

The Chain Bastard - Hunter x Hunter ep. 39-41: Media Club

Plus S01E13

Transcriber: robotchangeling

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Introduction

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

Keith: Welcome to Media Club Plus, a podcast about diving into the media that interests us and the stories that excite us. As always, we are brought to you by Friends at the Table. This season, we're watching 2011's *Hunter × Hunter*, based on the manga by Yoshihiro Togashi. My name is Keith Carberry. You can find me on Twitter at [@KeithJCarberry](#) and Cohost at [@KeithJCarberry](#). You can find the let's plays that I do at [youtube.com/runbutton](#), and you can find the first ever bonus episode for Media Club Plus on [friendsatthetable.cash](#). We've recorded TWO and have released [copied and edited in over the word “one”] TWO bonus episode where we watched basically half of a season of *Dragon Ball*. It was a blast. You should absolutely hear us talk about *Dragon Ball*, a show that I have seen all of multiple times, Dre and Sylvi have seen a little bit of

each, and then [cross] Jack had seen none of.

Sylvia: [cross] When I was six.

Keith: And that's the voice of Sylvi! Sylvi, do you want to—

Sylvia: Sorry to interrupt. [Dre laughs] Yeah, no, it was a really good time watching that episode. You can— if we're going straight into my plugs...

Keith: Yeah, go for it.

Sylvia: You can go to [@SYLVIBULLET](#) on all your social media platforms. Literally, like, search me on there. I'll show up; I promise. And if I don't, uh, sorry.

Keith: Something's happened.

Sylvia: I went out for cigarettes. [Dre laughs] You can also check out the show's TikTok at [@friends_table](#) and our YouTube, [friendsatthetable](#). We also have a Twitch channel, [twitch.tv/friendsatthetable](#).

Keith: Yeah. Lots of streams recently. Lots of stuff going up on the YouTube.

Sylvia: We recently did *Lethal Company*, which is going up on the YouTube at some point, and...

Keith: That was a blast.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Really encourage people to check that out. It was very funny.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Watch Sylvi be a pro fucking gamer.

Sylvia: [laughs] We were all on that.

Dre: No, I know, but like, you were...

Keith: But you were the one that did pro gaming.

Sylvia: No, I know, I just...

Dre: You had the pro gamer moment.

Sylvia: For people listening, so they know, all four of us were on that.

Keith: Yeah, we all four of us were on that.

Dre: That's true.

Sylvia: As well as Austin and Ali. Actually, everyone who's been on Media Club Plus was on that stream.

Dre: That's true.

Keith: It was actually the first Media Club Plus extended universe stream. [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah. The MCPCU. [Keith laughs]

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

Keith: Andrew Lee Swan?

Dre: Hey. You can find me on Twitter at [@swandre3000](https://twitter.com/swandre3000), and if you haven't already, you should rate and review this podcast five stars.

Keith: Yeah, I totally agree. You know, the reviews have slowed from the enthusiasm at the beginning. All the people who are really, uh, the kind of person that would listen to us when we ask you to go rate and review: they've all done it, so now it's on...now it's on the feet draggers to go rate and review.

Sylvia: Go review. Tell me who your favorite Phantom Troupe member is.

Keith: Oh, yeah!

Sylvia: And I will tell you whether or not you have good taste. [Keith and Dre laugh]

Keep in mind there is gonna be a delay from when I record this [**Keith**: Yeah.] and when you hear this, so it might be a little bit, but I promise you'll hear it.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And Jack de Quidt.

Jack: Hi, I'm Jack. You can find me on Cohost at [@jdg](#), and you can get any of the music featured on the show at [notquitereal.bandcamp.com](#). I know that last time— in an episode that aired recently, I said that there was going to be new themes for this podcast, and that's still true. I still fully plan to do that, [Sylvia laughs quietly] but I had to move house, and it's quite exhausting. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: Yeah. Well, by the time this comes out, you may have decided that you can do it, 'cause this will be out in three months or something.

Jack: Yeah. [sarcastic] Oh, yeah, and we're definitely not busy during that time.

Keith: No, no, that's true. [Jack laughs]

Dre: [sarcastic] I don't know what's happening.

Keith: Well, 'cause, you know, a lot could happen in three months. I'm not— I love the theme as-is. I could keep doing that for two years, so feel free to not make a new theme, but...

Dre: Wow, two years.

Keith: Yeah. Or, you know, I guess a year and a half, at this point.

Sylvia: Depends on recording, you know? Gotta give us that little buffer, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Sure, sure, sure, sure.

Keith: So, we've got a couple new things, couple new things in the production line here,

the pre-pro. [someone laugh quietly] I talked last time we recorded, I think, about the website that I found that has all of the soundtrack listed, like, timestamped [**Sylvia:** Oh.] per episode, that is amazing, that Jack can't look at, but anyone else could.

Sylvia: Could you send this to Dre and I?

Keith: Yeah, I can send this to you two. It's great.

Dre: Please.

Keith: So, I've been checking for— it's actually really hard to listen to the song in an episode and then figure out even what song that is, so it's been really great to, like, have timestamps with the dubbed names of the songs that I can see, oh, that song is called "Chain Bastard".

Sylvia: Fuck yeah it is! [Keith laughs]

Dre: Yeah it is. That's— yeah.

Keith: So.

Jack: You're kidding me. That song is called "Chain Bastard"?

Keith: Yes. Yeah, it is.

Jack: We'll talk about the chain bastard. If you're not familiar with the show, and you haven't been watching along, right now, take a guess as to which of the characters that we know is the chain bastard.

Keith: Yes.

Sylvia: Uh...

Dre: Hey, I have a question: if you haven't been listening to this or watching the show, and this is your first episode, what the fuck are you doing? [Dre and Jack laugh]

Sylvia: Chain bastard was a heavily— uh, very influential rapper from the Memphis

scene in the '90s. [laughs quietly]

Dre: Sure, yeah.

Jack: Oh, yeah, what a guy. [Sylvia laughs] Very exciting.

Keith: So, I have taken—

Dre: That's who *Hustle & Flow* is based on, yeah. [Sylvia laughs quietly]

Keith: I've taken all of the first appearances that we've got in these first three episodes that we're covering—which, by the way, are episodes 39, 40, and 41—and also one second appearance that we only got a very brief snippet of, way, way, way long ago. So, we're gonna talk about those, and I've even put little buttons on my mixer that I can press that will play a very very short couple seconds of the song, so that everyone can know what we're talking about.

Sylvia: Let's go!

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Including all of you.

Jack: Including us? [gasps]

Keith: Yes. you will be able to hear it.

Jack: This is very exciting.

Keith: Do you want me to press one?

Sylvia: Keith, you are...the host with the most, as Dre said [**Dre:** Yeah.] before we started recording.

Keith: I'll press one. I'll press one.

Sylvia: Do it. [clip of "Chain Bastard" begins] Press a button.

Dre: Oh shit.

Sylvia: Yeah!

Dre: I'm gonna go charge my Nen.

[music ends]

[Keith and Jack laugh]

Keith: So, I have a bunch of buttons that do that now. We'll talk about those when those songs come up.

Sylvia: Wait, is that “Chain Bastard”?

Keith: That was “Chain Bastard”.

Sylvia: “Chain Bastard” goes hard. I might make “Chain Bastard” my ringtone. [Dre laughs]

Keith: Yeah, “Chain Bastard” is great. That is the very beginning of this song, and it goes really hard. It's great. The other thing that I have— this is based on the struggles that we had during the Hunter Exam. I have got all of the new characters that are introduced and their name with a little picture of them next to them in our scratch doc.

Sylvia: God bless you.

Jack: This is excellent.

Dre: Yeah, seriously.

Keith: Basically...basically in order of appearance, so.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: There's a couple that I got— I didn't get exact, but anyway. So, that is what— that is the new stuff that we're working with: the music, the buttons, and the pictures.

[Sylvia laughs] And, uh, do we want to get into a little bit of recap?

Sylvia: Yeah!

Jack: Let's do it.

Sylvia: Let's go.

Dre: Cap me up.

Keith: Okay.

Sylvia: I'm jazzed.

Keith: So...

Sylvia: I'm so excited to talk about this arc.

Summary [0:07:22]

Keith: We start off with a, I think, a— it was a long flashback, but I think a pretty good recap, because, like, eight episodes ago, we saw a little bit of what Kurapika was up to, which is trying really hard to find the Nen office— or the Hunter office, not the Nen office, because Kurapika did not know about Nen.

Dre: Sure.

Keith: The Hunter office that gives you Hunter jobs and the very cool lady who is in charge of giving people jobs said, “No. Come back when you can see this,” [Sylvia laughs] and then points at nothing. Kurapika found a man in the woods who almost killed him.

Dre: I was about to say, “found” is an interesting way to say [Keith: Yes.] ran into a man who shot a bullet at him. [laughs]

Keith: Yeah. That actually was an acorn.

Sylvia: Eh.

Dre: Okay. Well, shot an acorn like a bullet.

Keith: Yeah, like, a bullet.

Sylvia: Went Conker on his ass. [Dre laughs]

Keith: Yeah, he went Conker on his ass, took out—

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Keith: It blew a huge chunk out of a tree. It was an acorn. I don't know if we ever get that guy's name, actually.

Jack: Uh, we do.

Keith: We do?

Sylvia: We do in the Hunterpedia.

Keith: In the Hunterpedia. Oh, okay.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Sylvia: I didn't write it down, though.

Keith: Whatever his name is. If somebody could let me know what that guy's name is, that would be great.

Jack: This man's name is...Mizuken.

Keith: Mizuken. Okay. So, Kurapika meets Mizuken, and Mizuken's like, "I'll teach you about—" or, sorry, he says, "Your Hunter Exam isn't over yet," is what he says.

Dre: I was gonna say. First he negs Kurapika and then is like, "All right, I guess I'll teach

you about Nen.”

Keith: Yeah. So, he’s learning about Nen from a stranger from the woods. We get a quick Nen recap. I’m sure Jack was excited about that.

Jack: [sarcastic] Always thrilled.

Keith: As part of, like, an expositional reveal that Kurapika is a Conjuror. You might remember Hisoka’s little Conjuror lesson or Nen type lesson. Conjurors are high strung, overly serious, stoic, and nervous. It fits!

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: It’s exact—

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: It fits exactly!

Dre: [resigned] Yeah.

Sylvia: [laughs] This is Hisoka’s Trick.

Keith: [laughs] Then we meet a string of new allies, and we get their powers. We get super hearing, dog training, [Sylvia laughs] magical poems, [Dre laughs] Nen puppets, and hypno femdom. [Sylvia and Jack laugh]

Dre: Uh huh. Also, please, they’re haikus, not just any poem.

Sylvia: Also, the last one could also be called dog training.

Jack: Right, right, right.

Keith: Also called dog training.

Dre: Yeah, that’s true.

Keith: There’s two different kinds of dog training.

Jack: There's some real Venn diagrams happening here.

Keith: Kurapika's newfound powers have something to do with whipping chains around, but also, they can detect things?

Sylvia: It's so cool.

Keith: It's very cool, but it's also confusing, and I'm sure that we'll learn a lot more about that in the future. We take a quick detour to Gon and Killua, who are on a boat, and Killua has a pet hawk, apparently. They learn more about Greed Island and then lose all of their money trying to make a lot of money. We see Kurapika's plan start to take shape. Basically, he wants to get in good with the mafia to find and kill the body traders, T-R-A-D-E-R-S, [Sylvia laughs] who buy and sell Kurta eyes. Kurta is the name of his clan, if you remember.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: The clan that was wiped out for their eyes. Depending on the sub or the dub or which sub you're watching, they're either one of the seven most beautiful objects in the world or, much less whelming, one of the seven most beautiful colors in the world. That's my dub. No— yeah, my dub says “seven most beautiful colors.” While this is happening, an even greater group of freaks is assembling in some abandoned building. [Jack and Sylvia laugh] Dot dot dot...

Jack: They're finally here.

Keith: They're finally here. We've been hearing about the Phantom Troupe since, like, episode 7. No...

Dre: Even before then.

Keith: Even before that. Even before that.

Sylvia: Since, like...

Keith: Even before that.

Sylvia: Yeah. I think since Kurapika showed up.

Keith: They're referenced earlier than that, but I think they're named in, like, episode 7 first.

Sylvia: You might be right about that.

Jack: We will get into— we are going to spend basically the back half of what you are listening to right now talking about the Phantom Troupe.

Sylvia: Oh yeah.

Jack: But I think that it is...it is so exciting that we have immediately sort of di— I just nearly knocked a fucking full cup of tea off my desk. Holy shit.

Sylvia: Oh good lord.

Keith: Good catch.

Dre: So jacked up.

Jack: It is so exciting that we have immediately dialed into the fact that we have been talking about the bogeyman since episode 1 in this show, [**Keith:** Yeah.] and the bogeyman has finally been introduced, and the way that that happens is really cool.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Really, really interesting. It's a real Togashi move of how he chooses to introduce his characters.

Keith: We're back to the old intro. Sorry, by the old intro, I mean the intermediate intro. We briefly returned to the original intro, and now we're at the second—

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Keith: The Nen intro. We got a [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] brief back to the, like, “monsters and beasts!” the better intro, and now we've got the Nen intro again, which is fine.

Dre: Wow.

Keith: Any first, uh...any other first impressions that we want to get out before we start getting into, like, stuff that happened in this episode?

Sylvia: We also— did you mention Neon[pronounced NAY-on] at all in your summary? Did I miss that?

Keith: No, no. So, we could talk about— yeah, we could talk about—

Sylvia: Just worth ment—

Keith: Is it Neon[NAY-on]? I just say Neon[NEE-on].

Sylvia: I think it might be Neon[NEE-on].

Dre: I thought it was Neon[NEE-on]. Yeah.

Jack: In short—

Sylvia: I might have just been hearing an accent—

Keith: Yeah, maybe.

Sylvia: At some point, honestly. So, yeah, Neon, who is the daughter of the, like, crime boss that Kurapika's trying to work for and has [**Jack:** Right.] a fortune telling poem ability.

Keith: Yeah. They introduce her and refer to her as just the boss, even though her dad—

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: —obviously is the, like, head of the family. She is there. They—

Sylvia: She's— you know.

Keith: They basically seem to answer to her, [**Jack:** Yes.] which is interesting. And yeah, we'll get to that. Is, uh...I think she shows up in episode 40?

Sylvia: I believe so.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Towards the latter half of what we watched this week, at the very least.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Any other, uh, anything else to get out before we dive into episode 39?

Sylvia: Mm, I'm ready to go.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: No, let's go.

Keith: All right.

Jack: Let's do it.

Keith: All right.

Jack: I will say that I think—and this is diving in—Togashi's game...

Keith: Yeah. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: That he plays on me [**Keith:** Yeah.] every time is that he starts a— and this might also be Keith's game.

Keith: [surprised/amused] Hm?

Jack: I don't know.

Dre: [intrigued] Mm.

Jack: Because I know that you've spent a lot of time looking at these spreadsheets as

to the episode order. The little episode chunks of three episodes or something start out, and for about 12 minutes, I'm like, "Yeah, okay, yeah. This is— yep. It's more *Hunter × Hunter*. Yep. This is what happens," and then the afterburners fire, and, like, a cavalcade of nonsense takes place. [Dre and Keith laugh] And it's like, this trick has happened to me so many times that I just need to fully buckle in for the first 10 minutes of every chunk of *Hunter × Hunter* [Keith: Mm.] to just be like, we're gonna get a little recap. You know, pieces are going to be [Keith: Yeah.] moved around the board that I've seen before, but don't worry. Just get ready. [laughs quietly]

Keith: I'll say that, like, having four minutes at the beginning of every episode, every new episode of an anime being basically unnecessary is super common.

Dre: Sure. Yeah.

Keith: This is like a way to pad out episode lengths. Animation is difficult to do. It's expensive. They're working with, like, unfinished material a lot of the time, and so it's like, [Sylvia: Mm-hmm.] we need four episodes that don't advance— we need four minutes that don't advance anything in this episode, or we're gonna run out of manga to adapt.

Sylvia: Also, with something like *Hunter × Hunter* that's sprawling so much, [Keith: Yeah.] they use it—

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: They use that as a way to, like, basically catch up on things that would be...I don't know. Like, you could do, like, a "last time on" recap, but instead they do just, like, a truncated version of the events, so you can just, like, [Keith: Yeah.] here's what happened chronologically to Kurapika is kind of, like, how it feels.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: Right.

Keith: And it's not exactly as true with *Hunter × Hunter* that, like, they're trying not to

bump into— although I guess it is with Togashi's, like, health issues and long hiatuses. I guess it does [Dre: Yeah.] make sense to try not to, like, hey, I know that we've still got 70 episodes more that we can make before we hit the end of what is written, but who knows if we get there and there's nothing more that he's written in that time. So I don't know, like...it does sort of make sense that they do the normal— to me, the normal anime thing of, like, having a long intro and a recap at the beginning or just, like, replaying the last two minutes of the previous episode. Stuff like that. But I will say that this is the most tortured section of the show, in terms of me grouping episodes together. This has changed— everything else that we're working on is, like, basically exactly as my first draft had it, which is fantastic, but the Phantom Troupe arc I have rewritten four times, including just last week.

Jack: Are you able to speak to why you are making those changes?

Keith: Yes.

Jack: Or is that better to be talked about after we finish the arc?

Keith: Um...okay, do you— would you consider— and I know that you're not the most sensitive person to spoilers in the world, but sometimes, you know, it's still better not to know. Would you rather not know when there's— which episodes I consider having some really exciting stuff in them?

Jack: No, no, you can say that.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: The exciting bit is watching the show.

Keith: Episodes 46 and 47 have some really exciting stuff in them, [Sylvia laughs] but I didn't want them to be their own two episodes, so I've been trying— it's really difficult to, like, make sure— to, like, line things up so that these two episodes in the middle of the season then have, like, a balanced— the whole rest of the season has to be balanced around them?

Jack: Interesting.

Keith: So, for a while, they were split up, and I really hated that, and then I redid it so they were on their own, and I didn't really like that either, and then I had [**Dre:** Mm.] the impulse of like, well, maybe we could do the first five episodes instead of the first four, and then I was like, no, because then we barely have any episodes covering this arc, and I like this arc a lot. So instead, I did a compromise, which is I put four episodes that I really like together in the middle, and then we're gonna do three this week and two next week, and that— I'd rather have the two next week that I think is a little bit, like, underripe as a set to watch than [**Jack:** Interesting.] blow through these five episodes or isolate the two really [**Jack:** Yeah.] important episodes. So.

Jack: Huh.

Keith: This has been a torture to figure out how to order these. [Keith, Sylvia, and Dre laugh] So, I did watch these three episodes, and I think that they all work really well together, and I'm glad with how it turned out, and [**Jack:** Yeah.] there's no going back.

Jack: Yep. Fair enough. It felt consistent. It felt like it worked.

Keith: Yeah.

Episode 39: Kurapika [0:18:18]

Jack: I mean, so, these episodes begin— it was such a delight to begin with Kurapika, and at first, you know, I felt this kind of resentment that we were just covering old ground, but we got some really interesting stuff.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: In short, you know, we learn that Kurapika is a Conjurer, and we have some really interesting conversations with Mizuken, [**Keith:** Yeah.] his sort of trainee-slash-murderer.

Keith: I will say, [**Jack:** Yes?] another thing is— sorry, Jack, to interrupt, but another

important thing about that recap at the beginning is it's important to remember shonen is for kids and these kids have [**Jack:** Oh, yeah.] forgotten what is going on, because it happened 10 episodes ago.

Dre: Oh, sure, yeah, yeah, yeah. [Keith laughs]

Jack: Well, and—

Sylvia: Also, serialized media, it happened two and a half months ago, right?

Keith: Two and a half months. Right, exactly, yeah, yeah, yeah. For us, actually, two and a half months ago. [laughs quietly]

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: True.

Jack: I think also, uh...I'm thinking about the children as well and also for people like me who like Kurapika. We haven't seen Kurapika for a while.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: And kind of getting resituated with Kurapika's interests and affect is valuable.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And those interests and affect kind of come through quickly. Kurapika is grumpy right now.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Kurapika, separated from his husband, Leorio, is in a foul mood.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And he's also in a foul mood because he wasn't allowed to take a Hunter client. He has to learn Nen. I get the impression that Kurapika feels about Nen similarly to I do.

It's a lot of expl— and Kurapika is the king of explaining things, [**Dre:** Yeah.] but even he— maybe he loves to be the one giving the powerpoint.

Keith: Right.

Dre: Uh huh.

Jack: And doesn't like to hear the powerpoint from somebody else.

Keith: That'll come up, I think, later.

Dre: Yeah, we'll touch back on that next episode. [Dre and Jack laugh]

Keith: We will touch back. Oh, and we will also touch back up— we'll also touch back on that, like, in five episodes.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yes.

Keith: Some of the worst—

Jack: So—

Keith: Some of Kurapika's worst lines happen at a very crucial moment, which is very funny.

Jack: But Kurapika is— I'll watch Kurapika do a powerpoint presentation. We get some really good Kurapika powerpoints. He returns to the narrative with his full capacities to exposit stuff.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: But we learn that, you know, Conjurers— Kurapika is a little disappointed that he is not a...dah dah dah...what does he want to be?

Dre: Enhancer?

Keith: He wants to be an Enhancer.

Jack: An Enhancer.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Because Enhancers...per Kurapika, he could use that to, like, hone his body, hone weapons, you know...I think he sees, wrongly, an Enhancer as having the clearest utility for a path of revenge. And what he is told is, "Well, look, you can learn Enhancer stuff," and we get reminded again that your proximity on the Nen wheel to the other sort of Nen schools means that you can, um...

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's easier and harder to learn from them. And we get some, like—

Sylvia: With percentages.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah.

Keith: Speaking of— we do get— I think we've gotten those percentages before.

Sylvia: Have we?

Keith: The 80, 60, 40?

Dre: I think Wing went into that.

Sylvia: Okay.

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Dre: That seems like a very Wing thing to have done.

Keith: But we do get one new thing, which is: what is special about the placement of the Specialist on that chart?

Jack: The Specialist is at the bottom, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Between Conjurer and Manipulator.

Jack: And we are told— and this is very odd. This is, I think, just weird writing. We're told that there is a 0% chance that you can learn Conjurer skills. However...

Keith: Or Specialist skills.

Jack: Kind of— sorry, Specialist skills. However, you kind of can, right? We are told almost in the same breath that there's a 0% chance you can learn them, but with real application, you actually can? I'm not sure I follow what was happening there.

Sylvia: It's so funny. It's like...

Keith: We might have different subtitles for this, because I think they explain it pretty good in mine. Sorry, Sylvi, do you also have them?

Sylvia: I just think the wording is really funny. At least on mine, Mizuken says, "You can't change what you're born with," which is really funny.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: That's true. He does say that.

Sylvia: Just personally, very funny. [Dre chuckles] And then, also, in, like, later, I think they use the words like something about, like, developing into a Specialist or, like, becoming one, but not necessary that you'd learn their skills. Like, that your Nen would change in a way to become a Specialist. Am I right, Keith? If you have a better explanation, please go for it.

Keith: Right, yeah. So, the...basically the thing is, yeah, you can't learn a Specialist skill, but can become a Specialist, which is the thing. Like, Wing also kind of talks about how it's rare but your Nen type can change, and Mizuken says that a Specialist is

usually someone who, like, goes through an extreme hardship when they're young or they're just born with it. And so I think the implication is that, you know, someone who goes through an extreme hardship, in their later years, could swap to Specialist. Their Nen type could change mid-life.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: And that is more likely to happen to Conjurers and Manipulators.

Jack: Because of their proximity on the wheel to...

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: And to come back to the way Austin talked about the sort of schematic construction of this, especially as it relates to children's fiction. There is something really cool, and I think you see it quite a lot in these sort of schematics of, like, here are a bunch of special groups, but one of them is kind of more special than the others. Might not necessarily be better, but even within that wheel, there is, like, a...there is a further tier within the wheel.

Dre: Mm, sure.

Jack: And here that tier is Specialist. Have we, prior to this chunk of episodes— we'll get— I'm so excited to talk about the goblin later, but.

Sylvia: [laughs] Okay.

Jack: Prior to this chunk of episodes, have we met a Specialist?

Sylvia: Uh...

Keith: There is—

Jack: Or are we told—

Dre: I cannot remember...I forget his name. The guy who fought Hisoka and had the, uh—

Jack: That is Kastro.

Dre: Kastro. Was his—

Jack: No, he was a Manipulator, right?

Dre: I know he was a Manipulator, but wasn't the whole thing that he was basically trying to be a Specialist with the, uh...

Sylvia: But he was using Conjurer techniques.

Dre: With the doppelganger? Okay, okay.

Keith: It was a...

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: I couldn't remember if the doppelganger was classified as Conjurer or Specialist or whatever.

Keith: So...this is not super important. I believe that the thing with Kastro was that he was an Enhancer who was using both Conjurer and Emitter techniques, or Manipulator.

Jack: He was, like, splitting himself.

Dre: Okay. Okay.

Keith: Conjurer and Manipulator. So, he had, like, a really low compatibility with Manipulator and Conjurer, and his doubling technique relied on both of those things.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Okay. Gotcha.

Keith: So no, I don't believe that we have anyone whose power we can look at and say, "They're a Specialist."

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yep.

Keith: Until...

Jack: Maybe the goblin.

Keith: Until this episode.

Sylvia: Yeah, until the ones we watched today.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yes. So, what is interesting is that, you know, Mizuken sort of breaks down some interesting things about Conjurers and sort of say, you know, you could conjure a really sharp— so, firstly, you can't conjure weapons that sort of have inhuman capacity. You could never build a sword that could cut anything. You could build a very sharp— you can conjure a very, very sharp sword, but at that point, you might as well just go and buy a sword.

Keith: I love that.

Jack: It is so interesting, and I don't have the information or necessarily the interest to, like, dig into this specific aspect of it.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: But there's something so interesting to me about the way Hunters are like, money doesn't mean anything to us. You know, the thing that is interesting to us is, like, our own skill and effort.

Sylvia: There's a big moment like that later with Gon and Killua later too that I think speaks to [**Jack:** Yeah.] money being, like, weirdly non-material to a lot of Hunters.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Just buy one. Yeah, just go ahead and buy one.

Keith: Although I think I have a— I have a counter to that when we get there that'll be a fun thing to talk about.

Jack: Yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: It's in my notes on the doc, if we want to get into that when it comes up.

Jack: And then, having learned Nen but still with some sort of reservations, Kurapika goes back to Rei, sees her horrid little ghost gremlin in the air, and takes on a client. Kurapika is looking for—

Keith: And, by the way—

Jack: Yes?

Dre: Oh.

Keith: We never learn what the fuck that thing is. [laughs] We never—

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: It's just a Nen spirit she's conjured, right?

Keith: It's just like...yeah, it's just, like, no...but there's no, like, hint, like...you know, no one who we've met so far could, like, point to the air and conjure a weird spirit thing.

Jack: No.

Keith: [laughs] And we have no idea what that thing does. I just think it's fun to have this horrible little guy that we never figure out. We just like—

Dre: Sure.

Keith: There's just no— there's nothing about it. We just...

Sylvia: You know what that is? That's a Stand.

Keith: Oh, it's a Stand.

Jack: It is a Stand.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: There are a couple of Stands in this, sort of.

Sylvia: I will point out when there are [**Jack:** Yeah.] Nen users who are very, "oh, you have a Stand," 'cause there's a few.

Jack: And, you know, so, Kurapika is looking for a job at Yorknew City, and it is very interesting that a lot of the clients—hmm. There are a few clients available. There are four that Kurapika could work as a bodyguard for, and they're all bidding on different things. One is trying to bid on, as far as I can tell, a fancy gun. Another is trying to bid for fine china plates.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: The third is a flesh collector, [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] seeking a piece of tattooed skin with a dragon on it, the head of a child with jelly syndrome, and some other things. And at this point, Kurapika's eyes turn red, because it is this proximity, like Keith said, to the flesh collectors, to the people who are buying and selling, among other things, Kurta Clan eyes, that is not only a path to his vengeance—you know, vengeance for anybody who would touch that thing as a product—and also a path to the Phantom Troupe, right? If these people [**Keith:** Yeah.] are moving in the same circles as the Phantom Troupe, it really is sort of like a perfect tactical nuke of revenge from Kurapika.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: I feel like this part where the flesh collector comes up and Kurapika's eyes turn red is just, like, one of the first really good indicators of the tone that this arc is gonna be playing in.

Keith: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Sylvia: I think that, while Heavens Arena definitely had some, like, darker moments, especially with Hisoka and, like, the...when, like, the evil Nen came up. This definitely still feels like it is [**Keith:** Yeah.] getting darker. I think that, like, they do a good job of using the color palette to that effect. Like, a lot of these scenes, especially with Kurapika at the, like, job agency, the Hunter job agency, is, like, more muted and, like, navy colors and like...

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: A lot of the stuff feels like it's either happening when it's overcast or at night.

Keith: Yeah, lots of half-shaded face closeup on Kurapika.

Sylvia: Yeah. There's a lot of that in these episodes, and I think, like—

Keith: You'll notice, actually, that is, like...I mean, it's like...it's impossible to know exactly what they're trying to say, but that, to me, looks like that is, like, what's inside of Kurapika's head at that moment.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Like, there's a moment where very clearly it is a bright sunny day, green grass, green trees, and it cuts to Kurapika. It's at the very end of this episode, I think, or maybe it's the end of next episode, but...yeah, it's the end of next episode, where, like, it cuts to a closeup of his face, and it is, like, evil woods that he's surrounded by. [Dre laughs]

[0:30:16]

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: And it's like, everything is purple and black, and his face is, like, covered in shadow. One second ago, it was a sunny day. It was, like, mid afternoon.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: And they do that a lot. Like, you know, there's a storm brewing in Kurapika about this.

Sylvia: It's really— I think it's really well done. It'll be even more apparent later on, but I really enjoy the...

Keith: Do we—

Sylvia: The way that this arc sort of presents itself.

Keith: Do we want to jump back to what happens in between the two visits to the, uh, the Hunter store?

Sylvia: The training stuff?

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, sure.

Keith: Specifically the chain stuff.

Dre: Yeah, absolutely.

Sylvia: [cross] Oh, we need to talk about the chain stuff.

Jack: [cross] The chain stuff has not happened yet.

Keith: We have got to talk about the chain stuff.

Jack: I think the chain stuff happens after he is told that he could sign on with a flesh collector.

Keith: Oh, it is?

Dre: Right.

Sylvia: Oh, okay.

Keith: Oh, he goes back to training?

Dre: Yeah, and we see the scarlet eyes, and then it flashes back to that conversation, yeah. I'm pretty sure that's the order.

Keith: Oh, okay. That makes sense.

Jack: Because we learn that Kurapika— and this is great. This is...

Keith: Oh.

Jack: Kurapika is...oh, yeah?

Keith: Oh, sorry, yeah, yeah. I was just saying 'cause I'm now looking at my notes instead of just remembering them, and yeah, that is the order.

Jack: Oh.

Keith: We do— we get a remark about how it only took him six months to learn and how that's very impressive. We just saw a couple kids do it in, like, two months, but that's fine. No, it was about six months. It was about six months.

Dre: Yeah. Yeah, but they all— I mean, I also assume that, like, Killua or that Kurapika didn't get his fucking Nen pores blasted open.

Keith: Oh, yeah, that's probably true. He didn't get his Nen pores blasted open.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: I forgot that happened.

Keith: So yeah, we do— we cut back to the camp where they've been living in the woods, learning Nen.

Jack: Yes, and Kurapika has decided that the weapon that he would like to conjure. So,

he's heard everything that this man has said about the limitations of conjured weapons.

Keith: Yeah. Passes his pop quiz.

Jack: He passes his pop quiz.

Dre: [laughs] Yeah.

Jack: He gets given a little quiz.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And he decides that what he wants to do is conjure chains, because there are some people who walk this world that need to be chained to Hell.

Keith: Yeah. There's an evil—

Sylvia: Goes so fucking hard.

Keith: My subs said, uh, "There's an evil running loose that needs to be chained down to Hell."

Sylvia: Killer! [Keith laughs]

Jack: It's so good.

Dre: Sick. So sick.

Jack: Because Kurapika is...

Keith: 15.

Jack: It's...he's 15. [Keith laughs]

Dre: Oh, womp, womp.

Jack: And his whole—

Keith: Or something.

Jack: No, I was kind of aiming for that, right? He's...

Sylvia: I think...I remember... [sighs]

Jack: He's probably in his late teens, right?

Sylvia: Yeah. I know he is, like, under 18. I know...

Keith: He's younger than Leorio, who's, like, 19. I think he's a couple years younger, and he's also a couple years older than Gon and Killua, who are 12.

Sylvia: Right. He is...

Keith: So yeah, he's, like, somewhere from, like, 15 to 17 or something.

Sylvia: The reason why— I have figured out why I remember this. Someone mentioned that he is 19 where the manga is right now and was—

Dre: Oh, okay.

Sylvia: And on the wiki, he is 17 at the time of the Heavens Arena arc.

Keith: Ohh.

Jack: Oh, cool.

Keith: Okay. So, yeah, so 16, 17, yeah.

Jack: You know. I feel like—

Sylvia: I think it was very much a “Kurapika should be at the club right now” post.

Jack: Instead of whatever Kurapika is doing.

Sylvia: Instead of whatever's happening on the manga, [**Keith:** Yeah.] which I don't want to know about.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: Yeah, so, like, Kurapika as a character, especially when he is in the sort of group of four, represents a kind of wisdom and a kind of patience and a kind of reserve and also, I think, a generosity to others that is sort of the flip side of his revenge. He is someone who has been through an immense torment and has kind of come out of it being like, “There are so many things that I have learned about the world and the ways I want to interact with people.” And as we’ve seen in the Trick Tower, the other side of that coin sometimes reveals itself, which is that when in proximity to his revenge, whether that is sort of mental proximity—you know, being asked to think about it—or when in physical proximity to his revenge being meted out, the coin is turned over, and he is just as sort of poised, but he is deeply bleak. And it’s like what we talked about with, you know, looking around him and seeing the evil forest.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And it is so interesting, after— it’s great pacing, actually. After having had this lovely little mini arc with Gon and Killua at Mito’s house playing video games, figuring out essentially a fun little scavenger hunt, to cut back to another character who is just, like, usually quite cautious and careful and thoughtful, being like, “I am going to craft chains to tie my enemies to Hell,” and I think this is just because he feels that proximity to the revenge. He is like, it’s now or never. We’re going to Yorknew City. The Phantom Troupe are going to be there. Would you like to learn something interesting about spiders? You know?

Dre: Hmm.

Jack: You know, this is the friend of yours having an absolute hell time at their job, [Keith: Yeah.] and their entire personality transforms.

Keith: There’s also, like, you know, we talked about not having Leorio around. You know, Leorio forces Kurapika to defend that other side of the coin by being kind of outward— whether it’s true or not about Leorio, like, presenting as sort of greedy and practical and in it for the money and in it for living an easy life, and so Kurapika has to, like, defend justice and, like, do-goodery. And instead of having Leorio around, he’s got

no one around and doesn't trust anybody and is like, "All of these people are my enemy." [laughs quietly]

Jack: And has just had to learn Nen, which we know is really intense and unpleasant.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: He seems to be being taught Nen by someone who doesn't like him. The only reason he is learning it is to, you know, start hanging out with the flesh collectors, and this is—

Keith: Who he wants to kill.

Jack: Who he wants to kill. This is the classic story of revenge, of, you know, I need to get close to the people I want to do revenge on, and that means that I have to make compromises about the things I believe. You know, it is, like, the deep dark [Keith: Yeah.] standard revenge story that is just fun to see played out.

Keith: And that they tip the hand of way back during Trick Tower, when they're interrogating Kurapika about his intentions and if he can go through with his plan, having not killed anyone before, and he's basically like, "Yeah, I'll do whatever I've gotta do."

Jack: Yep.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And in Trick Tower, Kurapika is in full deescalation, "I don't want to kill anybody I don't need to; we need to talk this through" mode, through most of the Hunter Exam, and it is very interesting to hear Kurapika say, "I'll do whatever I need to do," writing the check that he is now cashing [Sylvia: Yeah.] in this ruined city. Hey, is this Meteor City, do you think?

Sylvia: I don't think it is.

Keith: No, it's not.

Jack: There are just multiple ruined cities.

Sylvia: No. [cross] Meteor City will come back up.

Keith: [cross] Well, Meteor City does not exist on the map.

Sylvia: Yeah, that's also true.

Jack: Ah. I hear that the Phantom Troupe are from there.

Keith: Mm.

Jack: No, what does Canary say? She says, like, "It's a terrible place. That's why the Phantom Troupe are from there," or something.

Dre: Something like that, yeah.

Keith: Yeah, that's basically...yeah, yeah. Oh, it is the dumping grounds for the world's pollution, and it's a place that is not on any map, and...ah, there was something about the Phantom Troupe, but I don't remember what it was.

Jack: It's like, low-lives are from there.

Keith: And it was also, like, yeah, it is the home of, like, the world mafia and also the Phantom Troupe.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Yes. We don't really know much about Kurapika's chains, at this point.

Keith: No.

Jack: We get a really cool closeup of his hand, [**Sylvia:** Ah!] and we can see that he is wearing one of the sickest anime weapons I have ever seen.

Dre: [laughs] Yep. Yeah, buddy.

Jack: Although, right now, it looks like a piece of jewelry.

Sylvia: Oh, yeah.

Jack: I'm doing it a disservice to call it a weapon right now. It just looks like he is wearing a series of chained rings connected on his knuckles [**Keith:** Yeah.] of his fingers and his thumb on his right hand.

Sylvia: I need some.

Jack: [cross] They're so cool.

Keith: [cross] Well, he gets in a big fight with Mizuken over this, because they had just finished saying there's no point in conjuring a weapon, because you can just buy the weapon. Conjuring it doesn't do anything for you except make you waste a bunch of time learning how to conjure the thing. Like, if you want chains, just go out and get chains. It's not even that hard. And like, this is the— this is, like, kind of— this is an obstinance that we haven't seen from Kurapika, who's just like, "I've got my mind set on the chains, and I'm going to make it work." Storms out.

Jack: Because it's an ideological weapon. You know?

Keith: It's an ideological weapon, right. Which is why... [clip of "Chain Bastard" begins] he's the chain bastard. [Sylvia, Keith, and Dre laugh]

[music ends]

Sylvia: Oh, this is great.

Jack: We've got the chain bastard.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And, yes, the chain bastard's theme makes this emergence as he talks about Hell. This theme is amazing, and the— who are the composers on *Hunter × Hunter*?

Keith: There is just one composer.

Sylvia: Oh.

Keith: I'm forgetting his name right now, but I'll look it up right now.

Jack: Okay.

Sylvia: I'll look into it.

Jack: He has this sort of...

Sylvia: Yoshihisa Hirano.

Keith: Yes. Yeah.

Jack: Hirano. Amazing. Hirano has this thing that he does regularly that I love so much. It's the inverse of—

Keith: It's so good.

Jack: He is— and he's writing so much music.

Keith: And his capacity to jump from these, like, battle themes with the electric guitar to, like, beautiful, beautiful classical instrumentation.

Jack: It's great. So—

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: It's amazing. We actually get an excellent moment of that in just a minute, so. But go ahead, Jack.

Jack: Yeah.

[cut]

Keith: Hey, everyone. This is Keith just popping in with a music note. I didn't have this information at the time of recording; I just missed it; but I just wanted to give full credits on this. We have— Yoshihisa Hirano was— does have “series music by” credits on 148

episodes. We also have Shigeki Ippon credited as the contrabass player for all 148 episodes. No other musicians are credited. And then you have Thierry Malet credited as “composer: additional music/orchestrator” on 116 episodes. So, not on anything that we've seen so far? No, that's wrong. We've just started getting into the Thierry Malet stuff. I don't know what “additional music/orchestrator” means, but there you go.

[cut]

Sylvia: His resume makes a lot of sense with some of this stuff.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: He did, um...

Keith: There's a really sad dip in that resume, because he— because Japan is really, really terrible about drugs, and he was caught with marijuana and was, like—

Sylvia: No!

Jack: God.

Dre: No...

Keith: Blacklisted for, like, eight years?

Dre: The devil's lettuce.

Sylvia: So he's too fucking cool for— I'm glad he's getting work again.

Keith: He just started work again. He just started working again.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Which is really exciting. But yeah, he was basically blacklisted for almost a decade.

Jack: That's horrible.

Sylvia: [cross] He was one of the composers on *Death Note*. Shoutout.

Keith: [cross] Honestly, we're lucky that they still air *Hunter × Hunter*.

Jack: Whoa. Yeah. Yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: With how they are about that stuff.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: So, he has this technique where, often with these really great battle themes, he will have this just roaring guitar intro. Hit “Chain Bastard” please, Keith.

[clip of “Chain Bastard” plays]

Sylvia: Ah!

Jack: And then, as the theme develops over the next, you know, few minutes, he is a savvy enough composer to be like, “Sadly, I cannot just rip the electric guitar for two minutes, because my viewers are going to need to be interpreting information on the screen.” You know, there’s a degree of sort of satiation that you have to avoid with stuff like that. And so, very often, his battle themes move into these really striking rhythm guitar sections or really striking percussion sections as we, you know, move out of this massive guitar flourished open. And this one, “Chain Bastard”, turns into this really cool kind of, like, triplet shuffle groove? It settles into this really, like, driving, syncopated, but also with the kind of lightness of triplets, of sort of waltz time. It is so cool.

Keith: Yeah. Actually, I think I can probably do...

[different “Chain Bastard” clip plays]

Sylvia: Oh, yeah.

Dre: There it is.

Keith: That the part?

Jack: Yep, that's exactly the part. It's like that four to the floor groove of, like, the cymbals with the rhythm guitar coming through in these triplets to give it this kind of waltz feel, which serves to, you know, have "Chain Bastard"... "Chain Bastard" is a figure of dynamism and power, you know?

Keith: Yeah, and there is something else. I don't know if you heard. In that last, there's those dissident single notes on the piano, the [imitates]. Did you hear that?

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: In what I just played?

Jack: That's the bastard.

Keith: That's the bastard part, and when— [Dre laughs] Jack, I don't know how much you have left in your point, but I want to drive through this while we're here.

Jack: No, no, no.

Keith: As Kurapika is leaving the Nen office— this song has been playing the whole time. Since the fight, through the last bit of the conversation with, um...sorry, what is her name from the Hunter office?

Jack: Rei.

Keith: Rei. And then it fades out into just that last stuff, just the dissident notes. ["Chain Bastard" piano clip plays] We've got this stuff here.

Jack: So cool.

Keith: And it's just closeup on his face, and then someone notices him, and we get this, like, huh? Like, turns around, and it is a new character that we don't know. We will soon learn that her name is Melody. She can hear heartbeats, and that sound, the "Chain Bastard" sound... ["Chain Bastard" piano clip plays] That is the sound of Kurapika's

heart.

Sylvia: It fucking rules. It's so... [Dre laughs]

Jack: It's so good!

Keith: It becomes— it pulls the sound out from the soundtrack and into Melody, who can literally hear it. Her tune, by the way, is called “A Field in Spring”.

Jack: Let's save it until we get to—

[beep]

Keith: Oh!

Jack: Oh.

Keith: Nope. We'll save it.

Jack: Because we gotta introduce—and I say this with all the love in my heart—the goblin.

Keith: Oh, the— Rei's goblin?

Jack: Melody is the goblin.

Dre: Wow!

Sylvia: Wow!

Keith: [laughs] Oh, Melody's the goblin. Oh my god.

Sylvia: You will regret your words and deeds.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: You will regret this.

Jack: I am the goblin lover. I always have room in my heart for a goblin.

[0:45:01]

Keith: Okay.

Sylvia: Okay.

Jack: Melody arrives and is a very small person of initially indeterminate gender, which I mention because the show makes a point of that later on.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: She is, uh, she has a bald head, and like a— she has a bald top of her head and a ring of hair, almost like a monk's tonsure.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: She has very pale skin. She has a single pair of sharp sort of, like, buck teeth. She looks like she's come from another show.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And at first, I was like, this character— [Dre laughs]

Keith: Not the only character that looks like they've come from another show in this set of episodes.

Jack: That we will see today. And she almost looks like she's come from *Dungeon Meshi* or something. And my first reaction on seeing her was this character's familiar to me, and I think this is because...I'm about to make some predictions here.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: First— I was about to say I think Melody is a very well-liked character, but I can't imagine there are any characters in *Hunter × Hunter* who aren't very well-liked.

Keith: That's fair.

Sylvia: Eh...

Dre: Eh...

Keith: I'm gonna say it's fair. I'm hearing the "uh"s, but I'm saying fair.

Dre: No, yeah. I guess— yeah, it's the difference between "should they be well liked?" but yeah.

Sylvia: Everybody's got some— I think that's the better— yeah. Yeah.

Jack: So, my suspicion is that I have seen—

Keith: [sarcastic] I can't even imagine who you're talking about. [Jack and Dre laugh]

Sylvia: Yeah, I don't know. Shwing!

Dre: Excuse me. It's shween. Please get it right.

Jack: Oh my god.

Sylvia: Sorry, my bad. [Dre laughs]

Jack: So, I...my suspicion is that I've probably seen Melody in screenshots. In the same way that I realized after doing the *Dragon Ball* stream that I'd seen Master Roshi out in the world prior to this point.

Sylvia: You've seen her in the outro.

Jack: Oh, I have seen her in the outro.

Keith: That's true.

Jack: But I think I've seen her on Twitter.

Sylvia: Oh, maybe. Probably.

Keith: It's possible.

Dre: Yeah, probably.

Keith: Yeah. I can't think of, like, what specifically people would be posting with Melody in it, but I wouldn't be surprised.

Sylvia: I think it's—

Jack: Melody—

Sylvia: Maybe I'm wrong about this. People can correct me on this. I do feel like this arc and the infamous Chimera Ant Arc are the two most talked about arcs of the anime.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Sylvia: Sorry, Jack, not to interrupt.

Jack: No, no, no. So, let's see. First reactions to Melody. The first thing I— so, Melody immediately zeroes in on Kurapika's heartbeat and decides to also take a job in Yorknew City, revealing that she is a Hunter. I spent a while worrying that Melody was going to be a member of the Phantom Troupe, [**Keith:** Hmm.] in part because one of the things [**Dre:** Mm.] that I know about the Phantom Troupe is that they have this incredible diversity in character designs, and I was like, oh, this looks like someone who might be in the Phantom Troupe and can hear people's heartbeats and is zeroing in on Kurapika. And so, for a long time, I thought, "Oh, Melody is shadowing Kurapika to essentially, like, report on him, to keep him, you know, under watch." But it seems like Melody is a Hunter with another backstory. Melody is the Hunter that I think is a Specialist. I think the thing Melody can do—which is, yeah, listen to people's heartbeats—is a Specialist skill.

Keith: Okay.

Dre: Hmm.

Jack: Although I am thinking about what Austin said, where it's like, sometimes you will

see people who have a skill, and you'll be like, "What is that?" and it turns out that they're just an extremely strange Evoker or something, and you're like, "How the hell is that an Evoker?" until it sort of makes sense. But no, I think Melody is great. I'm very excited. I don't mean to offend anybody by calling her the goblin.

Sylvia: [laughs] You're fine. [Dre laughs]

Keith: Is there a follow-up, or that's end of thought? [laughs]

Jack: That's end of thought.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: That's end of thought. My suspicion— I'm putting pieces together rapidly in my head, in the way that I can't really predict this show, but between "you will regret your words and deeds" and "people becomes Specialists through immense trauma," my suspicion is that [Dre: Mm.] Melody has been, uh, forged one way or another. Sort of the [Keith: Mm.] person that Melody is, she got to through a history of violence and trauma.

Sylvia: Hmm.

Jack: Which is exactly how Kojima got to Quiet, but he's a hack.

Sylvia: Wow! That's a hot take! [Jack laughs]

Keith: Whoa.

Dre: Is it?

Sylvia: I think so. I don't know. Kojima is, uh...I wouldn't call him a hack, but I would call him, uh, less consistent than people like to act, you know?

Dre: Sure.

Jack: Well, that's true. You know who is a hack?

Keith: I believe that during Run Button let's plays of *Metal Gear Solid* 1 and 2, we dubbed Kojima the world's smartest dumb guy.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, I...

Jack: I think that's probably right.

Dre: Yeah, no, yeah, yeah, yeah. For sure.

Sylvia: I realize I'm defending him because Hunter Schafer's in his new video game.

Dre: Oh.

Sylvia: You know.

Jack: Ah, but this is the Hunter Schafer defense squad showing up.

Dre: We've all been there.

Jack: Not the Kojima squad. [Sylvia laughs] Nicolas Winding Refn is a hack.

Sylvia: Oh, yeah. I think Refn is more of a hack than Kojima is, in a weird way, because I think Kojima has knowingly made things I'm more engaged with and find more, like, thematically interesting.

Jack: I think *Death Stranding* is fucking incredible.

Sylvia: Yeah. Anyway. What I'm saying is Refn didn't make *Metal Gear Solid II*, you know?

Jack: Nope, no. He made fucking...*Drive* is good.

Keith: *Metal Gear Solid II* is really good.

Jack: He made *Drive*, but unfortunately, he also made...did he make *Only God Forgives*?

Sylvia: Yeah, he did.

Jack: Ugh. All right, let's get back on track.

Dre: [laughs quietly] Blech.

Jack: Blech! Yeah.

Dre: Lck.

Jack: And then, we get— we start cutting very rapidly between different situations. The pace of the episode changes.

Keith: Oh, there's one last thing to do. We've talked about the goblin. We missed:

[clip of "A Field in Spring" begins]

Dre: Oh. Oh, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah!

Jack: Does the goblin's theme emerge at this point? [music ends] [Sylvia laughs] This is so beautiful.

Keith: Yeah, it cuts right from the—

Sylvia: The goblin's theme!

Keith: It cuts right from the end of "Chain Bastard" where she's hearing [Sylvia laughs] the horrible dissonant piano of Kurapika's heart into "A Song for Spring" which is Melody's theme.

Jack: It's beautiful.

Keith: And which I can only assume is the sound of her own heart.

Jack: It could be the sound of her own heart.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: It could be the sound of— you know, there's a kind of precision to the sound of the flute that could just as easily be read as a kind of watchfulness. The thing she is doing is— or listening, a kind of precision in listening. There's a kind of cleanliness to a flute part that is, like, focused in—and it's a solo instrument as well—focused in so specifically on these sounds that it might be the sound of her listening. But it's beautiful, and it's by Hirano, who just wrote "Chain Bastard". It's great. And also, shout out to this flutist. This performance is...it's played so beautiful.

Keith: It's really, really good.

Jack: Yeah. And there is a kind of lightness to her, in this moment, but an anxiety as well, right? The impression that you get, whether or not you are—as I was, at this moment—reading her as possibly a spy for the Phantom Troupe.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Because this hasn't been disproven yet. The thing that you get from Melody is a kind of anxiety and caution about Kurapika's whole deal.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Sure.

Keith: And I think it does make sense. Like, the sound of her listening, it makes sense, because, you know, what we've seen so far is that she is listening. That's, like, what she's doing. We have, like, two— we're about to get to the second scene with Melody in it, and they are both sort of demonstrating her listening to the sound of people's hearts and emotions.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. Big fan of Melody.

Keith: And first appearance of both of those back to back.

Jack: Hearts and emotions?

Keith: Hearts and emotions, yeah.

Jack: In *Hunter × Hunter*?

Keith: No, “Chain Bastard” and “Field in Spring”.

Jack: Yep. Lots of new music in this arc.

Keith: Yeah. Third— there’s gonna be a third one, [**Dre:** Mm.] just from this episode.

Jack: We start cutting rapidly to new locations.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: The click click click of the rollercoaster has reached its top, and it goes into its first dive.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: This is a rollercoaster with multiple dives in these little chunks that we see.

Sylvia: It’s got some loop-de-loops, you know?

Jack: Yeah, exactly. But we are beginning our first descent, as we learn that the Ritz-Carlton exists in this universe.

Keith: Yep. [Dre laughs] Tell me about the world’s scariest man.

Jack: [laughs] Oh, so...

Dre: Oh, yeah. [Keith laughs]

Jack: A tall purple-haired woman arrives. You know, she’s wearing, like, a cocktail dress. She looks very cool. She’s wearing a purple dress. She steps out of her car and opens the back door to let out the world’s scariest man. I wrote down, “Accompanied by her ward?” question mark? “A scared purple-haired boy.” And then I wrote, “Oh, date,” because immediately some bad guys arrive and talk about how this is this

woman's date. And she says, "No, no, no. He's not my date. He's my employer," and I wrote, "Oh, employer." [laughs quietly] I was getting swizzed by Togashi the whole way through.

Sylvia: Togashi's Trick.

Jack: Togashi's Trick.

Dre: Sure.

Keith: Mm.

Jack: The men kind of harass her and, you know, threaten her, threaten the man, and she responds by kissing this man and casting a Nen spell.

Sylvia: The lines are specifically, he's like, [suggestively] "You could guard my body," and she's like, "I don't guard ugly men," and then [**Jack:** Yeah.] she just kisses him. [Dre laughs]

Jack: It's great.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: This is the first time we have seen this in this chunk of episodes, and it will not be the last: a full-scale magical girl anime title card when a new move is introduced. I know *Dragon Ball* did this, but it didn't give it the full treatment that either this show is doing or the *Sailor Moon* series do where, when a new move is introduced, we often move into freeze frame, and a title card shows up [**Dre:** Mm.] to introduce the move. This is— first she kisses him, and she kisses Nen into his mouth. There is nothing sicker and sexier in fiction than someone poisoning someone with a kiss.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Jack: This is that version. [cross] This is spitting poison into someone's mouth.

Sylvia: [cross] We also—

Keith: [cross] Does anybody remember the sound effect that happens during this?

Sylvia: Oh, of course I do.

Keith: “Wooow!”

Dre: “Wooow!”

Jack: “Wooow!” [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: It was the Menchi sound. Or not Menchi, the, uh...it was the...

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Sylvia: Whatsername from Trick Tower, when she got revealed.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: It did the exact same “wow.”

Jack: And it went “wooow!”

Keith: Oh, I forgot about that. Wow.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: “Wow!”

Jack: “Wow!”

Dre: Oh, wow. Yeah. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: And the name. Jack, you set up the cut to the name so well, but what’s the actual name?

Jack: This spell is 180-Minute Love Slave/Instant Lover. [laughter]

Dre: Sure is.

Jack: It's so good.

Dre: That's what it's called.

Sylvia: She's mother, you know? She's just incredible.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: She's great.

Keith: And I like how specific it is.

Jack: Pink hearts. 180 minutes.

Keith: Yeah. Three hours.

Jack: Well, because—

Keith: Three hours of lover.

Jack: Yeah. Three hours of lover, and— because Nen takes effort to do, you know?

Keith: Right.

Jack: You don't want to— and also, it is clearly a utility thing rather than an emotive thing. Why would I want these men to stick around for longer than three hours?

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: Three hours is pushing it, you know.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Right.

Dre: They get annoying very quickly.

Keith: Yeah. Well, you could surely order them to go into the closet.

Jack: You sure could. They get pink love hearts over their eyes which is such a funny demonstration of how Togashi uses Nen to sort of literalize some of the conventions of animated fiction. It's very similar to the way that cartoon logic works in, like, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* or something.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: The fact that she is using Nen to literally give him glowing hearts over his eyes, as opposed to it just being the visual effect of hearts over eyes, [Dre chuckles] I thought was really really good.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Every single person that she kisses becomes her willing slave, and—

Keith: It is funny— sorry, Jack, to interrupt you, but you made me think of one of the first times that we have this, like, interplay between, like, conventions of television and audience TV relationship with Hisoka, like, breaking the TV screen—

Jack: Right.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Like, early on in the sort of cutaways between episodes, and like—

Jack: He talks to the narrator at one point too.

Keith: Yeah, talks to the narrator, acknowledges the— like, looks at you through the TV during that moment, [**Sylvia:** I—] and then earlier, we've got the sort of taking the soundtrack and making it part of what a character's actually hearing.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Like, pulling it from being non-diegetic to being, I mean, at least in a character's head. I mean, and now we've got this sort of Wile E. Coyote kind of— or I guess Pepé

Le Pew is really what it is.

Sylvia: Eh, you know.

Dre: Po-tay-to po-tah-to.

Sylvia: Looney Tunes.

Keith: Looney Tunes. Yeah, Looney Tunes shit. [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: I should go— I need to get back into checking the manga just occasionally, 'cause some of these specific moves are things that I want to know, like, how much of this came about in the adaptation process of the anime and how much of this was, like, in the manga.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Sylvia: I'm sure something like the heart eyes was, but like, was Hisoka breaking the fourth wall in that way also done that way in the manga? Like, that sort of thing.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah.

Sylvia: Also, I think all of the Nen users that we meet in this little bit here are all characters that a *Yakuza* subquest or a *Like a Dragon* subquest would revolve around.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: Yeah. 100%.

Keith: Sure.

Sylvia: Yeah. Is there more with, uh...

Jack: Yes.

Sylvia: Did we say her name? Is there more with her?

Keith: Baise.

Jack: Her name is not introduced later, but she is called, uh...

Dre: Baise.

Jack: Yeah, Baise, which I wonder is a reference to—

Sylvia: 'Cause she's based.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Is a reference to kissing, the French for...

Sylvia: Oh, maybe.

Keith: Oh.

Dre: Oh, I didn't know that.

Jack: Like, a peck on the cheek.

Sylvia: [cross] Is that why they call it first base?

Keith: [cross] I know Basho's name is also a reference.

Jack: It is.

Dre: Sure.

Keith: So, there's a lot— so it wouldn't surprise me if maybe all or several of these people have names that are references to something?

Sylvia: I mean, Melody's name is literally melody, right?

Dre: Sure.

Keith: Right, Melody's name is literally melody.

Dre: You know, maybe Baise' name is a reference to the fact that she's bae. All right, I'm gonna quit the show. This has been fun. [Keith and Jack laugh]

Sylvia: All good.

Dre: Thanks for having me on.

Keith: Okay. Bye, Dre. [Dre laughs quietly]

Jack: Before we get to Basho, who is our next guy, I do want to talk really quickly about this next line she says. So, her employer freaks out and runs away, and she says, “Ugh, I'm gonna have to get a new employer,” and this is fascinating to me. There is a really interesting relationship between Hunters and their employers or their clients. It's very odd. I'm so curious about where the power dynamic rests.

Keith: Mm.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: Where it's like, what do the Hunters get out of this arrangement?

Keith: Okay.

Jack: Is it just money? The fact that she is like—

Dre: Well, and I think, too, it's also interesting, Jack, 'cause that, like, seemingly is in contrast to the other— the approach to money that Hunters almost always have otherwise, where it's just like, [**Jack:** Yeah.] “Ah, it's just fucking money, man. Who cares?”

[1:00:09]

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Sorry, Keith.

Keith: So, there is something interesting about— this is not the first instance of this. They don't— it takes a long time to sort of collect these thoughts from *Hunter × Hunter*, but it reminds me— like, we haven't got— we haven't seen all the stuff that we'll see

about this in this show, but it reminds me of stuff he's done before in *Yu Yu Hakusho*. There's, like, a major plot point of the boss of their, like— it's the same sort of thing. Guys from the underworld have hired demons to be bodyguards, and at some point, try to tell them to do something that they don't want to do, [laughs quietly] and it doesn't go well.

Jack: Mm.

Keith: Because it's like, you hired us, but we're demons. Like, we— like, you don't have the power to make us do anything. You have no real leverage over us except, like, you know, that we technically said that we would work for you.

Jack: Yeah. It really does remind me a lot of demons in the, like, sort of Faustian sense, right?

Keith: Mm.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: Or demons in the sense of drawing a summoning circle and there are very specific restrictions that you, as the summoner— you are inviting a great and terrible power into your life that can grant you your wildest dreams, but even setting aside the bargaining, if you take the wrong step, the demon's coming out of the summoning circle and is gonna get you. And that kind of very terse relationship of obligation and need being wound up in that really does remind me a lot of the way we've heard powerful Hunters talk about their employers.

Keith: It's so funny how, if you look at the trouble that Togashi was having towards the end of his run on *Yu Yu Hakusho*— he's, like, sick. He's got, like, back issues. He has a really hard time delegating and, like, wants, you know, this creative control. He's, like, not being able to do the story stuff that he wants to do, because he's being told, like, not to write it by editors and wants to start doing new things, and it is very funny that— and, like, specifically is like, "I want to start deconstructing these characters that I've made, because, like, that's the only thing left that I have to say about them," and they were

like, “No, you can't do that.” So he spends a while kind of trying to figure out how to end things, and *Yu Yu Hakusho* has, like, a famously divisive last arc, basically, that I think is, like, basically fine but is of course not the best and probably is the worst part of the show. Anyway, it is very funny that the spirit detective that gets created as the main character and a couple side characters in *Yu Yu Hakusho*, it really is, in *Hunter × Hunter*, being like, “What if there was just, I don't know, a thousand of these guys?”
[Keith, Jack, and Sylvia laugh]

Jack: Yeah! And it's worth saying “what if this was a thousand?” because it is— this really is the starting pistol for the freaks. [Dre laughs] Togashi and the team of animators have had to piss about for a while teaching us how Nen works and teaching us the groundings of Nen. We've had to fight several fairly normal men. Mr. Wing has been there; he wears a button down shirt. We've had a lot explained to us. Melody arrives. Baise arrives. The starting pistol goes off. Here come the freaks. Freak number two. Three, I suppose, if we're including Melody. This is Basho. He is complimenting the moon [Sylvia sighs] and writing a poem when the police try— so, this man is— let's describe him.

Sylvia: Yeah, please.

Jack: He's muscly. He's a muscle man. He's wearing, like, a vest, like an open jacket vest. He has a Elvis Presley brunette quaffed hair that bobbles around. He's got ripped sleeves. Has he got ripped sleeves?

Dre: I think he has a vest. [cross] He has, like, a vest.

Keith: [cross] He feels like he would have ripped sleeves.

Sylvia: [cross] I think so.

Dre: I think he just has a vest on and, like, no shirt underneath it.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. He's got beard and mustache.

Keith: For *Yu Yu Hakusho* fans, it's what if Kuwabara was a poet.

Jack: Yes. I don't know who that is.

Sylvia: And had a Lemmy facial hair situation.

Keith: Yes, yeah.

Jack: Oh, yeah. Fully Lemmy. Absolutely.

Keith: Here's Kuwabara, for everyone who doesn't know what Kuwabara looks like.

[laughs quietly]

Jack: And we're talking about Lemmy from Motörhead, who you should also look up.

Oh yeah, totally. He is immediately arrested by the police [**Keith:** Attempted.] for stealing corpse samples. Yes, because he says, "Time for you to, I guess, have a taste of my fists," and he turns around, and he starts beating them up as his theme begins.

[clip of "The Iaido Lunatic" plays]

Sylvia: Yeah!

Jack: This theme continues, and its, like, main instrument is a koto.

Keith: It's got a really awesome, like, distorted electric koto in it.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Or maybe just being played through, like, a hot mic or something.

Jack: Which is consistent with— there is such a funny thing happening here, in the same way that there's a really funny thing happening with Hanzo—

["The Iaido Lunatic" starts to play again briefly]

[Jack, Sylvia, and Dre laugh]

Keith: My bad.

Dre: Just had to keep it going. Nah, I feel you.

Jack: As a ninja, where it's like, later on, we learn that Basho, this guy who looks like Lemmy from Motörhead meets Elvis Presley, [Dre laughs] says that haiku is like an ancient poetic form from his homeland, and his main theme is played on a Japanese koto, where it's like, there's this real evocation of Japanese cultural history in music and in, you know, poetic forms.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And this dude looks like a guy from Motörhead.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Which is brilliant.

Dre: Do you think this guy knows how to make sushi?

Jack: Yes! [laughs]

Dre: Okay.

Jack: I trust him. I trust Basho. [Dre laughs] Because he kicks the shit out of these cops without using Nen at all. In fact, he says, "I didn't even need to use my Nen." No, that's a little later where he says, "I didn't need to use my Nen." He fights some, um...ah, we'll get to them. He fights some, uh...

Dre: Some things.

Jack: Hooded summons. But yeah, he beats the cops up, and later, when we learn what his Nen power is or what his primary Nen power is, it rules. Basho is cool as hell, but right now, we basically see him on a rooftop kicking the shit out of some police officers.

Dre: Yeah. Also, just, another group of people who have no fucking idea that Nen or

seemingly Hunters exist and what they're capable of.

Keith: Nen is secret!

Sylvia: Yeah, it is.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah...

Sylvia: Nen is a secret.

Keith: It does— it is hard to accept that it's secret because of how little anyone—

Dre: The thing about it that makes it really hard to accept is that the fucking internet exists. [Jack laughs]

Keith: Well, but—

Sylvia: Yeah, but there's, like, a separated dark web for Hunters too.

Jack: And we'll get there

Keith: Yeah, and to get the URL for the Hunter website, uh...

Dre: Yeah... [sighs]

Keith: They had to send it on a hawk.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah. [Jack laughs] This— I know, like, this is just a suspension of disbelief that, like, [Keith: Yeah.] the show wants you to go with.

Keith: It does help—

Dre: But it is funny to me every time.

Keith: It does help that—

Jack: Yes.

Dre: Like, every couple episodes, we get someone who's like, "Uh, you're just a lady or a kid or a whoever! What could you do?" and then they get the shit kicked out of them. Like, this happens everyday, and nobody learns anything! [Jack and Dre laugh]

Keith: It does help to think of, like, okay, the main thing about Nen is that if you don't know Nen, it's invisible to you.

Dre: Yeah. Like, you cannot perceive it whatsoever. Yeah.

Keith: And we spent the first, you know, 30 episodes of the show not being able to see Nen and so not knowing what it was.

Dre: Sure.

Keith: And then, once we learned about it, then we, as the viewers, can see it happening, and then it's everywhere. But there was a lot of Nen happening during that Hunter Exam that we just couldn't see, [Dre: Sure.] and so we were just like, "Uh, I don't know. I guess some of these people are just magic or something."

Jack: Yeah. Yeah.

Dre: Yeah, I mean, they specifically talk about Hisoka having an aura.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, they...

Dre: The Hunter Exam people do.

Jack: Did y'all ever catch yourself calling it Nen during those first episodes? I don't think—

Keith: No, we never did.

Jack: I think I would have—

Sylvia: No, we were— I was very, like, "I need to make sure..."

Keith: We barely even talked about the aura stuff because of accidentally, like, you know, stepping into it.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: I think I talk about that and I describe it as— I describe it as Nen without the words. I remember feeling— the way I felt about that was it's like [**Keith:** Yeah.] Hisoka is radiating murderous malice, [**Keith:** Yeah.] and that's like, yep, that's Ren.

Keith: We talked around the aura stuff, because aura is in a lot of shonen. It's a staple. The reality of having, like, a physical manifestation of your spirit energy is, like, [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] key to how [**Jack:** Right.] almost every anime that deals with people having powers, how those powers work. And so, we were able—

Jack: The Netero fight was Nen. Must have been.

Keith: With, um...

Jack: With the ball.

Keith: You think so?

Dre: Yeah, probably. I mean, I don't know. I think...not necessarily.

Keith: Could just be strong.

Dre: But I, you know. Netero is also a person where it's like, you know, how do you distinguish— someone like Netero who's, like, so strong; how do you distinguish what's Nen and what is not?

Keith: That's true. [cross] It does get to a point where...

Sylvia: [cross] There is a specific moment...uh, sorry.

Keith: Say again, Sylvi?

Sylvia: There's a specific moment in that fight where he talks about how he needs to

block Gon in a way, but if he does...

Dre: He could kill him.

Sylvia: If he blocks it properly, he'll kill him.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: And that, to me, feels like he is using Ten right now, and if he used it there,

[**Keith:** Yeah.] the impact would kill Gon? But again, that's an inference. Like...

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: You are right in saying that we can't know for sure.

Keith: It is the sort of thing where, like, once you are, like, a, you know...once you are a professional level Nen user, it sort of becomes like a different kind of breathing, where it's just, like, always in your body, you know?

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: There's just, like...unless he was specifically repressing it—which would also be a weird thing to do—with Zetsu, then he probably was using it, and in that, he just, like, lives with it.

Jack: Yeah. I'm still not 100% sure on which...on which one is which, but we will— I will have time to figure it out.

Keith: Yeah, they talk a lot about it in the show. [Keith, Dre, and Jack laugh] Zetsu is the one that Gon learns while hunting Hisoka, learns how to suppress his...

Jack: Oh, right, yes. Then, we have another hard cut to a man chatting on the phone. This is just a really nice conversation. This is a brown-skinned man in a cool sweater. He is sitting on the floor, surrounded by dogs, in the garden of a massive mansion. This man's name is Squala.

Keith: Yep.

Jack: And he's chatting on the phone with, I have to imagine, his partner and is basically saying, "Don't worry; I'll get this job. I'm gonna bring home the money. We'll be fine."

Dre: [voice] "Babe, it's gonna be totally cool, babe! Don't sweat it!"

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: [laughs quietly] I know. Such a—

Sylvia: He is Val Kilmer in *Heat* right now. [Dre laughs]

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Not—

Jack: It's such a weird conversation.

Sylvia: In the film! In the film *Heat*.

Jack: Right, right, right. Yes, no. I— have I seen *Heat*?

Sylvia: You should watch *Heat*. More people should watch *Heat*.

Dre: Oh, man. You know, I haven't seen *Heat* either, Jack, so.

Sylvia: It's three hours long, but it's good.

Keith: [cross] Wow, we're three non *Heat* watchers.

Jack: [cross] Is *Heat* the one that ends—

Dre: [cross] Media Club Plus bonus episode, maybe. I don't know.

Jack: Is *Heat* the one that ends with a fight on a boat?

Sylvia: I don't want to tell you about the ending of *Heat*, but that's not accurate.

Dre: *Heat* is the one that *Payday* is about.

Sylvia: *Heat* is...yes, and also, *Heat* is a fantastic love story between Robert De Niro and Al Pacino.

Jack: Okay. They're both good.

Sylvia: Oh yeah, also kind of *Death Note* before *Death Note* in some ways too, [**Keith:** Ooh.] except he's not killing people, he's doing bank—

Jack: Oh, Ryuk is in it?

Sylvia: He's doing heists. I wish Ryuk was in— well, you could probably say someone's Ryuk.

Keith: It's very funny that Jack knows who Ryuk is, just because we happened to be talking— I assume that you know because we happened to be talking about it recently. [laughs quietly]

Jack: I knew who Ryuk was before that.

Keith: Oh, okay.

Jack: I couldn't remember his name.

Keith: Okay.

Sylvia: Uh, *Death Note* will come up again later.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: [hushed] Oh, it will.

Jack: So, this is Squala, and he is also joined by an unnamed man—unnamed for now—who has cool curly sideburns and the ugliest sweater on the planet.

Keith: Yep. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: These are all the—

Keith: I have him written as “Link from *Zelda* looking guy.”

Jack: Yeah, he is Link from *Zelda* looking guy.

Sylvia: Whoa!

Jack: What did I write?

Sylvia: If Link from *Zelda* had busted facial hair.

Keith: Yeah, he has a bad— well, the curly thing kind of feels like a *Zelda* thing. It’s not— I guess he’s a sort of, uh...

Sylvia: He’s an— if he was a *Zelda* shopkeeper, I would accept it.

Keith: Yeah, he’s more like a *Zelda* shopkeeper.

Sylvia: If Link had that facial hair?

Keith: Yeah, more like a *Zelda* shopkeeper.

Sylvia: I’m turning into Mr. Burns from that one *Simpsons* episode where he keeps saying “shave the sideburns,” you know? [Jack chuckles]

Keith: He just, like, looks kind of like a Hylian.

Jack: He does look like a Hylian. And then Kurapika arrives at the castle, revealing that this is the interview crew, or rather the prospective employees for this flesh collector job. I wrote down, “They’re all here: Kurapika, Basho, purple-haired kiss lady, goblin, dog telephone man, and curly sideburns.” [Jack and Sylvia laugh quietly] And it becomes clear straightaway that, because he cannot resist it, we’re in another death game. Togashi has constructed [Keith laughs] another death game, because the interview is in two steps. The first step involves finding items.

Keith: Yep.

Jack: Scavenger hunting items from a list, and the list includes these items: lock of hair

from a famous actress, right arm of mummy from Egyptian tomb—and if you, viewer, are thinking, “Egypt is in this world?” this is a mistranslation that we will get back to later—scaly skin of patient with ichthyosis, skull of one-horned creature, Kurta eyeball. Classic, you know, red eyes, [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] at this point, as Kurapika gets the shart bitter taste of his proximity—or his necessary proximity—to people that he finds the most repugnant that there is.

Sylvia: So, the Egyptian tomb thing really struck me, because at first I was like: I wonder if that was, like, a mistranslation— like, a very literal translation of, like, how pyramid is written in Japanese?

[1:15:02]

Dre: Mm.

Sylvia: But then later on, there’s something in the subtitles that makes me think: no, Togashi’s just doing things here.

Jack: Yeah, I think it is...

Sylvia: Togashi is just naming things things.

Jack: Togashi is just naming things things. I think that they mistranslated that subtitle.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: Uh, why save it for later? Later, the mummy is talked about again and is described as an Egypersian mummy.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Like a portmanteau of Egypt and Persia.

Keith: Mm, okay.

Jack: Which, in and of itself, those are different countries. They are not close to each other.

Dre: True.

Jack: But it is the, like, Yorknew City thing.

Sylvia: Yes.

Jack: And I'm a little saddened, because it robbed me of the excitement of, like, is this Earth? Are we— [laughter] are we— are we in, [cross] like, a Gene Wolfe *Book of the New Sun* type situation?

Keith: [cross] Yorknew City? Is this Earth?

Dre: Yeah, the Ritz-Carlton? Is this Earth?

Jack: [laughs] Is this Earth? So I was actually a little disappointed when it seems like, instead of that, it is just these weird portmanteau [**Keith:** Yeah.] sort of, like, interpolations of real world spaces.

Keith: Well, you know, I mean...if they can rename New York City to Yorknew City, they can have a different country named Egypersia.

Jack: That's true.

Dre: Yeah, or they can have a different hotel named the Citz-Rarlton. [Jack laughs]

Keith: I would say, you know, if something that you're curious about is “what planet is this?”, you know, keep being curious about that.

Jack: Yes, I...

Dre: Yeah, sure. Also, hey, don't google it!

Keith: Don't google.

Sylvia: Yeah, don't google it.

Jack: No, no. I will— I will not google anything. Oh, I got some— not *Hunter × Hunter* spoilers, but, um...what was I doing and a *Hunter × Hunter* character showed up on...? Oh, I saw some fanart of Kurapika— of Killua and Gon just on TikTok the other day. I was just scrolling through TikTok, and it was not a spoiler, but I was like, “Shit, I gotta be careful.”

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: But that's just the world you live in.

Dre: Head on a swivel.

Jack: Yeah. You know, there's not much I can do about that.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: This is really funny.

Dre: Is— oh, go ahead.

Keith: So, I was doing that little character thing, and I was on the section of the [hunterxhunter.fandom.com](https://hunterxhunter.fandom.com/wiki/) wiki, and in order of appearance, it has Sara, parentheses, “hair”, listed. [Jack, Dre, and Keith laugh]

Sylvia: Incredibly good.

Jack: Uh huh. Yeah. Hair. Remember when I said that the first step of the interview process was that you have to get the items on the list?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Sike! No! The first step of the interview process is leave this mansion with your lives, as the wall explodes. [laughs quietly]

Dre: I have a really quick thing.

Jack: Oh, yeah?

Dre: I can't remember if this happened here or if it happens after this, but I think it's this part where, you know, they're showing the items, and they show the eyeballs of the Kurta Clan, and Basho has a moment where he sees it and, like, he starts trying to explain what it is to Kurapika.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: And then we cut to Kurapika, and Kurapika has the scarlet eyes, and like, Basho—and she basically tells— or he basically tells Basho, “Hey, shut the fuck up.”

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yep.

Dre: And then Basho sees the scarlet eyes, and he's like, “Oh.”

Keith: Uh, there is something about—

Jack: But he's kind of grumpy about it.

Keith: There is something about these eyes. I didn't want to mention it before, but maybe now we should mention it. They're not quite scarlet.

Dre: That's true.

Jack: Huh.

Keith: And, uh...and, you know, I don't think it's a spoiler, 'cause this is definitely something that I noticed when I was first watching. Kurapika's wearing, like, gray contacts to keep [Sylvia: Mm-hmm.] his eyes from changing, and—

Jack: Is that so?

Keith: Yes.

Jack: Huh.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: So, you can sort of see the red [**Dre:** Oh!] on the outer ring of the eyes, and it could be true that Basho got a good look, saw that the eyes were kinda weird, and was like, “This guy must be Kurta,” but I actually think that what’s happening is just Kurapika’s being extremely intense and scary, and Basho does not [**Dre:** Mm.] know why but is just like, “I’m gonna drop it,” because we also—

Dre: Yeah. It’s not worth talking about.

Keith: We do see Kurapika being sort of secretive about his identities and powers in the next episode in an interesting sort of way.

Sylvia: Yeah. I feel like...I wonder if, I guess is more of a way to put it, the red glow is just for the viewer.

Keith: Yeah, I agree.

Dre: Yeah, that’s a good point.

Sylvia: As opposed to something that Basho sees because of the contacts. I think it’s just supposed to be, like, the cue that, like, Kurapika is feeling angry enough to activate the red eyes. And also, just in general, worth flagging this as, like, part of the ongoing, like, theme of Kurapika having to deceive people to get his revenge.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: And, like, be very guarded about, like, the most important thing in their life so far.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Yeah. And not just be guarded or be deceiving. I think that there is— I’m so glad that you brought up these contacts, Keith, because I completely missed this, but I think

it is so fascinating the way that Kurapika's control, the demands on Kurapika's control of his emotions and, on some level, sort of respectability, right? Of not showing grief [Keith: Yeah.] or not showing intense emotion [Dre: Yeah.] is physicalized. You know, it is physicalized in the first place, you know? Where when Kurapika feels these really strong emotions—and usually the way we see it is fury, but I believe it is strong emotions of any kind—his eyes turn red, you know? Everybody feels very strong emotions, but Kurapika's are physicalized in his eyes turning red anyway, and so it feels like such an interesting next step to say: and then he has to hide that. He has to shut that away.

Keith: Do we think that the— 'cause there is undoubtedly a massive change between Kurapika's demeanor when he is sort of gray eyes, even-keeled, stoic, maybe slightly neurotic.

Jack: Maybe. [laughs quietly]

Dre: Kind I think is a another big one.

Keith: But like, careful, kind, and then the eyes turn red, and then it is, like, fully, like, a barely controlled rage.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And even when we saw, referencing Trick Tower again, back when he was fighting Majtani, he knew the whole time that Majtani wasn't in the Phantom Troupe but still could, like, barely get ahold of himself in that moment.

Sylvia: I—

Keith: And what I'm curious about is if Kurapika's demeanor— if there's always this, like, bubbling rage or if the eyes turning red literally change his personality.

Sylvia: So...well, I think that's something that, like, we should [Keith: Yeah.] keep thinking about, and like, this is probably a conversation we could save for later, but we brought up Leorio earlier as sort of a foil for Kurapika, and I think that, like, Kurapika

having the more...just, like, for lack of a— to keep things simple, like, a “good” exterior personality, like a personality that, like you said, is kind and wants to, like, deescalate things and stuff like that, and then having this sort of, like, darker, like, fury and anger sort of always, like, [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] in the background [**Dre:** Sure.] is really, like, worth putting against Leorio’s situation where he is presented to us early on as very greedy, very, like...very hotheaded, very angry, and then has the opposite sort of thing going on, where like...

Jack: Mm.

Sylvia: We talked about it in the early episodes, like, he is...one, there’s the doctor thing already, but he is very, like, caring and kind in addition to that. Like, will go out of his way to— the example that’s popping into my head right now is when he stayed behind with the shapeshifters that I can’t remember the name of in the Hunter Exam.

Jack: The Kiriko.

Sylvia: The Kiriko, thank you.

Dre: Yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: To, like, tend to the wounds and then, like, the way he, like, would stop even for Tonpa to help Tonpa with his, like, tummy troubles and stuff like that.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: I think it’s interesting to— because *Hunter × Hunter*, by giving us a main four to, like, bounce off each other in terms—

Keith: Togashi loves a main four.

Sylvia: Yeah. There are— I want to watch *Yu Yu Hakusho*, because I was talking to a friend about how there are similarities to the main four in that, but their positions within the, like, story are changed. It’s a whole thing we can talk about when we watch some *Yu Yu Hakusho* at some point in the future. But...

Keith: I'm so excited for that.

Sylvia: What I was gonna say is I think, like, something I'm trying to do especially as we do this is use all four of them to sort of, like, mirror each other or, like, how—

Jack: Mm.

Sylvia: The way that they, like, bounce off each other in terms of similarities and differences, and I think that the way that Killua and Gon have that going on, there's a lot of that with Kurapika and Leorio.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Maybe not as explicit, but still there.

Dre: Yeah. I mean, it's— oh, man. I get to sound smart in this podcast for once. [Sylvia laughs] But I mean, like, what you're talking about here, Keith, also plays a lot into what we know about how the brain works when it is exposed to trauma.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Hmm.

Dre: And then is also reexposed to something that the part of the brain, like— this is a very, like, bare bones, like, I am not going to use, like, big neuroscience terms, because I also suck at neuroscience terms. But like, the middle part of our brain is the part of our brain that is, like, fight, flight, or freeze response, right?

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Dre: That part of the brain also sucks at the perception of time, and that is why something that happened to us a long time ago that is, like, particularly traumatic or scary—

Keith: The four of us or people in general?

Dre: Yeah, it can, like, hit us the same way, and we also know that when we go into a

trauma response, the part of our brain that is more, like, emotionally intelligent and also probably more, let's say, calm and compassionate and intellectual and reasoning. Like, literally that part of the brain, like, its activity level goes down, because you need blood and oxygen going to your muscles and all the other things that help you punch things or run faster. So, like, literally what is happening to Kurapika is an illustration of a trauma response, and this happens every time that Kurapika [**Keith:** Yeah.] is reminded of his trauma of having, like, his whole people killed.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. And reduced to treasure is the other thing, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It's not just the horror of a genocide. It is— and, I mean, these things so often go hand in hand.

Keith: Cruel indignity on top of that.

Jack: It is the indignity of [**Dre:** Yeah.] being commercialized.

Dre: Mass dehumanization.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: It's so startling also to have these two arcs paired back to back, getting off of Heavens Arena, we talked earlier about how this is already so much darker of a plotline than we were dealing with, which was like, yeah, they were fighting, and there was some stuff with Hisoka, and there was, like, you know, some stuff with the Nen hazing, but really, it was fairly lighthearted most of the time, except for the fact that it's fully taking for granted, I think intentionally so, taking for granted, like, the violence inherent to the world that they're now part of. Like, Gon gets beaten half to death with magic spinning tops and is basically like, "All right, I've learned a fun lesson about Nen!" [**Dre** and **Sylvia** laugh] And it's funny to jump into the Kurapika plotline where the consequences of violence are taken so seriously.

Jack: Yep.

Keith: It's the only time that, so far, the [Dre: Mm.] consequences of violence are really taken seriously where Kurapika is, like, fully changed as a person because of it, and you can compare it to something like *Naruto*, where, you know, admitted— ah, god, what's his name? Kishimoto from— is that the *Naruto* author?

Sylvia: Yep. You got it.

Keith: I always forget it, so this is the first time that I've ever remembered that. Fully admits that Sasuke from *Naruto* is a sort of composite character of two Togashi characters. One of them is Kurapika and one of them is Hiei from *Yu Yu Hakusho*. And Sasuke also is a sort of dour young boy with eyes that turn red when he's mad [Jack: Oh.] with superpowers, that had his entire family get slaughtered.

Dre: Oh.

Keith: And he is, like, also sort of kind of forever changed by this, but the way that it plays out in the sort of day-to-day is kind of like a long slow— like a sort of sour angst. Like, he's angsty. He's angry. He's depressed. He's extremely competent in a similar way to Kurapika, but it is sort of funny to have these two things to compare that the way to take that sort of character where it just feels like the violence is taken and the consequences of violence is taken so seriously in *Hunter × Hunter*— in this part of *Hunter × Hunter* that is not just dissimilar from other parts of *Hunter × Hunter* so far but from almost any other show in the genre that I can think of.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah. I mean, I do think there is a distinction there, in terms of, like, the violence that we saw with Gon in Heavens Arena is, in a weird way, a violence that Gon chose to experience?

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Which is not to say it's any less terrifying.

Keith: No. But it's the same people. Like, Hisoka—

Dre: Sure. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Is in the same group that, uh...that, you know, asterisk, but is in the same group as the people that did this to the Kurta Clan and to Kurapika. [Dre sighs] Like, it's a different situation, but it's the—

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: All of those people are capable of it and are part of a world that does stuff like it.

Dre: I do think it is interesting, and this is— we'll talk more about this later, but they do— they are kind of playing with this idea of not only how much is Hisoka actually a member of the Phantom Troupe, but later on, it's was Hisoka a member of the Phantom Troupe when this happened.

Keith: Right.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, we will— we'll definitely learn more about that, but it is, I think, an interesting juxtaposition and I think an intentional juxtaposition to have, like, have a new— be following so closely a character that is, like, interacting with doing violence and receiving violence in a much different way than that last 15, 20 episodes.

Dre: Sure.

Keith: Well, or even in the last 40 episodes. Anyway.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Sorry, that was a long tangent.

Jack: No, I think a valuable tangent. Uh, time for killing and fighting now, [Dre and Keith laugh] as the...

Sylvia: Yeah!

Dre: You know, what we're all here for. [laughs]

Sylvia: Keith, hit "Chain Bastard".

Jack: Hit "Chain Bastard"! Keith!

[clip of "Chain Bastard" plays while Dre imitates guitar riff]

Sylvia: Yeah! [Dre and Sylvia laugh]

Episode 40 [1:30:56]

Jack: The wall of the building explodes, and a bunch of masked men wielding swords and guns burst out. You know, we are— full-scale Togashi death game has begun. You are now trapped in the mansion, and you have to get out. This death game is really funny. Not content with looking the tournament arc dead in the eye and saying, "[clicks tongue] That's enough of that," I feel like Togashi looks his own death game dead in the eye and says, "[clicks tongue] Eh, that's enough of that," after about, you know, 15 minutes. [Dre and Sylvia laugh] Like, what could be a whole arc gets dispensed with so quickly. I'm just gonna hit the big things here. The crew learn quickly that one of the men, the Hylian, the man with the sideburns, [Dre laughs] whose name is Shachmono Tocino[pronounced: to-CHEE-no], with curly sideburns.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: The best name!

Keith: Tocino[to-SEE-no], yeah.

Jack: Great name. Tocino[to-SEE-no].

Dre: [voice] Ey, it's my cousin, Tocino[to-CHEE-no] over here!

Jack: Ah, Tocino[to-CHEE-no] over here!

Sylvia: A lot of...

Keith: Ey.

Sylvia: There's a lot said about, um...oh, fuck, I forgot his name, but the guy who made Gundam. There's a lot said about his names. Togashi's got some great names too.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. He is an imposter. He's conjured these figures. He is a cat thrown among the pigeons by the crew—oh, sorry, by the employers—and he let slip, perhaps deliberately, that there might be another imposter among them, at which point, Kurapika, chain bastard himself, [Sylvia laughs] busts out a chain and uses it as a dowsing rod to do what is essentially the blood test from— well, mm, what seems like it's going to be the blood test from *The Thing*, you know?

Sylvia: Mm-hmm. [Dre laughs]

Jack: Where he lines them all up and he says, you know, if this moves, you are probably the imposter. Melody, who I didn't know who she was; she is not named yet. I wrote down "the goblin," subtitled, "short woman," [Keith laughs] gives a powerpoint presentation on dowsing, and this is how I knew that her and Kurapika were probably going to be fast friends, because...

Sylvia: Oh, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: You know, powerpoints like—

Dre: This is after Kurapika gives a powerpoint presentation on, like, how he knew it was the Hylian who was the imposter.

Jack: Yes.

Keith: I do love the part where, like, we haven't figured out what is happening here, but

we get a lot of— it's back to the old thing of, like, watching Kurapika get some distance on an event and just, like, kind of look at what's going on, and you do see that these guys are not very good swordsmen.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: What is going on with these flailing idiots? And then we get a little bit of Basho punching one and kind of being like, "Something is weird about this." Did we say what they are? We—

Jack: They're summoned— they are conjured—

Dre: They're, like, Nen ghosts or like Nen...

Jack: They're Nen ghosts, yeah.

Keith: They're aura shaped like a human.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Ah, it's so great. We get this great shot. Very Studio Ghibli or Miyazaki shot of, like, one of them getting hit and shrinking down into this tiny doll that then shrinks down into nothing. Really reminds me of the...actually, these guys remind me a lot of the, like, goop men from *Howl's Moving Castle*.

Keith: Oh, yeah.

Jack: The Witch of the West's horrible goop men.

Keith: I'm sorry to pause here, but we have changed episodes. This is episode 40 now, that we're in, right?

Jack: Yes.

Sylvia: Yes.

Keith: And I didn't watch any of the Hunterpedias this week, and I only realized that...

Jack: Aw! This one's so cute.

Keith: I only realized that because, before the show, I was looking at the scratch doc that has some of our little notes here, and Dre, you have a note about the Hunterpedia, if we want to really quick hit this Hunterpedia.

Dre: Oh, yeah. The end— the Hunterpedia at the end of episode 39, [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] they're talking about Kurapika's teacher. I'm forgetting his name again.

Sylvia: Mizuken.

Dre: Yeah. And they say something along the lines— I think Gon says something along the lines of, "I guess Nen users are destined to be Nen teachers!" But how do people end up being Nen teachers? I mean, I'm just assuming that there is no, like, rhyme or reason or organization or qualification to it whatsoever, [**Sylvia:** Uh...] because that's everything involved with the Hunter Association. [Jack chuckles]

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Outside of the exam.

Sylvia: I mean, it's like— hey, we can use *Dragon Ball* as a touchstone now. I guess it is kind of in the same way, it's like, what qualifies Master Roshi, right?

Keith: Right.

Dre: The Kamehameha Wave.

Keith: It really is—

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Well, that qualifies him. He knows something that he can teach people.

Dre: Yeah. For sure.

Keith: But I guess it's about— it's gotta be at least half about the student, right? And so, Goku just shows up and sees Master Roshi one day, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] and they basically are like, [Roshi voice] "I'll teach you how to be better at..." and they just [Sylvia laughs] sort of, like, form a decades-long bond based off of— it is really vibes-based, I guess.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvia: I guess we do get mention by Wing that it is a school of martial arts, the Shingen-ryu school, [**Keith:** Yeah.] does teach Nen.

Dre: Sure.

Sylvia: That isn't to say that all Nen is the Shingen-ryu martial arts or whatever.

Keith: No.

Sylvia: I think that's more tied to the philosophy that's attached to Nen that he teaches the two of them.

Dre: But I think that does imply that there probably are some [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] organizations that have popped up that have, like, codified how to teach Nen and [**Keith:** Yeah.] understand Nen in this kind of way.

Keith: I guess it's gotta be in the same way that some people are like, "I want to become a Hunter. I've now learned about Nen, and I'm going to dedicate myself to being a Gourmet Hunter." I would not be surprised that a lot of people are like, "I want to go learn a bunch about Nen so that I can teach someone everything that I've learned about Nen."

Jack: Yeah. Very possibly. I think that's very possible. The other thing I picked up from this little Hunterpedia ending is that they don't just say, uh...I wrote the line down exactly. "I guess Nen users are fated to meet Nen teachers. Maybe that's why we met each other," says Gon and Killua.

Sylvia: And then they rub cheeks together.

Jack: It's fate. And then they rub cheeks together. [Keith chuckles]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It is so cute. I don't know whether or not we should take from there that one of them is a Nen teacher and one of them is a Nen user. I think that they're both Nen users who met teachers, but it's like, we were classmates, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, I think that's more how I take it. Also, they—

Keith: It is funny that the two translations sort of have it coming from the opposite way. One of them are "Nen users are destined to become Nen teachers," and the other one is "Nen users—"

Sylvia: Mm.

Keith: Sorry, Jack, what was yours again?

Jack: "I guess Nen users are fated to *meet* Nen teachers."

Keith: Fated to meet teachers.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Which is a—

Sylvia: Can I tell you something?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: This is JoJoesque. That's a JoJoesque thing to say.

Keith: Speaking of JoJoesque...

Jack: Hmm.

Dre: I can see that.

Keith: I have the guy that originally, at the very end of the last episode, we skipped it. It's not super important, but the guy that gives them their mission over the TV speaker, I say that this is a JoJo-looking guy to me.

Sylvia: Oh.

Keith: Um, what's his name? I could be wrong. Maybe I'm—

Sylvia: Oh. Uh, I want to call him Dolezal, but that's not his...

Keith: No, it's—

Sylvia: Dalzollene. [Dre laughs]

Keith: Dalzol— Dalzollene. Yeah, Dalzollene.

Jack: Dalzollene.

Keith: He's a very JoJo-looking guy to me.

Sylvia: [cross] Uh, yeah, I could see that. Not a main character, but.

Dre: [cross] Famous Tomino character, Rachel Dolezal.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: No, I don't— [laughs]

Sylvia: Pretending to be a Nen user. [Dre and Keith laugh]

Jack: Um, let's see. Okay, so, they all fight.

Keith: They all fight.

Jack: The imposter starts pointing towards Squala as a possible— sorry, the dowsing

points to Squala as a possible imposter, and they're not able to—

Keith: It's so funny that it's just like, why can he do this? What is this?!

Jack: It's Nen.

Dre: Don't worry about it.

Jack: It's Nen power. Yeah.

Keith: But he's obviously—

Dre: It's Nen, man.

Keith: He's a Conjurer, so he's conjured a little ball that can detect...what? What does it detect? [laughs]

Dre: [cross] Stuff and things.

Jack: [cross] Well, have I got some news for you, because we're about to meet the coolest stupidest Nen power we've seen in a long time. Basho pulls out an ink brush and [**Keith:** Yeah.] composes a poem.

Sylvia: Yeah!

Dre: It's so good!

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Basho's the best.

Jack: The poem is something like, "My hand makes a punch, and whoever I hit will burst into flames a bunch." [Dre laughs] Basho's power is called Wandering Haiku Poet.

Keith: It is so—

Jack: And in his title card, we get a watercolor illustration of him in the style of, like, old Japanese watercolors.

Keith: Mm-hmm. It's so funny. There's so many weird little differences between the subs this time. It usually doesn't come up this often, but the translation for your poem is so much different. Mine was something like— I don't have it written down, but it's something like, "Whatever I punch will burst into flames," is what it was.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Huh.

Dre: No, he definitely rhymes "punch" and "a bunch" in the dub.

Jack: Yes. So, he sets up a new poem, which is, "If you're a liar, your painful death will be swift and in fire," and now this is a *The Thing* blood test. You know, Kurapika was just pissing about with a little dowsing rod. This guy is going to burn someone if they reveal them— or if they tell a lie.

Keith: Right, there's stakes to this. This one has, [**Jack:** Yes.] like, a little bit of, like— it's a little bit evidentiary. If someone will... [laughs quietly] will not tell the truth, they will burst into flames.

Jack: They will self combust.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yes, and there's this lovely little moment where, you know, they ask the Hylian if he is an imposter, and he's like, "Well, yeah, sure, yep. Course I am," and doesn't burst into flames, [Dre laughs] and it is revealed that Squala is and is an imposter. He is working for the crew. Which means that our new employees are Melody, Baise, Basho, and Kurapika, or the new prospective employees. Squala is a Manipulator who doesn't have a Hunter license. He is a Hunter without an official license. Hey, what?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah, don't worry about it.

Sylvia: I wrote that down as, like, oh, we are now using Hunter as shorthand for Nen

user as opposed to...

Keith: Yeah. Yes.

Dre: Yeah, 100%.

Sylvia: To mean accredited Hunter.

Keith: Yeah, we've now, like—

Sylvia: Which I think is a very pointed thing, at this point in the show, right?

Keith: Yeah. Yeah. 'Cause it really means [**Jack:** So—] that the thing that's important about being a Hunter is not the test. It's not passing the test.

Jack: What, you mean the death game where most people die, including nearly Gon?

Keith: Yeah, that is merely the turn that you take to set you on the path to learning Nen.

Dre: And also the thing that you take so that you can't get arrested for murdering people.

Keith: Sure.

Jack: That's true. Okay. I'm ringing the "What is a Hunter?" bell. New prospective answer: anybody who can use Nen is a Hunter.

Keith: Well, but there's people with Hunter Licenses that can't use Nen.

Dre: And never learned, yeah.

Jack: Oh, and they are still technically Hunters.

Dre: [cross] Hmm, but are they?

Keith: [cross] But are they only technically Hunters? Is that what you're saying?

Dre: Yeah. I mean, it goes back to, like, I remember we— I think, Sylvi, you said this,

like, right after they got the exam and they're talking about, like, "Well, now that you're a Hunter, you can ride the bus as much as you want," [Sylvia laughs] and it's like, this fucking sucks. Why did everybody, like— why did so many people die in pursuit of a free bus pass? And I guess, like, this is the answer, right? It's that the free bus pass is also the pass to, like, sending you on a track to learn Nen, potentially.

Jack: [sighs] I'd hate it. I think it's probably just such a headache learning Nen.

Probably.

Sylvia: Oh, almost definitely. And not just because your pores get blasted with Nen sometimes.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: I imagine that is also— gives you a literal headache.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, probably.

Keith: But it gives you really good skin.

Dre: Maybe. [Keith laughs quietly]

Jack: It turns out that Squala has sort of charmed the dogs around, using dog Nen power.

Dre: Oh!

Jack: We learn—

Dre: Hey, Jack, how do we learn this?

Jack: Oh, 180 hour— no. No. [Keith and Dre laugh]

Sylvia: No.

Keith: No.

Jack: No.

Sylvia: That would be so powerful.

Jack: 180 Minute Kiss Slave Love? What's it called?

Keith: [cross] Instant Lover.

Sylvia: [cross] Instant Lover!

Jack: Yeah, it goes exactly as we expect. There's something about the efficacy of 180 Hour Love and Basho "I can make a poem about anything" that really is just, like, childhood games.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: Like, "Well, I have the gun that fires endless bullets, [**Keith:** Yeah.] and it can do anything, and you can't beat me," which is interesting.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Dre: It is very Calvinball.

Jack: Yes. [laughs] Yes, it really is.

Keith: It's also extremely binary. It's sort of just, like, [Sylvia laughs] my move works. Like, it flips on.

Jack: Yeah, and it's so fun to see this outside of the context of a tournament arc where people are, like, setting Nen powers off against each other, whereas it seems, post tournament arc, it's often being used like a swiss army knife. It's just like, ah, do you have the Nen power that lets you open doors of a diameter wider than three feet? Yeah, of course I do. Bang! Door's open, no problem.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Little brief—

Dre: Do you have the power that lets you make a video game? [Jack laughs] Or a website?

Jack: Don't even get me started. I'm so excited to talk about the game. [Dre laughs] Subset of dog powerpoint presentation briefly introduced. The maltese will nip at people's heels. [Sylvia laughs] The saint bernard will smother them. [Dre laughs] The dobermans will swarm and then kill. [Keith laughs] If the target escapes, the bulldogs will finish them off. Everybody is now just delivering, like, more and more elaborate powerpoint presentations, and this one really was just a slideshow of lovingly animated dogs. It was great.

Keith: [laughs] Yeah, easy way to get some dogs in there.

Jack: And then they just leave the mansion. This is Togashi going, "Eh, I don't think I want to do a death game today."

Keith: Yes. We're done with this now.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Ah, but the thing is—

Keith: This could have been 10 episodes, but it's just half of one.

Jack: The joke is that these people, despite some of them being Nen users themselves, were just woefully underprepared for four skilled Nen users to rock up.

Keith: It is phenomenal that when something starts happening in *Hunter × Hunter*, there's no way to know if it's going to take one half of one episode or 80 episodes.

Jack: It's so funny. [Keith laughs] It is so funny, and I think it's part of why I keep getting tripped up by the beginnings of arcs feeling a little slow. It's like I'm the guy who has

never ridden a roller coaster before and doesn't know what it is and is like, "Ugh, this bit where we just go slowly up a hill [**Keith:** Yeah.] is so uninteresting to me." [Dre laughs]

Keith: And especially for a guy who's so committed to, like, building that track and, like, giving you a height to drop from.

[1:45:10]

Jack: But sometimes Togashi will just go, "All right, everybody off. Roller coaster's done. We're all going to go and get hot dogs over on the other side of the park now, completely unrelated." Melody keeps her Nen class secret. They have a little chat about what they are. Melody's answer is basically, "Wouldn't you like to know, weather boy?" which is really funny. [Keith laughs] Melody's great. Kurapika also keeps his name and skill secret, because he [**Keith:** Yeah.] doesn't know if they're going to be working together, and they begin the scavenger hunt.

Keith: It's funny, because Melody is like, really wants to know Kurapika's name, because she's sort of, like...she's sort of figured him out and is curious about his secret darkness and is like, "What's going on with this guy? He's so interesting."

Sylvia: What's up with his strange swag? [Jack laughs]

Keith: But Kurapika's like, "I'm working with four people. One of them's a goblin. End of story."

Jack: Simply end of story. Goblin with a really smart understanding of dowsing history, though.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: I love her.

Keith: So, like, Melody is currently fighting an uphill battle to become friends with

Kurapika. [Dre laughs]

Jack: Yeah, but she does have— she got off on a really good foot by giving a powerpoint presentation.

Keith: Mm, yeah.

Dre: That's true.

Jack: But it has to be about the right kind of thing. Kurapika hated it when—

Dre: And they happened to be in the same city at the same time, and they seem to like that about each other. [laughs]

Jack: Yes, that's true. Back in the mansion, the tall man— what's the guy called, Dalozene? What's his name?

Keith: Ah, it's stupid. It's a stupid name. It's...it's Dalzon...Dalzonene?

Sylvia: Dalzollene.

Keith: Dalzonene?

Sylvia: We have it written down. We have it written down.

Keith: I'm reading it. Dalzollene. Yeah, D-A-L-Z-O-L-L-E-N-E, Dalzollene. It's a weird name.

Jack: Dalzollene, for mild to severe skin irritations.

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] Yeah, I was gonna say.

Keith: Sorry, Jack, say again? What'd you say?

Jack: Dalzollene, for mild to severe skin irritations. [Dre and Keith laugh] Back in the mansion, Dalzollene is talking to the candidates. Sorry, to the infiltrators. [Sylvia laughs] And they say, "One of the candidates looked promising, at least more than him," and

points to, like, a man bound and gagged in the corner.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Ugh.

Jack: And then Dalzollene says, “It’ll be a while before I require him. You should put him away, Squala.”

Dre: Mm.

Jack: And Squala’s like, “Okay.” And this does not come up again in the episodes that we have seen.

Dre: No.

Jack: There is some sort of game being played here that we do not have access to. Although...

Keith: [cross] No, it does come up.

Dre: [cross] For a second, I also thought that was maybe the butler.

Keith: Wait.

Dre: I didn't include this note, but the butler who is the droopiest man I've ever seen in my life.

Keith: The butler who immediately— no, the butler gets immediately killed by the—

Jack: Gets shot.

Dre: Right, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: By Instant Love.

Dre: But I don't—

Sylvia: He gets Instant Loved and dies protecting women.

Dre: Right.

Keith: Sorry, I—

Sylvia: Salute.

Dre: But I also was like, I don't know, man. Maybe that butler didn't die, 'cause it's *Hunter × Hunter*, but...

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: When does this come up again, Keith? What is this?

Keith: Sorry, Jack, you're saying the man in the corner doesn't come up again?

Jack: The bound and gagged man in the corner, yeah.

Keith: He's the living— he's, like, the horrible body on the wall that gets gooped up on the wall. [Jack gasps]

Dre: Oh!

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: And they're like, "I don't like this. It's too realistic," and they're like, "That's 'cause it's real."

Jack: Okay, we'll get back to that. Yep, we'll get to the gooped man.

Keith: [laughs quietly] Yeah, the gooped man. He becomes the gooped man!

Jack: Choral music rises as Kurapika reaffirms his desire for revenge. His aura burns around him. His eyes turn red.

Keith: So, we've got a couple new songs in this little part. We get— sorry, I never said the name before, but Basho's little theme is called The, uh, laido— yeah, "The laido Lunatic" is what it's called. That's the, uh...

Jack: Presumably, much like the Chain Bastard is Kurapika, the laido Lunatic is Basho.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, that's this one.

[clip of "The laido Lunatic" plays briefly]

Keith: That one. We get the second appearance here of "Requiem Aranea", which hasn't happened since the last time that we talked a lot about the Phantom Troupe. So this is—

Sylvia: This is when I wanted to bring up *Death Note* again, because this [clip of "Requiem Aranea" begins] is very similar to— ooh. Ah, I don't want to interrupt.

[music ends]

Keith: I think you could have talked over that, but I let it play.

Sylvia: Oh, it's fine. I show deference to the Troupe, you know?

Keith: Yeah. It's great.

Sylvia: A lot of the work Hirano did on *Death Note* was these very operatic choral songs. Like, I think he did a lot of the stuff in the, like, latter half. Don't hold me to that. There were two composers on *Death Note*, but like, the ones that he's credited to, the one that I'm thinking of in particular, is—

Keith: Did you mention earlier that he was also on *Death Note*?

Sylvia: I did.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: I brought it up. I think—

Keith: I totally missed that.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: I totally missed it. That's crazy.

Sylvia: Yeah, no, he did a lot of the— like, he did, like, “Domine Kire” and, like, the requiem in that show as well.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Sylvia: A lot of these, like, you can picture them being recorded in, like, a big cathedral type [Jack: Yeah.] songs, you know?

Jack: It's being composing.

Sylvia: Oh, he's fantastic at it. Like, it's really good. I'll send you some. I'll post some after we record.

Keith: I imagine it's the same style of music in the other thing that he started doing in 2006, which was composing for *Ouran High School Host Club*? [Sylvia and Jack laugh]

Jack: This guy's great! [Keith laughs] This guy's fucking great!

Sylvia: He's got a body of work!

Keith: He does have a real body of work.

Sylvia: He did, uh, *Final Fantasy XIII* as well. He was an additional composer on that.

Dre: Oh, wow.

Jack: It is— this requiem that plays is great. I am...such a vibes-based, like, music supervisor in my own work, in terms of, like, what I choose to soundtrack and why, and in my own work, I'm always so resistant to being like, “This character's on screen, so I'm playing the—” you know, or like, “This character has a big martial thing, so I'm gonna play big stomping steps to sound like his footsteps” or whatever.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: So I'm always so reluctant to do that in my own work, but I don't know how, you know, the composers and music supervisors here are feeling about it, but I do think it is really notable that, in these moments when Kurapika is, um...I wanted a better way of saying rotating the Phantom Troupe in his mind. [Sylvia and Jack laugh]

Keith: Yeah. Thinking about the spiders.

Jack: When he is focusing on the singular object of his revenge.

Sylvia: [laughs] When he's thinking about those spiders.

Jack: When he's thinking about those spiders.

Dre: Stewing 'bout the spiders.

Jack: Ah! We don't get his theme. We don't get Kurapika's motifs.

Keith: Right.

Jack: We get the Troupe's motifs.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And there is something about it preying on his mind. You know—

Keith: So, this is the second time it's shown up, but it's been so long. The only other time was, yeah, the last time that he was talking about the Troupe, basically.

Jack: It is similar to a lot of Zoldyck music.

Keith: It is.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: The Zoldyck stuff is a little more romantic, but there is this line being drawn by Hirano of, like, bloodshed and specifically, like, bloodshed in the service of money.

Keith: I would call— the Zoldycks' one, to me, is, like, bombastic.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: It's, like, evil, but it's also bombastic. This one is tragic. This is like...

Sylvia: Yes.

Keith: This theme is so...it is, like, haunted. It is like a haunted house kind of sad.

Jack: It's so lovely. I really thought about this a lot when it was showing up in the thing, where I was like, "Ah man, I would love to arrange this," but so much of the power of this is in his instrumentation, is in these— [**Keith:** Yeah.] this choral voicing, and you would lose so much of that power if I, you know, transposed it to different instruments. It's just such a gorgeous piece of composing. And as the Troupe start to appear, we're one episode away from the arrival of the Phantom— the proper arrival of the Phantom Troupe, and I can't wait.

Keith: In the scene where it's playing, the difference between the sub and the dub— because when something cool happens, I usually switch, just to see, like, what's going on in both.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: But the English dub for Kurapika, Erika Harlacher, is, like, super angry delivering this mono— he's, like, monologuing his plans for the Phantom Troupe, and, you know, complaining— basically talking about, like, all of these, uh— what are they called? I keep calling them body traders, but they're called something else actually in the show.

Jack: Flesh collectors.

Keith: Flesh collectors.

Dre: Flesh collectors, yeah.

Keith: He's like, all these people? I'm gonna kill all these people. But, uh—

Jack: But she hits it really hard. The voice actress is just furious.

Keith: Yeah. Miyuki Sawashiro, the Japanese actress, is unhinged. [laughs quietly]
Extremely disturbing delivery.

Jack: It's great.

Keith: It's really good.

Jack: She goes for it.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And, you know, it coincides with that or with the aura burning, and when I say burn, I don't mean, like, fire. It's this effect that we've seen when, um...

Keith: Purple smoke.

Jack: It almost looks like— no, it's not even purple. It's the white evaporation around their bodies when you see their aura.

Keith: Oh, yeah, it's the Ten escaping instead of being contained.

Jack: Oh, it's great.

Keith: Yeah. I know what you're talking about now.

Jack: Meanwhile, in the Zoldyck estate, Milluki is reverse engineering the game. You can tell that Milluki is a technical person, because he uses four keyboards at once.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And then he delivers the web address. He basically says, "I can probably get the game from this. You know, I can— Killua gave me the real deal. I can probably crack the game." And we're not entirely sure what his plan is. He talks about, like, making something revealed, but it's not clear why exactly he wants the game— because he could presumably afford it. He's— the Zoldycks are super rich. I don't know what's

happening here.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Uh, it is a lot of money, and they have, like...they have, like, limits, because if you remember back when he was torturing Killua, he's, like, talking about a deal that he had to make in order to afford a new computer. I think that they are on sort of strict—they're on, like...a, like, limited income.

Jack: Yes, a little walkin' around money

Keith: Yeah, they're on— they have an allowance.

Jack: Yeah. That sounds like Silva.

Keith: They're not allowed to spend \$9 billion. [laughs]

Jack: On a video game. No.

Keith: Sorry, 9 billion jenny.

Jack: Yes, and he decides that he is going to give Killua the goods. He's going to follow through.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: He writes the URL on a little scroll and sends it off on a hawk. This is the Zoldycks through and through, right?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: The opera, [**Keith:** Yeah.] the splashy, overwhelming, kind of silly, even in the moment of violence.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: You know—

Sylvia: They're camp.

Jack: They are. They are camp, in a way that the Phantom Troupe— hmm. The Phantom Troupe are camp in a different way. [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. Oh, we— I totally miss— I missed this. Sorry to hit this again, but we actually— not only do we get...uh, not only do we get the "Requiem Aranea", the Phantom Troupe theme, but we get a more specific theme. We get— and maybe I'll play it when he shows up, instead of now, because we're past the moment, but...

Sylvia: Mm.

Jack: Is this Chrollo's theme?

Keith: "The Man of the Reversed Cross".

Sylvia: Yeah!

Jack: Ohh! Sick!

Keith: Do we want it now, or do we want to wait til next episode?

Jack: Let's wait until it comes up.

Sylvia: Let's wait. Let's give him his moment, you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Uh, on a boat—

Keith: Do we like the songs in the thing? Do we like— is this good?

Sylvia: I love it.

Keith: Okay, great.

Jack: Yeah. I'm having a great time.

Keith: Great.

Jack: And viewers, you can't— we can't hear you.

Keith: No. In three months, you can tell me whether you like it or not. [Keith and Jack laugh]

Jack: On a boat, Gon and Killua see Yorknew. They get the hawk message. They are excited to meet the rest of the gang. It's very sweet. Killua is wearing the silliest outfit he's worn so far.

Keith: Oh, does anybody want to describe the outfit?

Sylvia: I...

Dre: You mean the sickest, drippiest outfit that Killua has worn so far.

Sylvia: Yeah, absolutely. [Jack laughs] It's so good. Go for it, Dre, if you got it.

Dre: Oh, I don't have a picture in front of me.

Sylvia: Okay, I—

Keith: I have it written down. I have it written down.

Dre: Okay.

Sylvia: If you have it written down, go for it. I could do it off memory, but...

Keith: He's wearing a burgundy tank top.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Two ripped black arm sleeves. A striped cream and black pants, like, oversized pants. He's wearing a feather necklace, like, two feathers on a string. He's carrying a hawk. And we actually don't get this. I had to add this in, 'cause we don't get it til next

episode: and he's wearing flip flops.

Sylvia: Killua dresses like lesbians I know. [Keith and Jack laugh]

Dre: Uh huh.

Sylvia: Like, just straight up.

Keith: And I—

Sylvia: Butch icon, Killua Zoldyck.

Keith: I know that that tank top is a \$500 tank top.

Sylvia: Oh, yeah, no. That thing is...so are the, like, torn up arm warmer, like, elbow pads, for sure.

Keith: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Totally.

Sylvia: Those go for, like, 500 each.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: You know?

Jack: It's so funny. Yeah, the "steal Killua's look" and it's that collage of, you know, [Keith and Jack laugh] huge amounts of money.

Sylvia: Yeah, comes out to 28,000 United States dollars.

Jack: Yeah. Although, that's what Killua— no, I don't know. I don't know. Is that what Killua spends his alliance on?

Keith: And candy.

Jack: Uh, his alliance. And candy, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: His allowance is candy and clothes.

Keith: It's possible—

Jack: And a skateboard. Where's Killua's skateboard?

Keith: This is really funny. Uh, I don't know. Where's Gon's...

Dre: I don't know.

Keith: Where's Gon's fishing pole? I don't know.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. Fair enough.

Dre: In storage.

Keith: This is something that I've had in my head for a while, but maybe instead of spending all of his money on clothes, I wouldn't be surprised if the Zoldycks have a, like, they employ a clothes buyer.

Jack: Because, um, Kallu— no, what's her name? Kikyo.

Keith: Kikyo.

Jack: Also dresses incredibly.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Silva also dresses incredibly. They all dress really well.

Keith: They all dress— yeah.

Dre: Sure. Yeah.

Keith: So I'm thinking that they have a stylist they employ.

Dre: Yeah. That or they just, you know, they kill people and take all their clothes.

Jack: That's true.

Keith: Yeah. They only kill the most fashionable people.

Sylvia: One murder a day. [Dre laughs]

Keith: One murder a day.

Jack: One murder a day.

Dre: It works for Agent 47.

Sylvia: What if *Fashion Dreamer* worked like this, Jack, where you had to kill the people to get the clothing? [Keith and Jack laugh]

Jack: This is *Love Nikki*. You're describing Nikki.

Sylvia: Oh, right! I am! [Dre laughs]

Jack: Okay. Onto episode 41.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Uh huh.

Jack: Yorknew City is surprisingly uninteresting looking, for all of this buildup.

Keith: Oh, anything—

Jack: Oh, yeah?

Keith: Anything good, uh, any good Hunterpedia for that one?

Jack: I didn't write anything down, and I have been writing them down if they are interesting to me.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: I think it's about Mizuken, so no.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Sorry, Mizuken.

Sylvia: Uh, no, Mizuken was the one we— uh, we talked about the Mizuken one.

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Keith: Yeah, that was the teacher one.

Sylvia: Uh, whatever.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: If it's...it's probably not important.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, York—

Dre: I don't remember what it is.

Episode 41 [2:00:12]

Jack: Yorknew City is very bland, and it makes me wonder, um...none of the cities that we've seen so far have been particularly interesting-looking, have they?

Sylvia: Hmm.

Jack: The show is very good at these, like, singular images. You know, the image of the hotel where they had the cooking competition with all the pigs on the spits in front of them, the image of Kukuroo Mountain, the image of the Zoldyck Estate, some of the stuff we get later with the Phantom Troupe's set. There's some really nice set design, but not a lot of it is, like, cities [**Keith:** Yeah.] and good-looking cities.

Keith: We do get some good— we get some really good locations in Yorknew City, but like, not a ton of, like, beautiful New York City landscape, like, postcard shots, you

know?

Jack: No.

Keith: Like, there's not a good skyline.

Jack: Yeah, not very interesting color work. It's very beige.

Keith: We get some really good, like, oh, here's a wide shot of, like, a street at night, like some nightlife shots, and then we get some really, really nice daytime stuff, but yeah, we don't— as far as I remember, there's not a really nice Yorknew skyline.

Dre: Yeah, I think you're right.

Sylvia: We don't, uh...I think there is one.

Keith: Okay.

Sylvia: I think there is exactly one shot where I would consider that.

Keith: Oh, sorry. I now know exactly the one shot. [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah. Yeah, like, Keith, come on.

Dre: Oh, is that from the intro?

Keith: Yes, there's a very actually important shot of it, yes.

Sylvia: Like, I also think that they do, later, when we get closer to the auction, make the city have a more distinct feel.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, totally. You get a really good— the city is really cool once we get to, like, know a few places, but there is this— now that I'm thinking it, there is this very fun sort of, like, they save the view for when we get to the view, if that...

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Hmm.

Keith: That's great. I love that.

Jack: So, that bizarre tower that you see in the opening frame of the show is in Yorknew City?

Sylvia: I think so?

Keith: Mm...

Jack: Okay. Interesting.

Keith: I thought that the bizarre tower was Heavens Arena.

Jack: Oh, I don't know.

Dre: Mm...

Sylvia: I think there might be another skyscraper [**Keith:** Yeah.] that we see, but I...

Keith: I'm not— I cannot recall all of the images from that right now, but...

Jack: Yeah. In any case, it's time to go to an internet cafe.

Keith: This is great.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: This is wonderful. Gon and Killua—

Keith: What a revealing— what an embarrassing reveal on how Hunters see themselves. [Keith, Sylvia, and Dre laugh]

Jack: Yes. So, Gon and Killua go to the Hunter website. Its splash page is a bad sepia photograph of a bar, and even before we got into—

Keith: A saloon, even.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I thought to myself, “Hey, do Hunters have taste?”

Dre: No.

Jack: No. Right?

Keith: Right, 'cause Killua's not a Hunter. [Dre laughs]

Jack: That's true. Killua is not a Hunter.

Sylvia: Damn!

Jack: The Hunters are regularly some of the coolest people you will ever see, but they're like— oh, here's the thing.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I want to find an exact quote. Oh, it wasn't that, and I've reached my monthly limit. I'm just gonna... [Sylvia laughs] I'm just gonna fucking ad lib it. Yeah, the vibe I get with the Hunters' taste reminds me of a great quote from some piece about Steely Dan that I read in which the author— she describes the great paradox and success of Steely Dan is something like the fact that it is extremely entertaining to watch the two least cool dudes you have ever met try to make the most laid back music in the world, and this is the impression that I get watching Hunters do anything. They are, like— they are simultaneously overwhelmingly powerful and look extremely cool and are also just spectacularly tasteless self-obsessed weirdos? It's great.

Keith: Mm.

Jack: Because we have to log into their website with our little Hunter thing, and we get—

Keith: That you have to get the URL by hawk.

Jack: Yeah, I imagine it's like a...what are they, like a TOR URL or something, where it's just, like, a string of number.

Keith: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And I don't think it's like a real— you can't go to www.hunterwebsite.plus or whatever.

Keith: It's hunter.onion.

Jack: Yeah, yeah. [laughs quietly] Yeah, exactly.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: And we enter it, and it is a point-and-click game set in a cowboy saloon, complete with a sort of—

Dre: It's a Flash website.

Jack: It's a Flash website! Complete with a little bartender. And, of course, this was being made at a time when Flash websites—god, RIP—were more popular or more common, right?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Or just more.

Keith: It actually was— it was, like, right before they were popular. This was, like, slightly ahead of its time on the internet, I feel like.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, I guess if you consider when the manga was written too.

Jack: That's true.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Like, very ahead of its time.

Keith: Yeah. Which is why they actually had to— they added the next thing that happens. This is unique to the 2011 anime.

Jack: Oh, because the next thing that happens is so— oh, so, firstly, we learn that it costs money to get information from the forum. [laughs quietly] It's just terrible. This is the Prima Games of things. [Sylvia and Dre laugh] You have to pay money for a guide that you could get for free, and a weird man will tell it to you.

Dre: And it, like, barely tells them shit!

Jack: Yeah, because Nen starts coming rushing out of the computer and sucks them into the game.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Something about a website having been spelled, having been witched by Nen and dragging you into the computer is just— this is by far the least stupid thing we have seen Nen do, but there is something so, like, facile and petty about it. About, like, you know, Nen can do anything, but instead, we have witched a website to draw you into it. [Sylvia laughs] And we are now chatting with the bartender. We pay him a bunch of money, and we learn that Greed Island is a game created by Nen users. It has multiple creators whose motives and identities are unclear. The game is Nen-infused, pulling the player into the game. As long as you stay alive in the game, the console will continue to run, even if the card is removed. You can only return if you find a savepoint. The game is very dangerous. People will send Hunters into it to give it a shot, and none of them will come back. And all I could think about watching this was how cleanly and spectacularly I called the shot when, in the first episode of this show, I said this show is obsessed with games [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] and, like, abstracted game ideas. Hunters make for themselves a world that is just literalized quests and games, and what more do we have here—

Keith: Even the little website.

Jack: Even the little website! But, you know, Greed— I felt this when Greed Island was

introduced and it was like, oh, it's a game made by Hunters for Hunters, but learning that it draws you into the game. You know, it literalizes the metaphor of what Hunters are. You know, if Hunters are people constantly seeking to be drawn into a world of adventure and mystery and intrigue and violence, you know, how much more literal does Togashi have to make it to have these people pay vast amounts of money to be physically transported into a game?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It's great.

Keith: The other note that I have here that I put on the doc is before they get sucked into the website they are— they have to buy the information. The information was— I think it was 2 million or 20 million jenny.

Dre: That sounds right.

Keith: So like \$200,000, which is a lot of money. And it reminded me, just popped into my head is, like, the old— it's like the old saying about the Gold Rush where it's like, the real people who made a fortune from the Gold Rush were the people selling, like, pails and shovels.

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Keith: And the person who makes the website that Hunters go to buy information at is the only thing— gave me the sentence here, the only thing— a Hunter must have started the Hunter only website. What's the only thing more powerful than a Hunter? A Hunter who's also a capitalist.

Jack: [laughs] Yes.

Sylvia: Ugh.

Keith: And, like, to use the power and reach of what being a Hunter gives you to profit seek is terrifying.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Because we've actually not— it doesn't matter whose version of what a Hunter is we've heard. The only profit seekers that we've heard about have been, like, poachers and thieves and murderers. We haven't heard a lot of of Hunters who have, like, started businesses. [laughs quietly] To me, it is so much worse to live in that world, to have the scale of resources that being a Hunter gets you, then to be like, “You know what we need? Amazon or something.”

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. Hunter Amazon.

Keith: Hunter Amazon.

Jack: This is the, you know, Ibex. If Ibex was watching *Hunter × Hunter*.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Ibex in the beginning of the show. Ibex at the end of the show would be watching *Hunter × Hunter* and probably thinking something different. But I love this. We learn that seven copies will be sold at the auction. The lowest starting bid is 8.9 billion jenny. Gon and Killua, two kids who don't understand money or the internet, are incensed. [laughs]

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: They were like, “We could have just got this at retail cheaper than that! Bullshit!” These children.

Keith: [laughs] Of course, there is no retail. There's 100 copies.

Jack: No.

Keith: They're gone.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: No, but they are— they are discovering that the holder of the rare commodity is the one who sets its value in real time, [**Keith:** Yeah.] and they respond in the funniest

possible way.

Keith: We get—

Jack: Dre, you had a note about this.

Keith: Yes. Yeah, Dre.

Dre: Yeah, they got scammed on fake EBay.

Keith: They got scammed on fake EBay, after a short but intense montage of them, like, making deals online.

Jack: And not just making deals online.

Keith: Hold on, I'm gonna send pictures of these.

Jack: Making deals for treasure. [laughs quietly]

Keith: Yeah, for treasure.

Jack: It's so funny.

Keith: Their whole plan is we should just buy a bunch of treasure and then sell it for a profit, and that's how we will make the 9 billion dollars.

Dre: They're fucking— Gon and Killua are dropshipping.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, they're— [laughter] They're dropshipping treasure.

Jack: The thing that makes the joke work so well for me really is the fact that it's treasure, that we cut to seeing what they're seeing on the computer screen, and it's just, like, bejeweled amulets. [laughs]

Dre: Yeah, it's *Indiana Jones* shit.

Keith: For me, it's how quickly they go from— like, three still images. Killua talking on a phone, making a business deal. Gon, mouse in his hand, leaning over at the screen. Cut to the two of them: Gon, hands in the air and laughing; Killua giving a big thumbs up. And then, cut to: head in hands, we lost all our money. [Keith and Jack laugh]

Jack: It's so funny.

Keith: It looks like, in about eight minutes, they lost 790 million jenny. No. 790,000 jenny?

Jack: It's wonderful.

Keith: Something like that.

Dre: It's a lot.

Jack: I wrote down here, "They simply can't make enough money." Oh, let me go back a step, real quick. Uh, my first thought when I heard about Greed Island being a game that sucks you into the game; loads of people have gone in, none have come out; nobody knows who built it and why; there are certain criteria for going in and coming out. Literally the first thing I thought when I heard it was, like, this is going to make a really sick arc, several arcs down the road.

Keith: Mm.

Jack: I was just like, this is a good setup for a story going inside the cursed video game, but it's Togashi, so we might go in there for 10 minutes, and then he'll be done with it. [Keith laughs] But I don't know. We're going into Greed Island at some point, because it's to do with the Ging plotline. I'm stoked. Meanwhile, back in the place where people haven't just gambled away all of their money on a plaster cast of a dead queen's head, the crew of weirdos is shown a man who's sort of been sealed in carbonite, if it was somehow worse. He's sort of been, um...lacquered. [Jack and Sylvia laugh] He's been— [Dre sighs]

Sylvia: He's been engooped. He's been— he's—

Jack: He has been...

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: This is a man who's been engooped.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: He's been—

Sylvia: Enveloped by the goop.

Jack: Enveloped by the goop, yes.

Sylvia: It—

Jack: Mm?

Sylvia: I was gonna say it's like, um...it's like he's caught in a digestive enzyme on the wall, you know?

Jack: Yeah, truly. Horrible.

Dre: Ugh, yeah.

Jack: Horrible. And this is a previous bodyguard who gave bad information, understood bad information. The impression that you get isn't that he, uh...he fucked it up inoffensively, you know? He made a screwup, but it wasn't like he betrayed them or anything. He just, he was wrong about something. And they are introduced to the boss. It's time to meet the boss! [Sylvia laughs]

Dre: The cutest girl with the worst posture I have ever seen. [Keith laughs]

Jack: This is the first—

Sylvia: I've seen cuter, and I've seen worse.

Dre: Okay, fair.

Jack: I'm ringing the bell. This is our first, um...when we had Ali on and we were talking during the Zoldyck arc, Ali talked about a panel in the manga where Togashi says, "Oh, I have just gotten married to the *Sailor Moon* creator."

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: You know, "This is us proposing, this is us planning the wedding, and now we work together," and there's that shot of them, you know, sitting side by side as they are...presumably, as Togashi is working on the Zoldyck arc. Miss Neon, the boss, is our first fully formed *Sailor Moon* magical girl character design [**Keith:** Yeah.] showing up in the show. We have had Menchi a little bit. We've had Machi the doctor, but I think those are just shonen ladies. I think that Miss Neon is a magical girl character design produced by sitting four feet away from the woman drawing *Sailor Moon*.

Keith: Totally. I 100% agree. Shoutout to Naoko Takeuchi who very clearly, I think, inspired that design. [laughs quietly] And it's great! It's a great design.

Jack: Yeah, she's surrounded by plushies. All you need to know—

Keith: Having a tea party.

Jack: Yeah. All you need to know at this point is she is the flesh collector boss, and at this point in the story, we just have all the business that you can imagine surrounding, uh, duh-duh-duh...she's supposed to be intimidating, but she's just a cute little girl. You know? That is really where we are at this point. It's like, there's a mismatch between her menacing status and her actual affect, which is just a friendly, [**Keith:** Yeah.] bubbly teen girl.

[2:15:00]

Keith: And we just sort of get, like, really quick, the plan to, like, take the boss from the airport to the auction site. There's nothing really interesting that happens here, except for the sort of head bodyguard gets into a sort of mild bickering match with Kurapika about, like, Kurapika's like, "I'm gonna make a plan, and I'm gonna figure out what's

going on, and is there anybody you know who would do something to take out— to harm the boss,” and he’s just like, “No, it’s not about that. You just need to protect her from everything.”

Jack: Well, this is also him, I think, beginning to get the idea that Kurapika is asking a lot of questions.

Keith: Mm.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Because what Kurapika is doing here is fishing for information that will draw him closer to his targets, right?

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: Now, I have a question.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Before we move onto the— I’m ready to move onto the next scene. Is there anything about Miss Neon that we would like to...?

Keith: Yes.

Sylvia: I have one note about Neon.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Which is that her vibes are...she’s like one of those Twitter users that has, like, gained a following for being, like, cute and quirky and whatever, and then you find out that they work for Raytheon. [Jack, Keith, and Dre laugh]

Jack: Yes, that’s absolutely what it is.

Sylvia: Because it's like, aw, she's so cute and quirky! And then it's like, oh yeah, she's also, like, she buys, like, the eyes of a fucking genocided people [**Jack:** Yep.] on the black market and collects, like, both the living and the dead.

Jack: Yep. She sure does.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: She sure does.

Sylvia: She's the— you know what she is? She's the girl who got canceled on Tumblr for stealing bones from a cemetery to do her witchcraft.

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

Sylvia: That's what Neon is. Yeah.

Jack: Yep.

Dre: Jesus Christ.

Sylvia: That was a real thing that happened.

Dre: I believe you.

Jack: She's great.

Keith: I'll say that she does have a sort of haunted quality about her.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Like, she's like, she does have the hunched over. She has, like, slightly spooky hair.

Jack: Haunted, would you say? Interesting.

Dre: Hmm.

Keith: Yeah, she's got, like, a tattered, like, bandana that ties her hair up.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Her clothes are kind of like, um, pink witch. [Keith and Jack laugh]

Sylvia: There is a— there is something that is, like, deliberately, I think, very, like, off about her. Like, there—

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Dre: Sure.

Sylvia: Like, as much as she has the sort of, like, bubbly [Keith: Yeah.] quirky personality, she is also, like, [Keith: Yeah.] presented as being a little off-kilter.

Keith: The one way that she's not exactly the, like, the girl you find out— the influencer who turns out to be working for Raytheon, is that she also is kind of scary right away, and those people are, [Dre: Yeah.] like, squeaky clean.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. Um...I have a question.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yes.

Jack: Let's say [Keith: Oh.] you were Yoshihiro Togashi.

Keith: I probably have one thing before this.

Jack: Yes.

Keith: I'm pretty sure that before the next scene starts in proper, we have the shot of them leaving the airport? Am I right, or does that happen a little— I guess it doesn't really matter.

Jack: It happens after.

Keith: Okay. Okay.

Sylvia: Oh, okay.

Jack: I think. I think. Because there's a music thing that happens there.

Keith: There is, yes, there's a music thing that happens, and that's part of it.

Jack: The transition needs to work, yeah. Here is my question. Let's say you have, over hundreds of pages of a manga and a television show, constructed an evil organization so far reaching and so menacing in their power and capability, that even—

Keith: Talking about the Hunters?

Jack: Mm... [Keith cackles, Dre laughs] Even the mention of them causes your heroes and anybody who knows their name to freak out. Would you... [Keith laughs quietly] introduce them at the beginning of their own episode? Would you give them a real big classic buildup to the beginning of their own episode? Or would you cut suddenly to four of them and their boss, essentially in a lobby, hanging around waiting for everybody else to show up?

Keith: It's an abandoned lobby.

Jack: [laughs] This is— it is amazing! The Phantom Troupe are introduced, what, 15 minutes [Keith laughs] into an episode that is only tangentially about the Phantom Troupe. You know, we've known that this arc is walking towards the Phantom Troupe for a long time.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: But the moment that they are introduced is Togashi's Trick! It's him saying, [Keith: Yeah.] "Oh, you want the Phantom Troupe? Okay, here they are. Here they are."

Keith: Well, and then, what's their vibe, Jack?

Jack: Okay, let's talk about this, because I, uh...I went on Togashi's wild roller coaster

here. We see a sort of ruined church building [**Keith**: Yeah.] and we start panning down this church building.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And I was like, this is how he's going to do it, the Phantom Troupe is going to arrive. And sure enough, with his back to us and in tight closeups of him reading a book without his face being revealed, we have Chrollo Lucilfer, not named, I think, at this point, right? Or maybe they [**Sylvia**: Nope.] call him Chrollo towards the end?

Sylvia: I think they just call him the boss.

Jack: The boss?

Keith: They just call him boss. Yeah, they don't say his name.

Jack: Yep.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: But this is, if you have watched— if you're like, “Why does Jack know the leader of the Phantom Troupe?” We watched the screenshot stream in which the character was named, and I have known that this guy's the leader of the Phantom Troupe, because he has appeared in every closing and opening credit scene [**Sylvia**: Yeah.] for a while.

Keith: For two arcs.

Dre: For a long time, yeah.

Sylvia: I believe also the— hey, if you haven't heard that stream, it's the episode 0 in this feed.

Keith: Yeah, it totally is.

Jack: It's a lot of fun.

Keith: It is a lot of fun, yeah. It's great.

Sylvia: It's very fun.

Jack: And, you know, I recognized straightaway that this sort of abandoned church is that room, right? This is that space?

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: The Phantom Troupe's meeting zone. Chrollo is reading a book. He's just hanging out. And then, the Phantom Troupe members are introduced, and they are bickering.

Keith: Um, sorry, real quick. This is stupid, but if you haven't watched that episode 0 or listened to it, and there's the links for the screenshots that we teased Jack with are in the description of that episode. We might be about to resolve a couple of those screenshots in the next session.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Keith: So.

Jack: Was Miss Neon in one of those screenshots? I think she was.

Keith: I won't tell you. [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: I...

Keith: No. No, she wasn't. [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: I don't remember.

Keith: Neon was not.

Jack: Okay.

Keith: Was not. But one of them you can guess, based on what we're talking about now, and another one will probably be a surprise when it happens.

Jack: Exciting.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Okay. So, brief— we get a detail on Chrollo's— the back of Chrollo's jacket. He has an inverted cross, which I sort of figured out from the screenshot stream, but something I missed is that the cross has two, like, blood teardrops, [**Sylvia:** Uh huh.] one on either side of it, right? It's like a very specific logo, and I can't tell whether this is— oh, it's not. This is his logo. This is his crest, because we know what the logo of the Phantom Troupe is.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's a horrible spider.

Keith: Mm-hmm. It's a horrible spider.

Jack: Interesting. Don't play his theme yet, but what's his theme called? The Man With the Inverted Cross" or something?

Keith: "The Man of the Inverted Cross". Oh, sorry.

Jack: Yep.

Keith: "The Man of the Reversed Cross" is what it's called.

Jack: Interesting. The Phantom Troupe are very— by *Hunter × Hunter* standards. Don't get me wrong. There's a mummy wearing boxing gloves. [Dre laughs] There's a man— there's a rōnin. There is a one-eyed person. You know. But by *Hunter × Hunter* standards, they are—

Keith: There's a Frankenstein.

Jack: There's a Frankenstein. They are very normal people [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] who are

chatting and bickering and checking their watches and greeting each other and hanging out.

Keith: They're just a bunch of friends!

Jack: You get the sense that they are dangerous people, but they are...they're Hunters. They're just Hunters. [laughs quietly] You know?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And we are introduced to them very quickly. We have Pakunoda, who is a sexy lady. She has a lovely piece of animation. She checks her wristwatch, at one point, and she's wearing her watch like a bracelet with the face on the inside of her wrist like some people do, so she's, like, looking at the inside of her wrist to check the time.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: We have Shalnark, [**Keith:** Yeah.] who is a little *Dragon Quest* boy. He's, like, cheery. He's happy to see everyone.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: He's just a nice lad.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: We have Phinks! With a P-H. P-H-I-N-K-S.

Keith: Yep. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Who is a grumpy racing driver. He's a man in a sort of racing driver.

Sylvia: Oh, okay. That's an interesting— I didn't get racing driver from him. I always got, uh, Chris Moltisanti.

Keith: But I get it from the jacket though. Sorry, you get who?

Dre: Yeah, I totally get it.

Sylvia: Chris Moltisanti from *The Sopranos*?

Keith: Oh, it is.

Jack: Oh, yeah. [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: The, like, tracksuit vibe?

Jack: Yeah, totally. It's absolutely that tracksuit vibe. I also saw it as, like, a racing jacket or, like, racing colors.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, no, absolutely. I think you are, like, totally right. I just, when I first watched this, it wasn't— I was just— yeah.

Keith: I don't remember when they reveal what his power is, but it's very funny—

Sylvia: It's great.

Keith: And it's not to drive fast. [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Whoa, spoilers.

Keith: Yeah, sorry.

Jack: And between the, uh, Baise...wait, I can do it. Baise, Melody, Kurapika, and who's the fourth?

Sylvia: Oh. You can do it!

Jack: Oh, uh, Basho.

Sylvia: Yeah!

Jack: You know, we are now so firmly— and after the whole shit in the Heavens Arena, we are now so primed to be like, each of these people are Nen specialists, and each of them is going to do something fucking weird. So, as Togashi is just introducing the Phantom Troupe, like, faster than lightning, you know, one appearing almost before the other has left the screen, all you can think is—

Keith: Very conspicuously using each other's first names. [laughs quietly]

Jack: Yep. Yeah, exactly. Is, "What is this person's deal? What is their Nen power?"

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Here comes Bonolenov, a mummy who is wearing boxing gloves.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: And shorts.

Jack: [laughs quietly] And shorts!

Sylvia: Yeah. Oh.

Jack: Bonolenov is great. If you are— I know we're kind of blitzing through these descriptions quite quickly. There are 13 members of the Phantom Troupe.

Sylvia: Yes.

Jack: We will—

Keith: This is how it feels in the show, though, too.

Jack: Yes. We will invariably talk more about them as they— as focus falls on them in later episodes. But Bonolenov is a gangly mummy wrapped head to toe in bandages, bright circular eyes peeking out, and wearing boxing gloves and shorts. They are— what are Bonolenov's pronouns? He/him?

Sylvia: He/him.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: He is accompanied by Kortopi, a one-eyed— or maybe— hmm. A small child in a green raincoat with long gray hair cover— with only one eye visible beneath. Then there is Uvo, a—

Keith: Fully covering their face.

Jack: Yes.

Keith: Like, can't see their face.

Jack: Uvo is a spiky-haired gigantic sort of fur-wearing— almost like an RPG barbarian sort of vibes from Uvo. And then—

Sylvia: He has, like...he has, like, boss character from a Dynasty Warriors game vibes.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah, he absolutely does. And then, finally, Shizuku, who wears a cross necklace on a chain, has purple eyes, wears glasses, and is a new member of the Phantom Troupe. And they briefly mention another group of people who are on their way, Feitan's crew, who, I don't know. If you thought we were done meeting Phantom Troupe members, we are not.

Sylvia: Uh-uh.

Jack: But we are going to take a little break from them [**Keith:** Yeah.] for a few scenes. But the implication is that the other new Phantom Troupe member is a certain clown pervert whom we all know and love.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Hisoka Morrow.

Keith: Do we want to get "The Man of the Reversed Cross" here while we do the transition into...?

Jack: Uh, no, because I think the time for "The Man of the Reversed Cross" is when we see his face at the end of the episode.

Keith: Okay. Sure. Oh, I forgot that his face—

Sylvia: It's always time for the man of the reversed cross, as far as I'm concerned.

Keith: I forgot that we get his face at the end of the episode.

Dre: Awooga.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Awooga?

Sylvia: Listen, I'll post my notes. [Jack and Dre laugh]

Keith: Does it say "awooga" in there?

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] It's bad.

Dre: It should. [Keith laughs]

Jack: But yeah, it's really interesting. You know, this first group— I think Pakunoda says, like, "Has the other new addition arrived yet?" and is responded to with someone saying, "You should ask Machi," where, you know, Machi is sort of, like, the contact with Hisoka. And over this, the choral music of the Phantom Troupe, you know, rises up again, this beautiful choral part [clip of "Requiem Aranea" begins] that we heard last time, that you are now hearing in the podcast. This thing fucking rips. This is great. As we meet all the members, and then, without an interruption in the music, [music ends] we cut back to the bodyguards and Kurapika loading Neon into a limo off a plane, and this is just— this is beautiful [clip of "Dirge from Dark Side" begins] music work here as, you know, we keep the choral part of the Phantom Troupe but cut to, presumably, their targets, as we see them all moving. This is just nice classic [music ends] film scoring technique of, you know, build tension by assigning one threatening theme to a particular

entity and then carry it over into the next thing.

Keith: So, that is actually two songs, two separate songs on the soundtrack, and it's interesting, because before I went to go get the name of the song, I was watching the cars driving away from the airport, and I was like, "This looks like a funeral procession," and then I looked up [**Jack:** Mm!] the song to put it in my notes, and it's called "Dirge from the Dark Side".

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: It is lovely, and I want to be specific here when I talk about the way it is being used. I think it goes beyond just assigning—just motif work, you know? It would be one thing to say this is music for the Phantom Troupe, you've heard them, and then, later in the episode, as the limo cavalcade moves, we hear their theme again. I feel this is pretty classic motif work, to be like, "Oh, better watch out! There's a threat coming." I think what sets this apart and what makes it a really nice sort of compositional technique is the way the scenes flow directly one into the other. You know, we are introduced. We are submersed in the soundscape of the Phantom Troupe. We see them not being too threatening, just chatting with each other, bickering. We hear their sinister music building, and then seamlessly transition to, as the music continues, our team moving in the limos. And something about that straight line drawn between the two scenes with no scenes in between—you know, no additional music stuff—really sells the sort of the sinister...the way that the Phantom Troupe are off-kilter, that we've just seen these people palling around, getting ready, you know, and then we are seeing, you know, perhaps the target of their...you know, their fell misdeeds. The other thing it really reminds me of is one of my favorite scenes in *The Dark Knight* where... 'cause Christopher—no, what's his name? Hans Zimmer?

[2:30:28]

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Good composer. I would not want to spend any time in a room with him, but he's

a good composer. [Dre chuckles]

Keith: It's 'cause he bites.

Jack: [laughs quietly] It's 'cause he— [Keith laughs] It's 'cause he's rude to junior composers.

Keith: Is that true?

Jack: Yeah, he's just a...

Sylvia: Oh, yeah, no. Hans Zimmer, piece of shit. Just putting it out there.

Jack: Piece of shit.

Keith: I don't know anything about Hans Zimmer except for that he does the big sounds.

Dre: Hmm.

Jack: There's this moment when they are transporting Harvey Dent early on in *The Dark Knight* and there have been kind of threats that he is going to come under attack, and so they stack up this massive convoy, and you just get these just detached horrible helicopter shots of the convoy, you know, moving unthreatened through Gotham as, you know, Hans Zimmer's cues of menace and threat build up in the soundtrack, and it really reminded me of these great shots of loading the limo as this dirge is playing. Really, really good. Because the bodyguards are just like, "Welp, doing our job."

[2:31:30]

Jack: Inside the limo, everything is normal.

[brief pause]

Keith: Hmm. [Sylvia laughs] I don't think so. I actually disagree.

Sylvia: Yeah, I might...

Dre: What?

Sylvia: Might have some issues with that.

Dre: No, I think it's normal.

Sylvia: Yeah?

Jack: Dalzollene give Neon her tasks for September, because it turns out that Neon is a powerful Nen user and a fortune teller. She has a, like many characters in this show, complicated relationship with her parents.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Her father is a mafia boss, but, as Kurapika figures out later in a kind of powerpoint presentation, is ultimately just using his daughter's magical ability to allow him to climb the ladder. And this is just— again, this is fully the way that *Hunter × Hunter* is about people's relationship with their parents and the way that their parents instrumentalize their power or their capacity.

Keith: Mm-hmm. And just how adults instrumentalize people in general.

Jack: Mm-hmm, yep. Yeah, totally.

Keith: Regardless of if they're— [laughs quietly] if they even have the claim of being a parent.

Jack: Yeah. And so, you know, Neon chats with her dad on the phone. She has these cute little phone charms on the back of her phone.

Keith: One of them is a character from *Yu Yu Hakusho*.

Jack: Cute.

Sylvia: Oh!

Dre: Oh.

Keith: The little penguin-looking thing. His name is Pu.

Jack: Huh.

Sylvia: Its name is what?

Keith: His name is Pu. It's spelled P-U.

Sylvia: Oh, okay, nevermind. Cute! [Dre laughs quietly]

Jack: And we soon learn how Neon performs fortune telling.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Jack: It rules. Does someone else want to talk about this? Because she gets out a little pen and gets ready to—

Keith: Does anyone have the name of the— because we get the sort of, like, named move, even though...

Jack: Yes.

Dre: Oh, I think I have it written down. Lovely Ghostwriter/Angelic Auto Writing.

Keith: Yep. Yep. I have that in quotes, and then unquote, and then, "creepy." [Dre laughs]

Jack: Mm.

Keith: What does it look like, Dre?

Dre: It is just this, like— okay, you know Slimer from *Ghostbusters*?

Keith: Yeah, Onionhead, yeah.

Dre: Yeah. What if you took Slimer, and you made him purple instead of green, and then you kind of squished him a little bit, so he was, like, longer and taller?

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: And then also just had a deeply unpleasant face. So there's just this, like, awful spirit creature with, like, this big mouth, seemingly, like, just whispering into Neon's ears, and she's just, like, writing down everything it says.

Keith: It's actually—

Jack: It's weirder than that.

Keith: It's controlling her hand.

Dre: Oh, you're right! Yeah, yeah, yeah. It, like, is basically— I guess they don't say this, but it seems to imply that it is basically possessing her.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: This is a Stand as well.

Keith: Well, they say—

Sylvia: This is...

Jack: That's the other Stand that I...

Sylvia: Yeah, if this was named Rockwell, this would be a stand. [Jack laughs] It just needed to be named after a band of some sort.

Keith: They say, at the very end of this episode, one of the last things is the head bodyguard on the phone with Neon's father and confirms that she never remembers the fortunes she tells, [Dre: Yeah.] and she can't tell her own fortune. Those are, like, two of the rules of the thing. I think it's unclear if she knows what Nen is or knows that she's doing this.

Jack: Keith, I think it's [Sylvia: Yeah.] unclear whether she is conjuring...is that a demon? Like, for real? Is that— you know, are we outside the realm of Nen, and she is actually tapping into some underworld, otherworldly power?

Sylvia: I mean, straight up, like...

Keith: Because why would this be subconscious? Why would this subconsciously be happening?

Sylvia: We do learn...I don't want to talk about this yet, but we will— I think I could explain this later on down the road.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: Okay.

Sylvia: When there are more Nen rules revealed.

Jack: Interesting.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Because the read I got was, um...and I realize that in a show with Nen in it, what I'm about to say is going to sound absurd. I think this is a ghost or a demon or something. You know, this is some James Wan Blumhouse shit. You know, she's got a cursed pen. She knows how to tap into the otherworld.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: The demon writes fortunes for her.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's great.

Sylvia: I mean, straight up, like, it might be just worth thinking about, like, how Nen could encompass so many things that are just that. Like, Nen can be demonic in its nature, right? And so, like...

Jack: Yes. Is Nen just a way— you know, Wing and the general convention interprets Nen as being about your aura, but what if Nen is a way to touch some other world?

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: You know.

Keith: This is a good time— I sort of forgot about this from earlier, but just to squeeze in here before we end the episode. It is interesting that Nen is known to the under— Nen is supposed to be secret, but the underworld seems to know about Nen, at least further than just the Zoldycks.

Jack: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And it doesn't seem out of place to anyone that a mafia guy would hire a bunch of, like, Nen user bodyguards, but also, being a bodyguard for the mob was not on anyone's list of jobs a Hunter might have during the Hunter Exam.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Like, this is like—

Jack: However.

Keith: Oh?

Jack: It is a Hunter job. It's a common enough Hunter job [**Keith:** Right.] that four Hunters have showed up.

Keith: Right, yeah.

Sylvia: That's what I was gonna say, right? Like...

Dre: And there was, like, three that were already hired.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Like, it seems— it seems like— it seems very weird. And it's got a high barrier to entry. Like, you've gotta find the Hunter office, *and* you have to know Nen, so this is, like, fully a Hunter job.

Sylvia: It's like, it speaks to kind of the weird— well, like, we talked about Hunters and their relationship to money earlier, and like, this kind of puts it in the opposite way, where they are the service that only the hyper rich can afford for this stuff.

Keith: Right.

Jack: Mm.

Sylvia: And because of that, Hunters being so powerful and being, like, the standard of, like, this person is going to be able to handle your problems, they end up inevitably working for rich people who have gained that through, like, unscrupulous means. I mean, you know, as if— you know. You know! You know how I feel about all rich people, but [**Jack:** Yeah.] you know what I mean.

Dre: Sure.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. And then, in just, like, a great little twist, the car blasts past a group of people walking by the side of the road. This is the second detachment of the Phantom Troupe, who do not give a shit about the limo convoy. They are just— they are—

Keith: Was that a red herring for you?

Jack: Yes.

Keith: Or was it— okay. Okay.

Jack: Well, I thought that the Phantom Troupe were going to launch an attack on Neon.

Keith: Sure.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: For some reason.

Keith: But they just happened to be walking by.

Jack: Yeah. They're just— oh, it's ships passing in the night.

Sylvia: I do love that shot.

Jack: It's great.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: This is Feitan's group. Sorry. Time for more Phantom Troupe members, although I think—

Keith: [cross] Never apologize for that.

Sylvia: [cross] "Sorry"? Never apologize for the Phantom Troupe members.

Dre: No, no, no, yeah.

Sylvia: I mean, you can apologize—

Keith: You can apologize for their deeds.

Sylvia: Never apologize for talking about them.

Jack: Yes. These are, I think, our last Phantom Troupe members, right?

Keith: Very nearly, yeah.

Jack: We have Feitan, a small frightening child [Sylvia laughs] with a tall collar with a skull on it.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Feitan's affect is like...Hisoka drained of the sexual malice and delight. He has that same very light voice, very low, measured. But whereas Hisoka's is just crackling with a kind of lascivious menace, [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] Feitan's is sort of loose and detached and sinister.

Keith: Listless but violent [**Jack:** Yeah.] and menacing.

Jack: Yes. I don't know anything about Feitan. We are telling you— I mean, not the other three. We are putting into this episode all we know about the Phantom Troupe right now.

Keith: Right. Yeah.

Jack: You know, we are not being given anymore about any of these people, what their powers are, what their relationships are. We're just going on vibes from these guys.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Feitan is joined by Machi, the Nen doctor who we last saw dealing with Hisoka. Great. Good to see her here, you know, with her people. And also—

Keith: A familiar face.

Jack: A familiar face in a gang of weirdos. It's always important to have. [Sylvia laughs] Also with them is Nobunaga, who is a rōnin with a classic sort of top knot and a robe and a katana, and then finally, Franklin, who is Frankenstein, sort of.

Keith: He's a big Frankenstein with big ears, big long ears.

Sylvia: Yeah, like a Buddha Frankenstein type of thing.

Jack: Yes.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: He has, like, elongated earlobes, and he has stitching on his face in sort of chunks. They walk together, and they basically bicker about the— well, first they say, "It's been a long time since we have all been together. It's been—"

Keith: Years.

Jack: Years.

Jack: And during that time, Phantom Troupe members four and eight have changed. I

think we knew about this in past, that Phantom Troupe's organization is based on, like, seats, rather than an increasing membership.

Keith: Right.

Jack: I think we got this with Machi and Hisoka.

Keith: 13: 12 arms and a head.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yes. Four and eight are new. This is Shizuku, the woman wearing the black turtleneck and the chain and the glasses, and Hisoka.

Keith: God, wait until you figure out what she's about.

Jack: I'm excited. She— we saw her, and she was just very polite.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Very quiet and chill. I doubt she is.

Sylvia: No. [laughs quietly]

Jack: Feitan doesn't care too much for...it is Feitan, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Or is it Franklin? Who doesn't care too much for Hisoka?

Keith: It's both.

Sylvia: Both of them, yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. Feitan is, like, complaining about Hisoka. Machi's like, "Yeah, whatever. You know, it's not my business."

Sylvia: She also doesn't like him, though. Like, we saw that on screen.

Keith: Nobunaga's like, "He's here because he's good, so leave it alone," and then Franklin is like, "He's not *that* good."

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And then Feitan says, basically, "Are you questioning the boss's judgment?" and there's a really interesting sort of power dynamic here where Feitan is very prepared to say, "I don't like Hisoka very much," but is not— is going to kind of, like, bristle a little at the idea that Chrollo has misjudged Hisoka. I think there's a really interesting parallel here with— so, the reason that Feitan and crew aren't fond of Hisoka is that they say that Chrollo lets him do whatever Hisoka wants, and this is making text what is sort of made subtext with Netero and the Hunter Exam. Over and over again in the Hunter Exam, we hear people like Satotz say, you know, "The Hunter Exam is here for weeding out the violent people," but as we've talked about, all it does is ensure that the violent people that get through are the most violent people, are the most sinister horrible people.

Keith: Right, yeah.

Jack: And there's an extent to which—

Keith: And also that the good people that get in are the most violent good people.

Jack: Yes, yes. You know, almost everybody who is in a position of power over Hisoka has been giving him, consciously or not, a very long leash, and this is going to have consequences. And it is interesting seeing that, where Satotz was not really able to say, "Hey, Netero. Hisoka, really? He tried to kill an examiner last time," Feitan is at least prepared—maybe not to his face—to at least say, "I don't know if Chrollo should be giving this guy as much leeway as he's getting."

Keith: Yeah, this is where...this is where, like, Nobunaga has something to say about it, basically, like, he can do— you know, he's not...he's not doing anything. He's not breaking any rules, and he's talented. And then, uh, I think it's Feitan who accuses

Nobunaga of, like, kind of subtly saying that the boss is scared to tell [**Jack:** Right.] Hisoka what to do.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: And then none of them like that. Franklin and Feitan are both mad about this.

Jack: There's a great moment. They all walk in silence for a bit. This is kind of our first sign of the Phantom Troupe's...of the, let's say, the tension roiling under the surface of the Phantom Troupe at all times. They walk in silence, and then Franklin and Nobunaga both just, like, suddenly lash out at each other and get into a scrap.

Keith: It's explosive.

Jack: Yeah, it's great. It's almost a jumpscare, these two, you know, suddenly bursting into violence, and Machi and Feitan are sort of just like, "Oh, they're just bickering."

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: But it really is that, like, sudden lashing out of violence to each other.

Keith: Yeah. The vibe of not every single interaction that we have with the Phantom Troupe, but, like, a lot of it, it is so tame. Like, we do get this, like, sort of fight between Franklin and Nobunaga, but it's pretty much immediately handwaved. They don't even stop to look at it. They just keep walking.

[2:45:04]

Jack: Yep.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: And then we do see them kind of fighting, and it does seem more like sparring than anything. They're just kind of going at each other. But there's a lot of friendliness in the Phantom Troupe. The vibe is so strange. Like, it's very clear that they are mostly friends and that they are not, like...they're not— you know in a movie when, like, a

character is evil, like, everything they do is evil?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: And, you know, they sing scary songs or they're, like, you know, being arch. No one here is arch.

Jack: They sing scary songs? Wh—

Keith: No. No, in—

Sylvia: Oh, you know. [Keith laughs]

Jack: Which scary songs have you been watching? [laughs quietly]

Keith: Just like— [laughs]

Sylvia: Like in a Disney movie, yeah?

Jack: Okay, I see, I see. [laughs]

Keith: A Disney movie, great example. Okay. Uh...

Jack: [cross] Don't help him, Sylvi. I wanted to hear a scary song. [Dre laughs]

Keith: [cross] Oh, no, this is bad. This actually is bad.

Sylvia: I'm sorry.

Keith: This is a bad example. Okay. Everyone remembers *The Pirates of the Caribbean*.

Jack: Of course.

Dre: Sure.

Sylvia: Yeah. This is a bad example.

Dre: Wow. Wow, wow. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: It's a bad example because of Johnny Depp, but it's a great example [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] with regards— without that part of it. The, like, ghost pirates. Like, they were all just, like, pirate crew until they turned into ghosts, but they really, really commit to being scary ghost pirates. You know what I mean? You know, they're singing, like, [cross] spooky sea shanties and whatever.

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah, no, I know what you mean.

Keith: And it's like, if I became a ghost tomorrow, I wouldn't immediately be into haunted stuff, you know? [Sylvia laughs] I'd just be a ghost [**Jack:** No.] who is into video games and music and comics.

Jack: But what's happened here is that we have the world's most dangerous group of literally genocidal villains.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Who are also just like, this is my colleague.

Keith: Regular people. Yeah.

Jack: It is...I'm...we're about to get really into the Phantom Troupe on this show, I bet. I am so interested to see how this is going to play out.

Sylvia: Do you want to know the other name for this arc? Because it is the Phantom Troupe Arc [**Keith:** Yeah.] for a lot of people.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: What's it also called? The Yorknew Arc?

Keith: The Yorknew City Arc.

Sylvia: Yeah, or the Yorknew Auction.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I hope we're not just going to...

Sylvia: Which is a pun, by the way.

Jack: On what?

Keith: What's the pun?

Sylvia: It's Japanese. So, in Japanese, the word for "new"—

Keith: It's a pun on New York.

Sylvia: Well, the word for "new" is shin, so when they say "the Yorknew Auction," they're saying "Yorkshin Auction."

Jack: Oh. [laughs]

Sylvia: So it's just, like, wordplay, because they sound similar.

Jack: I really hope— don't answer this. I hope we're not going to just dispense with the Phantom Troupe at the end of this arc. These guys are fucking scary and are all great characters, and I want—

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I want at least some of them to stick around [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] longer than their own arc.

Keith: I just love that we get some of them arguing. We get some of them happy to see each other. We get some of them gossiping.

Sylvia: It's really good.

Keith: We get two people that are, like, mad that someone's late.

Jack: Have they ever wiped out a clan?

Keith: Have the Phantom Troupe ever wiped out a clan?

Sylvia: [cross] You know, it depends on the configuration.

Keith: [cross] I don't know. If they had, I would maybe have to reassess.

Jack: It does depend on the configuration.

Sylvia: 'Cause, right? Like, we get—

Jack: One bad apple.

Sylvia: We get confirmation that both Shizuku and Hisoka are pretty new, right?

Jack: [sarcastic] And they both seem like real good souls. [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: I mean, Hisoka I'm not defending, and I'm not even defending Shizuku. It's just interesting to be like, they are part of this organization and the only ones that we could really consider...like, we don't know which ones were there for Kurapika's thing.

Jack: I wonder if the head of the spider changes too.

Keith: We will learn the answer to all of this, pretty much.

Sylvia: We will learn all about that. Yeah.

Jack: Huh.

Keith: Almost all.

Sylvia: We will find out more about, like, we will be able to confirm some people who were there is why I, like...

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, totally.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: It would be bad storytelling if it was a completely different Phantom Troupe.
[laughs quietly]

Sylvia: Yeah, exactly. Like, I don't want to bring— I just want to bring that up—

Jack: [cross] Yeah, no, I think it's worth mentioning.

Sylvia: [cross] In terms of, like, what we end up seeing Kurapika do to them.

Jack: Yep.

Sylvia: And the extent to go to get them when it's like, almost— you don't know how Ship of Theseus this group is, you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And that dovetails so well with a classic revenge storyline, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Because it's like, upon whom am I meting the revenge? How far down the chain of actual culpability is my revenge going to take?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Well, I think that that is what would make, if it was a full Ship of Theseus and none of these people were there...

Jack: Mm?

Keith: I think that that could be fun.

Sylvia: I think— yeah, I think that could be fun. I also do think that it is an inter— like, I like the decision to make it clear that, like, some of them weren't, some of them were. Like, I like...

Keith: It's Togashi, so there's, like, a whole set of rules about it, so.

Sylvia: Yeah. Well, yes.

Keith: We will learn very specifically what is going on here.

Sylvia: Do we want to...do we...I mean, we have more to say about the Phantom Troupe, obviously, but do we want to talk about the last little bit of this meeting?

Keith: Uh, yeah, please.

Jack: Oh, wait, no, that comes right at the end, right? We have a—

Sylvia: Oh, right, we have more of, uh...

Keith: Oh, sorry, we have the fortune telling.

Jack: We have the exact fortune.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: The fortune telling has already happened, but [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] we hear what her fortune was, or rather, something interesting happened with the fortunes that she told for four high profile clients of her father's, four mafiosos who are going to be at the auction.

Keith: One of them is Krillin.

Jack: Oh, yeah, right, the baby mafia guy.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Sure. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: If you haven't heard the— or been able to hear the episode, go to friendsatthetable.cash where you'll be able to get access to the bonus episodes of *Hunter × Hunter* where we talk about *Dragon Ball* and I didn't know who Krillin was.

Because he arrived for the first time in a full suit, I thought he was a mafioso baby. Yes, something is odd about these fortunes. Four of them begin with the same opening lines, suggesting that the outcome of the fortune is going to happen to all four men at the same time, suggesting that it is going to be at the auction, especially because the fortune reads something like this: “In the basement where prices rise, your bed shall be made with your brothers. Do not descend stairs you have never climbed. In numbers, do not compete with others,” which is a great fortune. It rhymes. It’s lovely.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: It’s spooky. [cross] Seems like the sort of thing a demon would write.

Sylvia: [cross] Love a good omen.

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

Sylvia: Like...

Keith: If I can— not quite an omen, but if I can deliver your fortune, Jack.

Jack: Mm.

Keith: You will be hearing more fortunes, and you will continue to like them.

Jack: Oh, excellent! [Keith and Jack laugh] That’s great. I feel very good about that.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Oh my god. Yeah. Yeah, you will!

Keith: Yeah, you will. Yeah. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: And so, you know, the bodyguard whose name is also a topical anti-irritant [Sylvia laughs] says Neon cannot go to the auction, because it will put her in danger. We can't tell her why, because she can't remember her fortunes, and she can't make fortunes of her own, and she won't listen to us if we try and keep her out, so instead—this is just nice, you know, put the characters in the room—the bodyguards are going to be sent to

bid in her stead, putting them in danger, putting them at the site where this fortune is likely to transpire. The bodyguards—

Keith: And directly, like, specifically ignoring what the fortune says.

Jack: Uh, yeah.

Keith: Which is don't bid. It says don't bid.

Jack: Yep. But no, they're gonna go and bid, because they— this is a demon. This is a demon saying this. How is her subconscious helping her learn this? This is also classic demon logic.

Keith: Nen can— Nen can know the future.

Jack: Yeah. [Keith laughs] Yeah. Hmm. Hmm.

Keith: How do you feel about Nen now, Jack? Do you feel— has anything changed for you?

Sylvia: That is a great question, actually, yeah.

Dre: Oh, great question.

Jack: Okay. Here is what the experience of learning about Nen has been. It has been as though someone has handed me a manilla envelope containing seven to nine small print, small spacing descriptions of the core mechanics of Nen. This is Mr. Wing's lesson, and I look at this sheet of paper, of this little manilla folder, and I'm like, "I have to read all of this, and I have to internalize it before I can move onto the other good shit of the show?" And when I finish reading it, Togashi takes it back from me and says, "Great. That was the prologue of Nen. Now look over there." And I turn around, and it's one of those fucking circus organs where the guy is, like, playing the organ with the left hand [Sylvia laughs] and smashing plates with the right hand, and like...

Sylvia: I was literally gonna say smashing plates [Keith laughs] like that one skit from *Think You Should Leave*.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly. He's playing a harmonica at the same time.

Keith: The Fred Willard, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: He's stamping his feet. Behind him, there are, like, 12 cheerleaders. Someone has lit a bonfire.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: [cross] And Togashi is like—

Keith: [cross] And you didn't even see the plates until they started smashing them.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And Togashi is like, "All right, chapter one: Nen," and he points at this shit, and I turned around, and Mr. Wing and the manilla envelope has disappeared. [Keith and Jack laugh] They have just gone.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I...right now, Nen is fucking great, but it is also everything else in the show.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: So, you know, I still feel justified when I was saying how much I hate Wing going into all that Nen shit. I just didn't realize that all the interesting Nen stuff had already been happening elsewhere in the show, and now I just get to go splashing back into that swimming pool. [Dre and Keith laugh] But look, Wing, you're on thin ice. But no, no, this stuff is great. This stuff is— this stuff's fantastic, and I bet every single member of the Phantom Troupe does something freaky with Nen, right?

Keith: Can you tell me— I'm gonna give you a, um— I'm gonna give you a Mizuken pop quiz. Can you tell me who's an Enhancer on the Phantom Troupe?

Jack: [thinking] Let's see...okay. An Enhancer on the Phantom Troupe is...the barbarian. Ovu or—

Keith: Uvogin.

Jack: Uvu— Uvo. Yes.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: They call him Uvo. His full name is Uvogin.

Jack: Yes. Chrollo calls him Uvogin later, I recall.

Keith: I'm just gonna tell you: nailed it. You got that right.

Jack: Oh, really?

Keith: Yeah. You got that right.

Jack: Ah, that's great.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Also, watch this. Watch this. I'm closing my laptop. Can I get a little bit of the Phantom Troupe music?

Keith: Yeah.

[clip of "Requiem Aranea" begins]

Jack: I'm going to name all 13 members of the Phantom Troupe.

Dre: Oh shit!

Sylvia: Oh my god.

Jack: The Phantom Troupe is led by Chrollo Lucilfer. [ding] There is the sexy lady.

["Requiem Aranea" ends, "The Man of the Reversed Cross" plays briefly]

Sylvia: [cross] That's not a name. [laugh quietly]

Jack: [cross] Pakunoda? [ding]

Sylvia: Oh, okay.

Jack: There is, uh, Phinks, the racing driver. [ding] [clip of "Requiem Aranea" begins]
There is Sharkla, the little *Dragon Quest* boy. [Sylvia laughs] [ding] There is Uvo, the barbarian. [ding] There is Shizuku, the turtleneck lady. [ding] There is Feitan, the creepy boy. [ding] There is Borodev, the mummy. [ding] [Keith and Sylvia laugh] There is— his name begins with a K. [ding]

Sylvia: You got it! Come on!

Keith: Wow, congratulations.

Jack: Kuropi. [ding]

[music ends]

Sylvia: Okay. No, I didn't say, like, "you got it," like they're done.

Jack: Who is the one-eyed guy. [ding] That's eight. There's Machi, the doctor. [ding]

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: There is Nobunaga, the rōnin. [ding]

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: There is Franklin, the Frankenstein. [ding] I'm missing—

Keith: Franklinstein.

Jack: The Franklinstein.

Sylvia: You're missing a very funny one.

Jack: I'm missing two. I'm saving the one I know for last.

Sylvia: Okay.

Jack: So, who am I—

Keith: I think you know two for last. Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe you said it, and I didn't hear you say it.

Jack: Um...

Sylvia: I—

Jack: Well, there's Hisoka. [ding]

Keith: Yep.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And who's the last member of the Phantom Troupe?

Sylvia: Wait.

Jack: There's 13 of them.

Keith: We have a theme song for one.

Sylvia: I think that they mentioned Chrollo.

Keith: Oh, okay, okay.

Jack: I started with Chrollo.

Keith: Okay.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: That's probably why I don't remember. It was ages ago.

Sylvia: Yeah, I think you got them all. Well, you got... [Keith laughs] You did...

Keith: Yeah, yeah, you got them all. [laughs]

Sylvia: You got them all in spirit. What was it, Shalkran [incorrect buzzer] and Bondorov? [incorrect buzzer] [Keith, Dre, and Jack laugh]

Jack: But yeah, all right, now I'm opening up my laptop to look at my notes again. It's great. I love it when a show is like...I mean, this is also— this is also any sort of schematic of, like, a crew.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Jack: The fun of a crew is who are all the members and what are their weirdo powers.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Is Chrollo a Nen user? He must be, right?

Sylvia: I mean...

Jack: They must all be Nen users.

Keith: Yeah. Yes. I'll just say yes. I don't think that that's a spoiler.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Okay. So, they get ready to go and bid. Let's end on Chrollo, so let's talk about what they are going to go and win. They are trying to win, for Neon, the bodyguards are trying to win the intact mummy of Princess Corco. [laughs]

Keith: Yep. Good luck.

Jack: The only princess made of cork. Good luck. [Keith laughs] A tissue used by the actor Sonne Limarch.

Sylvia: Crazy. Weirdly enough, one of the grosser things.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: And the eyes of a Kurta. The rising action to this moment, you know, over the course of this episode has been lovely as Kurapika stands on the rooftop, his chain in his hand, resolved to go and bid on the eyes of his slaughtered brethren to get himself closer to the moment of his revenge. It's good storytelling!

But Hisoka has not arrived, and one of the members of the Phantom Troupe is like, "He's not shit, and if he arrived, I bet I could beat the shit out of him," at which point, the candle gutters and goes out, and Hisoka steps out of the shadows. And this is really interesting to me, because I think that Togashi and crew are going to have to—if they are interested in it, which they might not be—are going to have to do a lot of work to make the Phantom Troupe scary alongside Hisoka, because we know how menacing Hisoka is. We know how powerful he is. We know how malicious and predatory his intentions are. And the show is writing a very complicated check that it is going to have to figure out how to cash, which is: Hisoka is terrifying, and we need these new characters, or at the very least, we need Chrollo to be just as scary, and I don't know how we're going to do that, because right now, the setup is that, like, weirdly, despite hating him, the viewer is aligned with Hisoka. He is our guy entering [Keith: Yeah.] this villainous space.

[3:00:05]

Keith: He's Kurapika's man.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Yeah, exactly. He is there to make the Phantom Troupe look bad, right? You know, like, they say, "Hisoka won't show up, and when he does, I bet he's not even going to be really powerful," and he shows up, and we're like, "It's Hisoka! Here he is! We know this guy!" You know, it's exciting to see him.

Keith: By the way, guarantee he was waiting in the dark—

Jack: For that—

Dre: Oh, sure.

Keith: For them to get mad enough at him to be like, [mocking] “Nah, I’m here.”

Jack: 100%.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: And so, in much the same way that I was really curious about how the show would disempower Killua, you know, would put Killua under threat, I am so curious about how the show is going to handle: how do we make Chrollo menacing and powerful and scary alongside Hisoka, a character whose menace and power we know intimately and are already kind of aligned with in the narrative? We’ve spent so much more time with him. We understand his perspective more. How do we get Chrollo and the Phantom Troupe to be frightening?

Keith: Mm.

Jack: And I don’t know how we’re going to do that.

Keith: Sorry, I’m writing secretly to everyone but you, Jack. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Yeah, no, no. That’s absolutely fine. You know where I’m coming from, right? Where it’s like...

Sylvia: Yeah, no, absolutely. I mean, I think that’s a very, like, understandable way to look at this from a first viewing. I think that, like, is the question it raises for the viewer, right? Is like, oh, we’re turning Hisoka from almost an— the— I mean, not almost an antagonist. From an antagonist to a POV character in a way?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Sylvia: That is—

Keith: And a situational ally.

Sylvia: Yes.

Jack: If not a literal— I want to be as clear as possible that, when I say Hisoka's our guy, I don't mean that I am, you know, I am switching my allegiances [Dre laughs] and I am now— this is now a pro-Hisoka podcast. I mean in terms of the way you structure character moves [**Keith:** Right.] in a story. If you are introducing a character you have spent a lot of time with to a group that you, the viewer, have not spent any time with, I think the natural thing that happens is that you align yourself with that character in that moment.

Keith: And we are friends— as viewers, we're friends with Kurapika, all of us.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Dre: Absolutely.

Keith: And we are sympathetic with his goal to kill the people in the Phantom Troupe, the people that slaughtered his entire clan, and he's been put on this path by Hisoka. One of the only other things that we know about the Phantom Troupe, besides that they were going to be here now, is that Hisoka's wearing a fake number 8.

Jack: Yeah. But what does that even mean, you know? It's—

Keith: Is it 8? Is he 8? Am I right?

Jack: Uh, he's either 4 or 8. Yeah.

Keith: He's either 4 or 8.

Jack: It's the same as a fake Hunter License— or not a fake Hunter License. It's the same as the difference we were talking about between, like, "I don't have a license, but I'm [**Keith:** Yeah.] actually a Hunter," and it's like, what does being a fake Phantom Troupe member actually mean?

Sylvia: Yeah, exactly.

Keith: We don't know—

Jack: You're a member of the Phantom Troupe.

Keith: Yeah. We don't know exactly what it means, but we do know that he sent Kurapika here, knowing that he's after the spiders.

Jack: Yep. Yeah. We don't know why Hisoka is— oh, Hisoka has ill designs on the Phantom Troupe, for some reason. I don't know what that's about, but we get a clue, as everyone's like, [instrumentals of "The Man of the Reversed Cross" begin] "All right, boss, time to speak," and Chrollo stands up. Hit it, Keith.

[intense choral part kicks in, then clip finishes]

Sylvia: Let's fucking go!

Jack: Do you know what they're singing?

Sylvia: I don't.

Keith: I think that they're singing, um...they're singing "aranea," is what they're singing.

Sylvia: Oh.

Jack: We've heard that name before.

Keith: Yeah, that's the— that is the name of the Phantom Troupe, is "Requiem Aranea". Aranea means spider.

Jack: Oh! Sick. And despite having a huge cue like that, Chrollo, much like Illumi and like a lot of the very dangerous killers in this show, has a weirdly gentle affect. You know, we see his face for the first time in the show, outside of title sequences. He has very pale skin. He has very big eyes. He has a kind of placid, relaxed expression on his face. He wears a spiky, furry collar and this black jacket with rivets in it. He is holding a book. And the Phantom Troupe are so excited to hear him speak. They clearly have a

lot of respect for this guy. They're wondering what he's going to ask them to steal, because we've talked about the Phantom Troupe as murderers, but I think they are also specifically thieves, right?

Keith: They are specifically thieves, yeah. They're like bandits.

Jack: It's just, in order to steal Kurta eyes, it involves...

Sylvia: Killing them.

Dre: You gotta murder 'em first, yeah.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: I mean, you steal them from their head, it's most likely they're not gonna live through that.

Jack: Yes, exactly.

Sylvia: I don't think they're taking their time to do it safely, you know?

Jack: And there's these little moments where the crew is like, "What's the boss gonna ask us to steal?"

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: "He loves reading. Maybe he wants us to steal a book." And, you know, that's about the depth of character that we get from Chrollo, at this point. We know basically nothing about him other than that he is held in very high regard [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] by the Phantom Troupe and—

Keith: I really love this moment of them all talking about him like he's not there, like, guessing what they're gonna ask.

Jack: Yeah, it's great.

Keith: They're very excited to figure out what he's gonna tell them to do, what their

orders are gonna be, and they're like, "Maybe it's the video games. Maybe it's the books." It's very, very funny, waiting for him to reveal.

Jack: And Hisoka looks up at Chrollo as he speaks with—is this fair to say?—a familiar expression on his face.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Keith: Yes. Horny.

Jack: Hisoka sees Chrollo and is filled with a kind of lascivious adoration, and this is really striking, because the only other person we have seen Hisoka really look that way to is Gon. Sometimes he looks that way at people who are trying and failing to kill him, but it really is Hisoka's recognition of a power that he can manipulate. It's creepy. It's really, really creepy.

Sylvia: Yeah. It's...it's definitely...it's definitely a signifier of what Hisoka's looking for from the Phantom Troupe, you know?

Jack: Uh, proximity to a kind of magnetic sexual power? [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Sort of.

Jack: What a horrible little weirdy. But—

Keith: I think that, like...I think that...we haven't gotten a lot of it, but we should be looking out for things maybe more material than proximity [**Sylvia:** Uh huh.] for Hisoka's motives here.

Jack: Interesting. Interesting. You said more material?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: What are we going to go and steal?

Dre: Uh, everything.

[clip of "The Man of the Reversed Cross" begins]

Jack: Everything?

Sylvia: [intensely] Everything.

Dre: Everything from Yorknew Auction.

Keith: Whoosh. Everyone freaks out! It's great!

Sylvia: It's so good. There's the, [music ends] um, "Uvo, are you scared— are you frightened?" because he's like, "What, everything? We're gonna make enemies of everybody in the underworld," and it's like, "No. I'm excited," and I'm like, ah, yeah.

Jack: And you believe him, right? That's not him...

Dre: I'm horny to murder!

Sylvia: Oh, I fully believe him.

Jack: That's not him saving face. He is just— he is thrilled to go.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Oh, it's great. And then, Uvo says, "Go on, then, Chrollo," basically, "give the order." There's this sort of ritual. There's this weird ritual about it, even after having been told that they— what they are going to steal—answer: the whole auction—he's waiting for something. He's waiting for a specific order, and Chrollo says, "I give you permission to kill them all, anyone who dares get in our way." And that's the apotheosis of this meeting. You know, this kind of ritual order: of take everything and stop at nothing. Anybody who gets in our way dies. It's so interesting that you described them earlier as bandits, Keith, because like, when I think of bandits, I think of, like, 14 guys with clubs sort of ravaging and pillaging.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And up until this moment, I didn't get any of that, until Chrollo gives this, like, this ritual order of: we will get what we want, and anybody [**Keith:** Yeah.] who gets in our way will be killed.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: In game terms, which is the terms that *Hunter × Hunter* is asking us to put things in all the time...

Jack: All the time.

Keith: This might be— every single member of the Phantom Troupe might be the boss of a crew that you have to kill that, like, the grunt is just called a ravager or something.

Jack: Yep. Yeah, totally. And you would have the great revelation, after having spent 40 hours killing ravagers, that their bosses are 13 fairly relaxed normal people.

Sylvia: Uh, I would, like— I know we've been going long, so I don't want to— we don't need to spend too much time [**Keith:** Yeah.] on my boy Chrollo here.

Keith: This is a good set to go long on.

Sylvia: It is, but it's also late.

Keith: Yeah, it is late.

Sylvia: And some of us need to be up tomorrow, so I don't want to...

Keith: I need to go eat dinner.

Sylvia: Yeah, I don't want— yeah, like, you know, I want to be considerate to you guys. I'm fine. I'm fucking around. Anyway, they are bandits. They are also, uh, sort of apostle-like with one of them being a traitor [**Keith:** Oh.] in the midst of our buddy. [Dre laughs]

Keith: Sure. Oh, yeah, they are fully, like, a...you know, like a sacramental perversion on the 12 apostles.

Sylvia: Yes. I think that is, like...

Jack: I had not picked that up at all, but the inverted cross, the number of them plus one imposter in Hisoka, the fact that they are meeting in an abandoned church, the choral music. Yeah. I would not have got there. Thank you for bringing that up. [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: Yeah, no worries. I have a lot of Chrollo feelings. He's sitting here on my desk looking at me record this right now.

Dre: Uh huh.

Sylvia: I'm sure we will have ample time to get into them.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: But that along with the, um...because we were talking about it earlier and I looked at it while we were recording, the two blood drops that you mentioned, to me, look like devil horns.

Keith: They totally do.

Sylvia: Which I think is kind of like a— possibly, probably meant to read as both to the viewer, but I think, you know, worth mentioning with his name and then talking about the sort of, like, weird evil, like, holy men apostle vibe we just mentioned.

Jack: But if we extend that metaphor out, it gets weird quite quickly, right?

Sylvia: It does get very weird.

Jack: Where it's like, if Chrollo is Chrollo Lucifer, he has devil horns on his thing.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: We have a kind of like a black sacrament happening, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yes.

Jack: Where it's like, but in the context of that, the imposter would be a force for good.

Sylvia: Yeah. Or...

Jack: The Judas figure would be, you know, someone sent in to destabilize the, you know.

Sylvia: Yeah. Yeah. [Dre laughs]

Jack: The other thing about Judas is that he is preordained. You know, his role is, uh...was always going to happen, was necessary, was a necessary part of [Sylvia: Mm-hmm.] the resurrection, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Interesting.

Sylvia: It's also just, like— I want to— we'll definitely revisit it, and this will come back up again, this sort of the inversion that they're going for here, but also, it's...to give a shoutout to the "let's not think too hard about it" crowd, it is also just, um...

Keith: No, never shout them out.

Sylvia: ...aesthetics.

Keith: Fuck them!

Sylvia: Not shouting them out, but I am throwing them a bone that the aesthetics here are good, and [mockingly] maybe he's just doing that. I don't think that's true, but I do think that it is—

Keith: There's just too many parallels.

Sylvia: Yeah, but this is a common thing to get drawn on as just a, like...

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: I don't know.

Keith: Well, it is not a...you know, I think there's a difference between, like, a literal metaphor and, like, a useful metaphor.

Sylvia: Yeah. I guess—

Keith: Like, this is, like, we're past aesthetic metaphors and into, like, meaningful metaphors?

Sylvia: We are. You know the thing that's making me say this is because I have had this talk about Organization XIII with someone, and it doesn't hold up as well as it does with the Phantom Troupe. That's more, I think...

Keith: What's Organization XIII?

Sylvia: From *Kingdom Hearts*.

Jack: They're in *Kingdom Hearts*.

Keith: Oh. Yeah, I have no idea.

Sylvia: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Dre: Jesus, Keith.

Sylvia: It's fine. It's fine. It's fine. [Dre laughs] I'm— it's— [exaggeratedly pained] I'll be okay. [Jack and Sylvia laugh]

Jack: I am so excited that they are— that they have arrived and that they have arrived in such a weird way.

Keith: It's so weird.

Dre: Look at those freaks!

Sylvia: Look at those freaks.

Keith: Look at those freaks, and they're friends, and they're just, like, guys, but also, they really got excited when they got permission to go kill everyone.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah, all of them.

Keith: "Yeah!"

Jack: Not just Uvo. [Sylvia laughs] There's, you know.

Dre: Yeah, even the nice quiet lady with her [censored buzzer] like, yeah, let's go— let's murder. Let's do it.

Jack: Who has a [buzzer]? What?

Keith: Oh, nothing.

Jack: Okay.

Sylvia: Don't worry about it.

Dre: Oh, shit. They haven't— yeah, okay. Nevermind. [Jack laughs] No, ignore that.

Sylvia: You had a long day.

Dre: Yeah. I finally slipped. [laughs]

Keith: The [buzzer]...it's fine.

Jack: [quietly] Who the fuck has [buzzer]?

Keith: It's fine, because the way that that resolves, it won't even feel like a spoiler. It'll feel like a red herring.

Jack: [laughs] Okay, sure. Okay.

Keith: The, uh...

Dre: Hey, beep that out, Keith.

Keith: Yeah, I'll beep it out.

Dre: Every time we say that word, beep it out. [laughs]

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: What, [buzzer]? [Keith and Dre laugh]

Keith: Okay, I'll put a flag on this.

Sylvia: What about [buzzer]?

Keith: Okay.

Sylvia: You have to bleep that one too. Sorry. [Dre laughs]

Jack: It's like a [buzzer] but the modern technology lets you [buzzer].

Sylvia: It's like a bleep but a bleeeep.

Dre: Just five minute beep. [laughs]

Keith: Come on, it takes me, like, eight hours to edit these.

Sylvia: Sorry. [Keith laughs]

Jack: Let's make him do another one. [Jack and Sylvia laugh]

Keith: The, um...ah, I had something. I had something. I had a last— I had a final thing. Anyway. Yeah, sometimes— sometimes metaphors are just aesthetic, but I think that there's— we can get something useful [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] out of this metaphor beyond that it just happens to be 13 and it's cool, dark, you know, angsty...

Sylvia: I regret how I worded that.

Keith: No, it's okay. [cross] I'm not actually mad about it.

Sylvia: [cross] I should have said how it is a common, like, [**Keith:** Yeah.] aesthetic choice that Togashi is doing more with than just that.

Jack: No, I think— I think you brought it up in a way that made a lot of sense to me, although [**Sylvia:** Cool.] I don't know where we're going, so it might be that, you know. [laughs quietly]

Keith: Well, the idea of being— the idea of, like, including a bunch of stuff from the bible, including plot points, [**Sylvia:** Yes.] and then saying, “But it doesn't mean anything,” is, I think, it's a self-defeating argument, because you've already taken plot points.

Sylvia: I think so. Yeah.

Keith: Once you're taking plot points, you have to admit that it means something.

Jack: Yes.

Sylvia: Media Club Plus.

Keith: Media Club Plus.

Sylvia: You have to admit that it means something.

Keith: You *have* to admit that it means something. [Dre, Keith, and Jack laugh]

Final Thoughts [3:15:10]

Jack: And I think that probably does us for today.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: We're at a really great point. It's worth saying that we just reversed the order of

those last two scenes so that we could end on the Phantom Troupe and Chrollo showing up, but it does end with that great image of Kurapika on the roof, you know, powered by rage as he gets ready to bid on his comrades' eyes.

Sylvia: And we get the guitar kicking in.

Jack: Yes, the closing credits guitar starts.

Sylvia: [imitates guitar]

Keith: I fucking love that guitar. It's so good.

Sylvia: "Hunting For Your Dream" is one of the best songs in all of anime.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Just, like, I'm putting that out there.

Dre: Oh yeah.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: I think it is fucking killer.

Jack: [cross] We had some—

Sylvia: [cross] This is my "Smile Bomb", Keith, you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: We had some listeners who did not like the screamo aesthetics of the first song. Far be it for me to, you know...

Sylvia: Weaklings.

Dre: Wrong.

Jack: Well, yes, uh—

Keith: I didn't like it. I don't like it.

Jack: I'm going to finish my sentence.

Dre: Banned. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Far be it for me to, uh, you know, frown on another person's enjoyment or dislikes, but they are wrong, and so are you, Keith. But this is better.

Keith: Oh yeah.

Jack: This ending is better than the first one.

Sylvia: Absolutely. Not gonna fight you on that.

Keith: It's 16 times better.

Sylvia: Yeah, at minimum.

Jack: It might be 16 times better, but I also like the first one.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: I mean, I think this is—

Keith: And I think it speaks to the strength of "Chasing After a Dream".

Sylvia: I'm excited to get to the themes that come after this, because in my mind, this is my favorite one, but it's been so long since I've heard the others, that...

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: We'll see. It makes such an impression, though.

Jack: What are we watching next time?

Keith: Next time, we're watching two episodes.

Jack: [laughs] You're going to join us for— ah, who are we kidding? It's gonna be two

and a half hours. [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: I'll get all my Chrollo stuff in then, you know? I'll just do a lot of that.

Keith: Buckle in. Please, please buckle in for the episode after next. It's four episodes, and they are— it is the thickest steak you've ever had. [Jack laughs]

Dre: Oh.

Jack: But not this next one.

Keith: No, this next one...

Jack: We're watching two.

Keith: This is skirt steak.

Sylvia: Next one's a good appetizer.

Keith: Yeah, it's like...

Sylvia: It's some garlic bread, you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Mm.

Keith: It's a skirt.

Dre: A little amuse-bouche.

Jack: Oi. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: And, so, 42 and 43: "Defend × And × Attack" and "A × Shocking × Tragedy".

Jack: Hmm. I hope Chrollo doesn't die.

Sylvia: Um...

Keith: I don't think that that would earn—

Sylvia: Bad news. That's the shocking tragedy. [laughs]

Keith: I don't think that that would earn Sylvi's Nendoroid.

Jack: Chrollo shows up for one episode, and he has four lines, [laughs] and then he's killed.

Keith: Yeah, and dies.

Sylvia: Yeah, four lines and dies, but everyone's like, "Oh, hey, goth boy, what's up?"

Dre: But is still in the ending every single time we watch an episode.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. About 10 times more screentime in end credits than in the actual show.
[laughs quietly]

Sylvia: Kurapika finds a sniper rifle and, uh, [Jack and Keith laugh] the rest of this arc goes by really quick.

Keith: Please, we know that bullets can't affect these people. We didn't mention it, but Kurapika blocks, like, 12 close-range bullets with the chain.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Sylvia: How did we not mention that? That was such a chain bastard maneuver.

Keith: It was a total chain bastard maneuver. Yeah, he swirls it around, and— he swirls it around, and then it stops [clip of "Chain Bastard" begins] the bullets right in their tracks! And everybody notices and is really impressed! [music ends] [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: If you said to me...if you said to me, one episode ago, that we are going to start calling Kurapika the chain bastard... [Sylvia, Dre, and Keith laugh]

Keith: Yeah, you wouldn't have been able to guess who the chain bastard was.

Sylvia: Yeah, you would have never expected it.

Keith: Like, oh, is that maybe Chrollo?

Sylvia: [cross] Oh, I wish we had known to ask.

Jack: [cross] I would think that the chain bastard was someone on the Phantom Troupe. 100%, yeah.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: Someone on the Phantom Troupe is the chain bastard.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: No, it's Kurapika [**Keith:** Yeah.] has become the chain bastard. [Jack and Sylvia laugh]

Sylvia: Okay, this is the chain bastard arc.

Keith: It's funny, because we will bring up the chain bastard in relationship to the Phantom Troupe.

Jack: Of course. I mean, the chain bastard is the Phantom Troupe's, you know, kryptonite. The Phantom Troupe is ready for anything but not chain bastard.

Keith: Yeah, that is who is saying "chain bastard!"

Jack: [laughs] Tell you what. If I was part of a villainous outfit that killed every member of a society—

Keith: Oh my god, Ali!

Jack: What?

Keith: [laughing] Look at the Media Club Plus chat.

Sylvia: [shouting] Yeah! [normal excited volume] I was— I didn't want to post it. I didn't want to be the one to post it, but I do love this image.

Jack: [laughs] Uh, Ali's—

Keith: They made Leorio uglier for 2011.

Jack: Ali has posted a screenshot from the original *Hunter × Hunter* anime [**Dre:** God.] with what I'm going to guess are user-added captions. [Sylvia laughs] I don't think these are the original captions.

Sylvia: No, this is in the original anime.

Keith: Yeah, it's in the '96 anime, or '99, yeah.

Jack: Leorio is talking on the phone to Kurapika and saying, "So you be masterbatin' a lot?" and then eyes emoji, smirking emoji, heart eyes emoji. And then Kurapika, in the next frame, is saying, "Leorio." Uh, yes.

Keith: And doing the, like, classic Kurapika face.

Sylvia: It's like—

Keith: Like, the smile, close eyes, look away. Like, the...

Sylvia: Yeah, it's like, [fondly] "Leorio."

Keith: The satisfied "Hmm."

Sylvia: Like, you know.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Why, in this picture, Leorio looks like fucking Andy Samberg when he's doing all the goofy-ass songs about fucking Justin Timberlake's mom on SNL?

Sylvia: Do you see the question he's asking? [Keith laughs]

Dre: I mean, yeah, no, that's fair.

Sylvia: He's asking Kurapika if they be masterbating a lot. [Jack laughs] That's an Andy Samberg line if I've ever heard it.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Um...I had something before we went. Um...no, I don't know. I don't know. I'm so glad to get back to this show.

Keith: Yeah, it's been a while.

Jack: It will not have been clear because of how we release these episodes, but we took a break. We basically can't— hmm. We watched half a season of *Dragon Ball*, [Sylvia laughs] and we couldn't do that at the same time as watching *Hunter × Hunter*, otherwise we would have come apart.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yes.

Jack: So we took a break from watching *Hunter × Hunter* to watch those 10 episodes of *Dragon Ball*, so it felt really good [**Keith:** Yeah.] to get back to *Hunter × Hunter*.

Keith: And it's also— honestly, the structure of this, 'cause we don't want to go two weeks without watching *Hunter × Hunter* if we don't have to, but also, that means that we will be increasingly further away. Having all of those episode backlog just, like, sitting on my hard drive is emotionally difficult. [laughs quietly] I hate it. So, it's nice that the structure of doing the bonuses can have the feed catch up a little bit to where we're at, so.

Jack: Yes.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: For sure.

Keith: It is a good opportunity to take a little bit of time off to do a bonus, catch up a little bit, and then reset.

Jack: All right. Well.

Keith: Well.

Jack: We will see you next time, where we will watch episodes 41— no.

Keith: No. Nope.

Sylvia: Nope.

Jack: We will watch episodes 42 and 43.

Keith: “Defend × And × Attack” and “A × Shocking × Tragedy”.

Jack: Sweet.

Keith: Yeah. This is gonna be a fun one.

Jack: Good night, everybody.

Keith: Hey, and remember to watch that episode 0, if you haven't listened to that one yet.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Yeah. Check out the screenshot stream, and look out for the chain bastard.

Keith: And go, uh, again, to the feet shufflers...

Jack: What are you talking about?

Keith: Go write a review on iTunes.

Jack: Oh. Oh, I see. The bit— right.

Keith: Sorry, do we not all remember—?

Jack: I thought you said, “Go to the feet shufflers,” as though it was a place. You. Go to the feet shufflers.

Keith: No, no. I’m calling back to three and a half hours ago, when we were talking about the people who drag their feet on... [Jack laughs] It’s all— those are the people that are left. You need to go do that.

Sylvia: Tell us your Phantom Troupe takes. Again, I will have opinions on them.

Keith: Yeah, go write—

Sylvia: Regardless of what you say.

Keith: Yeah, go write your strong— listen to the bonus, the *Dragon Ball* bonus, and start leaving criticisms our opinion on *Dragon Ball*.

Sylvia: But also give us five stars when you do.

Keith: But also give us five stars when you do, yeah.

Dre: Sure, sure.

Keith: You can say anything you want, as long as the five stars are there.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: I went on a walk in the countryside today. I walked around a forest trail in Ann Arbor for three miles. It was...

Dre: Ooh.

Jack: The middle of winter. There were no leaves on the trees. It was very still. Squirrels running up and down the trees. And during the walk, I listened to us weirdos doing the *Dragon Ball* episode, [laughs quietly] and that was very pleasant.

Sylvia: Fantastic time.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: *Dragon Ball*: it's nice to walk around and listen to a podcast about.

Keith: It's so good that Jack listened to it, and they were there.

Jack: Yep. Yeah.

Keith: And we will eventually start remembering to write some of these down so that we can read them out ahead of time, like Jack said that they would.

Sylvia: Uh—

Dre: Jesus.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Wow.

Jack: Wow. You know what, Keith? [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: I also said that, just to, like, also take the bullet.

Dre: How's the underside of that bus, Jack? [laughs]

Keith: Well, hey, look!

Jack: Hey, you know what, Keith?

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Look, Keith. I don't want to have to do this. That woman wields a [buzzer].

Keith: Oh no! Okay. Well.

Jack: [laughs] Good night.

Keith: "Five stars to the show."

Jack: Oh. Oh, oh! We're gonna do some reviews!

Keith: “Zero stars to Leorio being a gross pervy idiot in episode 11. Come on, dude.”
True.

Sylvia: True.

Jack: True. Agreed.

Sylvia: Thank you.

Keith: But five stars to Leorio every other time, all the other moments of Leorio.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: Uh, not every other time.

Keith: Almost—

Sylvia: [cross] Most other times.

Keith: [cross] Most other times, yeah.

Dre: Most other times, yeah.

Sylvia: He’s got, like, a 90% hitting rate for me.

Keith: This person gave five stars. “Delivering this five star rating so we don't have to euthanize Dre and Sylvi.”

Sylvia: Thank goodness. Thank you.

Dre: Wow!

Keith: Sideways face.

Dre: I remember talking about how, like, I was gonna cry if you didn't give us five stars. I

don't remember dying.

Keith: No, no, this was way earlier than that. Yeah.

Sylvia: I talked about killing and dying, [**Dre:** Okay.] as I am wont to do.

Dre: Sure.

Sylvia: I apologize.

Keith: And then Dre hopped on board with it.

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

Sylvia: Yeah. I mean, you know. That's a good—

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: That sounds like me.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: That's just good podcasting.

Keith: Just good podcasting.

Sylvia: You “yes and”ed me. I appreciate it. [Dre and Jack laugh]

Keith: They also say, uh, “A Hunter is, according to this podcast...um, wait, hold on. I have it here somewhere.” [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Yep. Good question.

Keith: There's a lot of good forgetting what a Hunter is reviews here. And leave some more of those. Okay, bye.

Sylvia: Thank you, bye!

Jack: Good night!

[song plays out]