**Keith:** I think another thing to keep in mind is, like, you're a very rare kind of person who is, like, coming to this without a lot of knowledge of other shonen.

**Jack:** Mm.

**Keith:** And so I think that this episode also has to do a lot of communicating to people who have seen a lot of different kinds of these shows, both people who are maybe interested in this kind of thing, like people who can use powers like this, but also having to illustrate the ways that it's different from other stuff and why it's important, like, how it works instead of another show which might not even try to tell you how stuff works. It's just part of the show that it works, and it's fine.

**Jack:** Right.

**Keith:** And so, like, there's this whole audience of people that have certain expectations for how this stuff goes, and I think that a lot of this is communicating to them specifically, and it's like, you needed a pamphlet before getting the encyclopedia, maybe, ideally.

**Jack:** Yeah. Yeah. And instead, I'm just sort of getting the encyclopedia.

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

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** It's 36 volumes, and it's called NEN. Um, okay. Before the fight, Killua goes to see Kastro. Kastro sneaks up on him through what kind of looks like a weird teleportation. Killua pretends to be just a regular joe looking for an autograph, and Kastro basically says, "What do you take me for? I know exactly who you are and Gon too." [Dre chuckles]

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** You think that I don't research everybody on floor 200, you idiot? [Sylvia chuckles]

**Keith:** I think it was really cute how he said, "Gon's not with you today?"

**Jack:** [laughs quietly] Yeah, that was really good.

**Keith:** That was good.

**Jack:** The two of them together. And they have a little chat, and Kastro essentially says, "You're really capable, Killua. I will see you at the Battle Olympia." You know, you're gonna go far. And Killua—

**Keith:** His impression— oh, go ahead, go ahead.

**Jack:** Oh, Killua has been affecting this kind of, like, nonchalance, this kind of boredom, a desire not to fight. And it's hard to tell [Dre: Mm-hmm.] how much— Killua is so strange that, you know, how much of this is that he actually doesn't want to fight because he is, um... [sighs] regretful of his actions at the end of the Hunter Exam and of his kind of movement towards beginning to reckon with his own violence, and how much of it is that he's, like, an annoying little snot [Keith laughs] who is like, "I don't want to fight anybody unless they're an interesting opponent." You know, where have we heard this before?



**Keith:** Well, there's a third thing, three and a half things. It's that he learned that the secret is that there's just the battle tower and the Battle Olympia, and I think he genuinely didn't care about that, especially when the actual prize opened up to him, which was getting stronger and beating his brother.

**Jack:** Yeah. Learning Nen, yeah. At that point, he's like, well, this is, you know.

**Keith:** Yeah, it's about Nen.

**Jack:** Why would I climb higher— [laughs quietly] what is it about Nen? But yeah, it was interesting to see—and we'll see this as we move forward—Kastro challenging someone's nonchalance vis-à-vis fighting, of saying [**Keith:** Yeah.] I think you are capable of being much more— not just violent but much more sort of actively powerful than you are letting on, and I will be ready for you when you are ready to engage with that. Was kind of our first encounter with Kastro.

**Keith:** He comes across very strange to me. He's very friendly. He's obviously knowledgeable, but he acts like a celebrity who's, like, meeting someone who said, like, "Oh, I also want to be an actor," and being like, [Sylvia laughs quietly] "I bet you'd be an amazing actor." [Jack laughs] Like, it's friendly but condescending. It's sort of like if I had a conversation with Tom Hanks, I feel like this is how Tom Hanks would act to me.

**Jack:** What, Sylvi's bud Tom Hanks?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** [weary] Oh, god. Yeah. [groans] [Keith laughs]

**Jack:** One star: repugnant.

**Sylvia:** Repugnant! Evil filmography.

**Jack:** No, I like Tom Hanks.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I'm sorry.

**Dre:** She's much more of a Chet Hanks girly. I get it.

**Jack:** [laughs] I'm glad Chet Hanks has sort of fallen out of the news.

**Keith:** I like Colin Hanks.

**Jack:** Who is Colin Hanks?

**Sylvia:** I do like Colin Hanks, actually! [Dre laughs]

**Keith:** Uh, Colin Hanks starred in one of my favorite underrated comedies of the 2000s, *Orange County* with Jack Black and John Lithgow—

**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah.

**Keith:** And Catelyn, uh— not Catelyn, Catherine O'Hara.

**Jack:** Wait.

**Keith:** Really, really good movie. Love it.

**Jack:** He's Tom Hanks's kid?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** He is Tom Hanks's kid.

**Jack:** He's Gus Grimly in *Fargo*. He's fantastic.

**Sylvia:** That is exactly the performance I think of as well.

**Keith:** Oh, he's Gus Grimly. Oh, interesting. He's in *Fargo*.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Jack:** I love that character. What a great weirdo to show up halfway through a show.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** He also does a lot of, like, comedy directing. If I'm remembering right, he directed a lot of *Always Sunny*.

**Jack:** Huh.

**Keith:** But I could be wrong.

**Jack:** I had no idea that was Tom Hanks's kid.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Wow.

**Keith:** Yeah, he's really good in *Orange County*. Love that movie.

**Sylvia:** The best thing Tom ever made. [Sylvia and Jack laugh]

**Keith:** Uh, yeah, shoutout to Colin Hanks, I guess. [laughs quietly]

**Sylvia:** Shoutout to Colin Hanks! You'd be a great live action Wing.

**Jack:** How many— it's really strange, because part of this condescension could be on some level that Kastro is, like, a floor 200 fighter talking to a 12-year-old.

**Keith:** Who's nine and one.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Yeah, that's true. Yeah. And—

**Keith:** He's not like the chumps who the show really wants us to be interested in.

**Jack:** No, this guy's good. And I'm so curious about, like— this is a world in which it is unusual but not out of the question to go to Heavens Arena and see three 12-year-olds, you know, just destroy a team of capable adults, and...do adults in this world know how to talk to children, given that they might have that capacity? I don't know.

**Keith:** I don't know.

**Sylvia:** Eh.

**Keith:** I certainly don't think that Hunters do. I don't know literally if Kastro's a Hunter, but it's the same idea, and at some point, it's like, well, if you're a Kastro, why wouldn't you just go be a Hunter?

**Jack:** It's like, yeah. I mean, if you were in, like, if you met a 12-year-old, and you were like, "Oh yeah, this person just kills adults on the reg."

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I don't think I'd be condescending, but I would definitely be weird about it, probably.

**Keith:** Right. Yeah. [Sylvia laughs quietly] He might not know that much. He might not know about the assassination stuff. Well, but they're famous. It's a famous family, so who knows?

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, people are placing bets on this. I feel like they've gotta know, at a certain point, when people— I guess—

**Jack:** Oh, that's Hisoka, the child killer. [Keith laughs]

**Sylvia:** Psssh. I was thinking more: "Oh, Killua Zoldyck versus such-and-such. Wait, why's that name so familiar?"

**Jack:** [laughs quietly] Let me look him up on the internet.

**Sylvia:** Let me google him real quick.

**Keith:** Zoldyck of the Kukuroo Zoldycks? [Sylvia and Jack laugh]

**Jack:** Actually, no, due to a problem with the social security number allocation, poor old

Kevin Zoldyck of the Yorknew Zoldycks, a perfectly normal guy, has been accidentally enrolled in this fight. [Sylvia and Jack laugh] The fight begins. This is very exciting, and it's very exciting to me, [**Keith**: Right.] because, you know, Kastro seems cool. These senior fighters are fun to watch fight. Hisoka is basically always fun to watch fight, and we haven't seen Hisoka fight for a while.

**Sylvia**: Mm-hmm.

**Keith**: This is the closest thing to a real fight that we've seen in a really, really long time. Maybe in the whole show.

**Jack**: It's fucking great. And as Hisoka is warming up, his theme starts playing, and we get a full orchestral arrangement of Hisoka's theme being played. This is the first time we've ever heard it. It is wonderful. And it's so strange, because, you know, I don't know why you would choose this moment to deploy this kind of orchestration. I suppose it's because he's on a big stage. There are a lot of people watching.

**Keith**: Yeah.

**Jack**: You want to sell the kind of— and I think that the showrunners know that we have been waiting for a fight like this for a long time, so you want to sell it hard with the music.

**Dre**: Mm-hmm.

**Jack**: But Hisoka has been in more consequential fights in the past. You know, fighting Gon has been a more consequential fight.

**Keith**: Yeah. But this is the stage that the show is using to, like, unveil what Nen actually is.

**Jack**: Yes, and Hisoka performs. He does a performance as much as a fight.

**Keith**: Literally, yeah.

**Sylvia**: Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Which is wonderful.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** So it makes so much sense that we have just this incredible arrangement of Hisoka's theme. Hisoka's theme is usually just played on, like, castanets and flamenco guitars. It's this very percussive flamenco sort of melodic theme, and here it is, like, expanded out to, like, loads of guitars and horns, and the main theme is now played really high up on a violin. It's really, really exciting. The fight begins, and Kastro kicks the shit out of Hisoka.

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

**Jack:** It's fun. He deserves it. It's good to see Hisoka, you know, take a few punches.  
[Sylvia and Dre laugh]

**Keith:** The is is Hisoka's only fifth point that he's taken. He got knocked down once in his first fight with Kastro, took three points, and then only one other person landed even a single hit on him, so it sort of sets the tone right away to see him take, like, an immediate hit.

**Jack:** Yeah, Kastro—

**Keith:** And then take another immediate hit.

**Jack:** Kastro's teleporting around. He keeps saying to Hisoka, you know, "It's time for you to get serious. Come on, really, you know, do the business."

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Hisoka, throughout this whole fight, is just doing classic creepy Hisoka witticism one after the other. Just, he came to the fight locked and loaded with creepy witticisms prepared the night before. He says something like, "I think I'll decide when I get serious, if you don't mind," midway through getting beaten up by Kastro.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm. And smiling. He's like...

**Jack:** Yes, well. Yeah, par for the course, but...

**Keith:** Getting hit but also being like, "Heh heh."

**Sylvia:** He's a real pervert about all this.

**Jack:** He's such a nasty little pervert.

**Keith:** Yeah, he's a nasty little freak.

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

**Jack:** I will say, he knows what his deal is, and he, uh...

**Keith:** Really knows what his deal is.

**Jack:** Really knows what his deal is, and he delivers every time. He does not seem to have an off day, as far as being a horrid little pervert is concerned.

**Keith:** [laughs] Reminder, though, that you do not, in fact, "gotta hand it to him."

**Dre:** No.

**Jack:** [laughs] Not gonna hand it to him. Kastro says, "I'm gonna take your right hand, Hisoka," and he charges up Tiger Bite Fist, his move, his Nen move.

**Sylvia:** This is when I knew he was going to lose drastically.

**Jack:** Oh, yeah?

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

**Dre:** Oh, sure, yeah.

**Jack:** You want to say more about this?

**Sylvia:** So, Tiger Bite Fist, for anyone who has seen the anime *Dragon Ball Z*, is

basically Yamcha's Wolf Fang Fist.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** And Yamcha, if you haven't seen *Dragon Ball Z*, is famously known as the fella in that crater. [Keith laughs]

**Jack:** Oh, shit! I know that guy.

**Sylvia:** That people post a lot. Yeah, exactly.

**Dre:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** So the second this guy, who's also got the sort of, like, pretty boy vibe going on that Yamcha had...

**Dre:** God, he does have huge Yamcha energy.

**Sylvia:** Starts doing his, like, "This is my ultimate technique, the Tiger Bite Fist!" I'm like, okay, Hisoka is going to embarrass you. [Jack chuckles] And look at that, I'm right.

**Keith:** It's comforting to know that, with the Yamcha comparison, which I think now is right there in the text asking you to make the comparison, we now know that Kastro cannot talk to girls.

**Sylvia:** Oh, no. No fucking way.

**Dre:** Sure. Thinks he can very much.

**Keith:** Wants to.

**Jack:** Nobody in this show can talk to girls, because there are no girls, basically, in *Hunter × Hunter* so far.

**Sylvia:** [laughs quietly] Depends on your reading of Kurapika.

**Jack:** I was gonna say. [Dre laughs] Kurapika is maybe the only person, but other than



that.

**Keith:** This is so funny, because, you know, I've seen this show three times, and, like, the first time I watched it, you know, I'm taking it in the way I normally would take in a show. The second time I watched it, I'm watching it with Isaac, and Isaac is like, Kurapika also is trans but is a trans man.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And I think that it's funny that everyone's claiming Kurapika.

**Sylvia:** Everyone claims Kurapika.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Everyone claims Kurapika.

**Jack:** It's because Kurapika's great.

**Sylvia:** Everyone just knows— sees Kurapika and they're like, "That's the queer one."

**Jack:** Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. Kurapika. They're great.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** It is— I think it changes the reading a lot to be like, Kurapika's an out trans man and not an— versus Kurapika's a closeted trans woman. It is, like, a much different—

**Sylvia:** We'll get back to it. [laughs]

**Keith:** It is a much different vibe.

**Jack:** I'm so excited. Me, shaking my head, looking sour: Nen. Me, smiling, pointing at the camera: gender. [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Hmm. [Dre laughs] This show, believe it or not, will get back into talking about gender at a certain point.

**Jack:** Does not surprise me.

**Sylvia:** Whether it means to or not.

**Dre:** Oh, uh huh!

**Keith:** It's Togashi. It has— he has to mean it. It's so— it happens so often.

**Sylvia:** I mean, I think so. There's a lot of stuff that feels like it could be by accident, but I also— you know?

**Keith:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** We'll get into it when we get to it.

**Keith:** But Togashi trying to talk about gender stretches all the way back into, like, the early '90s.

**Sylvia:** That is true.

**Jack:** Huh. Huh. I'm so curious, but here we are in the Nen trenches.

**Keith:** Yeah. [cross] The Nenchies.

**Sylvia:** [cross] The Nenchies? Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** The Nenchies.

**Sylvia:** Oh, they're up in my Nenchies right now. [Keith and Dre laugh]

**Jack:** Me, projecting a malevolent purple aura: they're up in my Nenchies. [all laugh]  
Anyway, all this is to say that Kastro charges Tiger Bite Fist. Hisoka puts his hand out to get it cut off.

**Sylvia:** Ohh.

**Jack:** Like Clem putting her hands up for handcuffs.

**Sylvia:** He says, “Then take it.”

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah. This is, by the way, [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] this is where I knew he was gonna lose. This is where I thought you were going, Sylvi.

**Jack:** Oh, yeah.

**Keith:** I didn't make the—

**Sylvia:** This is also it, but like, I was there a little earlier.

**Keith:** I didn't make the Wolf Fang Fist connection, but when Hisoka is like, “Yes, you can take my arm,” that's when I was like, “It's over.”

**Jack:** But Kastro does a little trick, teleports behind Hisoka, but he does cut off Hisoka's right arm. The arm goes flying into the sky. Hisoka says, “This is all within expectations,” as he catches his own severed arm.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** And then nonchalantly scratches his own shoulder with his severed hand.  
[laughs]

**Jack:** Yeah. [Dre laughs]

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

**Jack:** Earlier, you said Hisoka is no-selling losing an arm, and...

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Yeah, it almost looks like an animation error, you know? It looks like Hisoka's model has come apart. He doesn't flinch. There is no visible blood, at this point. I mean,

Hisoka is so pale anyway, just sort of this gaunt [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] white figure holding a severed arm. What it really looks like is in, like, a, uh, fucking stop motion animated Tim Burton movie or whatever, you know? When like an arm comes off just bloodlessly and hangs out in the scene.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Hisoka figures out that Kastro is summoning a doppelganger, is sort of siphoning off his aura, and a lot of business is made about this. Do we— is this relevant? Do we want to talk about doppelgangers, or is this just a thing Kastro does?

**Sylvia:** Um...

**Keith:** This is thematic. It seems weird that they spend so long on doppelgangers, but this is, like—

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And we learn more about— like, they bring it back in the next set of episodes that we're going to watch, but there's kind of a long explanation to—I guess it's not that long, in the grand scheme of things—to Zushi from Wing about, like, how the doppelganger myth is about seeing someone that looks just like you, and they kind of steal your essence from you and, like, cause you sick until you kill them.

**Jack:** Oh, huh.

**Keith:** And then Zushi's like, "Why are you telling me this?" and he's like, "Oh, nothing. It's just he has a Nen power." Yeah.

**Dre:** No, it's just a story.

**Jack:** But yeah, when you put it like that, yes, there are doubles that we are seeing in the show pretty consistently, and often those doubles are one malevolent or violent or destructive entity paired with a sort of a reflection of them. I'm thinking of Gon and Hisoka in a major way.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** So, yes. I think I was reading it too closely by seeing Kastro as, like, “I’m making an exact copy of myself,” and neglecting the metaphorical reading of, like, watch for doubled characters and themes, one specifically sort of sapping away the energy and power of the other until they’re killed.

**Keith:** And there’s another thing, which is more material to the show, which they, again, will get into this next set, but we learn during the explanation of what’s happening between, uh, I believe her name— have we gotten her name, the Nen doctor?

**Sylvia:** I don’t know if we—

**Jack:** Yes, we have.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** We have? Okay.

**Jack:** We got it in subtitles, at least.

**Keith:** Oh, okay.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Jack:** Which I sort of...

**Keith:** Yeah, you got your subtitle thing.

**Jack:** Consider to be cheating.

**Keith:** It is cheating. It’s not important. [Jack laughs] Her name’s Machi.

**Jack:** This character’s name is Machi.

**Keith:** But during the sort of back and forth between Machi and Hisoka about what happened during the fight, you get the explanation of Hisoka to Kastro, like, you spent

all of your time making this second version of you that you weren't strong enough to fight anymore.

**Jack:** Yeah. Also interesting if we sort of, like, expand that metaphor out. I'm so curious to see how that will play. Then, of course, Kastro is, you know, Kastro is now getting a bit tired of this, and he powers up True Tiger Bite Fist, and he says, "Now, I will sever your left arm, if only to see if you can maintain your appearance of disinterest." And again, this is, like, I feel like a direct— we're being invited to draw a mirror there with Killua, right? Killua's disinterest in fighting, especially with Kastro as kind of the linking character there. You know Kastro's trying to [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] sort of urge someone into breaking through an affected disinterestedness.

**Keith:** And although there is— this is, like, sort of misinterpreted by Kastro, I think. It is affected, but Kastro thinks that he's affecting disinterest because Kastro has grown so strong, and he sort of desperately wants to be acknowledged for his growth, but really the reason why he's affecting disinterest is because he is, like, doing a bit. [Keith and Sylvia laugh]

**Jack:** Hisoka? Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

## **Episode 32 [1:22:32]**

**Jack:** And as we move into episode 32, it's Hisoka's time to shine.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Ultimate bit man.

**Jack:** Because now it's just magic tricks. Have I talked on the— I know I talked to you about it, Sylvi. Have I talked on the show about a really disappointing film I watched with Jamie Lee Curtis in called *Terror Train*?

**Keith:** No. [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah.

**Keith:** *Terror Train* was disappointing?

**Jack:** Keith! This is what— okay, let me tell you the premise, and you'll be even more sad. So, this is from the late '70s. It's just after *Halloween* came out.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Jack:** Maybe the very early '80s. Starring Jamie Lee Curtis. She's a fucking great actress, obviously. I was excited.

**Keith:** [quietly] Oh my god.

**Jack:** The premise is a bunch of high school students or college students, freshmen, board a New Years Eve costume party on a steam train, and a masked slasher also boards the train with them and slasher villains his way through the cast, trading costumes every time so that, like, you don't know who on the train is the slasher villain, et cetera. How do you fuck up this premise? And the answer is you cast David Copperfield, and a full two thirds of the movie is just David Copperfield doing magic tricks? [Keith and Sylvia laugh]

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

**Jack:** It's such an own goal. [laughs] I don't know how you get it that wrong. But this is the good mirror of that, which is that a lot of this episode is Hisoka just doing magic tricks, [**Keith:** Yeah.] and it fucking rules. The first trick he does [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] is he says, "Now witness my powers of clairvoyance." He puts a cloth over his severed hand, and he transforms it into cards. Not clairvoyance, Hisoka. At that point, I was like, you know, that's fine. Maybe he thinks of clairvoyance differently. And then, he does a pick a card magic trick, which I believe—and I didn't actually do this, because it was happening too quickly, and I was tired—is one of those, like, [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] classic kids' magic book magic tricks.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Where you perform a mathematical formula on any given number, and it will always produce the same result. Is that the case?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yes, it is.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Is it— oh, go ahead.

**Sylvia:** I just checked afterwards. I did it with a couple different numbers and was like, oh yeah, yeah, no.

**Jack:** This is lovely. This is one of the most sort of exciting moments I've seen in the show for a long time, because Kastro is doing this magic trick— also, I would just kill Hisoka at this point, if I were Kastro. I'd be like, I'm not—

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Why are we pissing about doing all this stuff? But Kastro does the magic trick. He does the maths. And the whole audience does the maths, and presumably the viewer is also doing the maths, because there's a little—

**Keith:** Uh, did we skip over something important? Real quick.

**Jack:** Oh, no, go right ahead.

**Keith:** Did we skip over going from two arms to one arm to no arms to one arm?

**Jack:** Uh...no, the number magic happens first.

**Sylvia:** I think this comes before that.

**Keith:** Okay, okay, okay, okay.



**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah, we have some arm business afterwards.

**Sylvia:** This is— because there's a prop with— there's a bit. Part of the bit involves the first arm.

**Jack:** Yeah. So, we get this little subtitle across the bottom that's kind of showing Hisoka's formula, the formula he's asking you to do, so you the viewer are also clearly being invited to do this sort of formula. And then Hisoka reaches into the flesh of his severed arm, and in kind of the first moment of, oh, this is— Hisoka is, if not mortal, definitely, like, made of flesh. We get this really gross sound design as he pulls a bloody ace of spaces from his hand and holds it up to the camera, and that's the card that Kastro and everybody in the audience and the viewer has gotten.

**Sylvia:** It owns.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** It rules so hard.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** It is wonderful.

**Keith:** And, to be clear, when you say gotten from his hand, what you mean is gotten from inside of his forearm.

**Jack:** Yeah, he pulls it from out of his— and not like out of the side of his hand. He reaches into—

**Sylvia:** He gets in there.

**Keith:** He gets in there.

**Jack:** Yeah. It's gross.

**Keith:** He gets deep in there.

**Sylvia:** [laughs] It rules. It's so sick. I loved it.

**Jack:** I love this whole scene. But I've talked in the past about Hisoka sort of being the only character who has, beyond sort of breaking the fourth wall, [**Keith:** Mm.] quote, unquote, breaking the fourth wall, his ability to engage directly with the format of the show is something that I keep noticing. Throwing the card directly through the scene. That great moment [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] in the last set of episodes where he responded directly to the narrator. And now we are demonstrating Hisoka's power in such a way that he is able to clairvoyantly read the audience's—

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Not just the audience, the viewer at home's mind.

**Keith:** That's a great point.

**Jack:** Is just wonderful. I don't think I've ever seen that happen before, because it relies on so many different things. You know, it relies on having a particular showman character who can do this sort of trick. It also relies on putting them on a stage where they have the sort of time and reason to do this magic bullshit, but then specifically situating it in this, like, there is a full crowd of people who are all also so excited about Hisoka's power. There's an announcer, you know, hyping everybody up. There are ticket scalpers that have been, you know, selling the tickets at really high prices. And then to have this character like Hisoka look straight out of the screen and seemingly read the viewer's mind is such a great, like, piece of television. I loved it.

**Keith:** Yeah, it's great.

**Jack:** And then it's got all this, like, weird gore of Hisoka losing his arms. It's a fucking great scene. I love this stuff.

**Keith:** And that the whole thing is, like, a guise to set up a, like, basically one hit KO.

**Jack:** Yeah, yeah. So he says... [laughs] He pulls the card out, and Cocco the announcer says, "That's the bizarre behavior we expect from Hisoka." [Keith and Dre laugh]

**Sylvia:** Not wrong.

**Jack:** That is the bizarre—

**Keith:** Within expected parameters.

**Jack:** Yeah, [laughs] within expected parameters. I'd be really disappointed if he just showed up and killed someone with a gun or something, you know? [Keith laughs]  
Then, yes, Kastro sort of is starting to get a little flustered and cuts off Hisoka's other arm, but then Hisoka pulls his arm from behind his back to reveal that his right arm is now reattached. He says, "You'll dance yourself to death," to Kastro.

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

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

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

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** And then, in Hisoka's oldest and best horrible move, shoots him full of cards, and does he kill him? Is that guy dead, or is he...?

**Dre:** No, he dead.

**Keith:** They never say either way.

**Dre:** Ah, he's dead.

**Jack:** You think he's dead?

**Keith:** I think—

**Sylvia:** That motherfucker is dead.

**Keith:** I think the implication is definitely that he's dead. I did update the Hisoka murder chart.

**Jack:** Oh, can we get a quick rundown?

**Dre:** Oh, thank you.

**Sylvia:** Can we get a total? Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, we're currently at 13.25.

**Jack:** Oh, because of the arms? [laughs]

**Keith:** Because of the arms that one time, yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** You know, I'm starting to worry that we're never gonna get a 0.75 to round that out.

**Jack:** That can't be right.

**Sylvia:** Eh.

**Jack:** That can't be right.

**Keith:** Can't. Yeah, yeah.

**Dre:** I believe in him.

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah, he'll find a way. We'll have to make sure to keep an eye out for potential three quarter kills.

**Sylvia:** Oh, I hope it's not an eye. The math would get so confusing if he takes an eye

out.

**Jack:** Oh my god. Especially because we've now written checks that we have to cash. You know, by doing non-full numbers.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** You know, we can't say we're just gonna count the eye as one or we're just gonna count the eye as 0.25 or whatever. We gotta figure out the math there.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** What percentage of a person is their eyes? Oh, let me just google this.

**Keith:** Less than...less than a tenth.

**Jack:** How much does an eye weigh? How much does an eye weight? 7.5 grams.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Dre:** Wow, that's less than I thought it would be.

**Jack:** Average human weight, whatever that's worth. Okay, humans weigh, on average—whatever that's worth—about 60 kilograms, which is 6000 grams.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Keith:** What was— you said 6.7?

**Jack:** It was, uh, 7.5 grams.

**Keith:** 7.5, okay.

**Dre:** So, we're just gonna— I'm just gonna say 0.01 grams.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Wait, 0.01%? Oh, no, because we're calculating— hmm. I see what you mean. I

was trying to figure out what percentage of a person was their eyes.

**Dre:** Sure, yeah.

**Keith:** 0.00125. Uh, wait, so that would be 0.12— yeah, 0.125%.

**Jack:** Because you're counting both eyes. Okay.

**Keith:** No, no, no, that's just one. That's just one.

**Sylvia:** I feel like Gon right now. [Jack laughs]

**Dre:** Yeah, same.

**Keith:** It's 7.5 into 6000, right?

**Jack:** Yeah, for one eye.

**Keith:** Or, sorry, 6000 into 7.5.

**Jack:** Yeah, for one.

**Keith:** Right. And so, yeah, so that's— for two, would be, uh, 0.25.

**Jack:** Okay, so Hisoka just needs to take out, like, a good number of eyes.

**Keith:** Yeah, bunch of eyes.

**Jack:** Okay. I believe in him. Yeah, and that's the end of the fight. Just after saying, "You'll dance yourself to death," he shoots the man full of cards in this, like, uh... [laughs quietly] It's great. It's really exploitative, but it's shot so well. Just this, like, slow motion, almost like slow-mo in a John Woo movie, you know, of Kastro just getting card after card shot into him and his body recoiling as he sort of dances himself to death.

**Sylvia:** I feel like there's, like, a zinger before each one, right?

**Jack:** Yeah, pretty much.

**Sylvia:** Like, Hisoka says something [**Dre:** Yeah.] while each pair of cards, like, slides into him.

**Keith:** I mean, he even gets the zinger. The dance to death thing, that's a zinger.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I'm counting it.

**Jack:** Yeah. Hisoka zingers.

**Sylvia:** Oh, as you should.

**Keith:** Did we get the Nen punch to the fist? or to the face?

**Sylvia:** Um...oh, did we mention the punch to the face?

**Keith:** I don't know if we mentioned the punch to the face.

**Jack:** Who punching whom?

**Keith:** Uh, Hisoka punches Kastro.

**Jack:** Oh, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** So, one of the big tricks is— I think we— am I...? Maybe I just am memory blanking. Did we miss Hisoka reattaching his own arm?

**Jack:** Uh, no we didn't.

**Keith:** We didn't miss that. Okay.

**Jack:** So, it appears. We didn't really see him reattach it.

**Keith:** Oh, yes, it appears. It does appear, yeah.

**Jack:** It's like, he takes his hand back from behind his back, and it's got a hand on it.

**Keith:** Yeah. And then the other thing that happens, the thing that sets up the card

throwing, is he's sort of stunned by the other arm that was still on the ground sort of flies magically to his chin and punches him extremely hard.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And is stunned. He tries to block the cards with a double, but he goes, "You can't do a double. It requires too much concentration. You're stunned," and then all the cards hit him, and he does his little wiggle and dies. [Sylvia laughs]

**Jack:** What a way to go.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** His death wiggle. Oh man.

**Jack:** Oh, buddy.

**Keith:** I'll say, if that was me, those cards wouldn't have killed me.

**Sylvia:** Guy like me? Guy like me is dodging.

**Dre:** Built different.

**Jack:** No. No. Absolutely not. I'm working as a fucking chartered accountant in Yorknew City, [quiet laughter] and if a Hunter—

**Sylvia:** No, I'm a Floor Master for sure.

**Jack:** [laughs] Oh, god. Back in his quarters, Hisoka meets a pink-haired doctor, question mark? It's not clear. She's here to fix Hisoka's injuries for a large amount of money.

**Sylvia:** Kinda dressed like a ninja.

**Jack:** Yeah, sort of a mercenary doctor.

**Keith:** She only charges about 70 million jenny.



**Jack:** Yeah, yeah. Who my subtitles have spoiled for me is called Machi. I'm not gonna play coy about not knowing her name.

**Sylvia:** Eh, it's fine. It makes it easier for the rest of us. [laughs]

**Jack:** Yeah, that's true. Although, god, I wish that I hadn't had Leorio Paradinight. That was such a good one.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** When they finally say his name in a long list of other names, it is such, like, a bizarre moment for the character but also is like, "Wait, that's his name?" too. It's such, like, this weird moment. [Jack laughs] Oh my god.

**Jack:** She sews Hisoka back together with Nen stitches, because it has become clear that both of Hisoka's arms are not actually attached anymore, and it is here that we learn two of Hisoka's Nen powers. Dre, I think you've written down [laughs quietly] your delight at these powers?

**Dre:** Uh, no. Well, Bungee Gum, great name. Great name.

**Keith:** [laughs] The other one is...

**Dre:** The other one is Texture Surprise!

**Sylvia:** You don't want a texture surprise.

**Dre:** And I hate it. I hate it!

**Sylvia:** You don't want a texture surprise.

**Dre:** I hate it! I hate it.

**Keith:** It sounds like the slop that they serve you in, like, a B movie about summer camp, [Jack and Dre laugh] like an evil summer camp.

**Jack:** It really does.

**Dre:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Jack:** Texture Surprise.

**Sylvia:** It's an *Invader Zim* joke. They serve this at the cafeteria in the school from *Invader Zim*. [Keith laughs quietly]

**Jack:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. I just, this was such a cool moment, because...okay. It's cool moments all the way down. Hisoka reveals that he calls these two moves Bungee Gum and Texture Surprise. Firstly, the idea of Hisoka naming his moves is wild.

**Dre:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** He is such a strange character that him being like, "Yeah, like other people do, I've named my moves," you know. I never really took Hisoka as a Tiger Fist— True Tiger Fist guy or whatever.

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** What was that move called?

**Keith:** Uh, yeah, Tiger Fist and True— Tiger Fist Bite and True Tiger Fist Bite.

**Jack:** Yeah. True false war. But, so, he names them, and he also says that he named Bungee Gum, which is the technique that he uses. It's sort of like, um...I'm gonna trade one reference for another. It's sort of like Ultrahand from *Tears of the Kingdom*.

**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah.

**Jack:** He can, like, attach two objects together—

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

**Jack:** Through thin strands of his aura and use them to, like, pin objects to walls or, for example, pin a severed arm back onto his body for a short period of time or, like, create

these little bungee cords. He named them after his favorite chewing gum when he was a child.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Scary. I wrote down: question mark, question mark, question mark, question mark, how was Hisoka a child?

**Keith:** Yeah, Hisoka seems like someone who was never a child, yeah. [laughs]

**Dre:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Jack:** Yeah, for all the many valid criticisms that you could make of the novelist Roald Dahl, one of— a really powerful characterization that he made that sticks with me all the time is, in the book *Matilda*, there's this villainous child-hating headmistress who claims that she was never a child. [Keith chuckles] Not even that she could never remember being a child or not even that she hated being a child. There is something so sort of cold and restrictive and final about a claim that you were never a child, especially from an adult to a child. Especially because, you know, when you're a kid, adults are these sort of, uh, sort of mystical powerful entities that your only link with is that they were a child once, and to hear this character in *Matilda*, you know, just say, "Oh, I was never a child. There is no commonality between us, and I hate everything about you." But with Hisoka—

**Keith:** Can I tell you the opposite of that real quick?

**Jack:** Oh, yeah.

**Keith:** This is a story from my life when I was in high school just telling a story at the lunch table, and during the story I referenced one of my parents. I don't remember what the story was, but my friend John Melman stopped me. I'll bleep his name. [Sylvia laughs] When my friend John—

**Jack:** Wait, John Melman?

**Keith:** Yeah, John Melman, yeah.

**Jack:** Or one of the other Johns?

**Keith:** Oh, it was John Melman. When, uh...hold on.

**Jack:** When John Melman stopped you.

**Keith:** When John Melman stopped me. [Sylvia laughs] He was like, oh, he was just sort of taken aback, and he explained him being taken aback by saying, "You just seem like someone that doesn't have parents."

**Jack:** Whoa.

**Sylvia:** Whoa! [Jack and Keith laugh]

**Jack:** What a thing to say.

**Keith:** I know.

**Jack:** I kind of love it in a fucked up way.

**Keith:** I know, I know. Yeah. It's not— it didn't hit me as, like, "you seem like an orphan." It seemed like, "you seem like someone where no one ever told you to stop doing something." [Jack laughs]

**Sylvia:** Yeah, okay.

**Keith:** Which is funny, because I—

**Sylvia:** John Melman was kinda cooking with that one.

**Jack:** [cross] Shoutout John Melman.

**Keith:** [cross] Yeah, because I absolutely did have parents who told me not to do stuff.

**Jack:** Yeah. [laughs] And you did not care for it.

**Keith:** No. I listened. I was well behaved. I was just also really funny.

**Jack:** You were a well behaved kid?

**Keith:** I was extremely well behaved, yeah.

**Jack:** You're a fairly well behaved adult.

**Keith:** My personality was the same. I just had nothing— I had nothing misbehaving to do. Like, there was no...there was nothing that I would have gotten in trouble for doing that I wanted to do. Like, the worst thing I ever did was never do my homework and other schoolwork.

**Jack:** Oh, who does that?

**Keith:** Right, yeah, exactly.

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Keith:** But yeah, I didn't ever do anything wrong, get into trouble. I was good. I was just funny.

**Jack:** That's great. And you remain funny.

**Sylvia:** Much like currently, yeah.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** You've never done anything wrong. You're just funny.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** [laughs quietly] Doesn't know what poggers means, and didn't then.

**Keith:** Yeah, I definitely didn't then.

**Jack:** Quick sidebar, because you were talking about homework and not doing homework reminded me of it, Keith. Learning about Nen in this way in these episodes feels like being told to practice your scales.

**Keith:** [laughs quietly] Yes, it does. [Sylvia laughs quietly]

**Jack:** Something that I was told throughout my entire childhood and resented and didn't, and now I'm, like, [**Keith:** Yeah.] 30-ish, and I have— whenever I have time to myself to do music, rather than, like, making music professionally, [laughs quietly] really all I do is practice technique, because I'm like, “Ah, fuck. Yeah, okay. I can see why this is useful.” And I feel like I'm probably gonna feel the same way about Nen.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Where I'm like, yeah, you have gotta practice the scales.

**Keith:** If it helps, we really only have one more session left in this season.

**Jack:** Get me out of here!

**Keith:** We have a three episode thing next time, and then there's a little two-part that is really more of an introduction of the next season.

**Sylvia:** This is— hmm. We will revisit this. This is interesting to me.

**Keith:** Oh, yeah?

**Jack:** I'm so curious.

**Sylvia:** I don't know. I...we get a taste of it when Hisoka is explaining what Bungee Gum and Texture Surprise is, but Nen concepts, the foundations may stop being explained.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Sylvia:** But I feel like Nen powers being explained is not going anywhere anytime soon.

**Keith:** Yeah, but it's much—

**Jack:** I'm fine with that. That stuff's fun.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Keith:** Yeah, it's much more like “what's that weird face that the woman has?” versus, like, “make sure to practice your Ren” or like you've gotta, you know. The fundamentals stuff is the stuff that's a real snooze to me.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** But now I look at and I'm like, “Oh, it's cute. What cute beginnings.” But yeah, the first time, I definitely was like, “This is math. What are we doing?” [Sylvia laughs]

**Jack:** Do you want to know something fun that you should cut?

**Keith:** Yeah.

[cut]

**Jack:** Okay, let's come back in.

**Keith:** Yeah. Where were we?

**Jack:** Uh, we talked about Hisoka and children.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Jack:** But what we get the other way—

**Keith:** When aren't we?

**Sylvia:** Honestly. [Sylvia and Jack chuckle]

**Jack:** But what we get is kind of the other way around with Hisoka. We get this weird void, you know, where you can't possibly imagine Hisoka as a child, and yet the show asks us to or suddenly affords us that avenue of thought, where before this point, I was

sort of like, Hisoka was born fully formed from the head of Zeus, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Just like, he had the paint on his face. But he says—

**Keith:** It's hard to imagine him even liking something like gum, let alone being a child.

**Jack:** Even liking anything. Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** He gets nostalgic, apparently? He's nostalgic about this gum?

**Jack:** Yeah, and it is so strange to have this...mm. It's like we pushed against a door that we thought was locked, and it opened, and then there was nothing behind it.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** You know?

**Keith:** It's something that, like, in another context might be humanizing but is actually kind of, like, jarring and disorienting.

**Jack:** Further alienating.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Like, you were a child, and you're like this now?

**Jack:** Yeah. Yeah. And in an Earth world, I'd say, you know, what happened? What material conditions did you experience, you know? That, in the way that we all experience conditions, form us into the adults that we are today. However, in the *Hunter* × *Hunter* world, it could just as easily have been Hisoka found a clown paint and then just became evil. [Jack, Keith, and Sylvia laugh] Perfectly normal child who becomes



evil. As she leaves, Machi passes on a message which is just a punchline to this scene. It was lovely. She says, "All Troupe members are set to be in Yorknew City on the 30th, not just those who don't have anything to do." And Hisoka says, "The boss will probably be coming?" and Machi says, "Our biggest mission yet." And so we have confirmation, at least for the next ten minutes, that Hisoka is a member of the Phantom Troupe. This is—

**Dre:** Less than ten minutes. [laughs]

**Jack:** Yeah. This is also, I think, our first confirmed onscreen Phantom Troupe member in Machi. Is that the case? Confirmed.

**Sylvia:** Uh...

**Jack:** I'm sure we've seen some weirdos before, but...

**Keith:** Yeah. Confirmed.

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Dre:** Yes, yes.

**Sylvia:** We've only seen silhouettes up to this point, I believe.

**Jack:** Yeah, we've seen the silhouette of the full troupe, I think, right? At least at one point.

**Keith:** We have. Yeah, we have.

**Jack:** Oh, and we've seen...

**Sylvia:** I'm fairly certain.

**Keith:** We've seen Chrollo's face.

**Jack:** Chrollo in the title sequence.

**Keith:** Yeah. And then some of those people are in there too.

**Jack:** Yeah. But this is our first, you know, in-show appearance of the Phantom Troupe, and it's a woman doing medical surgery, which is...interesting.

**Keith:** It was so cool the way that stuff works.

**Sylvia:** Oh, it fucking rules.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Did we— we went over the explanation of how his stuff works? The...

**Jack:** Oh, he has bungee cord, and he has a thing that— Texture Surprise lets him change the texture of an object.

**Keith:** Right.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** And so he basically does sort of, like... [laughs quietly] like, human papier-mache to just [**Keith:** Yeah.] hold his hands to his body while he's in the fight.

**Keith:** Yeah. It's very funny, and the implication that I want to get into is that, like, so, Machi calls what he did performance art, and it very much is implied that Hisoka knew that this is what was going to happen the entire time. He had already told her to be there and that he would pay her. He's, like, holding out his arms, like, "Yeah, cut 'em off." Like, it seemed like his point in this fight was to get his arms cut off and then reattach them like a freak and then win the fight.

**Sylvia:** There's definitely something to it, to me, that felt like, oh, he knows that Gon and Killua are gonna be watching this.

**Keith:** Yeah. That also is true.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Keith:** And then the other thing is that there's a moment also— he's got no arms, and at this point, this is when he tells Machi that if he had just stayed composed then he would have had a fighting chance, which is, you know, I think if we take him at his word, that's—

**Jack:** Something you should never do with Hisoka.

**Keith:** [ambivalent noise] I don't know.

**Dre:** When it comes to fighting, I think we should.

**Keith:** When it comes to fighting, I think that he probably is right about that. I think that's what— he gave him, he gave up both his arms as part of a freaky show, and then they were on about even ground, [Keith and Jack laugh] which is startling, I think. I think that that is a— that should be, like, a startling thing, if you choose to take it at face value. I think that I do.

**Jack:** Yeah. I don't know. I anticipate that the full picture of Hisoka will come into focus when I have finished making this show. [Keith and Sylvia laugh] But right now, I am, you know, trying to figure it out.

**Keith:** I think, like, you know, if you've ever used a camera without, like, autofocus, you know, you over-focus and then you recorrect it and then you go back a little bit too far, and you're trying to find the, like, exact right point. I think Hisoka's a lot like that. I think that Hisoka will be coming in and out of focus a lot.

**Jack:** Great. Cool.

**Sylvia:** That's a very good way to put it, actually.

**Keith:** Thank you.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Jack:** And probably deliberate.

**Keith:** Oh, sure.

**Jack:** That's definitely a way to write a character, right?

**Keith:** There's gonna be stuff that's happening that you are not going to believe is happening, based on how you feel right now.

**Jack:** [laughs] What a pitch.

**Keith:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** You sound like a movie trailer announcer from the 1940s. [Keith laughs] "There is going to be stuff on screen. You'll think a train's coming towards you!"

**Keith:** [voice] You fellows are gonna get a load of this! [Sylvia laughs]

**Jack:** Okay. Killua responds to— goes back to Gon and says the fight was boring, but he's only lying to sort of, uh...

**Keith:** He very briefly lies. [Jack laughs]

**Sylvia:** Yeah, this is so funny.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** It's like— has anyone here played *Tales of Symphonia*?

**Keith:** No.

**Jack:** No, I haven't.

**Dre:** No.

**Sylvia:** There's a very famous "actually, I lied" scene where he does it, like, three times

in, like, 30 seconds basically, and it just reminded me of that.

**Keith:** That's very funny.

**Sylvia:** We don't need to get into it. Yeah.

**Keith:** The thing that's so striking about it is how quickly he admits to lying and how little he changes between lying and not lying anymore, where he's like, "Yeah, it was boring. No, I was lying. It was awesome."

**Sylvia:** It was actually really interesting.

**Jack:** Yeah. So flat. The vocal performer on Killua is fantastic. I think we've talked about her performance in the past.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** But she's crushing it.

**Keith:** Oh, there's— sorry about this. There's a couple things from that fight that I missed because I wasn't looking at my notes that I want to hit, just real quick. One of my favorite lines, when he's actually doing that, like, little algorithm trick with the number card, the announcer says, "There are no points for tricks! That had no effect on the match!" [laughs]

**Jack:** Yes. It's great. [Dre laughs]

**Keith:** So funny. And then we get the return of hacker Hisoka, because, explaining why Kastro can't beat him, he basically is like, "You tried to run a too memory intensive program, and you're out of RAM," is basically what he says.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm, yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah. [sighs] I don't know what to do with this, and I wonder if y'all can help. [Sylvia laughs]

**Keith:** You'll know next— you'll know in the next session.

**Jack:** Okay. So, it's not— right.

**Keith:** No, you can ask the question. I shouldn't stop you from asking.

**Jack:** Yeah. Is it coincidence that we've now seen several sort of technology and uses of technology metaphors with Hisoka, or is there something going on there?

**Keith:** Oh. Sorry, I mis— I didn't— I thought you were gonna ask something else. I think it's just— I think it's just a weird— it's either a weird bit of characterization that, like, is not important, or it's just, like, Togashi's personality kind of poking through these cracks in the writing.

**Jack:** In the early 2000s?

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, where, you know.

**Jack:** Or the '90s.

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

**Jack:** Yeah, 'cause it is weird. We've had Hisoka cyberstalking people, and then we've had Hisoka breaking down how a '90s computer works. [Jack and Dre laugh quietly]

**Keith:** It's definitely something that I didn't notice about the writing of his character until Dre pointed it out last episode.

**Jack:** I'm not missing something, right? There's no clear link between murderous clowns and computers. Uh, let's see. No, not really. I mean, Hisoka is talking about, like, procedure and a sort of mechanical or computerized procedure. He's viewing a person's, uh, you know, life through the lens of a computer, but I don't think that really— I don't think that's related to Hisoka at all. Yeah, I think this is just—

**Keith:** You know, there is one avenue here that I can see, and it has to do with sort of Hisoka as a sort of watchful judge of the people around him.

**Jack:** Huh.

**Keith:** And there's a point where— we've used, Jack, you did in a very early episode use a video game analogy for how the Hunters operate, and I used a similar analogy sort of forgetting that you did that in, like, episode one or two, like, in episode seven or something, and this is...this isn't really a spoiler, but Hisoka goes on to continue judging people the way that we've seen him do, but he will apply, like, a number score sometimes, and I think that there's, like, [Jack chuckles] this little bit of, like, Hisoka playing an RPG thing that's happening.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Keith:** Where, like...oh, Jack, I know you played some *Starfield*. You know how the ship engine works where you're allocating energy to different parts of the ship?

**Jack:** Oh, yeah, sure.

**Keith:** I think that there's a thing here where he's like, I beat you in the fight because you had the points in the wrong spots, is, like, the vibe that I get.

**Jack:** And that kind of focus, that kind of flattening of personhood down to those criteria.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** He's a power scaler. [Keith and Sylvia laugh] He's a power scaler.

**Jack:** I mean, he kind of is, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Sure, yeah.

**Jack:** Didn't we talk about Hisoka—? Or someone was being a power scaler a while ago. Maybe it was us.

**Sylvia:** We definitely have discussed power scaling before.

**Keith:** Yeah, I wish I remembered the context.

**Jack:** You introduced me to the concept.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I lived in a beautiful world where I didn't know about power scaling. [laughs quietly]

**Keith:** Power scaling is when people erroneously try to say that Hisoka could beat Goku in a fight, when obviously he couldn't.

**Sylvia:** I mean, he could trick Goku, but he couldn't beat him in a fight.

**Keith:** Right, yeah. Goku's not hard to trick.

**Jack:** How trickable— could I trick Goku?

**Keith:** Yes, yeah.

**Sylvia:** You could trick Goku.

**Keith:** Yeah, you could.

**Dre:** Yes, absolutely.

**Jack:** But I couldn't trick Hisoka.

**Keith:** Mm, maybe not.

**Sylvia:** Probably not?

**Keith:** Definitely much more immune to tricks.

**Dre:** [unconvinced] Mm, maybe.

**Jack:** Well, here's the thing, though. I'm real, right? And when I close the streaming



platform, Hisoka stops.

**Sylvia:** That's true.

**Keith:** That is a kind of trick.

**Sylvia:** That is a kind of trick.

**Jack:** This is the kind of power that I have.

**Dre:** That's Jack's Trick right there.

**Keith:** You're constantly making his whole world appear and disappear.

**Jack:** Yeah, that's true. He causes me no problem now. He causes me no problem when he's on television, other than that I have to write notes about his awful antics. [Keith laughs] Uh, speaking of: shower Hisoka.

**Keith:** Right. An antic.

**Dre:** Yeah, buddy.

**Jack:** This is also weird. I guess I never really thought of Hisoka needing to take a shower. [Sylvia laughs] Hisoka is so—

**Keith:** Yeah, he's a human person. Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** It is very strange. This reference to him being a child once and then him doing something as normal as, like, taking a shower.

**Keith:** He has an apartment. Like, he's like...

**Jack:** He has an apartment.

**Keith:** [laughs quietly] It's, like, very—

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** It is very weird. Just, like, he's like this awful specter that is haunting the main characters of the show, and then all of a sudden they're like, he's an awful specter that had a childhood and has a shower.

**Jack:** And he's, like, ripped, right? The camera is kind of...

**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah.

**Keith:** Oh, yeah. This is a lurid sort of...

**Dre:** Oh.

**Sylvia:** This is fanservice.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Jack:** There's a real lascivious, like, look at Hisoka in the shower. He's got all his muscles. His hair is, like, wet down over his head. It is, uh, on the one hand, kind of weird, but on the other hand, Hisoka himself is this lascivious lens through the show, [Keith: Yeah.] so on some level, I can understand— not in the sense of, like, he's getting a taste of his own medicine or whatever, but this is the grammar by which Hisoka operates.

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** So it makes sense that— and I think Togashi has this kind of lascivious interest in Hisoka as well. It makes sense that we would kind of get this camera angle, but the really startling thing, for me, was, oh, Hisoka has a body, rather than just being, like, a weird mannequin almost, who loses— you know, we saw him lose both his arms earlier without flinching. I wrote down in my notes, and I think I've written it down several times now in different contexts, like, what is Hisoka? You know, is he a person? Is he a sort of like a lich or a ghoul? [Sylvia laughs quietly] Is he like a specter?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I'd call him a ghoul, but I don't know if it's literal.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Much like Leorio, Hisoka is just a guy.

**Jack:** He is just a guy.

**Dre:** Just a dude.

**Jack:** And there was something so disconcertingly disarming about just seeing him take a shower.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** As Machi— and I think this is so deliberate, this feeling is so deliberate, because over it, we get Machi walking away and saying—

**Keith:** Yeah, after Hisoka unsuccessfully and sort of clumsily asks her on a date.

**Jack:** Yeah. Yeah, and she is having absolutely none of it.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** She says some of the coolest lines about Hisoka we've gotten. She says, "He's a mystery. He never talks about his past. It doesn't interest him. He doesn't belong to anything or anyone. He's his own man, because he's absolutely convinced that he's the most powerful."

**Keith:** It's also a really funny thing to say right after he was talking about his past.

**Jack:** This is exactly it.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** You know, setting that monologue against these, um, very intimate images, more intimate images of Hisoka than we have gotten so far [**Keith:** Yeah.] is a real choice and

produces a really odd affect, and I'm curious if y'all felt the same way? This feels like a...not like a turning point but like a really weird pivot with Hisoka. And did you feel the same way when you saw it the first time, or...? What's your takeaway in terms of these reveals that we've gotten?

**Sylvia:** Uh...this is one of those things where I wonder if me having seen the show has affected my perception of things [**Keith:** Yeah.] coming back into it, because it...

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** I'm trying to, like, recall without being colored by too much.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, because watching it [**Dre:** Yeah.] through this time, it didn't actually feel that, like, out of...

**Jack:** Hmm.

**Sylvia:** Like, it made sense [**Jack:** Right.] with my idea of Hisoka's character. Like, there is...the things that Machi— that's her name, right?

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. The thing she says that stands out to me is like, "He's never thinking about the past. He's always looking at the future," which comes into play a lot with how he looks at the, like, people that he wants to fight and stuff.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** But then the fact that he's named his power after this, after candy that he liked when he was a kid, does sort of...to me, it was just like, oh, this accentuates the, like, childish nature that he approaches all this stuff with. Like, this is [**Jack:** Mm.] something that really emphasizes the, like, "This is a game to me!"

**Keith:** Right, frivolous.

**Sylvia:** "I'm the funny clown!"

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah. Totally.

**Sylvia:** Hisoka's famous line, "I'm the funny clown." [Keith laughs]

**Keith:** [voice] I'm the funny clown.

**Jack:** I'm the funny clown. He doesn't really have a catchphrase, does he? Well, his catchphrase is just, like, creepy noise.

**Sylvia:** It's, yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Ugh.

**Jack:** Make a creepy sound.

**Sylvia:** Don't.

**Jack:** No.

**Sylvia:** Nobody on call make a creepy sound, okay?

**Dre:** [laughs quietly] Don't.

**Jack:** No, nobody. That guy's horrid. Although, he does reveal that he has a gigantic Phantom Troupe tattoo on his back.

**Keith:** Or?

**Dre:** Or...?

**Sylvia:** Or?

**Jack:** Well, I have a question about this first. Uh, why does the tattoo have a “4” in it?

**Dre:** Oh. Can we answer that?

**Jack:** Is this something I've forgot?

**Sylvia:** I don't know if we can answer that, yeah.

**Jack:** Okay, cool, right. I just remembered that, like, [cross] didn't Majtani claim something about Phantom Troupe tattoos?

**Sylvia:** [cross] I don't remember, yeah.

**Jack:** Majtani claimed, like, Phantom Troupe people mark their tattoos for the number of people they've killed.

**Sylvia:** Yes. Yes.

**Jack:** And then Kurapika said, “You're a fucking idiot.” [laughs quietly]

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, because they've killed too many to, like, count.

**Jack:** So, my suspicion, based on—

**Keith:** So, that was the— so, I don't remember what Majtani says about the tattoo. I do remember he says that the wrong number of people are in the Phantom Troupe. Kurapika knows how many people are in the Phantom Troupe. I think that he says...should I say? I think that he said— I don't think it really matters.

**Dre:** It's not a huge thing, but...

**Sylvia:** This is Jack's discretion, to me.

**Keith:** Jack?

**Jack:** I mean, my— let's hold off.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Jack:** My guess is that Phantom Troupe members are— my guess is that the Phantom Troupe— all right, here we go.

**Sylvia:** [laughs] Yeah!

**Jack:** I think that Majtani was kind of right. I'm theorycrafting it. [laughs quietly] I guess—

**Keith:** Well, so, the people that he kills, those were the tattoos that he had, the teardrops that he had, not...

**Jack:** Oh, sure. Okay.

**Keith:** Not the number from the tattoo, from the spider.

**Jack:** Right. I think that Phantom Troupe tattoos have numbers and that indicates the position on a kind of seat that you are in in the Phantom Troupe. I think the Phantom Troupe is a one-in-one-out gang of murderers, and much like the, um...oh god, the, um...the spies, the Curtain spies in PARTIZAN who are like, oh, I'm the Lace, and I'll always be the Lace, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] and if I die, then this person will replace me as the Lace or whatever. I think Phantom Troupe— there are, like, seats.

**Keith:** Mm.

**Jack:** And I think that the "4" in Hisoka's thing, along with being Hisoka's, you know, four death number theming, [**Keith:** Right.] is representative of him in the fourth seat in the Phantom Troupe. That's my guess. However...

**Dre:** Sure.

**Jack:** It's, uh, Texture Surprise! [laughs] It's just Texture Surprise. He pulls it off, and he

doesn't seem to be in the Phantom Troupe at all, maybe. This is—

**Keith:** Uh, Machi seems to think that he is.

**Jack:** Machi absolutely thinks he is.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** In fact, the narrator says, “Hisoka is masquerading as a member of the Phantom Troupe, but to him, the Troupe is just another target.” This is—

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** This is fucking wild.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** So, Hisoka says, “I’ve found some new toys to play with,” as we see Gon and Killua. He’s sort of imagining— he flashes back to them walking through his Ren, and then he says, “Time to start the hunt,” and I was like, “Oh, he’s going to hunt Gon and Killua,” but then the narrator says, “Hisoka has been masquerading as a Phantom Troupe member. To him, the Troupe is just another target,” which is really cool. I mean, the thing we know about the Phantom Troupe is that they are the— they are murderers’ murderers, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** And so, if Hisoka is deciding to—

**Keith:** That’s like the comedian’s comedian? It’s like they’re...

**Jack:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. [Keith laughs] Like a real, uh, Mitch Hedberg type or you know.



**Keith:** Yeah. [Sylvia, Dre, and Jack laugh] An Andy Kindler.

**Jack:** I don't know who that is.

**Keith:** There we go, [cross] because he's a comedian's comedian.

**Jack:** [cross] That's why he's a comedian's comedian, yeah.

**Dre:** Never try to give Hisoka a receipt for doughnuts, you know?

**Jack:** No. No, we don't need to put ink and paper here. So, if he's gonna try and kill them...

**Dre:** [quietly] That's a Mitch Hedberg joke.

**Sylvia:** [quietly] I don't get it.

**Dre:** Oh, that's a Mitch Hedberg joke.

**Sylvia:** Oh, okay.

**Jack:** He says, "I don't need a receipt for doughnuts. It's one doughnut. We don't need to bring paper and ink into this situation."

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** His delivery is better than mine and Dre's, because he was Mitch Hedberg.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, no, of course.

**Dre:** Because he's Mitch Hedberg, yeah.

**Sylvia:** He's a— yeah.

**Dre:** Pour one out.

**Jack:** Pour one out, all the time. Um, where was I?

**Dre:** Sorry, Jack. [Dre and Jack laugh]

**Jack:** No, it's okay.

**Keith:** Uh, one in, one out. Hisoka, fourth seat.

**Jack:** Yeah, but Hisoka has clearly been—

**Dre:** Organization 13.

**Jack:** [laughs] He has been masquerading as a Phantom Troupe member for long enough that Machi believes that he is a member of the Phantom Troupe. This raises a question: what is the difference between pretending to be a member of the Phantom Troupe and actually being a member of the Phantom Troupe? I'm curious about that. I don't know.

**Keith:** Not having to get a tattoo, for one.

**Jack:** Not having to get a massive spider tattoo? Yeah, I suppose.

**Dre:** Well, I mean, I guess I read that as, like, he did get the tattoo, it's just he got the tattoo on a Texture Surprise sheet that he attached to himself.

**Jack:** Oh, shit! Yeah.

**Keith:** Oh. Well, because he can change the look of the things, I just assumed that he just did the whole tattoo with Nen.

**Dre:** Oh.

**Keith:** But maybe it's a thing where they watch you get the tattoo, but I don't know.

**Jack:** But again, what this really is is it's just drawing the orbits of all these characters back together. The Phantom Troupe getting—

**Keith:** It is, and we've done so much, like, talking about the Phantom Troupe. Like, we know all these little bits, at this point.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** And like, now we know, like, this huge bit of inside information, that Hisoka's a fake member of the Phantom Troupe, and we're like, "But what does that even mean? What does it even mean to be a member of the Phantom Troupe?" [laughs]

**Jack:** Yeah, totally.

**Keith:** We have, like, all these weird little bits of information. I know that— I remember, at this point of the show, I am, like, itching to meet the Phantom Troupe.

**Jack:** Yeah, well, and I get to see them at the end and beginning of every episode too, so I'm just like—

**Sylvia:** Yeah, they tease you.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** And all I can think about is the stupid screenshot stream with the Phantom Troupe in, and I'm like, was Machi in that stream? She was, right? She was in that screenshot?

**Keith:** Yeah. Well, actually, I don't know for sure.

**Jack:** I tell you who wasn't in that screenshot.

**Keith:** Who?

**Jack:** Hisoka wasn't in that screenshot.

**Keith:** Oh, true, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Jack:** That's interesting.

**Sylvia:** That is interesting.

**Keith:** I'll say that if that— if everything was the exact same and Hisoka was in that screenshot, I wouldn't have given it to you. [Jack laughs]

**Jack:** Yes. [Dre laughs] In part, because I'd have just been like, "Who the fuck is that? [Keith laughs] That guy looks like a real nasty freak." Actually, I don't know. If I saw Hisoka in a lineup with the— the Phantom Troupe's aesthetic is very goth. Well, that's not true. Chrollo Lucife— Chrollo— bleh. [Sylvia and Jack laugh quietly] He's very goth.

**Keith:** Right.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And the short little guy who's facing him in that screenshot is also very goth.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Yeah, there's a few goths, but then there's also the— there's the, like...

**Jack:** There's a mummy.

**Dre:** There's Machi.

**Keith:** The *Fantasy Star* character.

**Jack:** There's the brave little soldier boy.

**Keith:** Yep.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm. [Keith and Jack laugh]

**Keith:** There's the, like, Samurai guy.

**Jack:** Yeah. Yeah. It's great. I'm so excited to meet the Phantom Troupe, and we can't be that far off, because they're going to Yorknew City. You know, they are in the opening and closing credits of this arc or of this section.

**Keith:** It's already been, like, three of the six months.

**Jack:** Yeah. Yeah, we'll get there.

**Keith:** Yeah.

## **Episode 33 [2:06:04]**

**Jack:** Episode 33 does not have a lot in it. It's a fairly thin episode, by my calculation, but I'm curious to see if there's stuff in it that is sticking out to other people.

**Keith:** Um, yeah, I think that, for me, the biggest thing is, like, a kind of change in what Killua will go out of his way to do. Like, we're a far cry from Killua, like, telling Gon to forget Leorio back in the first phase of the Hunter Exam. In this one, he, like, goes through kind of a lot of effort to make sure that Zushi is safe, bring him home, make a deal that is bad for him to help Zushi and Gon kind of at the same time, and then, [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] like, take kind of drastic revenge on Gon's behalf, which, that's not that surprising, but I think it's sort of interesting to see, like, especially compared to, like, Killua being annoyed when Gon was paying attention to other people and was kind of putting himself at risk for Leorio to seeing what he's willing to do now for a character that he has not spent that much time with, in all honesty.

**Jack:** Yeah. Yeah. Um, Wing starts letting them train again and immediately introduces some new Nen techniques, high level application of Zetsu known as In, which lets Hisoka hide his aura. Gyo lets you put your own Ren into your eyes to see it. They have taken us for absolute fools. [Jack, Dre, and Sylvia laugh]

**Keith:** Well, you can always see the big stuff, but it's the little stuff that's hard to see. Oh, this is a huge— this is huge to me. When you use a camera, you can film Nen.

**Jack:** Keith! Keith! Yes! I'm holding your hands!

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

**Jack:** This blew my mind!

**Keith:** You can record Nen onto a DVD. This is huge.

**Jack:** Cameras can see aura. Cameras can see aura, but they don't, like, render it onto the screen.

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** You have to...

**Keith:** You have to do the same thing that you would have to do as if you were there.

**Jack:** I don't know what the implications of this are. Actually, there's a line that really makes me think of this. Uh, let me find it. It's fucking great. It's at the beginning of...31. Killua is shocked that Gon has recovered so quickly, and he says, "What is your body made of, by the way?" [Jack and Keith laugh] to which Gon says, "I don't really know how to answer that," [Keith, Jack, and Dre laugh] which is so good.

**Keith:** Why? Something to tell?

**Jack:** Yeah, I feel like the same way about learning that cameras can see Nen, where it's like, I don't really know what to do with this information, but it's really cool.

**Keith:** It is. It's cool. And we'll—

**Jack:** It furthers—

**Keith:** Hey, we'll see if there's any ways that Nen interfaces with technology, I guess.

**Jack:** I guess. Can you send someone Nen in an email? [Keith laughs] Can I send malicious Ren to someone in a Discord message?

**Dre:** God. [Sylvia laughs]

**Jack:** I bet I can.

**Dre:** I hope so.

**Jack:** Hang on. I'm gonna send some— I'm gonna send y'all some malicious Ren now in Discord, and you have to tell me if you feel its malicious energy.

**Dre:** Aw.

**Jack:** No, don't worry. Don't worry. Don't worry, because I'm not putting my full malicious spirit into it.

**Dre:** Oh, okay. Phew. [Jack typing] Aah!

**Jack:** There we go. [laughs quietly]

**Keith:** Oh, yep. Turns out I'm weak. That really hurt me.

**Jack:** [laughs] Oh no, Keith!

**Keith:** Yep.

**Jack:** What have you posted, Sylvi? You've posted three scary images.

**Keith:** It looks like Hisoka.

**Sylvia:** That's Hisoka's bloodlust, remember?

**Keith:** Yeah, that's Hisoka's bloodlust.

**Jack:** Oh, yeah, there he is. [Dre and Jack laugh] We have a Hisoka emoji?

**Sylvia:** That's just one that I have personally.

**Jack:** You have a personal Hisoka emoji.

**Sylvia:** I have a persokal Hisoka emoji, yeah.

**Jack:** Persokal Hisokal.

**Sylvia:** Perso— uhhh. [Jack laugh quietly]

**Keith:** Another thing that we get is we have, uh— we mentioned this already, but I just

want to highlight Wing sort of demonstrating how the two Nens are, in fact, related, and I think it's sort of like a proof of concept. It's really easy to get wrapped up in Gon and Killua's enthusiasm and, like, desire to press forward and their sort of general ambition for learning and growing and be like, "Come on, Wing, pedal to the metal. Let's teach these kids some Nen." [Jack laughs] But, you know, especially when his only other student is Zushi, who is, like, progressing so slowly compared to Gon and Killua, but we do get—

**Dre:** He's trying real hard.

**Keith:** Yeah, he's doing his best. We get this sort of, like, proof that Wing knows what he's talking about, kind of? Like, Killua and Gon are both, like, kind of concerned that they won't be able to do Ten, because it's been two months, because Killua decided to— we didn't mention this. Killua decided to also be grounded alongside Gon, so that he wouldn't get too good without his friend.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, he doesn't want to leave Gon behind, I believe is his exact wording.

**Keith:** It's adorable.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I love it. These two are perfect.

**Keith:** And, uh, so, they do Ten, and it's like, oh, they've actually, like, drastically improved their Ten while, you know, doing this sort of the flame Nen practice, so I just like that they kind of prove that if Gon and Killua had, like, the patience and weren't the subjects of a television show and a manga, if they had just been able to, like, live a sort of normal Nen life and studied at a regular pace under Wing, they'd probably be doing really, really well.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.



**Keith:** Maybe a little bit more slowly, but they'd probably be extremely excelling in that kind of environment.

**Jack:** And maybe more chill.

**Keith:** And maybe more chill.

**Dre:** Maybe.

**Keith:** And then we get a good quote from Wing: "Train with all of your might, play just as hard, and enjoy life." I think that would be— that's something that they should both remember.

**Jack:** He gives some genuinely good advice in this, some advice applicable even if you don't live in weirdo fucked up Hunter world.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Because Killua says, "Hey, can I do all that shit Hisoka did, please?"

**Keith:** [laughs] Yes, can I have weird rubber Nen?

**Jack:** And Wing kind of gives two answers. He says yes and no. He says, "Look, if it's— if Nen is being worked, you can learn how to do it, but everybody's Nen is specific to them, and people's Nen grows and changes, and the style of it changes in different ways. And you can very easily learn how to do Nen just like someone else, but I would really discourage you from just trying to follow that and instead think about what it is that you like." And he gives this really great advice about developing your own sort of personal style. It was really strange hearing Wing say that and, you know, having heard that about how to make music or how to write stories or whatever. You know, when you are younger or getting started, you feel this real excitement and temptation about other people's work, you know, because you're so moved by these other people's work, like, for example, [laughing] cutting off both your hands and pulling a magic card out of your wrist. [Dre laughs] And then, as you mature as a creative person or as an artist and you sort of start to think to yourself, "What is it that I actually like to make?" you know?

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** “What might I actually end up making?” Rather than trying to find your own style sort of by brute force, you eventually get to a point where you're like, “Oh, wait a second, I think I actually do have my own personal style,” or I've discovered my own personal Nen now, and it's tearing off both my arms and pulling a playing card out of my wrist. And I thought that was kind of sweet, hearing Wing work through, like, actual creative advice on a television show about Nen.

**Keith:** And we also sort of get— because of this, we get the answer to Wing sort of enigmatically acknowledging his master in an earlier episode.

**Jack:** Oh, yeah, Wing says, “What have I done, my master?”

**Keith:** Because he's awoken up the— and also weirdly has a smile on his face? I...it is a confusing—

**Jack:** Wing's fucking weird.

**Sylvia:** It is very reminiscent of how Gon feels when watching, like, hearing about Hisoka's fight and stuff.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Like, it has that same energy of, like, this is scary, but I'm excited about it because it's scary.

**Keith:** Yeah. So, he mentioned this master. We don't know who they are, and then we finally get the answer. It's Fleetwood Mac, go your own way.

**Jack:** [laughs] Fleetwood Mac are definitely Nen users.

**Keith:** Yes. Yeah.

**Jack:** Can you be a Nen user, or are you just a Nen haver?

**Keith:** Nen have— well, everyone is a Nen haver.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Well, everyone's an— everyone had aura.

**Keith:** Right, right, yes.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah. Well, if the aura is Nen, you know, the Nen just escapes through, and it doesn't affect. I think you're a Nen user, whether you're intentional or not, once the Nen starts, like, changing the course of your life.

**Jack:** But yes, Lindsey Buckingham, Stevie Nicks, Christine McVie, Mick Fleetwood.

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Jack:** Nen users.

**Keith:** All Nen users.

**Jack:** Yeah, they wrote Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow.

**Keith:** That's a great one.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** That is a great one. I think it was very overplayed when I was a kid. I heard it so many times, [**Keith:** Yeah.] on, like, commercials or whatever, and it was only in the last couple of years that I was listening to *Rumours*, like, front to back, and I was like, "That song fucking whips. That's a great song." [Jack and Dre laugh]

**Keith:** For me, it's "Landslide" is the one that I like but was, like, when I was a kid, way overplayed, yeah.

**Jack:** Oh my god.

**Dre:** Oh, sure.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** “Landslide” is brutal, though.

**Keith:** It is. It’s brutal. It is brutal.

**Jack:** You ever hear “Landslide” and are like, well, the next three and a half minutes of my life is some deep introspection? [Jack and Keith laugh]

**Keith:** I spent most of my time hearing that song being eight, so no.

**Jack:** What does an eight-year-old think “Landslide” is about? A landslide, probably.

**Keith:** I think that I— I think that I got it, I just don’t think I had the capacity to treat it properly.

**Jack:** Well—

**Keith:** It’s much like learning Nen too quickly.

**Jack:** Yeah. Well, back to the show.

**Keith:** Okay. [laughs quietly]

**Dre:** Bringing it back, yeah.

**Jack:** Uh, now the three— what did you call them earlier? You had a great name for them. I don’t remember who coined it.

**Sylvia:** Oh, the Nen Initiates?

**Jack:** The Nen Initiates show up.

**Dre:** Oh.

**Jack:** This is—

**Dre:** No, yeah, I called them the Handjob Brothers.

**Jack:** Oh.

**Sylvia:** [laughs] Sure.

**Jack:** [laughs] Bleep that.

**Dre:** Sorry, I thought that's what you were saying. I thought you said that was a great name. My bad.

**Jack:** [laughs] Yeah, so, the three Nen Initiates, which are someone described as person with one arm and a face like a mask; Gido, who is the spinning top person; and then, uh, Riehlvelt?

**Sylvia:** Riehlvelt. So, the names are Sadaso is the guy whose face looks like a mask or is described as having a face that looks like a mask, and then at the end of one of the episodes we get Gon and Killua's Hunterpedia where I believe— yeah, the man in the wheelchair is named Riehlvelt, R-I-E-H-L-V-E-L-T. And then, yeah, Gido is spinny top man.

**Jack:** And these three are very much sort of solidifying themselves as not quite as powerful as your Kastros or your Hisokas, but they are coming to represent the destructive power of Nen.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** These are people who—

**Keith:** Destructive and self destructive.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Yes, definitely. Although, I'm always a little leery of these three, in that they are people who have severe physical disabilities [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] brought about by the violence of Nen action against them, and there is an extent to which the show is not

quite fetishizing but definitely lingering on the way these people's bodies have been transformed by the weight of the Nen attack.

**Sylvia:** It definitely leans on some stuff that reminds me of things where, like, it's a common problem in *Star Wars* where, like, the more robotic someone is, the less human they are.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Like Anakin's arm and stuff, or like...there's a lot of, like, cyberpunk that plays with that idea.

**Dre:** Oh, sure, yeah.

**Keith:** It reminds me of, like, sort of B horror movies and creature feature stuff, where it's like, there's a gross thing that's dangerous and looking to get you, is what it reminds me of.

**Jack:** Yes, and the way that it has walked us there is through the path of saying, you know, the more injured these people have become, the less human and more evil they have, you know, sort of— these three are caricatures, and they're caricatures in a show full of caricatures, but they are pretty active caricatures, [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] in a way that feels kind of uncomfortable sometimes.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** As they begin to demonstrate by immediately kidnapping Zushi. What they want to do is set up a fight with Gon and Killua, who they believe are soft targets, and they are sort of rookie crushers, in the language of the Hunter Exam.

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Jack:** But Gon and Killua don't want to fight until early June. Something about the way the calendar in this show is just Earth's calendar never stops being funny to me. [Dre laughs] Like, they're like, "Oh, it's March 22." Yeah, bud, and I bet it's Saturday or

something. [Keith laughs] But that is too late for the Nen Initiates, who will get disqualified if they don't register to fight within that time. So, they kidnap Zushi. Killua kind of figures out that they've kidnapped Zushi and says, "Look, give me back Zushi, and I'll fight you, and in fact, I'll let you win. Would you like a win?" They keep one of Zushi's shoes and use it in the classic sending someone a finger in the mail to Gon to get Gon to fight Gido, but then what happens? The Zoldyck assassin has a trick up his sleeve.

**Sylvia:** Well, so...

**Dre:** You did skip a part.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Oh, what did I skip?

**Sylvia:** You want to take this, Dre?

**Dre:** Uh, well, where basically after Killua gets Zushi back, Killua says, like, "Hey, now you need to promise that you won't do anything like this again," and the—

**Keith:** Because they're giving them wins.

**Dre:** Yeah, and then—

**Keith:** He just says, "We'll lose on purpose so that you don't do anything to Zushi."

**Dre:** Yeah, and then they're like, "Well, what's gonna happen if we break our promise?" and, like, Killua starts to say something, and he goes—

**Sylvia:** Just don't do it.

**Dre:** "Ah, nevermind. Whatever. Who cares?"

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** "Whatever. Just don't do it." So yeah, smash cut to Killua has realized they broke

their promise and breaks into one of their apartments and I guess is using Zetsu...?

**Keith:** Yeah, he Zetsus up to...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** To completely conceal himself and basically almost stabs one of them through the head.

**Jack:** Yeah. It's great. It's classic, just, it's classic Killua mask off.

**Dre:** Yeah. Has the eyes.

**Jack:** Has the eyes.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** The theme hits. I love the arrangement of the theme hitting.

**Jack:** It's great.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, no, this whole— this whole sequence rules.

**Keith:** Yeah, and it's right after...and it is, you know, it's classic Killua, but is it classic Killua? Would classic Killua [cross] have just killed this guy?

**Dre:** [cross] I don't think so.

**Keith:** I think maybe.

**Dre:** Oh! Yeah, probably. Well...

**Keith:** Because he tells him to go away, don't come back.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** So they—

**Dre:** Classic Killua would have already killed this guy.



**Keith:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, maybe.

**Dre:** Right? No, but I mean, seriously.

**Sylvia:** No, genuinely.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Classic Killua would have killed this person because he wanted to. Classic Killua would not care that somebody else got kidnapped, right? Classic Killua would be like, “Well, I guess you suck, and that’s your fault. Well, I’ll go kill this guy, because he’s in my way now.”

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Especially, like, someone who he doesn’t have— like, we’ve seen a little bit of him being kind of, like, not caring as much about Zushi as Gon does or at least being a little, like, I don’t know, jealous of how Gon and Zushi interact, and like, him going out of his way to help a kid that you kind of get the impression— he, like, has a fondness for, but this is kind of when you learn that he has some kind of fondness for Zushi. You never really got the impression before this.

**Keith:** He feels so sort of like an annoying younger cousin but from a guy whose family are murderers. [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Yeah. [laughs quietly]

**Jack:** Yeah. It’s great. And, of course, he says to the guy, you know, “Don’t show your face in front of us again,” and so the time comes around, and Killua wins the match, because his opponent doesn’t show.

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah, the consequence to this was that they— he was trying to save Gon from having to sign up, and they basically tricked Gon into having to sign up, but then they, I guess, both— uh, I don't remember. Killua gets a free win, and I'm actually thinking that Gon might not anymore. I don't remember.

**Sylvia:** Um, I guess it's not 100% clear who Gon is fighting yet.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Because it's implied [**Dre:** Yeah.] that Killua's gonna be fighting Sadaso, and then it doesn't really...

**Keith:** Well, they were both gonna fight Sadaso, because he was talking about, like—

**Sylvia:** Oh, I guess so.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** “Hey, I've set this up so that I will get two wins in a row, and then I just have to find some other chumps.” This is also bad tactics on his part, because it's made pretty clear that he doesn't feel confident that he can get wins just by signing up and fighting, so he's intentionally finding weak people to fight, and if that was the case, it's a really stupid idea when you have, um...when the consequence of not meeting your deadline is being kicked out of the floor, it's a really bad idea to, like, have your other target be right after.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Like, give yourself some more time to find the next target.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I don't know. It's just, like, not a good plan on his part.

**Dre:** Also, what's he gonna do if he gets up to and has to, like, fight a Floor Master?

**Keith:** Yeah. I mean, yes, totally.

**Jack:** We haven't seen a single Floor Master yet, which is kind of fun.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** People so fearsome that they, in theory, outclass Hisoka, although Hisoka is on his way to, you know.

**Keith:** Right, yeah. The— so, the next thing that we see is like, he wins by default. It's the next day. They've shown up and— wait, did we already do the— we already did the Gyo scene where they both learn Gyo, right? Or was that— am I wrong?

**Sylvia:** Uh...

**Keith:** I think that's the very last thing, basically.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Uh, I think we talked about it.

**Jack:** No, because they see, uh— we talked about the camera.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Jack:** Gyo is when they see...

**Dre:** Mm.

**Keith:** Right.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Wing talks them through how Hisoka won the fight, and I wrote in my notes, "Oh god, are we gonna go through the fight *again* but with Wing doing a commentary this time?" and we sort of do, but we learn the technique whereby you can sort of look very hard. [laughs quietly]

**Keith:** Yeah, there's the first one where Zushi does it, and then they train with Zushi, and then the next day they show up and they both learned Gyo overnight.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** This is where Killua's like, "It looks like his Nen is, like, made of rubber or something," and then Wing reveals that Gon had just come in and demonstrated Gyo himself although didn't understand.

**Sylvia:** A thing I really want to point out is how the Zoldyck theme keeps playing up until, like—

**Jack:** Yes!

**Sylvia:** While Killua demonstrates that he has learned Gyo.

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

**Dre:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** And like...yeah, I don't know.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** It's just very, like...

**Jack:** So interesting.

**Sylvia:** It's a very deliberate decision, I think, to tie that leitmotif in with Killua's sudden, like, sort of anger-induced, like, advancement or learning?

**Jack:** 'Cause he's also—

**Sylvia:** How this sort of incident with Sadaso was what spurred him to learn this technique so quickly.

**Keith:** Yeah. And it's sad, because you can tell he really doesn't want to be doing this.

Like, he doesn't want to be acting that way, even though it's still an impulse.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And it's still natural. Like, he was just talking— like, and I think they do a really good job of this in the writing and the way it's sort of portrayed, where Killua had just been talking about how difficult it is to not kill people. Like, just sort of matter-of-factly. Ugh, it's such a pain to not have to— to not be allowed to kill these people.

**Sylvia:** “It's tough making an honest living,” I think is his words, which I love.

**Keith:** [laughs] After he very quickly made something like three million jenny.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** By fighting.

**Keith:** Yeah. So, he says that and then immediately is sort of put in this position where like, maybe I do actually have to not be honest living here. And they never, like, say— they never, like, treat it like it's this big shame, and actually, the next time we see— like, shame as in disappointment, not guilt.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** The next time we see Killua, he's, like, in a pretty good mood, but you can tell, like, “Oh, I've gotta hurry up and learn this stuff now, because I have to, like, do these fights. These people are not gonna wait. They're gonna pull some other shit.”

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** But it is just sort of, like, sad for him to be successfully struggling with not acting like an assassin and then be, like, put in a position where he's immediately gotta actually go back on that in order to— this time, in order to help his friends, but it's still like, you know. I would rather him not have to do that, because I like him.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah. I'm trying to think. Oh, uh, to your point about the Zoldyck theme coming up again here, Sylvi. It's really interesting. You know, up until this point, the Zoldyck theme has sort of been deployed as a villain's theme.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** We usually see it when it's Illumi, when it's the other family members. God, I'm so curious if we ever got any of the Zoldyck theme when Gittarackur was on screen. I don't think we did.

**Sylvia:** I don't know if we did.

**Dre:** Ooh.

**Sylvia:** That's something I'd have to go back to see.

**Keith:** My memory is that our first time hearing the Zoldyck theme is when they show Kukuroo Mountain.

**Jack:** Uh, no. We hear the Zoldyck theme when he is hypnotizing Killua.

**Keith:** Oh, sure. Sure.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Jack:** In the fight.

**Keith:** That is that— is that that same episode, though? It's like the beginning of it and the end of it?

**Jack:** Oh, maybe, yeah.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Jack:** But I think, you know, it's interesting in the sense of, you know, it could be saying

one of two things. It could be saying the Zoldyck motif is a villainous motif, and in, you know, acting like this, acting violently in this way, Killua is, you know, in some way, still aligning himself with the motives of the Zoldyck family. It could also be saying, you know, the Zoldyck theme doesn't necessary have to be viewed as a villainous motif.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** It is, instead, a motif about the power and capability of these people, and we're seeing Killua sort of use this power for his own ends, for people that he cares about, in a way that is not necessary malicious. That's the other way of reading the theme. I think the other interesting thing is that I associate the Zoldyck theme with eyes a great deal, especially because [**Sylvia:** Mm.] it has this really striking first appearance during that first scene when Illumi uses the malicious Nen, and again, we see it with Mike, Mike's big eyes. We see Killua's big eyes when Killua is murdering. [laughs quietly] When Killua is murdering.

**Sylvia:** I mean.

**Jack:** And so, I think it is also very consistent [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] to have the Zoldyck theme playing here as Killua is using Gyo and, you know, focusing very intently on the screen to see Hisoka's Nen.

**Keith:** Oh, it's even playing during that scene? I don't think I noticed that.

**Jack:** Yeah, it continues. The Zoldyck theme runs through the whole end of the episode, I believe.

**Keith:** Wow.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** It's a great theme.

**Keith:** You know, I noticed something in one of the earlier episodes that was interesting. It wasn't the Zoldyck theme. It was, like, a different haunted choral thing?

**Jack:** Yeah, I wrote this down. It was as their auras are being awoken, as their pores are being opened. [laughs quietly]

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Jack:** They play this— you're right, it's a haunting choral theme. I wrote down that what it is doing for me there is evoking, like, a holy rite. There is something ceremonial—

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Keith:** Maybe, because we—

**Jack:** About having their auras opened.

**Keith:** Maybe it's because I missed an earlier time when it was more important, but the thing that struck me was there's a scene in episode 30 where it's after the sort of meeting with— the one-on-one with Wing. Killua comes back to tell Gon everything that happened, and he comes back and finds that, like Wing told Killua to tell Gon to do, he was already meditating and practicing his Ten, and instead of stopping him and explaining, he just goes and just sort of, like, sits down near him and also starts meditating, [**Jack:** Yes.] which is, I think, a very nice moment, very interesting. And it was, like, very odd that the music accompaniment to it was the haunted chorus. [laughs quietly]

**Jack:** Yeah, but it wasn't the Zoldyck chorus.

**Keith:** No, it was a different chorus.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** It was this kind of quiet choral montage.

**Dre:** I guess I've been thinking of that, like the chorus, that haunted choral as you're talking about, I just think of that as, oh yeah, that's the Nen theme.

**Jack:** Yeah.



**Dre:** That's the music that plays when we're talking about or showing Nen.

**Keith:** Yeah, there is—

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** There is some of that, the like, it's like, [imitating] OOOooh. OOOooooh. It's, like, very odd. [Sylvia laughs]

**Dre:** Any noise. Any sound.

**Keith:** Yeah, thank you. Thank you. [Jack laughs]

**Dre:** Any sound.

**Keith:** I'm bowing right now. You can't see, but I am bowing. [Jack and Dre laugh]

**Jack:** Yeah, and I think that, you know, we're sort of left with this image of Killua alone in the ring and the crowd kind of a little confused and hard done by as they don't get to see the fight. Killua chalks up the W.

**Keith:** Someone yells, like, "I want my money back!"

**Jack:** Yeah. [laughs quietly] That would have been me. I don't think that you should pay money to see children fight...and I'll leave it at that!

**Keith:** Please.

**Dre:** Wow. Yeah. Strong stance from Jack here. [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Fucking can't do anything 'cause of this fucking woke culture that we're living in these days. [Jack and Dre laugh] Back in my day, you could go watch a couple 12-year-olds beat the shit out of each other, but the PC police ruining it for everybody.

**Jack:** That's, of course—

**Sylvia:** I don't know what this bit is. We need to end it.

**Keith:** It's actually the regular police that are ruining that.

**Jack:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Dre:** Jesus.

**Sylvia:** Well, PC stands for, uh, police constable.

**Jack:** Police constable.

**Keith:** Police constable, yeah. [laughter]

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** All right, break it up!

**Jack:** All right, break up the episode! We got anything else to talk about, or should we see you next time?

## **Final Thoughts [2:33:53]**

**Sylvia:** I briefly— I should have touched on this earlier, but I think that some— we can kind of talk about it now, because I was waiting for us to get through everybody's different— all the Nen powers that we've seen in this chunk have been mentioned.

**Jack:** Oh, god.

**Sylvia:** Well, no, because I want to— something that I do think this episode does well and is something that I think a lot of these battle animes have to do is set the tone for what a conflict between two of the, like, practitioners of whatever their ability— like, in *Naruto*, it's ninjutsu. In *Dragon Ball Z*, it's just martial arts, and stuff like that. Like, et cetera. JoJo's, it's Stands. I'm gonna— I mention JoJo's for a reason. I'll get back to it.

**Keith:** In *Yu Yu Hakusho*, it's spirit energy.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, and in this, it's Nen. But you need to lay out the rules for the viewer and, like, sort of— give some sort of precedent for what confrontation between two users of

this is gonna be like. I think this does a really good job of showing the unorthodox abilities that Nen can, like, encapsulate. Like, because when we first see it introduced, it very much just feels like it's an energy you build up, and you can blast it out of your hand. Wing shows us, like, "This is Hatsu," and destroys the wall, and the last episode we talked about that. And in this, we've got some more standard stuff, like Gido's tops, and depending on how you want to— oh, I keep wanting to call it Wolf Fang Fist. Tiger Bite Fist. That might be Nen. [Dre chuckles] I don't know 100% sure. And those are more standard, like, this is for fighting. This is like, this is the same as *Dragon Ball Z* charging up, in a lot of ways.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** And then we also get the Nen thread that's used for— literally, like, stitches together the veins and arteries and stuff in Hisoka's arm. We have Bungee Gum and Texture Surprise, which we've covered and are both very strange things. We have Kastro being able to create a double, and we have the big invisible hand that Sadaso uses that seems to put Zushi to sleep.

**Jack:** Oh, yeah.

**Sylvia:** And I think through all these examples, what they've done is made a, like, did a good job showing that the Nen power is going to be something that is, like, unique to the character in a lot of ways.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** That there's going to be overlap in the techniques, because the same— the principles are the same? Like, it's the— it's Ten, Ren, Hatsu, Zetsu, and then like Gyo and In as well. And like, those are all going to be— those are the thing that's the level playing field, and then everything— and then, beyond that, you have characters who, like, figure out how to— how they want to train with it. A big example is, like, Kastro's doubles and when Wing talks about how much time and effort went into learning how to do that. And the reason I bring up— I wanted to circle back to JoJo is it is very similar to how conflict goes in *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure* when Stands are more established,

where there's almost a more puzzling aspect of the fights, where you have to figure out what your opponent's ability is before you can beat them.

**Jack:** Huh.

**Sylvia:** And I think the Hisoka thing is kind of like the big, like, example of that?

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** And it's not an uncommon— the main reason I bring it up is because it's not the most uncommon type of conflict in shonen anime. I think of...

**Keith:** It's a really good way to, like, mechanize the trope of, like, you know, characters who need to explain their powers.

**Sylvia:** Yes. I was...

**Keith:** So that the viewer can know what's going on and can, like, figure out what's happening, and it's a good way to, like, take that exposition and turn it into something useful.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, and it's something that's very influential, actually. I know, Jack, you're not super into, like, popular anime, but anybody who's watching this for the first time but has watched *Jujutsu Kaisen*...

**Keith:** Mm, yeah.

**Sylvia:** There's definitely, like—

**Dre:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** That also—

**Keith:** Who is a big fan, apparently, of Togashi.

**Sylvia:** Oh, you can tell. You can tell.

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

**Dre:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Keith:** It is extremely plain.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. But that also, like, does a lot of the— to the point where, in that series, your power gets stronger if you explain it to the guy. [laughs]

**Keith:** Yeah. [laughs] It's really funny.

**Sylvia:** Which is very funny to me.

**Keith:** The reveal of that is hilarious. It's really good.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Wait, if I talk you through [Keith: Yes.] how I can jump really high, I'll jump higher?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Keith:** Yeah. It's like—

**Sylvia:** Yes.

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

**Keith:** They say it's like— it makes you, like, literally 25% stronger too.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. It's...

**Keith:** If you explain it.

**Sylvia:** So we're not gonna go to that extent, but it is definitely something that— fights in this— there are going to be fights where it's just who's the strongest in a punching contest, but it definitely leans more towards the sort of—I mean, I'm gonna just go with JoJo as my shorthand here—"we need to figure out what our opponent's ability is to

defeat them,” as opposed to the *Dragon Ball Z* “I need to have more strength of willpower and martial prowess.”

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And how varied that stuff is is, like, [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] a huge part of that. Like, in *Dragon Ball Z*, which is, again, like, the ur-shonen.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Everyone’s special move is just, like, a different size, shape, and speed of an energy ball.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, pretty much. [Jack laughs]

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** How big is your energy ball? How fast does it move? How strong is it? Like, there isn't really a difference between the, like, between Big Bang or Final Flash or Kamehameha or Masenko.

**Sylvia:** No. It’s basically just, like, what psi level of force does it hit?

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

**Sylvia:** You know? Like, how much pressure does your beam apply?

**Keith:** And how fast is it.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Like, Piccolo has the Special Beam Cannon, which is probably the most unique by far out of all of them, and it’s just, like, [**Sylvia:** Goated.] so thin that it can go through you instead of just explode on you.

**Sylvia:** And yeah, the main reason I just bring that up is because I think that Togashi does a very good job of setting the precedent, and like, the adaptation team as well

does a good job of setting the precedent that the fights aren't necessary going to be just whose beam is stronger, that there's a little more going on with the powers than just, like, Bungee Gum is strong because the elastic force of it is really good. No, it's the way you apply your Nen ability [**Keith:** Right.] is directly tied to how competent you are in combat or, like...

**Keith:** And it's also, it goes even, you know, the other layer of that is it's also, like, how well can you set yourself up with the power that you have, but how well can you have the right power.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Like, this is what they show so well between the fight. Like, at some point, Machi says, like, "Do you even get how perfect it is that a guy like you has these two powers? Like, that's perfect," and he goes like, "Yeah, it's so adaptable that even if people know what it is, it doesn't make it any weaker." Versus what they say about Kastro, which is like, you spent all your time learning how to do this thing, and it only has hurt you, actually. Like, it's impressive [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] as long as you don't know what's happening, but as soon as you figure it out, you're done. And then he was done. It's true that he was done.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And so there's this, like, you better use your powers right, but you also better not be learning the wrong things.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Which I don't know if that, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] if Stands can— you just have a— your Stand is just part of you?

**Sylvia:** Uh, yeah, Stands are more like this is a representation of your spirit energy.

**Keith:** Right.

**Sylvia:** There's many different explanations for what Stands are, because, uh...*JoJo's Bizarre Adventure*, also an extremely long-running not yet finished manga series, but the way that it works, for anyone who's not familiar, is it splits up into these separate parts, some of which follow a timeline, some of which follow a different timeline, and, uh, yeah.

**Keith:** What a bizarre adventure.

**Sylvia:** What a bizarre adventure!

**Keith:** It is bizarre, the only word to describe that.

**Sylvia:** But also worth bringing up, because it does predate— the manga, at the very least, does predate *Hunter × Hunter* by a few years.

**Jack:** Huh. I didn't know that.

**Sylvia:** I believe at least a decade, actually?

**Keith:** Oh. JoJo's old.

**Sylvia:** I think...JoJo starts in '87, yeah.

**Keith:** Wow. And I think *Hunter × Hunter*, yeah, starts in, like, '95.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, and so, by the time that *Hunter × Hunter* had started, like...

**Keith:** Maybe '96.

**Sylvia:** Uh, '98, I think, is when...

**Keith:** Oh, really? Oh, they got—

**Sylvia:** The manga starts, yeah.

**Keith:** I sort of thought— I thought it had to be earlier because of the '99 series being in



'99, but.

**Sylvia:** No, yeah, they, like, adapted it pretty— I think so. Hold on. It might be '97.

**Keith:** No, March 3, 1998.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Another reason why I bring this up is because, by the time Togashi was writing this, JoJo was and continues to be just, like, a hugely influential piece of media, especially in manga and anime.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** And, like, there's not, like— like, not to be— there's a bit of a meme on the internet, believe it or not, where people will be like—

**Dre:** [sarcastic surprise] What?

**Sylvia:** "JoJo fans will see anything and be like, 'Is that a motherfucking JoJo reference?'" [Jack laughs] But I do actually think that there's a level of this that is inspired by *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure*.

**Keith:** Hisoka looks like a JoJo character.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Oh man, yeah.

**Sylvia:** There are— like, genuinely— I'll come back to this at different points. There's, like, a few different series that I feel like get referenced a couple different times, and it's very fun to see.

**Keith:** And *Hunter × Hunter* is an extremely referential show and manga.

**Sylvia:** Oh yeah, I mean, absolutely.

**Keith:** Like, it's constantly. It is, like, living and breathing in the language of other shows and, like, what other manga are doing.

**Sylvia:** I mean, okay. This doesn't mean anything to Jack, so I'll say it. At a certain point, there's a character in this show that is just the protagonist of a JoJo part but with a different name, basically. [laughs quietly] Like.

**Keith:** That's funny. I have no idea who that could be.

**Sylvia:** I'll—

**Dre:** Oh, I know who you're talking about.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I'll send it in our little spoiler chat.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** So I don't torture Jack with it. [Jack laughs]

**Keith:** Uh, is that all we've got for today?

**Sylvia:** I think so. Thanks for indulging my little tangent at the end there.

**Keith:** No, that's okay.

**Jack:** No, no. It made a lot of sense.

**Keith:** I think—

**Dre:** No, it's great.

**Keith:** You know, Dre, I don't know how JoJo you are, but...

**Dre:** Not much.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** I watched, uh...

**Keith:** Sylvi, you're the only one who could deliver that information, so.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I figured.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I'm a big fan. For anyone— if anyone's curious, my favorite parts that have been animated, my favorite animated part is Part 5 and my favorite part that hasn't been animated yet is Part 7. Do with that information what you will.

**Jack:** So it's on the way.

**Keith:** So you like five better than seven? If seven were animated, would you like it best?

**Sylvia:** If seven were animated, it would be my favorite. Seven is my favorite [Keith: Okay.] thing that Hirohiko Araki has ever done. And I like the stuff that he's done afterwards too, but seven is just...

**Keith:** Really cover your bases there. They'll come at you.

**Sylvia:** I mean, listen. Some people get weird about JoJo, believe it or not.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** [sarcastic shock] Whaaat?

**Sylvia:** Anime fans on the internet can be like, "Your opinion's wrong."

**Dre:** Whaaat?

**Keith:** Oh no.

**Jack:** If you're weird about *Hunter × Hunter* and the project Media Club Plus but in a good way, [Sylvia: Mm-hmm?] we would love it if you would rate us five stars on Apple Podcasts. There are lots of different—

**Keith:** Can I tell you something very funny about that?

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And I encourage people to do this, of course, but for some reason, I wasn't signed into iTunes, and it was giving me, like, another region's version of iTunes for some reason, and so when I finally signed in the other day to do some other related thing, the number of ratings that we had changed from like 100— sorry, from like 29 to like 180 or something. [Jack laughs] And I was like, oh, that is making me feel a lot better about the show. I thought that we had 29 people who listened to us and went to iTunes [**Dre:** Phew!] or Apple Podcasts and rated the show and reviewed the show. But don't let that discourage you from going now and doing the same thing that the other 100-something people have.

**Dre:** Yeah. Give us more.

**Jack:** Yeah. It means a great deal. We don't advertise. It's all word of mouth.

**Keith:** Either way. We also don't take ads.

**Jack:** We don't take ads.

**Keith:** [cross] And we don't make ads.

**Jack:** [cross] We don't make ads.

**Sylvia:** Whoa.

**Keith:** So you can go to Apple Podcasts and review us, and also, you can go to [friendsatthetable.cash](https://friendsatthetable.cash) and patronize us.

**Jack:** Yeah. Absolutely.

**Sylvia:** The only way I want you to patronize me. [Keith and Jack laugh]

**Jack:** With money.

**Sylvia:** With money.

**Jack:** On the platform patronize.

**Keith:** With money. And you can be patronizing with your patronage, if you want.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. If you pay me, you can be patronizing to me.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** But if it's for free, it's nothing.

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

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Get out of here. [laughs]

**Jack:** What are we watching—

**Dre:** Yeah, fuck off. I'll say it again.

**Sylvia:** Damn.

**Jack:** Beginning and the end. God damn. [laughter]

**Keith:** It's a fuck off sandwich.

**Jack:** That's a fuck off sandwich. [Sylvia laughs] Uh, what are we watching next time?

**Keith:** Next time, we're back with three. It is the next three episodes: 34, 35, and 36. Those titles are "Power × To × Avenge", "The × True × Pass", and "A Big Debt × And × A Small Kick".

**Jack:** Mm. Excellent.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Uh, something—

**Sylvia:** Should we also mention that we'll be joined next week, or am I gonna have that cut out?

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Keith:** No, no, we can say that. Yeah, Austin's gonna be on the next one. Was gonna be on the last one, but I got confused at which episode was the thing that he wanted to talk about was on.

**Jack:** Austin wants to talk about glasses.

**Keith:** Yeah. Are you excited to see the first screenshot?

**Jack:** I'm so excited to see the first screenshot, because I have now, you know, fully intuited that the environment in that screenshot that we saw is Heavens Arena, and I think you told me as much. Yes, I said, "Where are they?" and you said, "In Heavens Arena."

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Zushi was in that screenshot, so yeah, [**Keith:** Yeah.] this first one's gonna come up. It's gonna slot into place like finding a missing jigsaw piece.

**Keith:** And there's something else that you must have supposed about this that you didn't know at the time.

**Jack:** I mean, probably they're using Nen.

[Sylvia sneezes]

**Jack:** Bless you.

**Keith:** Bless you.

**Sylvia:** Thank you.

**Dre:** Oh, bless you.

**Jack:** I don't know. I haven't seen that screenshot in a while.

**Keith:** Yeah, you called it right away that they looked like they were doing some sort of magic, is what you said at the time.

**Jack:** Yes, but Nen is not magic. That is critical to understand—

**Keith:** [laughs quietly] Well.

**Jack:** And in fact, in one of the episodes—

**Dre:** [ambiguously] Well...

**Jack:** A character says, “Is he using magic or his Nen?” to describe Hisoka.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** So—

**Keith:** This was— I would call this— I think this was kind of a lazy bit of writing, where the character— where Kastro was supposed to have noticed that the arm that Hisoka made was Nen and not magic, because it looked too pristine to be magic, [[“The Boy in Green”](#) begins playing] and I was like, why can't a magic arm be pristine? I don't know why that would be... [laughs]

**Jack:** Because Nen isn't magic, Keith.

**Keith:** Right, okay, sure, yes.

**Jack:** Gravity is not magic.

**Keith:** Yeah. Okay.

**Jack:** Magic is— simply, magic is what a witch does.

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** Have a good night, everybody. [Sylvia laughs]

**Keith:** New permanent sign-off. [Jack laughs]

**Dre:** Happy Halloween.

**Jack:** Simply, comma, magic is what a witch does. Happy Halloween. [quiet laughter]

[song plays out]