

An Appraiser Of Men - Hunter x Hunter ep. 48-50: Media Club

Plus S01E16

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Introduction

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

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. It's good to be back. It's been a few weeks since we recorded. It's been, like, a month since we recorded?

Sylvia: It's been a while.

Keith: Yeah. This is one of the longer breaks that we've taken. [cross] We were busy, and then I was sick.

Jack: [cross] But not for you, listener.

Keith: Yeah, no, not for you. This will be...you know, this is not gonna make any sense to you, because two weeks ago, you will have listened to the one right before this. It was a bad place to take a break, just 'cause these episodes flow so well from the last set of episodes, [**Sylvia:** Mm.] where we got a ton of Kurapika stuff, and then now, like,

it really is sort of part two of stitching these two plots back together. I really enjoyed them. Do we have any initial impressions?

Sylvia: Oh, I'm like, this was so much fun. I think it's like, the first episode we watched was a very, like, funny cute one, for the most part.

Keith: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: And then the other two—

Keith: New characters for the first time in a bit.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Oh, yeah, yeah, no, and he's great. I love him. Zepile, we'll get into, I'm sure. But then also we get some just, like, fantastic hunt for the Phantom Troupe stuff in the latter two.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Sylvia: And like, we're in it, you know? Like...

Keith: I do— I am starting to feel, 'cause like, I'm editing them, and so I'm hearing myself, like, repeat this.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Starting every episode being like, “Yeah, I really liked these episodes,” and I'm like, I have to stop saying that, 'cause I like all the episodes, and I sound like an idiot. [Keith, Dre, and Sylvia laugh] I sound like, yeah, every episode, I'm, you know. There's a lot of shows that I like that I'll be like, “Yeah, I didn't really like those episodes,” and I'm not saying that *Hunter × Hunter*'s a perfect show with no bad episodes, but it's just something that I have to stop saying, 'cause I keep repeating, like, “These were great eps.”

Sylvia: I mean, to be fair, I do think we have pointed out when things have dragged,

such as...

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, we have.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Sylvia: You know, we remember Nen. We remember when we were learning about Nen.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And hey, maybe there'll be a little bit of a stretch in a little bit where we won't think it's so great.

Sylvia: Who knows? I'm not believing that, but sure.

Keith: Okay. [Jack laughs]

Sylvia: I don't know what you might be talking about here. I'm straight up just like—
don't ruin it for me. I'm in a flow state with the Phantom Troupe. I'm just here. I'm ready.
[Dre laughs quietly]

Summary [0:02:53]

Keith: Speaking of ruining things for people, just weeks after Gon gives himself permission to use his Hunter's License, he's decided to pawn it off for cash to fund their investigation into the Spiders. While waiting on that info, it's back to scamming at the auction. This time, they've stumbled on a way to use Nen to their advantage and also stumbled upon a man named Zepile, an appraiser who takes a quick liking to Gon and Killua and agreed to work basically for free. They leave him to earn money while they go off to immediately get captured by the Troupe. Hopefully something they've learned antiquing will help them escape. [Sylvia, Dre, and Jack laugh]

Jack: It's so funny.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: You know, you ever learn about the antiques and art appraisal market so hard you use it to escape from history's greatest murderers? [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: It's fucking crazy. Like...

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: These kids are special.

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's wonderful. I mean, I guess I do want to start with: going into these episodes, my first thought was, "How does this escalate?" I mean, where we left off, Kurapika just took out a member of the Phantom Troupe with very little effort.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I mean, the notable thing about that fight was not just that Kurapika killed Uvo, you know, began his path of revenge in earnest, but did so seemingly— and not effortlessly, but without a kind of—

Keith: Pretty close. No hiccups.

Jack: No. It went exactly as Kurapika had planned.

Keith: Or, like, one hiccup. I think that ideally Uvo would not have escaped from...

Jack: And killed a bunch of the, uh, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: To be fair, like, the protection team, like the bodyguards, they suffered some

casualties 'cause of Uvo.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, that's true. And the way Togashi kind of responds to this is that he goes into his little quests menu and selects a side quest.

Keith: Yeah, it's time for a side quest. [Sylvia laughs quietly]

Jack: And all— you know, Togashi's trick is that all these are the main quest or whatever, but the vibe very much is— and Togashi does this all the time. I think it is, like, a side effect or rather, like, an upside to his drifting camera maneuver, where he can pick up and put down plotlines seemingly, you know, at will, and those plotlines can have very different feels or very different sort of levels of tension, but the fact that he is just drifting between them at all times lends the show this kind of, like, kaleidoscope feel. You know, all the colorful pieces inside a kaleidoscope rotating around each other, such that he is able to move from this moment of high drama, high tension—you know, the mafia murders; you know, Uvo killing 400 men and then getting killed by Kurapika with a knife in his heart—back to, like, now we're doing an episode about art appraisal.

Keith: This is something that I think, like, really...it's *Hunter × Hunter* sort of showing its age in, like, a good way. As shonen and these, like, battle anime have aged, they've gotten so good at staying on track and accelerating and getting to the exciting stuff and kind of, like, never braking, in a way that, to me, is exhausting. Like, if you look at something like *Jujutsu Kaisen*, which is currently airing, it is a similar thing, where it's like, hey, we're gonna, like, teach you fighting magic, [**Sylvia:** God.] and you're gonna fight, like, ghosts and demons and stuff.” [Dre laughs quietly] They get to that so fast and then never let up. There's, like, very few kind of breaks in the action, in a way that feels really tight and focused, but I like that sort of kind of *Dragon Ball* thing of, like, “Yeah, we're just gonna take seven episodes to do nothing.”

Jack: Well, except the trick is that it's not doing nothing.

Keith: No. No, no, no. It's not doing nothing. It feels like it's a sidestep, but it's really

legwork for the thing that comes after this.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And the thing that comes after this is Togashi escalating it. You know, he has actually meaningfully escalated from killing Uvo by immediately putting Gon and Killua fully in the clutches of the Phantom Troupe, which was not something I expected until Netflix told me that that was about to happen at the beginning of the episode.

Sylvia: Boo! [Dre and Jack chuckle]

Keith: What happened?

Jack: Oh, I went out— I got the episode ready, and I went out and made some coffee, and when I came back in, the little pause screen that shows the episode synopsis was like, “Gon and Killua have been kidnapped by the Phantom Troupe.”

Keith: Oh.

Jack: And I was like, “Ah, come on!”

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: But you know, it is what it is, and it builds to this great sort of piece of narrative sleight of hand, which is the Phantom Troupe don't know Kurapika's name, and they keep calling him “the chain user,” which, fair. I think if you met Kurapika recently, that's probably what you would call him. Gon and Killua know who Kurapika is, but they don't know that he is wielding Nen chains, so you have this great sort of people talking across purposes—

Keith: It's great.

Jack: Where they have actually got someone in their clutches who is extremely useful to them, but neither party recognizes it, [**Keith:** Not—] until— not immediately.

Keith: Right.

Jack: But I don't want to get ahead of ourselves. I wanted to bring up that point of, like, that is emblematic of the kind of escalation, of kind of the way these plotlines are pulled together, [**Keith:** Yeah.] is that, you know, the critical piece of information that the Phantom Troupe are looking for is in the heads of Gon and Killua, but nobody knows it.

Keith: And they set it up great with the Machi thing at the beginning of that episode. Sorry, we're all— we're talking about a thing that happens in the second episode that we watched. [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: But to set up Machi as, like, having a sort of— having sort of, like, supernatural hunches.

Jack: Yes.

Keith: And then, like, when things don't line up quite like she said, people are kind of surprised, but they actually did line up right as she said, it's just that no one— there was some classic dramatic irony going on.

Jack: Classic.

Episode 48 [0:09:21]

Jack: All right, there we go. It's time to talk about art appraisal.

Dre: Hell yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Welcome to *Pawn Stars*, everybody.

Jack: Welcome to *Pawn Stars*, as Gon begins by pawning his Hunter License.

Sylvia: Yep.

Jack: This is something we've been told people do in the past. I don't think it's completely untoward.

Keith: Talk about legwork. Like, they tell us that in, like, episode seven.

Jack: It's great.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: And it is so funny, in terms of, like, you know, all Gon wants is to be a Hunter to find his dad, and now he's got the Hunter License, a thing that he already doesn't feel like he earned, you know, in the first place, really. I think he feels like he earned it now, having given the badge back to Hisoka.

Keith: Right.

Jack: He is just like, "Well, you know. Step on the road to what I need to do," and what they are looking for specifically is...they're looking for information on the Phantom Troupe, which they know they can get, but it will cost them money, and they're obviously hunting for the Phantom Troupe, because that will give them the money they need to buy the game to go in the game to find the clue to find the dad.

Keith: Right. To find the dad.

Jack: To find the dad. Yeah. [Sylvia chuckles] I knew an old lady who swallowed a fly. [Sylvia laughs] And this goes fine. You know, they pawn the Hunter License, and they get an auction catalog. This raises a question that I had kind of suddenly, like a kind of uncomfortable bolt of lightning, which is Greed Island is very rare, right?

Keith: Yes.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yes.

Jack: Why is someone selling seven copies of it?

Sylvia: Oh.

Keith: Because it can make you a billionaire.

Jack: But why—

Dre: Oh, multiple times over.

Sylvia: I never—

Keith: Oh, I was under the impression that this is multiple sales by different parties.

Sylvia: That's what I was thinking too, but I mean, you might be right.

Jack: This is people who have been holding onto a copy of Greed Island for a long time

[**Keith:** Yeah.] and have independently come to Southernbees.

Keith: I'm going to tell you something that we're going to learn, because I don't think it's a spoiler really.

Jack: Sure.

Keith: But we're going to learn that there's someone who's, like, looking for copies and buying up multiple copies of Greed Island, which means that there's a hot market for Greed Island right now, and so because—

Jack: Yes. That is true.

Keith: Because Greed Island copies are going, the people who are holding them are selling.

Jack: Yes. It is, uh...

Dre: Mm.

Keith: That's my impression of the situation.

Jack: It is now it is time to sell Greed Island. Yeah, I just had a sudden realization where

I was like, is there something— you know, is there something sinister happening here? Why have all these copies showed up at the same time? But it does make a lot more sense if it's not, you know, someone selling them.

Sylvia: Nah. Somewhere in the *Hunter × Hunter* world, there's, like, an Adam McKay movie happening about everyone who has a copy of Greed Island.

Jack: Yeah. And based on—

Sylvia: I don't think it's very good, but it's out there.

Jack: Based on the way Togashi writes or the sort of...Togashi's desperate desire to keep writing new weird corners of this world, we're going to see it one day. [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Keith: Who wants to tell me about Benny Delon?

Sylvia: Oh my god. [Keith laughs]

Jack: Oh, you mean Benny Delon, creator of Ben's knife?

Keith: Yes.

Sylvia: Yeah, the Ben's knife.

Dre: Oh god, yeah.

Keith: Benny Delon, the creator of Ben's knife.

Sylvia: Which I can't hear as anything other than, like, Mercedes Benz. Like, Benz knife. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. [Jack chuckles]

Sylvia: Like it's something that, like, a Soundcloud rapper would be, like, fucking talking about. [Dre laughs] I adore it.

Jack: Benz knife.

Dre: Checkout my butterfly knife that I put a Mercedes Benz head ornament on. It's my Benz knife.

Sylvia: I'm gonna own that knife. I'm gonna own that someday now. [Dre and Jack laugh quietly] Yeah, so, Ben Delon was a skilled blacksmith and serial killer, who—

Keith: Sorry, skilled blacksmith and what?

Sylvia: Serial killer.

Keith: Oh, okay.

Jack: Serial killer.

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Combination blacksmith and serial killer.

Sylvia: And he killed, like...280 something people? 300 something?

Keith: 288 at least.

Sylvia: Okay. Yeah, and he made a knife for each one, and they are known as Ben's knives, and importantly, Killua's dad apparently used to collect them. [Dre laughs]

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It's great.

Keith: Extremely good detail on Killua's dad there.

Sylvia: It's so funny!

Keith: It's so funny.

Dre: Oh, here's a fun thing I just learned. There's not a picture of Benny Delone. Delon?

Delone? Delon?

Sylvia: I have no idea.

Dre: In the anime that we're watching.

Keith: No.

Dre: But there is a picture of him in the 1999 version and the manga.

Keith: Yeah, I linked it in the chat.

Sylvia: Oh my god, wait.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Okay.

Sylvia: William Shakespeare?

Dre: Exactly! [laughs]

Keith: Yes, this is William Shakespeare.

Jack: Wait, that is William Shakespeare. [laughter]

Keith: It is William Shakespeare!

Dre: Just balding. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Just balding William Shakespeare.

Keith: Well, without his wig, is, uh...

Dre: Well, yeah, okay.

Jack: And they are drawn to this knife, because Gon sees Nen sort of emanating from it and is able to pick it up at a bargain. You know, we've talked in the past...

Keith: Yeah, it, like, calls to Gon, and he, like, notices it enough to go, to use Gyo on it.

Jack: Yes. And, you know, we've seen in the past that this show is not very good at understanding what an auction is in the sort of conditional auction that Leorio set up, but here it does know what it's doing, as the way this market works is, you know, you write in the price you're prepared to pay, and people can keep upping the price on it until the end of the day, at which point you sort of win it. I had thought that when we saw this knife calling to Gon, it would be, uh, you know, a moment of something sinister, but Gon's laser focus is turned on "make me a lot of money right now," [Sylvia laughs] so instead, they just start applying it as, like, we've become really good art appraisers thanks to our Nen. [Dre chuckles] and they go around and start trying to bid on stuff, and we just get a really nice little *Hunter × Hunter* montage of the various treasures that they bid on. They try—

Keith: Great new song for this montage, by the way.

Sylvia: Ooh!

Jack: Oh, yeah, hit it.

[clip of "F-R-I-E-N-D-S" begins]

[Sylvia sighs]

Keith: This song is called "F-R-I-E-N-D-S". [Jack laughs]

Sylvia: Okay, yeah!

Keith: And it's a play on a song that also plays from the very beginning of, um...

Jack: Heavens Arena.

Keith: Of Heavens Arena.

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: It's the only other time it plays, called "Take a Walk".

[song starts playing briefly]

Keith: Oh, no, this one.

Sylvia: Oh.

[clip of “Take a Walk” begins]

Sylvia: Yeah, I was gonna say.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Mm.

Keith: So, this is the second appearance of “Take a Walk” [music ends] and the first appearance of “F-R-I-E-N-D-S”, the implication being Gon and Killua are friends.

Jack: That would seem to be the implication.

Keith: Which I think makes it a sequel song to the season one song, or the Hunter Exam song, “Let’s Be Friends”, [clip begins] which is this one.

Sylvia: I love this.

Dre: Aw.

[music ends]

Jack: We also hear often, the Heavens Arena itself has a theme that is associated—that is, like, a really bombastic version of that, [imitates song] that plays, you know, I think at the beginning of some Heavens Arena episodes, and following Keith’s logic, which I think is sound, Heavens Arena is where Gon and Killua express their friendship.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Through fighting.

Keith: Yeah, through violence. And learning.

Jack: And learning.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Here are some things in the montage that they see: fucked up doll. No, not a very fucked up doll. Fairly normal looking doll.

Keith: Haunted but not fucked up.

Jack: Yes. [Sylvia laughs quietly] Extremely fucked up looking pot.

Keith: Yeah, yes, yes. The pot is freaky, [Dre laughs] but not haunted.

Jack: Wooden, wood-carved statue that will become important later. The serial killer's knife. And then some additional wrapped packages. We just get lots of great images of Gon and Killua as if they have just come out of Macy's in this episode, [Sylvia laughs] except the thing that they are carrying are rare artifacts. They then, in a real 12-year-olds maneuver, try and get these added to the auction catalog.

Keith: And they're just like, "We already printed the catalog."

Jack: "No. We can't do this." I think I asked in a previous episode about how the auction was structured, because I had previously believed that there was, like, the legit Southernbees Auction, [**Keith:** Right.] and then a secret criminal auction, but when we spoke in a previous episode, you seemed to say, "No, it is all just the criminal auction." However, this seems to be...

Keith: Yeah, I was thinking about that again.

Jack: We have good auction and bad auction.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: My read is that the mafia is probably heavily involved in the Southernbees Auction, but it's a different thing.

Keith: My revised explanation, based on our last conversation and watching this, is that

there's, like, a week-long auction season, in which the mafia is heavily involved, and there's a special mafia night.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Yes.

Sylvia: Sure.

Jack: Like a girls' night.

Sylvia: Yeah, the mafia gets in free.

Keith: It's where the mafia community comes together.

Jack: [laughs] Yeah, yeah, mafia gets in free. Uh, Gon has some difficulty. Just a lovely little gag here. Gon can't do math and has never been able to do math.

Keith: Yeah, he can't multiply 500 by 2.5.

Jack: 2.5. Because they are being outbid by a man named— or by someone named Zepile, and I had a fun little throughline with this Zepile character in these episodes, where the first thing that I wrote down was, "Oh, he is probably another Nen user." You know, he's probably someone else out here...

Keith: [knowingly] Hmm, curious.

Jack: ...hunting for bargains. And what is notable—and, you know, we'll talk about it as more of Zepile gets involved—is he is a Nen user but not really in the way that we have encountered Nen users in the past, and it's very—

Keith: Do you remember the name for this that we get from, like, Wing?

Jack: No, what does Wing call them?

Keith: A Nen genius.

Jack: Oh, that's great.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: So, this is someone who doesn't sort of consciously know they are using Nen.

Keith: Right, yeah.

Jack: I think it's—

Keith: In Star Wars, he'd be called a Force Adept.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Sure. A Force genius.

Sylvia: [sarcastic] Yeah, no, sure. Everybody knows that.

Jack: It's notable that that was my first reaction, you know? I have now got— I have been so sort of— I have spent so much time immersed in Nen that—

Keith: Yeah, you're Nen-pilled.

Jack: I'm Nen-pilled. That as soon as I—

Keith: I heard you were maybe gonna say that, I think.

Jack: I was trying to find another—

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: I was trying to find another phrase than Nen-pilled. [Keith laughs] But look, I'm Nen-pilled. [Dre laughs quietly] That my first thought is, you know, “Oh, someone's very powerful and has a capacity? Well, it's gotta be Nen!” And I'm kind of half right.

Keith: Half right. Mostly— maybe even more than half.

Jack: As Gon and Killua try and sell these objects to a dealer, who initially seems to be offering them quite a lot of money for it, the dealer starts to pull some kind of a scam on them, as the dealer realizes that the wood carved statue is in fact, like, a vault. There's

a thing inside it. It's like a sealed box. The dealer tries to get one over on Gon and Killua but is interrupted by Zepile, who shows up. Zepile has a key characteristic, and it's his eyebrows.

Keith: Yep. They were like—

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: He is the most, like, *Phoenix Wright* looking character we've had in so fucking long.

Keith: Yeah, yeah, I wrote *Phoenix Wright* in my thing.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Keith: I love the little battle, the little *Phoenix Wright* battle where we learn about art forgery.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm. [Dre laughs] It's so much fun the way that, like...do you want to, like, take us through it maybe?

Keith: Uh, yeah.

Sylvia: Do you, like, have any specifics of it?

Keith: So, the specifics that I have of is is that it is— it ends up being totally pointless, because the—

Sylvia: Yeah. [Dre laughs]

Keith: So, we've got— they call it a wooden trove, and so it is like a secret cache that rich people would store their treasures in, and...

Jack: To evade taxes.

Keith: To evade taxes. Fun detail.

Jack: Now, I hate to just be banging this drum all the time, but the implication of taxes, you know, there's some sort of state structure that people are paying towards, [laughs quietly] and I would love to know what your taxes are funding in the *Hunter × Hunter* world. Are they funding Trick Tower?

Keith: Well, they're funding giving free air fare to Hunters to go wherever they want.

Jack: To Hunters? [laughs quietly] Yeah. I have no idea. It might be the case. In any case, please continue.

Keith: So, the sort of the clerk at the counter is like, "Ooh, I'm not gonna buy your wood, or I'm not going to buy this statue, it's really not worth very much, but I will buy the wood, because the wood is very rare and old."

Jack: Ooh.

Dre: Ooh.

Keith: And I'll give you— you know, I'll throw in 80,000 jenny for just the wood plus, like, 400,000 for the rest of the stuff that's actually worth something. And he's just going to take it into the back to check the age. And this is where Zepile comes in and says, "No, no!"

Sylvia: Objection!

Keith: "You're going to take it into the back to steal the treasure from the inside! He's giving you a fair price for the doll and whatever the other thing was, but he's trying to trick you on this wooden trove." Explains what a wooden trove is. Then a giant man comes out from the back, [Jack chuckles] does not introduce himself, never introduces himself, and then starts posing all these sort of questions about how could you or couldn't you know that it's a real wooden trove, maybe it's a counterfeit wooden trove, and then Zepile gets to demonstrate all of the ways you could fool an appraiser or an antiques dealer into buying a counterfeit wooden trove and how you might counter those forgeries. And the sub and the dub call everything a different name, but the basics are: you could crack it open and then re-glue it, which is, like, the worst thing that you

could do.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: You could heat it open, like melt the glue, and then replace it, which is the second best thing that you can do. And then I think we learn a little bit later that the third best thing that we can do is, like, make a hole in the side and take it out and replace that. We learn that later, but I'm telling you now. Anyway, none of this makes any sense, because—

Jack: This is all just for Togashi, right?

Keith: This is all just for— Togashi had a week where he really was into art forgery.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: And, you know?

Keith: And so he put it into...

Jack: I think I know why this is here, and I think I know what this is doing.

Sylvia: Yeah, my...well, do you want to go into what you think it's doing before I get into mine? Or...

Jack: Yeah, I think that this is an extended metaphor about counterfeits and about appraising people. You know, what this lets you—

Keith: Oh.

Jack: What this lets Togashi get into is spinning out a big metaphor about reading people [**Keith:** Yeah.] and not only how Zepile and others around Gon read him but how Gon reads others.

Keith: Sure.

Jack: And I think that's what this weird art appraisal plot is doing.

Keith: But the question, for me, is— because Zepile does make that connection later on, when he's talking to Gon and Killua. The question for me is: why does he choose art forgery as the avenue for this metaphor? Like, okay, I want to make a metaphor about, like, reading people. How do I fit that into my story?

Jack: Well, it's a metaphor about— and this is, like, the most surface-level crit here. You know. It's about claiming that something is different than it actually is or, you know, constructing a thing to be different from how it actually is.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: You know, looking inside something that initially appears to be one way and learning that it's another way. I think the other thing this is doing is it's mirroring Nen. I think it's notable that Zepile has these names for the different kinds of methods that he uses, and in a very Mr. Wing style way, he walks through them. It's like, "This is called an Autopsy. This is called an Ostomy."

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: This is called a whatever.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And like, this leaning on the same sort of structured language that Nen masters have used to talk about Nen for this character who we learn is a Nen genius, you know, is someone who sort of possesses Nen ability but doesn't know it and just sort of outputs it subconsciously or, you know, just sends it out into the pieces of art that he makes.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: I think Togashi is drawing a mirror between, you know, artistic practice and Nen.

Keith: Yeah. The reason why this is so funny to me, though, the nuts and bolts of it, is

that fundamentally nothing that the giant introduces to the conversation matters—

Jack: No. [laughs quietly]

Keith: —against that this guy's gonna take it into the back and crack it open. [Jack and Dre laugh] Whether it's a real trove or not, whether the treasure is still in there or not...

Jack: No.

Keith: That's what that guy is about to do. So the whole thing was like a strawman that Zepile sort of falls for and argues against and eventually does argue against it, you know, sort of competently enough. I think the ending thing is like, "Well, what do you do if you're wrong and actually there isn't a treasure in here?" and he says, "I'll become your slave for life."

Sylvia: That was flirty. [Jack laughs quietly] I'm just putting it out there. [Keith laughs] Like, that was flirty.

Jack: Huge man has no idea what to do with this.

Keith: [laughs] He gives up. He just immediately gives up.

Jack: Sort of like, "Well, shit. Okay." [Dre laughs]

Keith: He gives up, and he tells the other guy, "Hey, just give up."

Jack: And then they open this thing up, and...

Keith: [laughs] It's full of jewels!

Jack: It's full of a caricature of treasure.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: It's great. If you—

Sylvia: It's like a drop in *Ghouls 'n Ghosts* or something. Like... [laughs quietly]

Jack: [laughs] It really is.

Keith: Zepile values it at about 5 million U.S. dollars.

Jack: Oh my god. I hadn't done the, like, calculus. It's so funny. You know, it is big I'm playing pirates as a child, I'm like playing pretend with my friends, and there's pirates, and I picture pirate treasure, and it's fucking, it's this.

Keith: Yeah. Normally, you'd be thrilled to get 5 million U.S. dollars, but to Gon and Killua, they're like, "Ah, damn, only 1/200 of what we need."

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: For an opening bid. [Jack chuckles]

Jack: And so then they go and have dinner. They go hang out with Zepile, who reveals himself to be a pretty good judge of character and another entrant into the parade

[**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] of people that Togashi is setting in front of Gon and Killua as pseudo role models, pseudo exploitative figures. [Dre laughs] This is another Mr. Wing. This is another Netero.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: This is another Hisoka. This is another, um...I mean, the show has a very odd opinion about Gon and Killua as a sort of exploitable resource.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And when I say odd opinion, I don't necessary mean that the show is confused about what it's saying or is talking across purposes. I think the show is very regularly interested in how adults exploit these two kids and their world shattering ability. But out of the lot of them, Zepile seems like a pretty good guy.

Keith: Yeah, he says that he doesn't even want to get paid.

Jack: No. The conversation is really fun. We go into one of these sort of, like, "I'll ask a

question, and then you ask a question” conversation structures, and Killua—

Keith: Which immediately— which is Killua’s idea, and then he immediately regrets it.
[laughs quietly] He’s so mad! [Dre laughs]

Jack: Killua is so funny in this scene. There is nobody better to trap in one of these, like, swap conversations, swap questions scenes, because it— you know, we learn quickly that really what Killua wants to do is ask a question and not worry about the rest of the bargain, you know? [laughs quietly]

Keith: Right, yes.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It’s great. And they almost immediately tell Zepile how they found the things using Nen.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And Zepile reacts in the same way that everybody who hears about Nen in *Hunter × Hunter* reacts.

Keith: “Huh, interesting. I believe you.”

Jack: “Huh. Interesting.” We’ve said this before, but either, for such a world shattering secret, people are very chill [Sylvia laughs quietly] about hearing about Nen for the first time, or Zepile already knows about Nen, in which case there are a lot more Nen users than, you know.

[0:30:14]

Keith: Well, there’s— this isn’t even the first time they reveal Nen to a stranger in this episode, because while they’re looking over the Ben’s knife and going over their plan to use Gyo to look and find, you know, Nen-infused artifacts to then buy and resell at a higher price, they’re doing this right in front of the cashier who’s about to sell them the

Ben's knife.

Jack: What if—

Keith: And the cashier just goes like, “Oh, you could sell these, you know, over there.”

Jack: For huge amounts of money. What if you were just at the supermarket and two children came up and spoke the nature of the universe? [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: And it's just like— I think it's just one of those things that's like, it's too complicated to prove that Nen is a secret, so just understand that it's true no matter what, and we're gonna write the show in a way that's easy and not annoying.

Jack: Do people know Hunters are real?

Keith: Yes.

Sylvia: Yes.

Keith: Yes. That's why there's the second Hunter Exam, the secret Hunter Exam, is so that you can become a Pro Hunter and still not know about Nen.

Jack: Yes. In fact—

Dre: Oh, yeah. I mean, that's how— it seems like that's implied it's how most people go about it.

Keith: Yeah. 'Cause Zepile knows about Hunters but seems to not know about Nen, and I'm willing to just believe that Zepile's never heard of Nen but just also is immediately willing to believe in it.

Jack: He says, “There are a couple of Hunters in the antiques community,” which is so funny. We now have the mafia community and the antiques community.

Keith: The antiques community.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Antiques Hunters. Mafia Hunters, that's really what the Shadow Beasts were, they were Mafia Hunters.

Jack: Didn't work out very well for them.

Keith: No, it didn't.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: You know what? Here's really the thing, if I was— if I'm, like, really trying to give the show the favor of, like, figuring out how this sort of interaction goes down. I think Zepile's like, "Well, you proved to me that Nen is real simply by having chosen these items. You're obviously children [**Jack:** Oh, sure.] who have no idea what you're doing, and you picked these four items seemingly at random, and they're all, like, legit and important artifacts, except for my one that I won back from you." Do we want to talk about his last item, or do we want to do more of this conversation first?

Jack: Yeah. Zepile...I mean, I think this is sort of the other—

Sylvia: Yeah, I think this...

Jack: The last big bit before we move into the, like...

Keith: Yeah, this is Killua's focus.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Killua wants to know, like, "Why didn't you try to get the treasure? Why did you try to get what you got? Did you pull one over on us?"

Jack: And what he got is the fucked up creepy vase.

Keith: Right.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And it turns out that what Zepile is doing is a bit like the Audrey Hepburn movie

How to Steal a Million. Zepile used to be a counterfeiter and has sort of put this counterfeit item into the world and has a very low view of his own counterfeiting. It's not terribly clear to me whether he has a low view of it because he now believes it's morally wrong—you know, he's gone straight—or whether he thinks it was shoddy workmanship, and it might be a combination of the two. [cross] But he is now—

Keith: [cross] I always thought that that was him being overly humble, is how I read it.

Sylvia: Yeah. Especially with the way Gon reacts to it too, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Because he says, "It made me happy that this piece of junk actually caught your eye." I feel like he believes that, but I don't— it doesn't feel like it's true, which is why Gon has his, like, impassioned little speech about it.

Jack: Yeah, because Gon...you know, Gon stands up and is basically like, "Don't you talk about, you know, your own art like that, buddy! You know, you've got a real capability."

Keith: It's so good that it glows.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: You know.

Keith: It glows with magic.

Sylvia: Kid's got a point.

Jack: And it's so interesting here. You know, we've seen the box that Ging sent that had Nen, you know, written on it. We've seen the computer, Nen coming out of the computer that sucks you in. [Sylvia and Dre laugh] We've seen Wing's promise things. And it was really kind of touching to realize that the way the metaphysics works is that even

someone who doesn't know they're doing it can sort of imbue an object with such value in their care and attention to it that objects in the world sort of accrue Nen. You know, like, well-loved objects or well taken care of objects. You know, there is a spirit contained within those objects that the person isn't aware of, you know, putting in there. And I think in as many words, this is what Gon is sort of picking up on, you know, in saying...you know, you have a connection to the art you make, and you have a capability, and that is valuable. He gives a real little pep talk to Zepile.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And Zepile seems gen— well, Zepile seems, first, genuinely touched, and then, you know, as an art appraiser, and Togashi, you know, spilling out this metaphor, delivers just an absolute skewering, pinpoint skewering [**Keith:** Yeah.] of Gon's strength and weakness. This is Gon's trick, Gon's mistake.

Keith: May I read this thing?

Jack: Yes.

Keith: It's a little long.

Jack: No, I think this is...this is a real inflection point.

Keith: It's very important. I think this is one of the most important things in the whole set of episodes here. "My eyes didn't deceive me. When you appraise things long enough, you also come to be a judge of character. I look at sellers and buyers too, not just merchandise. It's a lot harder to appraise humans than antiques. When I saw you, I knew right away I wanted to work with you." And then there's a little bit of a...I think there's a little bit of a break, and then it switches to a sort of internal dialogue, when they agree that they also want to work with him. He says, "I think I get it now, why this kid intrigued me. He doesn't care about right or wrong. When I admitted to making forgeries and when that trader gave me a hard time, I didn't see a hint of disapproval or greed on his face, but what I did see was pure curiosity. If something impressed him, he doesn't start judging whether it's good or bad, which means he's dangerous," and in the

dub, it says, “which means he’s walking a fine line.”

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: “Someone who can never be truly appraised.”

Sylvia: This is real important, I think, this...

Keith: I think it’s very important. Sylvi, this was what you had— you had this in the doc, I saw.

Sylvia: Yeah. This is, like...for the beginning of this, this was, like, the only note I really had, was like, this quote from Zepile being, like, I think, genuinely, a very good read on Gon and something we should be keeping in mind, like, going forward, the whole...it doesn't necessary, like...the morality of things doesn't necessary factor in all the time. It’s just what catches his interest is just something he will pursue no matter what.

Keith: Although there’s another side to this coin that they show later. They also are using a coin metaphor for the whole next two episodes.

Sylvia: Oh, yeah.

Keith: They sort of— they kind of— they do a coin metaphor with, uh...I think, anyway. They're using a coin—

Sylvia: Mm-hmm?

Keith: The Troupe starts using a coin to decide things, like heads to do one and tails to do another, because they can't [Sylvia: Yeah.] get into a fight, so they have to decide things randomly. And I think that they're saying, like, Gon and Killua are two sides of a coin, and like, Gon is sort of aware of this dynamic in a way that maybe Killua isn't, and then also I think that they put that Zepile thing about Gon on one side of a coin, and then on the other side of the coin is some stuff later from the kidnapping that we'll get to. So, if I don't bring it up, that's my fault, but I'll get to it when we get there.

Sylvia: Yeah. I think I know what you're talking about.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It's great.

Keith: And then they get a call about the Spiders. The money that they sold the Hunter License for came through, and Leorio calls and is like, "Hey, there's some Spiders."
Episode over. [Jack chuckles]

Sylvia: Episode over and also...do we see in this episode how he is watching that stuff, or is that the next episode?

Keith: It was like, uh...was it a cell phone camera?

Sylvia: He had, like, a livestream going. [Dre laughs]

Keith: Yeah, he had, like, a livestream. [laughs]

Sylvia: That's more just what I mean.

Keith: Okay, yeah. And it doesn't quite match up with who they've got there watching them, once we see them.

Sylvia: No, it doesn't. It's very— it's interesting.

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: Before we move onto the next episode, I want to go back to one of Dre's notes here.

Keith: Oh, yeah.

Jack: Very early on in this episode, we learned that—you know, as we've known for a long time and as I think anybody who's seen five minutes of him on screen would be able to tell you—Leorio is a little behind, in terms of his Nen knowledge.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Leorio doesn't know what, um...and I'm also behind in my Nen knowledge, because I can't remember the name of it. He doesn't know how to do the eye trick, the seeing.

Keith: Gyo.

Dre: Gyo?

Jack: Gyo?

Dre: Okay.

Jack: Yeah. He doesn't know Gyo. And yeah, Dre, you have a question about, like, sort of ranking Hunters, right?

Dre: Yeah, so like, if you compare Leorio to most normal people, he is like a monster compared to them.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: But most of the other...I would say— mm. You tell me if this is hyperbole, but I feel like of almost all the other Pro Hunters we have seen, Leorio is like a baby compared to them.

Keith: Yes. Yeah.

Jack: I would agree, yes.

Sylvia: Yeah. I think the only comparison we've got is we got, like, a split second of Pockle struggling with Nen.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: Oh, we did. [laughs quietly]

Keith: I think that we could— I think that, like, I always go back to *Dragon Ball* when I'm thinking of, like, how strong are characters in other shows, 'cause it...

Sylvia: Power scaling.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: We can use the word. It's not a dirty word.

Keith: Well, 'cause I'm like...

Jack: Keith is power-scale-pilled.

Keith: I'm power scaling. I feel like Leorio, on a year where the turtle crew are not showing up to a world tournament, I think that Leorio could, like, maybe compete in the semifinals.

Dre: Do you think Leorio could beat up Mr. Satan?

Keith: Yes. Definitely.

Dre: I agree.

Sylvia: Yeah, absolutely.

Dre: Okay, anyway. My main question was: do we think that most Pro Hunters are more like Leorio or are they more like all these other freaks that we see?

Keith: Freaks.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Freaks. Freaks.

Keith: Freaks.

Jack: The...you know, the Hunters are...I mean, I understand that there are, like, wrestling jobber, like, types. [Sylvia laughs quietly] But the impression that I always have with the Hunters is, you know, when you watch pro wrestling, especially at large scale, you know, storyline driven pro wrestling, you immerse yourself— you sort of willingly

suspend your disbelief and enter into a world where every single person in it could punch your head off, you know?

Keith: Sure.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: It's like, everybody here is unbelievably strong, and also this guy's like a weird cultist. This guy's like a hyper-American guy. [Sylvia laughs] This guy has his brother, and they fight each other all the time. This guy occasionally just, you know, hits people with baseball bats, et cetera. That's the entire world.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And there is something really funny to me about *Hunter × Hunter*, where it's like, there are normal people in the world, but there are also this sort of, like, hyper-elite class of weirdos with an astonishing level of power that are just bebopping around all the time, you know, out there. I think it is funnier to me if the majority of the Hunters are just, like, overpowered freaks. [quiet laughter] They're like MMO player characters, you know? When you go into Limsa or whatever in Final Fantasy, and there's just, like, Greg who runs the bar, and then there's, like, the lady in the market, and then there's like the little NPCs in the bar who are sitting around and talking, and then there's, like, 4000 Warriors of Light, [laughs quietly] the most powerful people in the world.

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Casting spells, putting on plays, et cetera.

Sylvia: Everybody is, like...everybody is main character level or close to it, you know?

Dre: [laughs] Yeah.

Sylvia: It is the— we're all level 80 in the fucking level 20 zone.

Jack: Yeah, what if everybody in the Masons was a god? [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Is my new impression of what a Hunter is. [Keith and Dre laugh]

Keith: And it does make sense. Like, 'cause there's no one that we get a better look at how their time in the Hunter Exam goes than Gon, Killua, Kurapika, and Leorio, but we see that Leorio really wouldn't have made it if it wasn't for who he lashed himself to at the very beginning.

Jack: Oh, no, he'd be dead four or five times.

Keith: He has good instincts, and he has good luck, and that's what helped, and that's what helped him—

Jack: And he's a good doctor.

Keith: And he is a good doctor.

Jack: Against, you know.

Keith: And the sort of tertiary skills are what help him make it. I think he probably wouldn't have died, 'cause I think that he probably would have given up before he died. Like, we do know...

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Even without Gon and Kurapika, he would have overheard that person saying that the bus was a trap, even though he was gonna go the wrong way, and so I think he maybe could have gotten most of the way to the Hunter Exam.

Jack: This is not the first time we have come back to "Could Leorio..." you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Dre: For sure. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: “Could Leorio have made it through the Hunter Exam?”

Keith: I just think he would have flamed out. I think he...

Jack: I think it's compelling, the more weirdos we see.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: To me, Leorio gets by because he has just a sort of intrinsic “dudes rock” field that... [Keith laughs]

Dre: Sure.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: It's sort of like Nen. It like, when you get closer to him, you're just like, “Oh, well, shit, this guy's chill as hell,” and then you don't kill him.

Jack: Yeah, you've written down here, “This is now a Leorio respect zone.”

Sylvia: Yeah, I love that guy. I'd hang.

Jack: You want to talk a little bit about your formatting here?

Sylvia: Oh, yeah. So, it's...

Jack: Because you haven't just typed this into the Google Doc.

Sylvia: No, I changed the font a little, just to be a little more block font, and it's bolded, and I've put sparkles around it, and it's pink.

Dre: This is very Geocities core, to me.

Sylvia: That's what I was going for. Thank you.

Jack: Oh my god.

Sylvia: It's on my— it's my Gaia Online profile.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Live your life.

Keith: It's Leorio, so it's Guy Online. [Jack laughs]

Sylvia: Incredible. Well done.

Jack: And then immediately below it, you've written your next note, the full beginning and end of which is just the words, "Benz knife." [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: B-E-N-Z.

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Yes. Okay.

Sylvia: With my Benz knife. It's a bar.

Jack: [laughs quietly] The Hunterpedia here is Shizuku, as Gon and Killua wonder about Blinky and where you go when you get sucked into the vacuum cleaner.

Sylvia: Oh my god.

Keith: No one knows.

Jack: This is another good example of the Hunterpedia as sort of being, like, outside text [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] in a fun way. They have not met Shizuku in full knowledge of who she is. You know, they met her at the arm wrestling. They don't know anything about Blinky, but here they are, outside of the story, you know, talking about Blinky. [Dre laughs] Also, Gon and Killua have a little tadpole in a tank next to them.

Keith: Oh.

Jack: And I mentioned this tadpole in the last stream. Last stream. Oh my god. [Sylvia laughs] I mentioned this tadpole in the last recording, in the ones where Gon and Killua were wearing brownface because they'd got a tan over the summer.

Keith: Right.

Jack: And I went back to check. This tadpole is growing up.

Sylvia: Aw.

Dre: Oh.

Jack: He, at the end of episode 48, has [**Sylvia:** Aw.] tiny little, you know, little tadpole putative legs, one set of them.

Keith: What do you think happens when he hatches or when he...?

Jack: We're gonna come back to this. Don't worry.

Dre: Oh, okay. I really thought we were just gonna talk about Gon's Blinky face that he made.

Sylvia: I was going to talk about Gon's Blinky face.

Keith: Oh, that was so funny.

Dre: Not blinky as in he's blinking, but when Gon makes his face look like Blinky the vacuum cleaner.

Jack: I find Blinky quite frightening.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Oh, yeah. It's fucked up.

Keith: I like Blinky's voice. Blinky's got, like, a fun cute voice.

Jack: I don't like Blinky's voice. I find—

Keith: [imitates Blinky] [laughs]

Sylvia: Oh.

Dre: Oh, that's good.

Jack: You know how you describe—

Dre: Any sound.

Jack: Yeah. Any sound.

Keith: He sounds kind of like Toad from Mario 64. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: He/him Blinky?

Keith: I don't know. I just...that's just what I went with.

Jack: I've always thought she/her Blinky, [Dre: Oh.] as like a team with Shizuku.

Keith: Hmm.

Sylvia: Hmm.

Dre: Hmm.

Keith: Girl team.

Jack: [sarcastic] Listen, the vacuum cleaner is a boy or a girl. [laughs]

Sylvia: No, absolutely.

Jack: We're gonna hash this out. Okay, episode—

Sylvia: It's a boy, 'cause it'd be misogynist to make the vacuum cleaner a girl. [Jack, Dre, and Sylvia laugh]

Jack: Like that would stop Togashi.

Sylvia: Oh, I know.

Episode 49 [0:47:26]

Jack: Episode 49 begins. Now, you might have thought, “Oh, there’s gonna be some business about finding the two Phantom Troupe members,” which are Machi and Nobunaga. Nope. They find them straightaway.

Keith: Find them straightaway. Just skip it.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: They follow up on the tip, and they get there. This is Togashi’s pacing strikes once again. Yoshihiro Togashi, would you like to spend a little time as our heroes, you know, ascertain the location of the most dangerous foes yet? No, not really.

Sylvia: They googled it.

Jack: I would instead like to spend 25 minutes on art appraisal. Okay!

Keith: And then they’re just sitting at the mall waiting.

Dre: Uh huh.

Sylvia: That’s— hold on. Him spending 25 minutes on art appraisal is the secret sauce of this show.

Jack: It is. [Keith and Dre laugh]

Sylvia: I need to say that really— that’s important to me.

Dre: Yeah, that’s the secret collection of herbs and spices right there.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: It’s like when you deglaze a sauce, you know? And like, the bits on the bottom of the pan come up? [Jack laughs]

Keith: Yeah. Ooh, the fond.

Dre: Oh.

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah, yeah. The art appraisal type beat. That's the fond, you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Absolutely. And straightaway, we get a really cool side of...a cool side of Killua emerges, as Killua, you know, becomes very professional very quickly. [Sylvia laughs quietly]

Dre: While he also be sippy on a milkshake, though.

Jack: While he also be sippy on a milkshake.

Sylvia: [laughs fondly] He do! [Dre laughs]

Keith: He loves candy, loves sweets. Got a sweet tooth.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: He loves candy and sweets. He is also a child assassin.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And not just from any assassin family, from the prestigious Zoldyck family of assassins. Killua straightaway says, "We cannot do this," you know?

Keith: Right.

Jack: We can't kill these people. We are not going to be able to meaningfully collect on this bounty, so we are going to have to start making, you know, specific new plans. These two are members of the Phantom Troupe, and we learn that his dad Silva killed a Spider a while back.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: This makes me think this is possibly the empty seat that Hisoka filled, although

[Keith: Mm.] he talks about it being a couple of years ago, and we don't quite know what the turnover on the Phantom Troupe is.

Keith: I think that Hisoka said he's been in the Troupe for three years, I thought he said.

Jack: Oh, so it probably is Hisoka's seat. Four. Right? What is Hisoka's seat?

Sylvia: Well, didn't they also mention that Shizuku's newer than some other members, or am I misremembering?

Keith: Shizuku is also new, yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Sylvia: Yeah. So there's a couple people it could have been, I think.

Keith: The quote here is, "A while back, my dad killed a Spider for a job. He doesn't complain much, but he said it wasn't worth the price, and that is the highest compliment he gives a target. He even got the lot of us together and told us we should steer clear of the Phantom Troupe."

Jack: A little family meeting.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: He says, "Imagine if the people sitting at that table were both Hisokas." This is especially funny, because Killua does not know Hisoka is a member of the Phantom Troupe. We get a cute little image of the two Hisokas sitting at the table. One of them is looking lovingly at the other, which is, like, why I will always be here for Hisoka as extremely gross nightmare character. Togashi's character writing for him is so funny every time, in that, like, Hisoka is such a particular weirdo [Sylvia laughs quietly] that even in, like, a dream imagining, he is hitting on himself.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yep.

Jack: He's like, you know, "I am Hisoka," which is great. Nobunaga and Machi realize that they are being observed and are sort of deliberately acting as bait for a trap. They are trying to draw out their observer, who at first they think is the chain wielder, but then they can sort of sense. Everybody is suppressing their Nen deliberately, and they can sort of sense that there are people out there, and multiple people, but they don't know how many, so they write off quite quickly that this is the chain user, because the chain user works alone. And during all this time, I am— we are now describing Kurapika as the most powerful man alive.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And how long has this been the case? Has this always been the case, and it's just been superpowered once he learned Nen?

Sylvia: Uh...

Jack: Or has Kurapika just been this good the whole time?

Dre: No.

Keith: No.

Sylvia: No.

Dre: I think it is specifically when Kurapika forged the Nen contract.

Sylvia: I think it's—

Dre: Because Kurapika's power is the power of his will and his desire for revenge.

Sylvia: I think it's specifically when Emperor Time— it's Emperor Time, right? Is that what it's called?

Dre: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Keith: It's called Emperor Time, yeah.

Dre: Emperor Time!

Sylvia: Yeah. When that's active, I would say, yes, Kurapika might be the strongest person on the planet.

Keith: I think you're both right. I think that Emperor Time gives Kurapika a huge potential to be dangerous in general, and then his Nen contracts make him extremely superpowered versus specifically the Spiders. The combination of those things and the situation that they're in is sort of exponentially create the Kurapika that's able to easily defeat Uvogin, [**Sylvia:** Mm.] who is so so so so so so strong, who one-shots...he kills—

Jack: 600 mafiosos?

Keith: He kills nine Shadow Beasts [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] in, like, seven punches. [laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Off screen. Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It's...it's a really good feeling, hearing the Phantom Troupe talk about, you know, Kurapika in this way. We have spent so much time with him in the show up to this point, and he has now been removed sort of from the main— we had some pretty Kurapika-heavy episodes, you know, at the beginning half of this, but Kurapika has become a final boss, you know?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: At this point.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: And he's become a final boss for the villains. And Togashi wants to have his cake and eat it and is doing it really successfully in playing the audience's loyalty towards

Kurapika, you know, that sense of like, “It’s my boy. Kurapika can do this. He’s great,” and also, increasingly, playing the Phantom Troupe as the protagonists.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Where we are excited and terrified to see, you know, them get hunted by Kurapika in this way.

Keith: It feels so weird when we get into the Phantom Troupe’s lair and the show is giving us the angle of “the Phantom Troupe, who we know, have caught these two stranger kids.” [laughs]

Jack: Yes. Yes.

Keith: And it’s like, we know that those stranger kids are Gon and Killua, but the show is really playing it like...you know, we jump into Killua’s head, and we get some stuff, like, about, “Oh, I hope they don’t scan me again, ‘cause I figured out that the chain user is Kurapika,” but it’s so funny the way that they really...the framing in the show really kind of swallows the perspective of the Phantom Troupe, and we sort of become them looking at these kids like, “What the fuck do we do with these fucking kids?” [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: It demands such confidence from everybody working on this to do this. You know, in order for this move to work—and it works so well—you know, the shot choices, the storyboarding team, you know, people who are deciding where the camera is placed and the writers and Togashi are having to move with such, like, steadfast confidence in their perspective choice, you know? In saying, “We’re with these people, and we’re gonna make them compelling, and we’re going to make them charming. We’re going to make their concerns realistic and easy for you as an audience to buy into, and in situations where you can’t buy into them, you know, tough. You’re gonna have to deal with it.”

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: This is the camera perspective. You know, I keep thinking, Keith, about when you

said: as the camera follows the Phantom Troupe up to the sky in that balloon, you are never coming back from that moment.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: You know, we have demonstrated that we can make a separation that great between our sort of A team of protagonists and B team of protagonists, the murderers. And it's true. It means that we have these...first these scenes with Machi and Nobunaga. We get some great character writing on Nobunaga in these episodes.
[Sylvia sighs]

Keith: Lots of tension at this table. It is so good.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: 'Cause we had sort of— previously, here's what we had known about Nobunaga. He got shrunk into the car, and he hated it.

Keith: Yeah. Little bit of comic relief. He got into a fight with Franklin when they were—

Jack: He bickers with Feitan and Franklin.

Keith: Yeah. 'Cause they were late. They were all mad that they were late. I can't remember if Uvo was with them at the time, but we get a little bit more perspective on, like, Nobunaga doesn't like to be late, because Uvo gets mad at him when he's late.

Jack: Yes. And we just, we get a lot of dialogue from Nobunaga. His performance is really great, and we get to hear him, at the same time as Killua is talking through the practicalities of, you know, being an assassin. You know, Killua decides we're going to split up. We're going to tail them.

Keith: Yeah. We're going to run. If they see us, we are going to run.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Do not let them engage with us.

Keith: And then we immediately get to cut to them being like, “We know that we’re being watched, but we can’t really sense them, but we’re being vague on purpose.”

Jack: Do we think Uvo’s dead? Maybe we think Uvo’s dead.

Keith: Yeah, Jack, do you want to talk about the tension there between Machi and Nobunaga and their sort of difference of opinion on this?

Jack: Well, as far as I can under— I’m not sure that I get what you’re talking about.

Keith: Oh, okay. There’s two things. There’s two sort of fulcrums here. The first thing is: Nobunaga really doesn’t want Uvugin to be dead, and Machi is like, “I’m pretty sure that he is.”

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: And then the other thing is: Nobunaga’s like, “I cannot wait to get revenge on the chain user,” and Machi says, “The boss said to bring him in, and I think he wants to recruit the chain user.” And this causes so much tension between them that the sort of, the tension between them physically crushes a can of soda that is on the table between them.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: It’s a fake Heineken.

Keith: It’s a fake Heineken.

Jack: It is fake Heineken. It’s what we saw Uvo—RIP—drinking a lot in the last episode.

Sylvia: Yeah. Mm.

Jack: Yes, and we’ll get into, I think...we’ll get into Nobunaga and Uvo in the next episode, but it is really interesting...I didn’t pick up exactly what they were putting down in this moment until I watched the next episode. Uvo’s— oh, sorry, “Uvo.” Nobunaga’s

desperate sort of “I don't think he's dead” and “This would suck if we had to recruit the chain user.”

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Because this kind of— this blossoms into a really great really sort of touching moment in 50.

Keith: Mm.

Jack: They're also bickering about Machi's hunches. We alluded to this a little earlier in the episode. Machi is sort of, like, “I don't think we're being pursued by the chain user, but I think we are being pursued by someone who has a connection to the chain user.” And it's so interesting when a character makes exactly the right guess and doesn't have quite the language. [Dre laughs]

Keith: Ah.

Jack: Doesn't have quite the pieces to pull it together.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: It reminds me of...well, I guess it reminds me of two— the first thing that it reminds me of is, like, sort of a *Twin Peaks* sort of thing, like going off of hunches and stuff and sort of having— like, as a writer, [Sylvia laughs] you have the power to make your characters know things for no reason, and then when you then have them say out loud, “I know this for no reason,” and then play it off as something weird and mystical.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: The other thing is *Disco Elysium*, because a lot of *Disco Elysium* works that way.

Sylvia: Mm.

Keith: Of like, your main character sort of, like, getting senses of the world for no reason. Is it supernatural? Is it just a lucky guess? Is it that he has amnesia, and he just already knew, and he's just remembering something [**Jack:** Yes.] that he doesn't know that he knew?

Jack: Yeah. The other thing that, you know...I was trying to figure out what Nen power Machi is using here, and as much as I don't want to just be like...I suppose what I'm thinking is: how is she doing this? You know, what is—

Keith: Because we know her main Nen power.

Jack: But her main Nen power is threads, and that is what I kind of came back to, is that, like, whether she is consciously doing it or not, [**Keith:** Right.] Machi is connected to all the people around her, and this kind of almost invisible, you know, thin connection with all the people around her generates these hunches, and—

[1:00:06]

Keith: This is a very meta Nen power.

Jack: It's Demon World Theory. [Keith, Dre, and Jack laugh]

Sylvia: This...yeah.

Jack: I don't actually think it's Demon World Theory.

Keith: This is Jack's famous Demon World Theory. Yeah.

Jack: But it's...well, it's interesting. We learn later that sort of a lynchpin of the back of this episode is the Nen power of another Phantom Troupe member. Pakunoda? Pakunada?

Keith: Pakunoda.

Sylvia: Pakunoda, yeah.

Jack: Who can sort of verify whether something is true by reading the memories of people she touches. We haven't had this power confirmed, but that seems to be the case.

Keith: Yeah, that's Killua's sort of guess on how it works.

Jack: My suspicion is that it is something like that. What's interesting is that the Phantom Troupe use this as a resource. You know, they ask multiple times Pakunoda to, like, check things and verify them. And Machi, with a sort of...like, a slight tone of resentment in her voice, at one point, says, "If Pakunoda says it, it must be true." You know, like, oh, that information must be right. And you can tell that she believes that that's the case, but there's a kind of, like, well, we have the— you know, what good are my hunches in this world where we have this other member of the Phantom Troupe who can sort of verify things like this? And so I wonder if it is just another little wire in the Phantom Troupe of tension. You know, we have one woman who is operating on these hunches that even she can't really explain and doesn't dovetail perfectly with her Nen powers, and at the same time, the Troupe, including the hunch woman, [Sylvia and Dre laugh] is relying heavily on, you know, the direct magical Nen powers of this memory reader. So, I think, you know, it plays into the tension of this table, right, when Machi says, "I kind of have a hunch about this," and Nobunaga says, "Oh, you always have hunches," but they sort of are also right a lot of the time.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Really interesting. Yeah, not only do they break the fake Heineken, but Gon and Killua and Leorio all feel the kind of malevolent burst of Nen.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And it's great. This is some real anime shit, is Nen users in separate buildings, you know, without really knowing that the others are there, all feeling the consequences of each other's emotions. You know, it's great.

Keith: And there's a danger there too, because if they're not careful, then they're gonna

give themselves up by, like, jumping, you know?

Jack: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Because they have to strike a balance between sort of suppressing their Nen but not using Zetsu, which they explain to Leorio is like, they'd be able to feel our absence. [laughs quietly] If we used Zetsu, they'd be able to tell someone with Nen just turned off their Nen.

Jack: Yes, they do this. This is a plot point in one of the Jason Bourne movies.

Keith: Is it really?

Jack: With, like, phones that have been turned off. Yes.

Keith: What does being turned off mean in Jason Bourne movies?

Jack: Uh, telephones. They're looking for mobile phones that haven't rung or mobile phones that haven't...

Keith: Oh, so they break their phone.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Got it.

Jack: The spies are like, "Ah, there's a vacuum there, an absence." Time for a quick aside.

Dre: Oh?

Jack: With the chain user, Kurapika.

Sylvia: Oh, this— I fucking— this scene ruled.

Dre: Oh yeah.

Jack: A brief aside, as Chrollo learns about Miss Neon and that the chain user is one of

her bodyguards.

Sylvia: Oh my god, yeah.

Jack: This is important, I think. Chrollo, with a sort of— Chrollo has had—

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I keep saying this. About six lines of dialogue so far, and they've all been bangers. So when Chrollo says, "Miss Neon is how Nostrade gets all his success, huh?" and Shalnark's sort of like, "Yep, boss."

Sylvia: [voice] Yeah, that's right, boss.

Jack: Yeah, that's right. [Dre laughs] It's consequential. Okay.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: There's one more thing, before we cut away to Shalnark and Chrollo, is that this is the first appearance of the coin. They do a heads or tails on whether if they find whoever's tailing them, if they're going to kill them or bring them to the boss. And we don't know whether webs is heads or tails.

Jack: No, it's really funny.

Keith: But we do get a glimpse of the web.

Jack: They have a custom coin.

Keith: They reveal it later. They reveal it next— in the next episode, they flip a coin again, and they show one or the other [Dre chuckles] and then say, "Oh, it's heads," which reveals which one it was.

Jack: Do you think that they made a lot of these? Do you think that they...

Keith: I think they've all got to have a couple of these coins.

Sylvia: I think it's one per member.

Keith: I bet they—

Dre: Yeah, I think it's one per.

Jack: So, do you think that the sort of, like, the sort of workshop that they went to gave them, like, a batch order, and they got 20, in case people would lose them? Or do you think that they paid extra for "I just need 13."

Keith: I think, if I'm going to— if I can— if I can sort of psychoanalyze the Phantom Troupe a little bit, they've very got some members that are kind of messes, and I think that they need ready available extras on hand.

Jack: Yeah. So they got, like— Chrollo got 50 or something.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Shalnark probably got 50. [laughs quietly] I think this is sort of like a...

Keith: How many times do you think Shizuku has lost her coin?

Dre: Aw.

Sylvia: Oh my god. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Well, we already know that she can't remember anything, so.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah. I love her.

Jack: That was creepy.

Dre: She's great.

Jack: I don't think we've learned that yet.

Keith: It's creepy. We haven't learned that yet, no. We haven't. [laughs quietly]

Jack: Really creepy. Okay. Here's the news. Melody and Basho, wearing simple disguises, are going to take Neon back home, because the auction has been canceled, except as soon as Neon leaves, it hasn't actually been canceled.

Keith: Well, the mafia community needs to demonstrate that they will not allow anyone to intimidate them.

Sylvia: They won't negotiate with terrorists.

Jack: It's so funny. We want to do the auction, guys. Guys, we wanted to do the auction, but they killed 1000 of us, but we got— what mafia? Who is still alive?

Keith: Can I— before—

Sylvia: They sent proxies.

Keith: So, the next thing that gets revealed. Can I do this reveal? Because I have a button to press for it.

Sylvia: Oh, please!

Jack: Wait, no, wait. Okay. Before you hit it.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: The dons...I said "don" like I say "Gon", because I read D-O-N...

Keith: The Ten Gons.

Sylvia: Don Freecss.

Jack: The dons are going to try and get the goods back, because they have learned that all of the Shadow Beasts are dead, and in response to this, they have decided to— they're like, "Well, look. Our little experiment of 'get me 10 freaks' did not work, and instead..." [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: With the Shadow Beasts destroyed, the Ten Dons are hiring professionals to handle the Troupe.

[clip of “Family of Assassins” begins playing]

Sylvia: [cross] I literally, when this happened, I went, “YEAH!” Like, I lost my shit.

Jack: [cross] It’s so good.

[music ends]

Keith: Yeah. It was great.

Jack: It’s so good, ‘cause we haven’t heard their theme for a long time.

Sylvia: By god, that’s Silva Zoldyck’s music. [Dre laughs]

Jack: It’s great.

Keith: And the fucking, the image that they pair this with, I’m just gonna share it.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: The image of Silva that they have.

Dre: Oh, god, it’s so good.

Keith: It’s just sort of, like, sort of fades in from this blurry image to a closeup of his eyes looking like an absolute— the absolute murderer that he is. They use this shot a few times with other characters too, which is great.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah. This hyper-closeup on the eyes.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It’s wonderful, because god damnit, Togashi is doing it again, because now I’m

like, “Ah, my guys, Silva and Zeno Zoldyck.” Zeno?

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: The two worst men in the show so far.

Keith: Right, that’s the guy that collects Ben’s knives, right? [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: He collects Ben’s knives. He has one kill a day. He is the abusive father of our protagonist, and yet, because—

Keith: He has a pet dog that he loves.

Jack: He has a pet dog. [Sylvia laughs]

Dre: That’s true.

Jack: And because of the way that Togashi will make anybody a protagonist, given the, you know, slightest inkling, [Keith laughs] so the promise of Silva Zoldyck and Silva and Zeno Zoldyck showing up, I’m like, “Yeah, okay, get these guys involved.” I think, mm...I can’t stand Illumi. I think Illumi’s a real piece of shit.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And the show would have to do a lot of work to make me feel this way about Illumi.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And I can’t stand Hisoka, and I think Hisoka’s a real piece of shit. When we get

POV stuff from Hisoka, it is exclusively malevolent. I don't think...I don't think we'll have protagonist Hisoka, or if we do...uh, we had a little bit of protagonist Hisoka versus Kastro, and it ruled, so.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: But yeah.

Sylvia: I just want to say: do you think that Silva Zoldyck has, like, an Instagram where he posts pictures of his dog and his Ben's knives? [Jack laughs]

Dre: Yes.

Keith: [laughs] Well, they have a public— these are public figures.

Dre: Well, it's a Facebook. It's not an Instagram.

Sylvia: Okay.

Keith: Silva Zoldyck is a public figure.

Sylvia: That's what I'm saying.

Keith: He's, like, one of the most— he's like, um...

Jack: He's like what if—

Keith: I mean, all of the mass murderers in American politics, they all have Instagram accounts.

Sylvia: That's what I'm saying.

Dre: That's true.

Jack: They do.

Keith: So why not the mass murderer in charge of Kukuroo Mountain?

Sylvia: He's posting playlists like Obama.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Yes.

Keith: He's posting year end reading lists.

Sylvia: Ugh.

Jack: It really is like what if George Clooney was a murderer, just a physical murderer.

Keith: Do you think Silva Zoldyck is also listening to Boygenius? [Jack and Sylvia laugh]

Dre: Mm.

Jack: No, no, Silva Zoldyck is listening to...Silva is such a weird character.

Sylvia: [voice] That Julian has such a beautiful voice. [Keith and Jack laugh]

Keith: I'm not wrong, right? Boygenius was on one of Obama's lists, I'm pretty sure.

Sylvia: Yes, absolutely was.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: Yes. And then it disappeared the next year, after Lucy Dacus quote tweeted it saying something like, "Take our music off your list, you war criminal."

Keith: Great. Good for them.

Jack: Which is, you know.

Sylvia: She's cool.

Jack: What was I gonna say? Silva is such a weird character. The most we've seen of Silva is that deeply uncomfortable, really funny conversation he had with Killua, [Keith:

Mm-hmm.] just before Killua left, which was like the—

Dre: About the power of friendship? [laughs]

Jack: The power of friendship.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: The dad and son, like, [imitating] “Look son, I feel like we haven’t—”

Keith: “Hey, make me a promise, Killua: never betray your friends.”

Jack: It was really funny. And of course, it’s not just— the cool thing happening here isn’t just that the Zoldyck assassins are arriving, which should have been the mafia’s first decision.

Sylvia: You know, how did they know that the Phantom Troupe were coming, you know?

Jack: Everybody knows the Phantom Troupe is real.

Sylvia: Well, yeah.

Jack: So if you’re the mafia, you just... [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: If they operate— listen, not to— I’m just saying. If you operated under the assumption the Phantom Troupe are going to show up to everything, you’re not going to be able to make a lot of money. You know what I mean?

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: That’s true, and they are mortal. There are only 13 of them.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: You just need to, you know.

Sylvia: Also, rare that they’re all together.

Jack: And their boss doesn't even—

Sylvia: Established in the first episode they show up that it's been, like, three years since they've grouped up.

Jack: Yeah. Their boss doesn't do anything. He just sits and reads his book. You know, it's easy.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: It's fine. Just sit there and look pretty, sweetheart. It's all good. [Jack and Sylvia laugh]

Jack: The punchline to this scene is what Nostrade asks Kurapika to do, which is join the Zoldyck assassin team. Great.

Keith: Great.

Sylvia: Yeah, fucking incredible.

Jack: I love it. You know, I have a good time doing light analysis of the show, the way the show is working. Sometimes it's fun to just stand up in the stands and cheer when they do a cool thing. [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah! [Dre laughs]

Jack: Yeah, you know?

Keith: Hey, sometimes it's just an ace serve.

Jack: Yeah, exactly. It's exciting to me when the character we love, who is now the most powerful man on the planet, has to team up with the two patriarchs of the assassin family to...

Keith: Yeah, one of the three characters that they've shown that is, like, definitely despicable.

Jack: Yeah. It's great.

Keith: Like, they've shown being despicable.

Jack: It's also, you know, weaving further the whole "there is a massive cost to revenge." You know, not just in the sense that you're going to need to join forces with your enemies to exact the revenge, but a sort of, like, conflation of the two ways of killing, right? You know, by saying we are going to entwine Kurapika with the violence of the Zoldyck family.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: You know, Togashi—

Keith: Or by implying maybe there's only one way of killing.

Jack: Yeah, Togashi is drawing, you know, a line between the revenge, sort of the pure revenge of Kurapika, and the assassins, and then is going to, you know, inevitably problematize that.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And then, you know, as if he has suddenly remembered that he needs to spend 20 minutes in the previous episode talking about art appraisal and that's going to be a lot of illustration, we cut away from this. [laughs quietly] We're done with this scene.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Chrollo puts on a disguise.

Sylvia: [fondly] Yeah, he does.

Jack: He dresses up in a little suit.

Sylvia: [sighs] And his face is hidden in the shot.

Jack: His face is hidden in the shot. Now, what's Chrollo's face? He has creepy eyes.

Sylvia: Okay.

Jack: Does he have, like, a tattoo on his forehead or something?

Sylvia: Yeah, he has a cool cross on his forehead.

Keith: Right side up cross?

Sylvia: It's kind of like, just— it's not— it's symmetrical, like, both ways.

Keith: Oh, it's a plus.

Sylvia: Yeah, it's a plus. Or, hey, rotate that. [cross] It's an X.

Keith: [cross] It's a cross.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: So, either he's going to be— you know, they are very—

Keith: Oh, yeah, this thing.

Sylvia: Like— yeah.

Jack: They are very coy about Chrollo's full look here. You know, we sort of see him putting on his shirt.

Keith: Honestly, they've been coy about Chrollo's look. Like, they've only shown him a couple times.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And very often, we see Chrollo either in— he's shot so well, and this is— to some extent, this is Togashi sort of preempting shot choices with his manga work, but to Austin's point in the last episode, this is a result of the, you know, the anime team's work here. We either see Chrollo in extreme closeup, you know.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Or in distant shots or wide shots, group shots, you know, where Chrollo is, you know, almost a silhouette.

Sylvia: But is always surrounded by the rest of the Troupe too, right? In those group shots.

Jack: And this can't be right, because it would be crazy if this was the case.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm?

Jack: Is this the first time we've seen him move? I mean, we've seen him, like, move his head and his arms.

Sylvia: No.

Keith: We've seen him turn pages. We've seen him talk.

Jack: No, but I mean—

Sylvia: He got up to address the group, remember?

Jack: Oh, he does. Has he walked about before?

Sylvia: Yeah, that was, like, the big dramatic reveal when he stepped into the light. I think what the show does and what Togashi as an artist does too— I'm just conflating it with the manga. I don't know— I haven't checked to see how one-to-one these shots of Chrollo are. But it does such a good job of lending to the, like, air of...like, final boss atmosphere, to put it, like, as simply as I can.

Jack: But he's so passive.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Chrollo is so passive, and that—

Sylvia: But doesn't that— I don't know, personally, that adds to it for me, right? Where it's just like...

Keith: Adds to what?

Sylvia: Adds to the air of, like, I guess threatening air to it? Or, like, the fact— we talk about which characters are powerful, right? And it's like, this is the guy who Uvo, for example, answers to, and he doesn't— he barely expends any energy moving or talking.

Jack: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Sylvia: And it's just like, well, why do they...all of this...limiting how much you see him throughout the run of an episode, alongside what I just said and the composition of the shots in which we do see him, all go towards the sort of, like...I guess a form of mythbuilding [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] for, like, the viewer, of like, what the leader of the Phantom Troupe is capable of.

Jack: Yeah, what is his deal?

Sylvia: It's the rollercoaster going up, you know? And then...

Jack: Yeah, absolutely. And I think, on some level, that's informed by the fact that everybody else on this call knows what Chrollo does. I mean, maybe. I don't know. Maybe he is going to remain [Sylvia laughs] passive. You know, Chrollo— we know Chrollo's verbs, and they are "deploy the Phantom Troupe," you know? He doesn't need to move, [**Dre:** Mm.] because he has 12— 11, RIP.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: He has— you know, he has— [Dre and Sylvia laugh] and they don't fear him either. You know, it really doesn't seem like they are afraid of Chrollo. They—

Keith: No, they're in love with him.

Sylvia: Yes.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Yeah, they have this immense respect.

Sylvia: I mean, who isn't?

Jack: What is it that this guy can do? And Togashi's favorite thing to do is introduce a bunch of weirdos and then give them all a special power and then show you all their special power, and the fact that, you know, we don't have any of that with Chrollo is great. I know that the Phantom Troupe are a big player in the manga post-anime, and so I am so curious to see, like, what is the runway that Togashi is building for the Phantom Troupe, outside of as an object of Kurapika's revenge? I don't know.

Sylvia: [sighs] We're gonna have, like, so much— like, the— to go with your runway metaphor, things are about to take off, you know?

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Like, the plane is taxiing during these episodes.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm so excited. I mean, it is very *Hunter × Hunter* that one of the symptoms of it taxiing is our protagonist kills one member of the Phantom Troupe with no effort at all. [Keith and Dre laugh]

Sylvia: Well, we had a connecting flight.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah. [Sylvia and Keith laugh] Just a little, a brief connecting flight, vis-à-vis the chain bastard.

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Okay, so, Chrollo has left, presumably wearing a mask or hiding his face with Nen power or something, [Sylvia laughs quietly] my expectation is to kidnap Miss Neon or something. You know, if he can—

Keith: Or something.

Jack: [laughing] Or something. I don't know. You know! I don't. Okay. Gon and Killua begin to try and track the two members of the Phantom Troupe. Killua is—

Keith: God. I'm just thinking about the next couple episodes. Sorry, just give me a sec so I stop thinking.

Sylvia: Yeah. It's fine.

Keith: Okay, I'm done.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: I mean, Chrollo is out and about. You know.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: He's out and about. He's on business. Be very funny if we never see what he did, and he just comes back and it all happened off screen. [Sylvia laughs]

Dre: Sup. I'm back.

Sylvia: I'm back with Neon's head, just in a jar.

Jack: [laughs] I don't think he wants to kill Neon. I don't know. I don't know.

Sylvia: Yeah, I don't know.

Keith: Maybe it's not business he's out on.

Sylvia: Maybe it's not. I'm just saying shit, you know?

Jack: Yeah. Maybe he's out just enjoying the sights. Maybe he wants to buy something from the Southernbees catalog.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: You know, he wants to go buy a new—

Sylvia: He wants all of it.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Yes, he does want all of it.

Sylvia: Canonically.

Jack: Yeah. “We’re gonna steal it all!” That was my Chrollo impression.

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] Fantastic.

Jack: Killua has another one of these little pangs of jealousy of Gon, as Gon reveals that he kind of knows how to track. There’s a real sort of moment of, like, Killua being like, “Do you know how to do this? I want to teach you,” and Gon sort of going like, “Well, I know how to do it already,” and Killua going...you know, he’s jealous not in the sense of “I wish I could do that.” He’s jealous that his moment has been taken away from him.

Dre: Yeah, yeah.

Keith: Well, there’s a little ambiguity, because when Gon reveals that he learned how to track by tracking Hisoka and never getting caught during the Hunter Exam, Killua punches him in the head, [laughs quietly] and I couldn’t figure out, did he punch him out of jealousy out of either not being the one to get to teach him or being sort of shown up in this, doing something that is very difficult? Or did he punch him out of concern, which will come up later, of like, “Stop putting yourself in harm’s way. That’s way too dangerous. You shouldn’t have done that”?

[1:20:22]

Jack: I don’t think Killua knows how to tell the difference between those feelings.

Keith: Maybe.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: I think Killua is...Killua is feeling feelings that he has not necessarily felt before. This is kind of Killua's whole deal around Gon.

Keith: Well, when Gon asks why he did it, I think that Killua says, like, "No reason," or...

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: I can't remember what he says. [Dre laughs]

Jack: It was really weird. Killua tries to— Killua is trying to weigh up whether this is a trap or whether they are leading them back to their hideout, and he can't quite do it, and it is this, like, acknowledgement that he is, you know, right on the edge of solving a riddle that he can't solve that really grinds his gears for the rest of this episode and the next one.

Keith: Yeah. There's some great music here during the following scenes and then during what happens right after. I'll talk about the first one now. There's a variation of Killua's theme, which is "The Silver-Haired Boy", called "The Silver-Haired Apprehension".

Jack: Whoa. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: It hasn't played in a while. The part that I snipped here is this part.

[clip of "The Silver-Haired Apprehension" begins]

Keith: We hear this a lot, actually, 'cause Killua's apprehensive a lot.

Sylvia: Yeah, especially in this run.

Keith: Yeah, and eventually it devolves into sort of, like, [music ends] chaotic horror music strings, like the...

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Where, you know, you pluck the... [imitates] Like the, you know, horror music strings.

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Where you pluck the violin. I heard that violinists hate that, because they've gotta...

Jack: Hate what?

Keith: They hate when a piece, a composition has them plucking the strings like in a horror music thing, because they get resin all over their hands.

Dre: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Absolutely. I did a lot of Sangfielle, and it sucked. [laughs quietly]

Keith: So I've heard they are resentful of compositions and composers who make them pluck their strings.

Jack: You gotta put the bow down, [**Keith:** Yeah.] or, you know, hold the bow in a weird way. I didn't realize that was Killua's theme. That's such a weird— I mean, it makes exactly— you know. It's exactly the right choice for Killua.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: But it's such a sinister sort of shapeless little theme.

Keith: His main theme is much...it's less forboding, and it's more mournful, but "The Silver-Haired Apprehension" is very foreboding. They actually play this— I've got it right here on HxH (2011) OST List, the website that I've been using. [Jack laughs] They play it for, like, three straight minutes during this following scene. They play it from 13.5

minutes to 16.5 minutes.

Jack: Really working through this feeling, [**Keith:** Yeah.] the music supervisors.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Because, as they look down at Nobunaga and Machi standing on a big square to make themselves look super obvious like a *Dark Souls* miniboss, Phinks checks in and says, “Do you want a hint?” As to, you know, the identity of these people? [Keith laughs] revealing that he is directly behind them. There’s a great moment when Nobunaga turns and looks up at the window where they are.

Keith: It’s amazing. [Dre sighs] The distortion on the—

Jack: And we get this fisheye on everybody’s eyes.

Sylvia: Oh my god!

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: It’s so cool. It’s an effect that we haven’t seen in the show before. Yeah, it’s like a localized fisheye, as their eyes sort of swell as they see each other.

Keith: And then, and then, they both dart away from the windows, and there’s this huge exploding sound coming from their leaps to try to get away, only to realize that, like, they’re both penned in. And then Killua does this wild thing where he’s just, like, bouncing bouncing bouncing bouncing. He bounces, like, 80 times in about five seconds off of the walls before getting grabbed by Phinks. [Sylvia sighs]

Jack: This is I have to put Virginia in the kitty cat box so that we can go on the train. [Keith, Sylvia, and Jack laugh] You know?

Keith: That’s really good.

Sylvia: I think this scene is notable, right? ‘Cause like, when have we— we very rarely see Killua, like, get bested like this, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Am I misremembering something?

Jack: No.

Keith: Nope.

Sylvia: 'Cause other than Illumi intimidating him...

Jack: Illumi is, you know, hovering over these episodes like a specter.

Sylvia: Oh, very much.

Jack: He hasn't appeared yet in these episodes, but this idea of Killua being tested by his absent brother is just sitting here.

Sylvia: It's...it makes the Phantom Troupe— it makes Phinks scary, 'cause to me, he's just the dork with the snake hat.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: 'Cause I haven't seen him do anything else.

Jack: Oh, you mean the racing driver?

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Vroom vroom.

Sylvia: And then here, he's able to, like, stop Killua and, like, Killua has to power out so much from the grip that he has on his ankles that the skin is, like, torn up.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: And I don't know, it...

Dre: Also is able to just get the drop on Killua.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Nobunaga as well, right?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: 'Cause Nobunaga is just behind him when he looks back after that.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: He gets away from Phinks's grip, and then he hears Nobunaga.

Keith: Killua briefly thinks, like, "Wait, but we're on the fourth floor."

Sylvia: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Creepy.

Keith: What is the— and who wants to tell me the explanation for why Phinks was able to give them this hint? 'Cause I think it's really funny.

Jack: Oh, it's exactly the same thing that happened on Zevil Island. One person was tailing another person and did not realize that they were also being tailed. The Phantom Troupe had been following Gon and Killua this whole time, right?

Keith: Yeah, and not only that. Nobunaga at least, but probably Nobunaga and Machi, were not told that this was the thing.

Dre: Yeah, they didn't know.

Keith: So Nobunaga goes, like, "I was wondering why all of a sudden the city was full of Zetsu masters."

Jack: Yes, as the Phantom Troupe is tracking each other around. And this is, you know...I'm slowly building up a picture of what it is like to work for the Phantom Troupe, and it is weird.

Keith: Yeah. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: They are collaborators who have an immense respect for each other, know that they could each— or believe that they could each kill the other but are forbidden from doing so by a boss they idolize.

Keith: Non aggression pact. They're libertarians.

Jack: Yeah, it's a non aggression pact that they've got going on. [Sylvia laughs] But at the same time, they are all villains.

Keith: Right.

Jack: So they are all constantly lying to each other but in service of a common goal? You know, they really...

Sylvia: [mumbles]

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Sorry, go ahead. I...

Jack: They do seem to be pretty genuinely unified in, like, "Well, we want to do X, and, you know, we just have different ideas about how we want to do it."

Keith: Yeah, there was no hard feelings about being lied to. It was like, "Oh, yeah, that's a great way...'cause, you know, if I knew, then I would have known, and I would have acted differently, so this worked out best."

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: I just can't stop thinking about them arguing and then Feitan— or not— it's not Feitan that stops the fight. I think it's Machi later on, 'cause Feitan's part of the fight.

Keith: Right.

Sylvia: Nobunaga and him have a conflict. I'm just picturing one of them whining like that one Reddit post being like, "You're breaking the NAP! You're breaking the NAP!"

Keith: Yeah. [Keith and Dre laugh]

Jack: And their villain is— their villain. Their boss is the Devil. You know, it's odd.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: It is like a libertarian gang of roommates and their boss, the Devil.

Keith: Yeah. Killua's skirmish with Phinks is really fun, after the bouncing and Phinks catches him by the legs, and then Killua, like, feints with some rocks, almost catches Phinks off guard to try to kick him, but it doesn't work, and then Killua, like, does kind of like a tornado thing to escape, and he probably could have gotten out the window at that moment, but instead, either Nobunaga or Machi is right behind him.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, it was Nobunaga, yeah. But just kind of fun little scuffle, and he does a bit better than— you know, he's not— Phinks isn't sweating or anything, but he's doing a little bit [Sylvia: Yeah.] better than getting floor-wiped with him like he kind of acts like what happened later on, when they're being guarded by Nobunaga.

Jack: Yeah. He hates this, though. You know, he hates it.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It's especially tough, because he put himself in—for Killua—this position of vulnerability by saying, "We are weaker than these people, and we shouldn't engage with them," and then, you know, it's— he's sort of getting hit by the sword both ways, right? Where it's like, first he has to admit his weakness to Gon and be realistic, and then he has to suffer for it as their plan goes awry, and, you know.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: He gets hurt. And they immediately, they *immediately* start interrogating them. They say, “Do you know the chain user?” and it’s at this point that I realized that they don’t.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: I know. Isn’t that great? It’s so...it’s so well done, and, you know, all of the little bits of them here and there talking about Kurapika, not being able to get in touch with Kurapika, trying to meet up with Kurapika, and then it’s like, wow, good thing they didn’t fucking meet up with Kurapika.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: It’s lovely.

Keith: [sarcastic] It’s almost like they wrote it to be like this! [laughs]

Jack: I know. But it’s such...it’s not necessarily capital-C clever plotting. You know, I don’t think it’s doing anything particularly difficult., [cross] but it’s one of these little pieces of...

Keith: [cross] No, it’s fourth grade, you know, dramatic irony.

Jack: But it’s one of these pieces of plotting that, you know, doesn’t seem obviously until it is written, until those pieces slot into place.

Keith: Like a lot of—

Jack: And it must have felt great for Togashi to be like, “Wait, shit, hang on.”

Keith: Like a lot of Togashi’s writing when stuff like this pops up, it is, like, clever and elegant in that it feels inevitable when it happens. You know, it’s...

Jack: So clean. So clean.

Keith: It happens. It's clean. It's like, "Oh yeah, they never did talk." [laughs]

Jack: Yeah. Lovely stuff.

Keith: And then, and then you get to shine a spotlight on it and be like, now the whole thing is about this detail.

Jack: Yeah. Which 50, as we're about to move into, is.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: There's a little detail that I want to dig into. Killua, when he is being interrogated, says, "A bad lie will make things worse," to himself and then starts answering their questions honestly, and I wondered if people have thoughts about this kind of, like...this positioning from Killua.

Keith: Good instinct, because they have [Dre: Yeah.] someone there that can read his memories.

Sylvia: Um...I think it kind of ties into some stuff that we see later, the like...when Illumi's shadow starts being cast on the episode. I think this is just another extension of that, the "don't fight anyone you can't kill" thing.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: And I think that it's Killua being like, "Well, I can't [Keith: Right.] fight my way out of this. I need to just..."

Keith: Really being haunted by Illumi.

Sylvia: Yes, very much so.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: They ask him why he was tailing them, and he gives a really, really good answer,

really sort of cleverly evasive answer, which is he just says, “There’s a huge bounty out on your heads, and we wanted the money.”

Keith: And it’s true.

Jack: Yeah. They say, “Who’s your boss?” and he basically says, “My boss is Mr. Wing.” He doesn’t give his name, but he says, you know, he was an Enhancer. And he says he wants to be a Pro Hunter, which is so lovely. I can’t— you know, this might be a little moment of truth in Killua still, you know, feeling the pebble in his boot of [**Keith:** Right.] not having made it through the Hunter Exam.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Or it could just be a very convenient lie from a child assassin who has almost certainly deliberately put himself in a situation like this before. I am sure Killua has been interrogated by, you know, people before. It’s whether or not—

Keith: Right. People just as dangerous as the Phantom Troupe.

Dre: I mean, we’ve seen it on screen, basically.

Keith: Sure.

Jack: You mean with the Zoldyck family?

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah.

Keith: The thing is, you know, one of the, like, bits of luck is like, yeah, they have— the reason they are in town also is because of their friend Kurapika, who has a grudge against the Phantom Troupe, and they know that Kurapika is, like, looking for the Phantom Troupe, but they don’t really have any details, and it wouldn’t be...like, it wouldn’t be a complete thing to tell them. Like, if they did want to turn on Kurapika, you know, just out of instinct or fear or whatever, they wouldn’t even really have anything to say.

Jack: No.

Keith: So it is like, oh yeah, really the only reason why they're here...

Jack: The real accidental plausible deniability.

Keith: Yeah. The really only reason why they're here is because they need 8.5 billion jenny.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's great. He doesn't let slip that he is a member of the Zoldyck family, which is smart.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And possibly also Togashi doing some pre-plotting. If we're moving into a Zoldyck versus Phantom Troupe arc, the Phantom Troupe not knowing that Killua is the son of the Zoldycks might be— you know. I'm now watchful for whether Togashi is setting up some of these little neat plot maneuvers like they don't know Kurapika is the chain bastard. However, throughout the rest of this episode—I think this is lovely—Nobunaga calls Kurapika the cat-eyed boy, which we've never heard before.

Keith: Yeah. This is, by the way, we we've just sort of bridged the gap between these two episodes, 49 to 50.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: 49, I think, ends in the car ride to...

Jack: Oh, there's a great line before the car ride, though.

Keith: Oh, yes, I have it right here in the Discord. I just posted it, 'cause it mirrors the,

uh...a lot of eyes in this episode. The Silva eyes; this is, like, the exact same framing that Silva's eyes are framed in.

Jack: Nobunaga says, "I have a few questions for you," and, you know, interrogates him and then says, "And my last question is: do you want to die now or later?" which is just some good villain shit.

Sylvia: Killer.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: It's so good.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: As the episodes continue, we learn that, you know, Nobunaga doesn't actually necessarily want these people to die?

Keith: No. He's just scary.

Jack: But it's good posturing.

Keith: Yeah, he's just being scary.

Jack: It's scary posturing.

Keith: Oh, right, so, they're here. They get in the car. They just step into the— Pakunoda is there, asks them a few questions, and then they just get into the Phantom Troupe hideout when the episode ends and the next episode starts.

Jack: Yes, and, you know, we get a great reaction shot of Gon and Killua, from Gon and Killua, as, you know, Pakunoda says, "Welcome to our hideout," and the guitar credits, you know, start to play as we get the wide shot of the Spiders lounging.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And Hisoka is there, and we don't get a reaction to Hisoka being there from the

crew yet. It's very funny when we do. But just, um...it's a nice moment of, you know...

Keith: Oh, what a great joke. What a cut through [Dre laughs] a lot of tension from the last episode and this episode. Oh my god. It's, like, in the very beginning of episode 50.

Jack: Before we move on, I want a quick Hunterpedia update. Today's Hunterpedia update is Machi, the Transmuter. Gon pulls Killua up on threads like a little marionette. However, what I'm sure you're all here for is the tadpole update.

Sylvia: Oh, yes, please.

Jack: The tadpole now has two little legs.

Dre: Oh.

Keith: Great.

Sylvia: Okay.

Jack: That little fella's growing up.

Dre: Important thing that we did not talk about from this episode.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, please.

Dre: Machi's new outfit.

Sylvia: Oh my god, yeah!

Keith: Oh, tell me about it. I didn't notice.

Sylvia: With her wolf cut?

Jack: So, she...

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Dre: Her fucking wolf cut with her tracksuit. Yeah, man.

Keith: Oh, she's in a tracksuit. I forgot. She has a wolf— what is a wolf cut?

Sylvia: A wolf cut is a sort of stylish mullety thing. It's what I say to my hairdresser when I go in to get my hair cut. It's the sort of shag cut.

Jack: You say, "Sort of like Machi from *Hunter × Hunter*."

Sylvia: Yes, I go— I hold up a picture of an anime character at the salon.

Keith: Oh, okay, yeah.

Sylvia: And I go, "Please do this to me." [Jack laughs] Yeah, no, she looks like a good, like, 25% of the lesbians I know, and I love that about her. [Dre laughs] The, like— I didn't read this as a— I see it now as a tracksuit, but for some reason, looking at this, I was like, "Oh yeah, she's wearing, like, a collared shirt and a vest." [laughs quietly]

Dre: No, I agree. That's how I read it at first too, and then it wasn't until I saw the stripes on— the fucking fake Adidas stripes on the side that I was like, "Oh, okay."

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Her original haircut...originally she was wearing, like, a robe, like a sort of, like, almost like a gi.

Dre: Yeah, it's like a gi.

Keith: Not exactly like a gi.

Sylvia: Yeah, like a ninja uniform.

Dre: It's a ninja uniform.

Keith: It sort of looks like the pajamas version of a gi.

Sylvia: [laughs] Damn. [Keith laughs]

Dre: It's the athleisure version of it.

Keith: Sure, it's an athleisure gi, and then for anybody out there watching *Yu Yu Hakusho*, has sort of like a Botan-style ponytail, from *Yu Yu Hakusho*.

Sylvia: Oh, yeah. I know enough about *Yu Yu Hakusho* for that to scan.

Keith: Botan's the best. Best character in *Yu Yu Hakusho* besides...mm, that's hard. Actually, maybe they're all equally good. [Sylvia laughs] We gotta watch some of that. That's gonna be our...

Sylvia: Yeah, we will.

Keith: Yeah, we gotta watch...we gotta do two different bonuses, 'cause we're absolutely gonna do one where we just watch, like, the first three or four episodes, because it's the best opening to an anime, I think. It's got such a good start. And then probably somewhere in the middle. Some Dark Tournament stuff, maybe.

Sylvia: Okay.

Jack: Does *Yu Yu Hakusho* have a good ending?

Keith: No. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Huh. Okay. Well, moving on. [laughs quietly]

Keith: It's fine. It's fine. It has a couple endings, kind of, you know?

Sylvia: Oh, okay.

Keith: Season three...I think Togashi wanted where the anime ends in season three, I think that was really supposed to be the last season. And then there's a sort of controversial final season that has— is definitely the weakest. Some people are like, "It's still good," and then some people don't really like it, but it's just not a very strong ending. He wanted— he was trying to end it, and I think they sort of pressured him into

keeping going when he didn't want to. So, that's why sort of— it's a little long in the tooth.

Sylvia: Ah.

Jack: Yeah.

Episode 50 [1:39:35]

Jack: Episode 50 begins, and Gon, Hisoka, and Killua all notice each other. They all respond differently. Hisoka, for the first time, experiences a kind of sort of shock and embarrassment, where there's this brief moment where he's like, "Hooooly shit. [Sylvia laughs quietly] I hope these assholes don't give the game away."

Keith: It's so funny.

Sylvia: And there's straight up a sweat drop from Hisoka.

Jack: 'Cause imagine this from Hisoka's perspective.

Keith: Well, Gon just raises his hand and goes, "Hey!" [laughs]

Jack: Yeah, Gon... [Dre chuckles] Just before he raises his hand, Killua says, internally, you know, "We're gonna keep this secret for now," and is interrupted immediately by, you know, by Gon saying, "Hi, Hisoka!" Imagine this from Hisoka's perspective. You are disguising yourself as a member of the Phantom Troupe, who you've infiltrated for three years, because you want to kill their leader in a sex way. [Sylvia, Keith, and Dre laugh] One of their members, the strongest member, is killed. You don't know how or why. The entire Phantom Troupe starts freaking out and hunting for them. The boss leaves. Then, two members arrive, along with Gon and Killua. Gon immediately says, "Hi, Hisoka." [Dre laughs]

Keith: I should say: I think that Hisoka knows exactly why Uvogin died.

Jack: Do you thi— oh, right, yes, because of the chat with Kurapika.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yes. That puts Hisoka in a really interesting position in the Phantom Troupe.

Keith: Right. So, Phinks immediately is like, “Do you—” or maybe it’s Nobunaga, is like, “Do you know someone here?” and Killua answers for Gon, being like, “No, no!” and then goes, “Oh, wait, yeah. We do. Her!” and it’s Shizuku, who Gon arm wrestled, like, a week ago.

Jack: And Shizuku doesn't remember this at all.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: This is a tiny detail, and it is so scary. Shizuku has— the scary bit is not only that Shizuku has no memory of it but that the other members of the Phantom Troupe, on sort of realizing that they're not going to get through to her—

Keith: Because they do remember. Feitan and Franklin remember.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: They just sort of give over to her recollection of events. They just sort of, like, “Well, you know.”

Keith: Feitan says, like, “Once she’s decided to forget something, there’s never bringing it back,” and then that’s when Franklin goes like, “Oh, yeah, I guess you're right.” And then Shizuku’s like, “Yeah, I am right.”

Dre: Yeah. Listen.

Keith: She’s, like, she’s kind of pissed about it.

Dre: Gaslight, gatekeep, girlboss, okay? [Keith laughs]

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Gaslight, gatekeep, girlboss.

Keith: Not only do you have to agree with the reality that I have invented, if you don't, I'm gonna be mad about it.

Dre: Mm-hmm. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: She says “decided to forget.”

Dre: I'm gonna sick my vacuum on you.

Jack: Yeah. [laughs quietly] She said “decided to forget,” which is such a cool, you know, sort of snapping together of the stuff with Blinky and with making things disappear and nobody knows where they go. You know, if she is really in control of what she remembers and forgets, why has she chosen to forget losing an arm wrestling match against Gon, you know? [Keith laughs quietly] It's great. But the arm wrestling sort of conversation begins as— or rather, continues as Nobunaga starts arm wrestling Gon, initially probably with the pretense of, like, “I want to see how strong you are,” but in actuality, this is—

Keith: Yeah, he seems impressed at the beginning. He says, “You beat her in an arm wrestling fight?” and then it cuts to, like, clearly Gon has now lost 30 of these in a row.

Sylvia: His hand's bleeding.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: As Nobunaga's, like, working himself up into a sort of fervor of grief.

Jack: This is torture again, right? It's people torturing Gon again.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Right, yeah.

Dre: Yeah, 100%.

Keith: And it didn't seem like that's where it was going, which is why it's so interesting. It sort of makes me feel like Nobunaga doesn't have a good handle on his emotions.
[laughs quietly]

Jack: It was a real—

Sylvia: [sarcastic] What?

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: [sarcastic] Oh, word?

Jack: This episode—

Keith: Well, some of the Phantom Troupe do feel like they have a good handle on their emotions.

Jack: Who?

Keith: Um...

Sylvia: Yeah, wait, who?

Dre: Machi.

Keith: Yeah, Machi. That's a great example.

Sylvia: Okay.

Keith: Machi, Franklin.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Shizuku, 'cause she doesn't have any.

Keith: Right. [Sylvia laughs quietly] Uh, Chrollo.

Sylvia: Sure.

Keith: You know.

Jack: Weirdly, weirdly, Hisoka. They're not good emotions, but we've seen in the past, [Keith: Sure.] Hisoka kind of managing his emotions.

Keith: Right.

Jack: Like when he went into the death trance for an entire night and then [Dre: Sure.] hunted down and killed an old woman.

Keith: Right. Yeah.

Sylvia: True.

Dre: It's even more true if you don't count horny as an emotion. [Sylvia and Keith laugh]

Jack: Right. I think it is, but.

Keith: Which, of course, it is.

Dre: It is. It is. [Jack laughs quietly]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Listen, I'm a therapist. It's an emotion. [Keith and Sylvia laugh]

Jack: You can speak with confidence here.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: That is the funniest way you've invoked that. [Keith, Sylvia, and Dre laugh]

Keith: If anyone knows that horny is an emotion better than a therapist...

Jack: I feel like— and you can correct me if I'm wrong here, Dre. I feel like the secret trick is it's like that meme with the astronauts, and it's like, "It's all emotions?" "Always has been."

Dre: Uh huh.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Secretly, they're all emotions.

Dre: Uh huh.

Jack: This sort of arm wrestling torture sort of blossoms out into some great character writing with Nobunaga, as we see, for the first time, the depth with which he is grieving the loss of Uvogin. He is convinced that Uvogin couldn't have been beaten by this chain user unless he was caught in some kind of a trap.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: You know, that there was, like, a sort of a dirty trick being played. And what is interesting is that Uvo sort of was caught in a trap, [**Keith:** Yeah.] just not the kind that Nobunaga is imagining and perhaps not the kind that Nobunaga is capable of imagining. You know, I—

Keith: He says, “Uvo never would have lost a fair fight,” and it kind of wasn't a fair— I mean, it was— the rules of reality were being followed, but it wasn't, like, an equal test of strength.

Jack: Right.

Keith: One person had the special “I can kill Spiders” power.

Jack: Well, yes, it is...the trap is the Nen contract, you know?

Keith: Right.

Jack: The trap is not we surrounded him and shot him with a bunch of machine guns. You know, it's not the guy getting killed in *The Godfather* at the tollbooth or whatever. You know, it's not like they just jumped him or whatever. They stood there together in the desert and said, “Let's fight now.” The trap that they were caught in was specifically the trap of Kurapika literalizing his desire for revenge into a magic power.

Keith: Yeah. And the Spiders being unable to predict that someone would have such a grudge against them that they would shape their Nen specifically around them.

Jack: Yes. Which—

Keith: They all know about Nen contracts.

Jack: Do they?

Keith: I'm gonna say that— I mean, I don't know one way or the other, but like, I think they all do. I think that they must all know. I don't think any one of them is new enough to Nen that they wouldn't have heard of Nen contracts, something that Kurapika learned in his first week.

Jack: Yeah, that's true, but Kurapika's a genius. And we get a little more detail about Nobunaga and Uvo later in this episode, but I think it's probably worth talking about it now. They're lovers, right?

Sylvia: It feels like it, right? Like, it...

Keith: Sure.

Sylvia: I don't know. That was always my read, was like...especially when we get to the "Uvo always fought better."

Jack: They fight together.

Keith: There's a lot of unprocessed, you know, pseudo-platonic attraction in this show.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And I wouldn't be surprised if, in the same way that Nobunaga sort of projects his image of Uvogin onto Gon, that the show sort of projects, like, Killua onto Nobunaga, in some ways.

Jack: Huh.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Obviously not others.

Jack: Oh, that's really interesting, yeah.

Keith: And so, in the, you know, there's a lot of, like, "Gon and Killua are boyfriends" vibes surrounding *Hunter × Hunter*, but I've always—

Sylvia: Always are.

Keith: What's that?

Sylvia: Always are.

Keith: Yeah. [Dre laughs] I've always read their relationship as more, like...more one-sided, and I...

Sylvia: Yeah, I see that.

Jack: Really? That's so interesting. Unrequited?

Keith: And that's how I see the Nobunaga thing also, sort of mirroring this, like, "I can't exactly figure out my shit about this, but for some reason, I'm totally irrational about my friend, my normal friend Uvogin."

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. It's, you know, we learn later that, yeah, like you said, Uvo would always sort of fight better when he had someone to fight for, and the— oh my god, I'm gonna sneeze midway through a sentence. Hang on. Ah— [sneeze is censored with a ding] The example that they give is Nobunaga. You know, we see them fighting back to back.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And, you know, whether or not they are, like, capital-L lovers, these are two people who sort of depend on and are powered by each other.

Keith: We get a little bit of timeline here. Nobunaga says that they knew each other from before the Troupe formed, which I think implies that they're founding members of the Troupe.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: Yep. Also culpable in the, uh, Kurta...

Sylvia: Kurta slaughter.

Jack: Massacre. Yeah.

Keith: Yes. Yes.

Jack: Which is, we've sort of known, but there's a confirmation there. At this point, Killua puts together that they are talking about Kurapika. This is such a good moment, and it's—

Keith: Right. Shalnark reveals, like, these kids have nothing to do with it. Pakunoda's already cleared them, and we know that this is someone who's, like, got it out for the Spiders who works for the, uh...what's the family called? The, um...

Jack: The Nostrade family.

Keith: The Nostrade family. And that's where the lights go on for Killua.

Jack: And it's such a good, like, double revelation, first that Killua knows, and secondly that he has realized that Gon doesn't.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: You know, Gon has not figured this out. It's great. And Gon recognizes in this moment, in seeing, you know, Nobunaga sort of come apart, that the Troupe is capable of empathy, and in that moment, you know, in sort of making this acknowledgement, he expresses his aura. You know, what do you call this? His Ren?

Keith: Yeah, his Ren, yeah. He sort of— his power grows three sizes.

Jack: His power grows three sizes, and it also feels like a kind of, um...not like a concession but like an expression of his power. He is showing them his real power, after they have shown him something about themselves.

Keith: Yeah. Can I read the quote here?

Jack: Yeah, yeah.

Keith: He says, "I don't know him," the chain user, "but even if I did, I would never give him up to you. I thought you were just heartless monsters, but I see you can shed tears for your friends. Why couldn't you spare a fraction of that grief for the people you've killed?" And this is where he sort of slams Nobunaga's hand down, after having lost over and over again.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And it brings us into...

Jack: An immediate escalation, as Feitan gets involved.

Keith: [laughs] Right. Well, this is where they sort of all agree to let them go, and then— oh, am I jumping?

Jack: You're just a little bit. So, the...

Keith: Okay.

Jack: First thing that I want to say—

Keith: Right, because Feitan is like, "You can't— don't win in this. You're being

tortured.”

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. So, the first thing that happens is I think that this is kind of a terrifying moment for Gon or sort of a moment where the way the world works or bits of the way the world works are being revealed to him, maybe for the first time, which is that these monstrous individuals are capable of, you know, grief and empathy and, you know, a kind of internal, you know, calculus beyond just theft and murder and pillaging. And I don't think Gon knows what to do about this, right? You know.

Keith: No. Well, this is the other side of the coin that I was talking about earlier, where Zepile says that he doesn't judge things on the same sort of moral compass that other people are judging things on. He has his heart and his mind open to being impressed by things and being curious about the world. And then the flip side of it, though, is that he also does do that. He does go, like...he's not moved by Nobunaga's passion. He's infuriated by it.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Because it's hypocritical of him to cry for his friend and then also be a viscous, horrific mass murderer.

Jack: And Gon can't square— you know, Killua might be able to say, “Well, look, that's just the way the world is, unfortunately.” Unfortunately, the mass murderers also, you know...

Sylvia: Yeah, I mean, he was raised by them, right?

Jack: Yeah, I was gonna say. It's something Killua knows all too well.

Keith: Well, but Killua is a great example of this, because when Killua reveals that he and his family are assassins, Gon doesn't flinch and is just interested and curious, and I

think part of it is Killua saying, like, “Well, I don't really want to be an assassin anymore,” and also part of it is that it's never really made real to him.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. It's not immediate.

Keith: But this is real. He already knows someone whose life was torn apart by the Spiders.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And they certainly don't seem to be changing their ways [laughs quietly] or anything in this conversation, so it's sort of like, [thinking] “Okay, my friend Kurapika, his whole— everyone he knows was killed by the Spiders. [Sylvia laughs] One Spider died, and they're now like, ‘We're gonna go kill more people because of this,’ but so then...okay, I'm pretty sure. I'm multiplying 500 by 2.5. [Jack, Sylvia, and Dre laugh] I'm pretty sure I hate these guys.”

Jack: I'm pretty sure that these guys suck. Yeah. It's...yes. It's great. But now Feitan tries to torture him to get more information out of him. Something notable, we don't need to dwell on this. One of the torture methods that Feitan, who, you know, we know is a legendary torturer. Feitan doesn't come across well in these episodes. He seems like a real nasty piece of work.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I mean, he's always seemed like a real nasty piece of work, but he is...Togashi has decided that he is going to be the evil Phantom Troupe member in this sequence, so he his.

Keith: I love both the voice actors for Feitan. The sub is, like, the one that I am sort of the most...like, that's who I think of when I think of Feitan.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: But sometimes, especially when I'm taking notes, it'll be like, we just switch over to the dub for five minutes so that I can write while they're talking, and the English dub for Feitan is, like, such a whispery little creep. [laughs] He's so quiet.

Sylvia: Yeah. [Jack laughs]

Keith: And he's just like, he seems kind of bored, but he also seems kind of evil, and he's also, like, very whispery. It's very funny.

Jack: I should listen to it.

Keith: He's like, [voice] "I'm going to peel back his fingers."

Jack: Yeah, so the—

Sylvia: That's a good one too. You nailed that.

Dre: Any sound.

Jack: The torture that Feitan— any sound. [Sylvia laughs quietly] The torture that Feitan lays out is, you know, extremely straightforward physical violence.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: He's gonna break his fingers. He's going to pull his nails out or something, and it is very cold and upsetting that the final destination of this Nen torture master is just, you know, immediate physical violence on the body.

Keith: Yeah, we learned that he's a torturer and that people who get tortured by Feitan are the least lucky people that the Phantom Troupe kill, and we don't know what his powers are, and we still don't know what his powers are.

Jack: Yeah!

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, it's creepy. I was expecting a sort of, like...those horrible torture droids in

Star Wars. You know, some sort of very specific fictional, you know, frightening methodology. So to have Feitan come out and be like, "I'm just gonna break all your fingers," was spooky; was, again, just good character writing.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: But Nobunaga gets him to stop. There is no physical fighting between members of the Troupe. Disputes are determined by a coin toss. They decide to keep the guys around, especially because Nobunaga has decided that he wants to recruit Gon to the Spiders.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And Gon's response to this is: "No. Absolutely not." [laughs quietly]

Keith: Absolutely not. [cross] Oh, there's the great scene.

Jack: [cross] Nobunaga thinks this is really funny.

Keith: When they first agree to, like, let them go. [laughs] Gon, like, sticks out his tongue and goes like [blows raspberry] at them.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: It's so funny! [Sylvia laughs] And then Franklin sort of explains. Nobunaga's away, you know, watching them in, you know, captivity, and this is where, like, Franklin goes like, "Yeah, I can totally see, you know, why Nobunaga's, you know, on this weird kick. They definitely do kind of seem like Uvogin." One of the things that he says when he describes the similarities between Uvogin and Gon. We sort of talked about this conversation already, but it's: "He wears his heart on his sleeve, and when he's mad, he forgets about the consequences."

Jack: Mm.

Keith: And it's like, oh, demonstrated.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And you have a note about this, right, Dre?

Dre: Yeah. I mean, the other thing too is that when Nobunaga is getting sad about Uvogin— I think this is the right— yeah, well, I mean, we're talking about the last episode, but. You know, the other thing that they're talking about is that even though Uvogin was so powerful and he seemingly, like, always preferred to work alone, that actually, Uvogin was at his most powerful, and I think the wording they use was when he had— when he was, like, fighting for someone else.

Keith: Yeah, yeah. This is the conversation where they show them sort of back to back.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Him and Nobunaga. I think Shizuku describes it as: “So he was at his strongest when someone was holding him back?”

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Something— yeah, yeah. And we see Gon kind of basically, like, powering up in a similar way when he is, [**Jack:** Yeah.] like, kind of fighting on behalf of the memories and, like, the thoughts of all these people that the Phantom Troupe have killed.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: So, just another way in which we are kind of seeing, like, okay, Gon and Uvogin are very very different people, but they're both Enhancers.

Jack: Ha ha. And again, I mean, this is something that the show keeps doing. You know, we are constantly seeing weird uncomfortable parallels and, you know,

similarities and differences being drawn between Gon and Hisoka or Killua and the other Zoldyck family members. It is almost as though Togashi is presenting these two sort of character studies in Gon and Killua and then surrounding them with interesting reflections of those character studies, and that's definitely one way to write a cast of characters, right? You know, pick two protagonists, and then surround them by people that will reflect various aspects of those protagonists. I think it's working really well here, and it is as its most interesting for me when they are uncomfortable, right? When the parallels that are being drawn are between characters who do not initially seem like direct pairs. For example, the 12-year-old boy prodigy Gon and the Rōnin villain of the Phantom Troupe. [Sylvia laughs] No, the, uh...

[2:00:04]

Keith: The evil giant.

Jack: Evil giant of the Phantom Troupe, Uvo. I think that's great, taking characters that you're like, "I don't think these guys are alike at all," and saying, "Huh. That's what *you* think, buddy."

Sylvia: Yeah. [Dre chuckles] Get a load of this, buddy. [Keith laughs]

Jack: Togashi tapping the side of his head.

Keith: I mean, and they're right. I think they do a good job of showing where those similarities come from, and like...

Jack: Yes, and the differences, you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I think the moments where Hisoka and Gon's relationship in the show is the most generative, in terms of interesting story stuff, is where they are saying, "These are the ways they differ tremendously, and at the same time, these are the ways that they are grimly similar to each other."

Keith: Yeah, there's a little bit of, like, where you go, like, someone's personality— and I think they do a lot of this with the Phantom Troupe, where, you know, Jack, when we first get introduced to the Phantom Troupe, and you're like, you know, "All right, let's see the evil monsters!" and then it's like, oh, these guys are all just buddies.

Jack: Yeah. [laughs quietly]

Keith: They're evil buddies, but they're all just, like, kind of hanging out. Where there's a little bit— where they're going, like, being evil isn't your personality.

Jack: No. My personality is...

Dre: Mm.

Keith: You have a personality, and then you also are evil maybe. [Dre and Keith laugh]

Dre: Maybe.

Keith: But then they've got Hisoka, where being evil really is Hisoka's personality, but it doesn't have to be.

Jack: Hisoka's personality is, uh, grooming.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: For all kinds of reasons, for all kinds of people. And that is his evil personality, yes. Oh, also magic tricks. [laughs quietly]

Keith: Right, magic tricks.

Dre: Sure.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. Hey, people contain multitudes. Grooming, magic tricks.

Jack: And Hisoka contains two.

Keith: Yeah. [laughs]

Jack: It is so...you know you're in real trouble when Hisoka is the least weird person in the room. That's the joy of Hisoka being in the Phantom Troupe, is that, you know.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: He's just surrounded by awful people. I had to do a little check to see, you know, to do a little Phantom Troupe audit in these wide shots. There are ten members visible. The Troupe is down to 12 right now. RIP.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: So, yep. Confirmed, only Nobu and Chrollo are missing. Nobunaga is off guarding the boys, and Chrollo is out on the town. [Sylvia laughs quietly] He's gone to a ramen joint.

Keith: Truly out on the town.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: All dressed up.

Jack: He's—

Sylvia: He's picking me up. [Jack laughs]

Dre: Aww.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: No, it would be a terrible— he'd just read his book on the date. That's it.

Keith: He does— yeah, he's gonna read his book on the date. You know this.

Sylvia: I don't mind.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: I don't mind.

Dre: Have you seen how hot he looks reading that book?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: [cross] The book is gonna be magic.

Sylvia: [cross] Ain't nothing wrong with that. Ain't nothing wrong with that, you know?

Jack: The book is what binds him to the demon world. I think I've said this already. Let's move on. [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: Mm, mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Jack: Okay. As they are being guarded by Nobunaga, Killua has a breakdown.

Keith: Yeah, he is stressed about...

Jack: This is so good. This is the sort of nadir of Killua's very bad day, of saying, "Look, we shouldn't mess with these guys, 'cause they'll kill us, and if they don't kill us, they'll capture us, and if they capture us, we will be at their mercy." And now he knows that this is the case. And he sort of has this real low of like, "I have failed, and not only have I failed, I am vindicating what Illumi said to me," right?

Keith: Right.

Jack: And it's at this point—

Keith: He's sort of replaying the Hisoka moment in his mind, where when Gon gets grabbed by Feitan, Killua moves to help, and then goes, "Well, I couldn't have done anything anyway. If I had moved, then Hisoka would have cut my throat, but then doesn't that mean that I would have just let Gon die?" and he can't handle this.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah. This is two things, right? This is the long tail of Zoldyck trauma.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And—

Keith: And it's also, the other two things that it is, is it's the Illumi conversation, which we know, because they show Illumi, but the other side of that is it's the Silva conversation, because...

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Because by giving into the Illumi thing, he is not following the promise that he made to his dad.

Jack: And, at the same time, it is...it is the sad state of affairs that the way that Killua is able to think about those relationships closest to him is through a lens of violence, right? Is "how have I let this person down in a situation where they could have been harmed?" You know, it's almost as if the toolbox that Killua, the awful stew that Killua finds himself in, is always going to be one about, you know, his responsibility around moments of violence.

Keith: Yeah. I've got a button that I didn't play last time.

Sylvia: Ooh.

Keith: That comes back up around here. So, they play "Family of Assassins" again, which is great. [clip of "Family of Assassins" plays briefly] We never get sick of that. We love that. But last time, it was right after "Silver-Haired Apprentice" when Gon is standing off against Pakunoda and Machi and Killua is standing off against Nobunaga and Phinks. And this time, when Killua's, like, maybe going to intentionally step into the path of Nobunaga's sword, because he's basically daring himself to have the courage to protect Gon, and his only idea for how to do that is to, like, sacrifice himself to give Gon an opening.

Jack: He says that's what gives it meaning, the fact that he is likely to die.

Keith: That's what gives it meaning, yeah.

Jack: It's so sad.

Keith: It's very sad, and they have a great conversation about it, which we'll get to. But the song they play is "Illusion", which is, like, really good tense music that they play every once in a while. Hasn't played in a while.

[clip of "Illusion" plays]

Keith: It's that one.

Sylvia: So good.

Jack: Lovely. It's just two scales.

Sylvia: Sorry, I was grooving. I didn't say anything, 'cause I was too busy moving to it.

Jack: It's two scales played opposite to each other, which is so simple and so nice. It's very much like a...you know, it's like the simplest musical maths, [**Keith:** Yeah.] to be like, "Oh wait, these notes are all going to have an inverse relationship to each other as we walk up one scale and down another."

Keith: It gets very intense. It sort of builds for, like, two full minutes. Let me see if...

[another clip of "Illusion" begins]

Keith: Yeah, there we go.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: It's so lovely, 'cause, you know, what they've done is they've built out the chords above those scales, [music ends] and so now everything is sort of matching with the chord that it's in and also its opposite number in the others scale. Really, really, really lovely stuff. This composer's fucking great.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I had a really nice moment, actually, the other day, where I was like, “There's gonna be new music throughout the whole show.”

Sylvia: Yeah. [Keith laughs]

Jack: This guy's gonna be coming up with new stuff every so often.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Gonna be great.

Keith: We actually do get one other song that we haven't heard in a while, when they're talking about Nobunaga fighting back to back with, um...oh, do I not have that song anymore? I thought that I did still have it. They're talking about back-to-back fighting with Uvogin, and they play the same song. It was Baisho's song that they play when he's writing his first poem. It's called “The laido Lunatic” is what it's called. I think—? [music starts to play briefly] No.

Sylvia: Damn! Damn.

Keith: No, I maybe got rid of it.

Sylvia: The laido Lunatic versus the Chain Bastard.

Keith: Yeah. [Jack laughs]

Sylvia: Live on our fucking Hunter brawl. [Dre laughs]

Keith: Oh, I wish I still had it. It's such a fun song. Anyway. Anybody who wants to hear that can go hear that, but they've introduced a new laido lunatic.

Jack: Now Gon and Killua have a little argument, and they have this argument directly in front of Nobunaga, which is wonderful. I think only adds further fuel to Nobunaga's fire of “I have to recruit at least one of these people to the Spiders.”

Keith: Yeah. Which it's right after Gon has decided to start, for some reason, talking about Zepile and Zepile's art fraud techniques.

Dre: All the fun things he's taught, yeah.

Keith: Yeah, and Killua's, like, trying to work out how best to, uh...

Jack: Die.

Keith: Die, so that Gon can escape.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And is like, "Gon, stop it."

Jack: Stop fucking talking about the...

Keith: And then, Jack, do you want to talk about their argument here that Gon engages in?

Jack: Their argument is really simple, and it's really— it's great Gon writing. Killua sort of lays out what he's going to do, and Gon hits him again in a sort of mirror of Killua hitting Gon earlier.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And says, "Stop being so selfish." You know, this— what you are doing is selfish, and you shouldn't do it. You know, you're my friend. And Killua, like every single audience member, basically says, "Hang on. [Keith laughs] This is right out of your playbook."

Keith: Right.

Jack: I'm basically doing the Gon Freecs thing. [Dre laughs]

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: You know, calling back to the way Gon's obstinancy, the way Gon's considered obstinancy has, over and over again, wrecked his body but furthered his ideology. And then—

Keith: Yeah, this is sort of the Hanzo fight, like, turned into a dialogue.

Jack: It's Canary. Yeah, yeah, yeah. But it's not a long conversation, and it's really simple, and it ends with this great punchline, where Gon says, "I'm allowed to do this, and you're not," and I love it when two characters argue and both of them are wrong in different ways? Or it's like, you know, we don't have one character clearly winning the argument. The position Gon is taking is still a selfish and obstinate one.

Keith: Right.

Jack: But there is such, you know, barefaced smug lovable courage to him saying, "I'm allowed to do this, but you're not." It was such a great, you know, end to that discussion.

Keith: Killua is like, he goes like, "That doesn't make any sense," and Gon's like, "Yeah, well, I'm stupid!" [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: It's great.

Jack: [laughs] Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. It's great. Oh, but then, the genius brain that brought you "what if we used the weapons inside Trick Tower to hack through the walls?" [**Sylvia:** Uh huh.] delivers his second plan.

Keith: Let's hack through the walls.

Dre: Uh huh. Well...

Jack: And by plan, I mean...

Sylvia: It's ostomy time.

Dre: Let's kick through the walls.

Keith: And this is great, because right after claiming to be stupid, you realize that Gon

has had this plan the whole time and has just been [**Sylvia:** Absolutely.] trying to clue Killua into the plan.

Jack: Yes, but we didn't need to do all the art appraisal stuff to learn this. He's done this before. [laughs quietly]

Keith: Yes, he has done this before.

Jack: This is, you know, it's really not very art appraisal-based.

Keith: But now we know to call it ostomy.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: We do now know how to call it ostomy that the nice art appraiser gave us, during that week [Sylvia chuckles] that Togashi had rented Art Appraisal from the library.

Keith: Yeah. The dub that I— the English dub is the one that uses all the medical terms for this stuff. The Japanese or the English subs for the Japanese sub have, like, different names that I can't remember them.

Sylvia: Really?

Keith: And the fact that they had—

Sylvia: My subtitles said ostomy.

Jack: Yeah, my sub—

Keith: My subtitles called it sidestepping for this one.

Sylvia: Oh.

Keith: I can't remember what the other ones were called.

Dre: Interesting.

Jack: It is—

Keith: Not the first— I think we are— I think, between the four of us, we have at least three different subs, so. [Sylvia chuckles]

Jack: It is less subtle, but it is a clearer extension of the metaphor if they are medical or physical terms, if we're talking about appraisal of a person or appraisal of a body in the same way that we're talking about appraisal of art. I suppose that makes sense. I think sidestepping and stuff is cooler, but I can see why they used the medical terms. And then, briefly, the back end of this episode becomes a very short, very exciting slasher moving, as Nobunaga stalks through the corridors of their hideout, looking at the sort of— the first thing he does is he tries to lock some doors, to sort of... [Dre laughs] impede their progress, and then he sort of has a little chuckle to himself and says, “Ha, why am I locking doors? They just break through all the walls,” and it turns out that that’s what they’ve done. They’ve been breaking through the walls, and then, in the end, they break one wall but don’t actually climb through the hole, to sort of double back behind Nobunaga.

Keith: The start of this is great. It’s the same song that they play during Gon’s fight with Hisoka, and when they first go to, um, to [laughs quietly] ostomotize the walls, [Sylvia laughs] they sort of dash straight at Nobunaga, who’s like, “Are these guys really gonna fucking try to fight me right now?” and then, no, they dash to the sides, each going, you know, 180 degrees, and this is the song. It’s great. Called “Try Your Luck”.

[clip of “Try Your Luck” begins]

Jack: Oh, yeah, this one!

Sylvia: Oh, fucking shreds.

[music ends]

Jack: Keith, can you jump a little bit further where they, like, double the harmony on the electric guitar?

Keith: Yes.

Jack: It has, like, this descant line above it. It's so good.

Keith: I think it's...

Sylvia: The two guitars are Gon and Killua. [Dre laughs]

Jack: Yeah, they are!

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Or Kurapika and his chains!

Sylvia: Also that.

[same clip of "Try Your Luck" plays briefly]

Keith: Ope.

[slightly later clip plays briefly]

Keith: No. [Sylvia and Dre laugh]

["Try Your Luck" starts and stops several times]

Jack: No. It's worth it.

Keith: It's worth it. I'll cut all this out.

[more music plays briefly]

Keith: Oh. [Sylvia laughs] No, that was my fault.

Dre: Don't cut any of this out, Keith. Keep it all.

[more music plays]

Jack: Oh well. That's okay. We'll just cut all of that out.

[later clip of "Try Your Luck" begins, finally]

Keith: There it is.

Dre: Whoo!

Sylvia: Oh! Gon and Killua are shredding right now. They're playing this.

[music ends]

Jack: Oh, it's great.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Fucking love it.

Keith: Hey, we stuck to it. It only took a minute or two.

Jack: And in the edit, uh, you know.

Sylvia: Hopefully. It's nothing, yeah.

Keith: Yeah, I'll fix that. Yeah, so, I have the whole song as a clip on my mixer, and I can use the touchscreen on the mixer to sort of set the start and end of the clip that I want to play, [Jack laughs] and it's just, like, not a very precise thing, which is why I...

Sylvia: Oh, you're just, like, chunking out bits.

Keith: Yeah, I introduced earlier the concept that I can move things around, but I'm very limited in that capacity. [Sylvia laughs quietly]

Jack: We're gonna make you do it as much as possible.

Sylvia: There are restrictions to your Nen abilities.

Keith: Yes. [laughs]

Jack: Mm, mm-hmm.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Nobunaga introduces a creepy power here. It doesn't help him too much, but it's probably going to be frightening in future, [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] and it's a new Nen ability called En.

Sylvia: Yeah. You're correct. En is going to be on the exam.

Jack: Okay.

Sylvia: Like, this is something to remember, I feel like.

Keith: It's so great that he introduces it and then we actually don't see it used.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, we just kind of get the powerpoint presentation.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Here is how it—

Dre: And we see, like, the bubble, but.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Here's how it works. He extends his aura out from himself, [**Keith:** Yeah.] a really quite substantial distance. Not like a city block but definitely, like, an entire building.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And anything that moves within that building can...

Keith: It's as if it's touching his body.

Jack: Yes. He says, "I could feel any falling leaf." We get this sort of image of him surrounded by these falling golden leaves, kind of briefly coming back to Nobunaga as a

Rōnin and the sort of poetic imagery of a Rōnin, as opposed to what he has been this episode, a grieving fairly pragmatic man guarding two children.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: He also laughs a lot in this episode. He also has big Nen horoscope. He keeps coming back to, like, “You’re an Enhancer, so this means you’re like this,” or whatever. You know. He’s reading everybody’s signs. Gon and Killua escape. Gon saying, “It’s my job to be reckless and yours to stay cool and keep me in line.” [laughs quietly]

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Yeah, he thanks Killua.

Sylvia: It’s so cute.

Keith: Like, “Hey, Killua, I’m glad you’re back to normal. You were acting like me. I’m supposed to act like me. You’re supposed to stop me from doing the stupid shit I do.”

Jack: And Killua’s sort of like, “Pshh,” you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: “Aaah.”

Keith: It’s funny, like, you know, Killua is such an overthinker and an over-analyzer, and it’s funny for Gon to just introduce this concept to him that he obviously was not aware of that, like, it’s kind of— it’s not out of character, but it’s a surprising new notch in the character of Gon Freecs, that he is like, “I’m allowed to throw myself into crazy situations, because I surround myself with people that have my back and will tell me that I’m going too far.”

Jack: Yes. However, the absolute king of that, in Gon’s cosmology, the north star is the wise man Kurapika, who is currently on a bloodthirsty path of revenge.

Keith: [laughs] Right! Yes.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: He has decided to be way worse than Gon, in this respect.

Jack: Yes. Kurapika, "I'm signing contracts with the Zoldyck family." But Gon and Killua are triumphant. They're running back towards Yorknew City, and they've decided what they're gonna do is, I think, kill the Phantom Troupe?

Keith: Yeah. Gon, I think, says he wants to kick their butts.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Buddy. Uh...

Sylvia: Nah, he can do it.

Jack: Yeah. I mean, I don't know. [Sylvia laughs]

Dre: Eventually.

Jack: You want to start making some Nen contracts?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It's great, 'cause we are now right back to "we need to be strong enough to defeat Hisoka," because they realize that the only way to defeat the Phantom Troupe is to get better at Nen.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And the person who can teach them Nen, is it calm, considered Mr. Wing [Keith laughs] and their dear friend Zushi? No. It is the man we have discovered is our murderous revenge friend, Kurapika. [laughs quietly]

Keith: I mean, this is why I was trying to say that Mr. Wing is, like, in a show with a very short list of good guys, Mr. Wing ranks pretty high.

Jack: Yeah. I mean, Kurapika is a good guy. Unfortunately, Kurapika has sort of, like, um...

Keith: Kurapika is not taking a measured approach, vis-à-vis the Phantom Troupe.

Jack: Kurapika is riding a dangerous horse.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Meanwhile. Oh, so this is when Killua reveals that Kurapika is the chain user, and Gon's like, "Oh shit, really?"

Keith: "Oh shit. That's— are you sure?" [Sylvia and Jack laugh]

Jack: As the narrator— as we, you know, pan over the city lights of Yorknew City, and the narrator says, "Meanwhile, a fearsome storm has begun to brew," and I think he's talking about two things. He's talking about the Zoldyck family showing up. I am so curious to see— well, oh shit, Milluki's about to be in town, because we last saw Milluki leaving on a hot air balloon. Do you remember that?

Keith: I do remember that, yeah.

Jack: And I wonder how many people Silva is going to bring. Probably just him, right?

Sylvia: It is so funny to think that when they were talking about hiring professionals that they just got Milluki instead. [Keith and Jack laugh]

Keith: Yeah, they show Silva and Zeno, but that's just 'cause those are the names they know. [Keith and Dre laugh]

Jack: I think Milluki's a capable assassin. I mean, he says he hasn't left the island for— the island? The mountain for a long time. But, you know, he's gone through Zoldyck training. I'm sure he's...

Sylvia: Oh, I mean, yeah, for sure. And he's talked about, like, his explosives and stuff. It's just it seems like...

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: He's got that Coen Brothers plan to mount an explosive to a gnat or something.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, the other fearsome storm, of course, is whatever Chrollo is doing. You know, Togashi and the anime team know that by making Chrollo so passive, by making him so inert almost, as soon as we even hint that he is beginning to move, the viewer is going to be going, "What's that fucking guy doing?"

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: "What's he up to?" Before, I think, you arrived, Keith, in the call, we figured out how tall Chrollo was.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Yes, I remember this. I remember this.

Jack: Do you know?

Keith: 'Cause we talked about it in, like, either the first episode or, like, the third episode or something. We were playing the height game, and we were all guessing who was the epitome of 5'7" guy, and it ended up that it was Chrollo, right?

Sylvia: No, it was— no, he's 5'10".

Keith: Oh, he's 5'10".

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Oh. Who was the 5'7" guy?

Sylvia: Uh...

Jack: Shalnark, maybe?

Sylvia: Uh...

Keith: Maybe I'm just forgetting what the— no, because I remember guessing that it was Ging, was the 5'7" guy.

Sylvia: It was Kurapika that was 5'7".

Jack: Kurapika's—

Keith: That one I think that we revealed.

Sylvia: I mean, I'm looking at a GameRant article, so I'm like, [**Keith:** Yeah.] whatever, this is probably all bullshit, but...I just...

Keith: Maybe—

Jack: Kurapika is little.

Sylvia: Googling "*Hunter × Hunter* 5'7"" is just like, "Did you mean season 5, episode 7?" [Dre laughs] No, not in this case.

Keith: Maybe it was 5'10" guy, and I'm just getting the height wrong. That might be...

Sylvia: Possible.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Anything we would like to discuss in this episode before we move into the final Hunterpedia and some outro stuff?

Keith: No.

Dre: Mm-mm.

Keith: Hey, we didn't do intros today.

Sylvia: No, we didn't.

Dre: It's fine. Hey.

Keith: We just got right into it.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: We'll just do outros, I guess.

Dre: You're using "we" here, Keith, and it's doing a lot of work.

Keith: Hey, look.

Sylvia: You know, we could have stopped it.

Keith: Anyone could have stopped me at any time. [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: We could have said something.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: I noticed pretty early on, and I just decided to let sleeping dogs lie.

Dre: No, me too, but it was just like, "Okay, no, we're rolling."

Jack: Keith is kind of our Chrollo Lucifer.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm. It's true. [Sylvia laughs] And I knew if I said, "Hey, we gotta stop to do intros," then we'd have to do a coin flip, and it's a whole situation, 'cause we'd have to turn on webcams, and it's just not worth it.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And Keith's already done a coin flip on a webcam for Friends at the Table. [laughs quietly]

Keith: That's true.

Dre: Oh, yeah. That's true.

Jack: The final Hunterpedia is Franklin, who is an Emitter. Gon turns his hand into a gun. Time for the tadpole update. He shoots the fishtank, as the tadpole—

Sylvia: [gasps] No!

Jack: —which has now turned into a frog, tries to climb out of it, [Keith laughs] and the shot ends, as the poor fucking frog gets shot by Gon.

Sylvia: Wow.

Dre: Damn.

Sylvia: Do you think that's the end of the tadpole saga?

Jack: I have no idea. I don't know. I don't know how we escalate from here. [laughs quietly]

Dre: The tadpole has the gun.

Jack: Wow.

Sylvia: Oh my god.

Jack: It was so funny, because as soon as I realized that that little tadpole was actually growing, I was like, "Oh, it's gonna turn into a frog eventually," and for it to turn into a frog and immediately get shot by Gon doing a little "I'm Franklin" joke was very funny.

Outro [2:23:55]

Keith: Outro stuff.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: I would like to introduce a new segment.

Keith: Okay.

Sylvia: Oh!

Dre: Oh.

Sylvia: I had assumed the tadpole was the segment. This is great.

Dre: Same.

Jack: No. No. My new segment is— so, I was— after, um...what's the art appraiser called? Zelip?

Sylvia: Zepile.

Dre: Zepile.

Keith: Zelip. [quiet laughter]

Dre: Close.

Jack: After Zepile, you know, gives his little appraisal of Gon, I was trying to go back and find, you know, instances where maybe Hisoka had said explicitly what he thought Gon's ideology was, and either it's never been said as clearly as Zepile said or I didn't take notes for it, but what I did do in trying to find it is I searched in my notes for the phrase "Gon is," something that I have typed 25 times [Keith laughs] over the course of writing my notes document.

Keith: About once every other episode.

Jack: And I invite you to search in your notes document for the phrase "Gon is."

Keith: Ah, mine's paper.

Jack: Oh!

Dre: Wow.

Jack: Hell yeah.

Sylvia: Mine's, uh, ephemeral, 'cause I don't keep them after we record.

Jack: Sylvi. [laughs quietly]

Dre: Hold on, I can...I don't know— does anything know how to search within the Notes app on iPhone?

Keith: No.

Sylvia: No.

Jack: Oh, no, I don't.

Dre: Okay.

Jack: Ah, this...

Sylvia: I'm so sorry, Jack. I would have prepared.

Jack: Well, let me give you some samples of situations in which I have written definitive statements about Gon Freecss. "Gon is confused."

Sylvia: Yes.

Jack: "Gon is trying to catch birds with a fishing rod." [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: True. Yeah. No lie there.

Jack: "Gon is 12."

Sylvia: Uh huh. Presumably still.

Keith: So far you're 100. 100%.

Jack: “Gon is now officially a Hunter.”

Sylvia: True. I mean...

Jack: “Gon is a radiant personality.”

Sylvia: You know what? The “officially a Hunter” thing might have been wrong, depending on when you said it, actually.

Jack: Oh.

Sylvia: Because it could have been pre-Nen.

Keith: Well, I'll say this. It's pre-Nen—

Jack: It was pre-Nen. [laughs quietly]

Keith: He was *officially* a Hunter, but he was not a full Hunter despite being officially a Hunter.

Sylvia: Right.

Jack: “Gon is mine.” That's me quoting Hisoka.

Sylvia: Okay.

Jack: “Gon is happy to see Killua.”

Sylvia: Aw, it's true.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: “Gon is going to run to the airport.” [Keith laughs] “Gon is very scared.” “Gon is surprised he's gotten so strong.” “Gon is stuck in a BeyBlades fight.” “Gon is doing great.” [Sylvia laughs quietly] “Gon is alive.”

Sylvia: This is like poetry.

Jack: “Gon is learning to hustle.” [Sylvia laughs] “Gon is not concerned about what is good or bad.” [laughs quietly] “Gon is furious again.” “Gon is an Enhancer.” Yeah, and that’s it. That is Gon, so far.

Keith: Wow.

Sylvia: I like this.

Dre: I found one. I found one scrolling.

Jack: What have you got?

Sylvia: Hell yeah.

Dre: “Gon is so nonplussed about Killua killing someone.”

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Sylvia: True.

Jack: It’s true.

Keith: Maybe if we’re—

Sylvia: I’d like to invite people to tell us what they think Gon is, maybe in a five star review of some kind.

Dre: Oh. I found one more.

Jack: You should leave us— oh, yeah?

Dre: “Gon is happyscared.”

Jack: It’s true.

Sylvia: Oh, yeah. [Dre laughs]

Jack: Regularly.

Dre: Sorry. Go ahead, Sylvi.

Sylvia: No, I'm...I think Jack had something.

Jack: Oh, you should leave us a five star review, and you should leave it on Apple Podcasts. There are probably other places that you could leave a five star review, but the place—

Sylvia: Wherever you're listening to this, honestly.

Jack: The place that counts is Apple.

Sylvia: It's the big one, for sure.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: [as if doing an ad read] Apple: the place that counts.

Jack: No. Don't believe that.

Sylvia: Let's not do that.

Dre: Mm-mm.

Jack: I'm not gonna do that.

Keith: The place that counts. I will— Apple, I will sell that to you.

Sylvia: Yeah, because they're keeping track of us.

Keith: I'll sell that to you for \$5 million. You can have that. [Sylvia laughs quietly]

Jack: I can't read the reviews anymore, [**Sylvia:** No.] because people are putting spoilers there. Now, here's the thing.

Dre: Hey. Fucking knock that off.

Jack: I was—

Sylvia: It's a very minor one. I checked. It's very funny, but still don't do that.

Keith: It's very funny, but it has accidentally become important.

Jack: Yes. I will say: I don't mind too much if it turns out that I'm not going to read these reviews now, but at the same time, maybe think of other people who are similar to me.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I'm not saying this to scold people leaving spoilers in the thing. I'm just saying.

Keith: Yeah. I will say that if anyone who is not finished this show, it only will matter because of this show, not because of *Hunter × Hunter*.

Sylvia: Yeah. It doesn't— it is a, um...

Keith: It's a Media Club Plus spoiler more than a *Hunter × Hunter* spoiler. [Jack laughs]

Sylvia: It's screenshot related. I think we can say that, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: It's screenshot stream related.

Keith: It's screenshot related.

Sylvia: That's not enough to really be too specific and give anything away.

Keith: Oh, here's something funny.

Jack: People aren't out here saying...

Keith: Have we missed the screenshot of, uh...of behind the back Chrollo?

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: That was somewhere.

Jack: I think I talked about that in an episode.

Sylvia: We talked about it.

Keith: We did talk about it? Okay, good.

Dre: Hmm.

Keith: I remember talking about the arm wrestling, but I forgot that we talked about that.

Jack: But if you want to...

Sylvia: Yeah, I think we've covered everything for the moment, other than the last screenshot.

Keith: The last one, yeah.

Jack: If you're going to go in the reviews and say, like, "Gon duels Killua to death inside the sun," or something, I'm not interested in learning anything of that stuff, or like—

Sylvia: Someone write that though, 'cause it's not true. [Keith laughs]

Jack: Or, like, "There's only one Chimera Ant, and you've already met them."

Sylvia: Right? Okay. I'm gonna...here's the thing. I've got a couple five stars I'm gonna read out in a sec, but also, here's another prompt for people if they like having these prompts. Come up with your best fake *Hunter × Hunter* spoiler in a five star review. [Dre laughs] And I would love to see some of that. So, because Jack couldn't look, it fell upon me, so I grabbed a couple here. First one from junkbones: five stars, obviously. That's also the name of the title. That's also the title of the review, though.

Keith: Right.

Sylvia: "This podcast is so great that I'm infusing my review with Nen to make everyone who listens to an episode 0.1% stronger. That will really add up, trust me."

Jack: Wow. I'm feeling it.

Keith: I can already feel it.

Sylvia: There's health benefits.

Keith: I can open jars that I couldn't open before.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: I lifted my car.

Keith: Wow!

Sylvia: Wow!

Keith: So that means that you were already pretty close to begin with.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Oh, I'm a Nen master.

Keith: Oh, okay.

Sylvia: Jack is a Nen genius.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: This podcast is opening their Nen pores. [Jack laughs]

Keith: That's why the Friends at the Table music is so good.

Jack: Ah.

Sylvia: Oh.

Jack: I'm infusing it with Nen.

Keith: It's infused with Nen subconsciously.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: That does make sense. I'm not gonna read this whole one here, but there is a review that tickled me, from Leorio's Dad, [Dre laughs] which is their username on iTunes, that is a list of both what Nen types we would be, which I'm like, oh yeah, cute. A couple people did that. But then also what our zodiac signs would be. [laughs quietly]

Jack: Ha!

Sylvia: Which I think is really funny, because, for example, they called me a scorpio, which is not true, and it's just very funny that someone looks at me and goes, "You were born in November." [Keith laughs]

Jack: Oh shit. What are our signs, Sylvi?

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Oh, would you like to— I can go through both your, um...

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Go for it.

Keith: I would love to hear if anybody's is correct.

Sylvia: Well, first you can— Keith, I'm gonna start with you.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: They said you're a Transmuter and— sorry, "a Transmuter with some aptitude for Enhancement."

Keith: Mm.

Sylvia: Wow, they really got into that. "His star sign is Cancer Sun Gemini Rising."

Keith: I am cancer. Actually, I'm a cancer/gemini cusp, really.

Sylvia: Wow, okay!

Dre: Wow.

Keith: I don't know how to know what rising— I don't know how to calculate rising, but I—

Sylvia: That's, like, a chart thing.

Keith: Okay.

Sylvia: I know mine, but that's 'cause I'm a gay woman.

Keith: I was born on June 25, which is really, like, a day after most people are considered a cusp, but...

Sylvia: Okay.

Keith: But it— you know, it's relevant that, you know, I'm on the cusp of cusp with gemini.

Sylvia: Yeah. [laughs] Jack.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: “Is an Enhancer, though they also would have success with Transmutation as well.”

Jack: Oh.

Sylvia: “Their star sign is Virgo Sun Libra Rising.”

Jack: Uh, no.

Sylvia: Yeah, I thought. [laughs quietly] Me, Sylvi, “is a Conjurer, with the possibility of becoming a Specialist later in life,” [laughing] which I think is the funniest way of saying someone's trans I've ever heard. [Jack and Dre laugh] It's like, oh yeah, you got Kurapika vibes. To the person who wrote this: I love it. And, like I said, scorpio sun, gemini rising. I literally don't have any scorpio in my chart. Gemini's in there—it's fine—but it's not rising. Dre. “Dre is a Specialist—”

Jack: Ooh.

Dre: Mm.

Sylvia: “—but has also developed Conjuraton and Manipulator abilities.”

Dre: Oh.

Sylvia: “They are a Pisces Sun Libra Rising.”

Dre: Okay. I don't...I don't know, like, what the sun and moon and rising stuff is.

Sylvia: Sun is just your basic one. It's like...

Dre: Okay.

Keith: Yeah, the month.

Sylvia: [cross] If you're a taurus, you're born in May.

Dre: [cross] I am a pisces.

Sylvia: Hmm?

Dre: I am a pisces.

Sylvia: Okay.

Keith: Oh, so they got sun two out of four.

Sylvia: Two out of four?

Keith: Two out of four, not bad.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: Pretty impressive.

Keith: Not bad for a very fake thing.

Sylvia: Yeah. Shoutout to Leorio's Dad, though, who literally— by the way, the first line of this is "I know basically nothing about astrology." [Keith and Jack laugh]

Jack: That's a great position to work from.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: I think maybe in the same way that, like, they did a study and when you, like, crack someone's back, you actually [Sylvia laughs quietly] have more of a chance of being helpful and giving someone relief if you're not a chiropractor than if you are a chiropractor. [Jack laughs]

Sylvia: Oh, I see.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Like, professional chiropractors are less effective than base average.

Sylvia: Than your buddy.

Keith: At helping people with back pain by manipulating their back. I think maybe the same is probably true with astrology. The more you know about astrology, the less effective you actually are at reading people's signs and stuff.

Sylvia: This makes sense to me.

Keith: Yeah. This is my new theory.

Sylvia: Yeah. So, thank you for that, Leorio's Dad. There's also ones for Austin and Ali here, but I figure save that for if they're around.

Jack: Right.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: 'Cause I want to know— how do you guys feel about your Nen types, by the way?

Jack: Ooh...

Keith: Uh, sorry, mine was Transmuter?

Sylvia: Yeah, you're Transmuter with some aptitude for Enhancement.

Keith: I don't think I'm a Transmuter.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: I consider myself either a Conjurer or a Manipulator, probably a Manipulator.

Sylvia: Okay. Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: What am I supposed to be?

Sylvia: I'm fine with Conjurer. Jack—

Dre: I'm looking at the personality things, and yeah, I could see that, Keith.

Keith: Yeah. Oh, sorry, no, no, no. I'm wrong. I'm wrong.

Sylvia: Yeah?

Keith: It's not Manipulator or Conjurer. It is Manipulator and Transmuter. Those are the two that I'm like, I'm one of these.

Dre: Yeah. Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, so I take it back.

Sylvia: Okay.

Keith: Transmuter is whimsical, prone to deceit, and fickle, which was—

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: I think I just talked about feeling like a Transmuter in the episode with Austin that just...

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] I feel like a Transmuter.

Keith: I feel like a Transmuter.

Sylvia: I'm gonna read the next review here, unless...

Keith: Oh yeah, go ahead.

Jack: Oh, what were mine?

Sylvia: You were an Enhancer that does some Trasmutation, Jack.

Jack: I think I am an Enhancer or a Conjurer.

Sylvia: Yeah. I fuck with mine. I'm fine being Kurapika. I'll take it. [laughs quietly]

Jack: Chain bastard!

Sylvia: Yeah! They're calling me the chain bitch!

[clip of "Chain Bastard" begins]

[Dre laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah! Thank you so much, Keith!

[music ends]

Keith: You're welcome.

Dre: Well, time to go change your Twitter username. [Sylvia and Jack laugh]

Sylvia: I have one last review here, just for today, and I promise we'll be reading more of these. Don't you worry. You've gotta tell us all your fake spoilers. "Huzzah!" from—

oh, this is from AtFSam. “Huzzah! After years of begging my wife to watch *Hunter × Hunter*, they finally started watching it when Friends at the Table started this podcast. After listening to 8 episodes in, I understand why their words meant more than mine. [Jack: Ha!] My ego is in shambles, but I’m laughing too much to care. Easily a 5 star podcast.” Thank you so much. Sorry for destroying your ego.

Keith: Hey, that sounds like someone who loves *Hunter × Hunter* but doesn't listen to Friends at the Table but does listen to Media Club Plus.

Sylvia: Yeah. Shoutout.

Keith: That’s something I want to hear about, because I just sort of just baseline assume that almost everybody that listens to this listens to it because of Friends at the Table, [Sylvia laughs quietly] so I do—

Sylvia: That’s actually—

Keith: I want to hear from people who found this not via already listening to Friends at the Table, although that person only halfway that’s true, 'cause it’s...

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Let us know how you found out about us.

Keith: It’s via a wife who listens to Friends at the Table.

Sylvia: Still.

Keith: The fake spoilers. I want to say this. I want to give a warning. Don't give fake spoilers that are really close to the real thing.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: I'm gonna be vetting these.

Keith: I want them to be fake— well, but iTunes isn't, so they are gonna be up there.
[laughs quietly]

Sylvia: No, for sure. Like, for other people, do it.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: I just mean on the show.

Keith: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Like, yeah, don't be like...

Keith: Don't be only two degrees off from the truth.

Sylvia: If we did this a few episodes back, don't write, like, "Oh, Kurapika kills Nobunaga in the fucking..."

Keith: In episode 46.

Sylvia: In episode 46 or whatever. Like, don't just replace a character from a real spoiler or whatever.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Do things like, uh, "Leorio gets his head stuck in a toilet for a full episode."
Like...

Keith: [laughs] I think, uh, "Killua kills Gon fighting inside the sun." That's a great one from Jack.

Sylvia: That's a great example.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Thank you, Jack.

Jack: "Illumi is Leorio." [Keith and Dre laugh]

Keith: Yeah, Leorio takes off his little glasses, and then, just like Rattly Pin Man, transforms into... [Sylvia laughs]

Dre: Oh, god. Yeah, Leorio's glasses are the pins.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Sylvia: Oh. Ew.

Jack: Illumi's great. I miss Gittarackur. I hope we get to see Gittarackur again.

Sylvia: [laughs] Aw. We need, like, a recut of the show where Illumi's form is the fake form and Gittarackur's is the true form. [Dre and Jack laugh]

Jack: Oh, that'd be great. I don't know why...okay. This is a final note, and then we can leave. Why Gittarackur?

Sylvia: Yeah, we should plug stuff after this, too.

Jack: Why look like that? Why choose Gittarackur?

Keith: [laughs quietly] I don't know. I guess you want—

Sylvia: Intimidating.

Keith: You want to make people afraid of you just by looking at you?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And he succeeded.

Keith: Succeeded, yeah.

Jack: Earlier today, Kat, who has not watched *Hunter × Hunter*, said to me, "You know how all the *Hunter × Hunter* heroes look really stupid?" and I said, "Yes."

Keith: Wow.

Jack: And they said, “Do the villains also look really stupid?” and I said, [emphatically] “Yes.”

Sylvia: Yeah. Yeah.

Keith: Why do they look stupid? Who looks stupid?

Jack: They meant stupid, brackets, positive.

Keith: Okay.

Dre: Okay. Sure, sure, sure, sure.

Jack: You know, everybody is outlandishly dressed and styled at all times.

Keith: I'm on the record having said that the thing that initially prevented me from watching *Hunter × Hunter* was thinking that Gon's character design was terrible, and I can no longer understand what I was thinking. I don't know why I thought that.

Jack: I can't imagine what else he would look like. He looks like Gon Freeccs. What else is he gonna look like?

Dre: Yeah. Yeah.

Keith: He really— it really was the fact that he looks so much like an Akira Toriyama character that I was like, “This is just shitty Akira Toriyama,” but that's, like, part of it, [Sylvia: Yeah.] is the fact that he looks like an Akira Toriyama.

Sylvia: We've definitely talked about this before.

Keith: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I remember talking about it, but just to bring it up, I do know why—

Sylvia: Oh yeah.

Keith: I do know what it means to think that they look stupid, because that prevented me from watching the show for a while. [Sylvia laughs quietly] Okay. So. If you're

listening to this but not listening to Friends at the Table, we were talking about you a minute ago. Why don't you check out Friends at the Table? Or maybe why don't you go to youtube.com/friendsatthetable to watch the streams and stuff that we've done, or twitch.tv/friendsatthetable to watch the streams that we're going to do?

Sylvia: Or, very importantly, go to friendsatthetable.cash, 'cause we have bonus episodes of this show. We've done two episodes on *Dragon Ball*.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: And can I announce what the next one's gonna be?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah!

Sylvia: We are gonna be watching part four— some episodes from part four of *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: Diamond Is Unbreakable*.

Keith's Soundboard: Fr— fr— fr— fr— friendsatthetable.cash!

Sylvia: Yeah!

Keith's Soundboard: Frie— frie— frie— frie— friendsatthetable.cash!

Keith: Friendsatthetable.cash to watch us watch *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure* part four.

Sylvia: Yeah. Should I drop the episodes, or...?

Keith: Yeah, drop the episodes. Why not?

Sylvia: The episodes we're gonna be watching— the plan is to do two JoJo-based episodes of Media Club Plus Plus, which is not what we call that, but, you know.

Dre: We should.

Sylvia: We're gonna be watching episodes 3, 4, and 5 from *Diamond is Unbreakable*,

“The Nijimura Brothers” parts 1 through 3.

Keith: Very exciting.

Sylvia: Very excited to have you guys...have the, like, sort of a reference point for when I talk about stuff like Stand fights.

Jack: Yeah. When is that set? I know JoJo is, like, sort of bounces around different times and genres.

Sylvia: Uh...I'm pretty sure that one's set in the '90s. I'm just gonna check really quick.

Keith: That's a reminder, you can go to friendsatthetable.cash.

Sylvia: Yeah, mid 1999.

Jack: Ooh, exciting.

Keith: [Friendsatthetable.shop](https://friendsatthetable.shop). Any personal stuff, since we didn't do plugs at the beginning?

Sylvia: Uh, you can find me anywhere, @sylvibullet, if you want. You know, this is— this and Friends at the Table are the main thing I need you to check out, so whatever.

Keith: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah. I think that's it.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: You can find me on Cohost at [@jdq](https://jdq.cohost.com). You can get any of the music featured on the show at notquitereal.bandcamp.com. One of these days, I'll write a new intro or outro theme to this show, which would be fun. Oh, what would be a good time? Maybe a “Chain Bastard” when Kurapika does some shit? That might be fun.

Keith: Sure.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: We shall see. We shall see.

Keith: You can also find me doing stuff over at Run Button, youtube.com/runbutton. You can find our podcast in the RSS feed that you're listening to this from. Just search Run Button. We are great at doing podcasts. We only do a few of them a year, but we just did one, and it was great. So yeah, check that out. We just finished our 10 year long, almost 11 year long *Digimon World* let's play. You can check that out. It's sort of a...it's a bizarre adventure to watch a let's play that takes place over 10 years. Go watch that. It's great.

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

Sylvia: That's Keith's bizarre adventure.

Keith: Yeah. That's my bizarre adventure.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: All right, that's it. Bye.

[music plays out]