

## What Is A Chimera Ant? - Hunter x Hunter ep. 76-78: Media Club Plus S01E24

Transcriber: robotchangeling

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### Introduction

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

**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 [x.com](#) and [cohost.org](#) at @KeithJCarberry. You can find the let's plays that I do at [youtube.com/runbutton](#). [music ends] You can find the FIVE of us here today at [friendsatthetable.cash](#). That's our Patreon for the other show that we do, Friends at the Table. And that fifth person is our special guest today, Austin Walker. Hi, Austin.

**Austin:** Hello! Hi. I'm here. I'm here today.

**Sylvia:** Hi. Welcome!

**Austin:** I did it. I'm here.

**Keith:** Welcome.

**Dre:** What up?

**Austin:** I caught up.

**Jack:** Welcome, Austin.

**Austin:** I've watched everything that I needed to watch.

**Sylvia:** Really?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Nice.

**Dre:** Wow.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Everything that you needed to watch, meaning...

**Austin:** I mean, I've watched the show before, but the last time...

**Sylvia:** Yeah. That's why I wasn't sure.

**Austin:** But the last time I watched *Hunter × Hunter* was the last time I was on.

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** And so, I had to watch all of the rest of Yorknew City and then all of Greed Island.

**Keith:** Oh, so you did watch it.

**Sylvia:** Wow!

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Oh yeah.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** I needed to feel— and I've been listening along without watching. I've been doing that maneuver.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Right, yeah.

**Austin:** But it does mean that I needed to, like— I was like, I need to feel where we are in the story before we get to Chimera Ant.

**Keith:** That's fair.

**Sylvia:** Hell yeah.

**Austin:** I want to remember what that's like, because it's kind of— you know, a good example of this is: if you would have asked me what the last thing that happened, I would have remembered meeting Dwun. I wouldn't have remembered Dwun's name [Keith: Yeah.] or that Ging renamed him.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And I would've remembered the dodgeball fight, but I would not have remembered the fight with, um...

**Sylvia:** Genthru?

**Austin:** With Genthru, the Mad Bomber.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And I would not have remembered Gon getting his arms blown up and then getting them healed, which I think is, like, important broadly for all the reasons you all talked about.

**Sylvia:** It's so important.

**Austin:** So, yeah.

**Keith:** [sarcastic] I actually think it's going to end up meaning nothing.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, no.

**Keith:** I think that's not even going to matter. [Jack and Austin chuckle]

**Sylvia:** [sarcastic] I don't think there's going to be anything going on this arc. It's just really long.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Keith:** Also with me is Andrew Lee Swan.

**Dre:** Uh, hey, what's up? You can find me on Twitter at [@swandre3000](#). You know what? You can follow my Instagram if you want to see pictures of my dog.

**Jack:** Oh.

**Dre:** [@andrewleeswan](#) on Instagram.

**Austin:** Wow.

**Keith:** Also here is Sylvi Bullet.

**Sylvia:** Hey, I'm Sylvi. You can find me everywhere at [@SYLVIBULLET](#), and I'm also going to plug an Instagram.

**Dre:** Hell yeah.

**Sylvia:** If you go to [@xxemoboyskissingxx](#), you can find my band's instagram.

**Austin:** Woo!

**Sylvia:** We're hoping to have some stuff out soon.

**Jack:** Hell yeah.

**Sylvia:** It's an emo band, if you couldn't tell. Also, you should check out— Keith, did you mention the YouTube earlier?

**Keith:** I did not mention the YouTube.

**Sylvia:** You should check out the YouTube for Friends at the Table and also the Twitch for Friends at the Table. Both friendsatthetable in the URL. Because Keith and I are nearing the end of our 999 let's play. We've got, I think, one more session to go.

**Keith:** We could not possibly have more than one more session.

**Sylvia:** If we do, that game has some buckwild pacing.

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Austin:** That's the other thing I've been watching lately. I've been catching up on that. I've probably watched...I'd only watched the first episode of that, and I've watched everything else since then basically, so.

**Keith:** 999 is crazy.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I think it is, like, in a weird way, it is for *Hunter × Hunter* likers, but like, not because it's similar. [chuckles]

**Austin:** Oh yeah.

**Sylvia:** No, but it's like...

**Keith:** But it is, like, it does have a lot of the characteristics of the crazier bits of *Hunter* × *Hunter*.

**Sylvia:** It's not quite a peanut butter and jelly combination, [**Austin:** Mm.] but you wouldn't also turn your nose up at the two ingredients put together, you know what I mean?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Like, they're similar enough flavors is what I'm saying.

**Keith:** And Jack de Quidt.

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

**Keith:** Jack is now a Chimera Ant knower.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Wow.

**Jack:** God damn am I a Chimera Ant knower.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I mean, we're going to get into this, and you should do your little recap.

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

**Jack:** But I would like to say, right at the beginning: damn, the—

**Dre:** Just do your little recap.

**Jack:** They really are Chimera Ants, huh?

**Sylvia:** Oh yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, they really...

**Dre:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** It's what it says on the tin.

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah, I think I had—

**Sylvia:** It's nothing like Camp Tigers.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** [laughs] Right, the Camp Tigers, also pretty literal.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I guess so, actually.

**Jack:** It got to a point where I was like, "I don't know what I would call these things other than Chimera Ants."

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** It's what they are. All right. Begin.

## **Summary [0:05:00]**

**Keith:** Uh, okay. [Sylvia laughs] So, the aforementioned long period of speculation is over, and we're literally propelled into Chimera Ant territory. Gon and Killua had just used Accompany to transport themselves from the exit of Greed Island to Ngig, [Austin: Hmm.] the anagram used by Ging to do the one thing he swore he would never do: help Gon. [Sylvia laughs] This brings the boys to a mysterious clown-gun-having man named Kite, who turns out to be Ging's pupil, sort of like the son he never had. Kite is a hunter

super biologist—not what they call him—who’s recently become concerned about Chimera Ant behavior. He and his little crew of oddballs are trying to find the ant colony from which a massive ant limb was found. Seems like these ants may be bad news. And actually, we see a lot of the ants being bad news. We meet an Ant Queen who eats a lot of fish and bats [Sylvia chuckles] to create an army led by squad leaders.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Seven wet tuna sandwiches.

**Keith:** There's a whole walking talking ant society whose rapid expansion in a diplomatically isolated part of the world threatens an entire island full of unsuspecting people. Speaking of people, something very funny is happening with these ants. [Jack chuckles]

**Sylvia:** Yeah? Funny?

**Austin:** They're becoming people?

**Keith:** Mm, I don't know! We'll talk about it.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Dre:** [“I don't know” sound] [Sylvia laughs]

**Keith:** So, we do— so, I want to— I got a couple messages on Twitter and Cohost about the anagram for Ging’s name that we ended the last episode on.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** People saying, “Hey, by the way, it’s different in the manga.” It’s Ngig, instead of...what it is.

**Austin:** What it is? Yeah. [Keith laughs]

**Sylvia:** Yeah.



**Austin:** You want me to say it? I can say it, so it's not... [Sylvia, Keith, and Dre laugh]  
[Dre sighs] Do you think he knew? Do you think he was like, "Yeah, that's—" Like, he was 16 years old, and he chose that name on purpose? [Sylvia sighs] But not in a slur way, just in a "listens to lots of hip hop music" way.

**Sylvia:** I could see it for him.

**Austin:** You know?

**Keith:** For Ging?

**Austin:** For Ging.

**Sylvia:** Of all the characters in the show, I could see it most for him or maybe Leorio.

**Keith:** Leorio was what I was going to say, Leorio.

**Austin:** Oh, Leorio, for sure! [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Leorio for sure.

**Dre:** God.

**Austin:** Leorio loves Dipset. I don't know why. [Sylvia laughs] He's just a big Cam'ron fan. Ugh. [Sylvia sighs]

**Jack:** No idea why you make that change. No idea why you make that change in the adaptation.

**Keith:** No idea. Yeah, I—

**Jack:** Togashi gave it to you one way. Still not great, but a hell of a lot better than what you changed it to.

**Sylvia:** It's a really weird adaptation choice.

**Keith:** Ngig is not—

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

**Keith:** I have no qualm with Ngig.

**Sylvia:** I wonder if it's one of those things—

**Austin:** Well, we get a little extra— wait a second. We get a little extra— we do get a little extra context in this episode about—

**Keith:** Yes. Yeah, we do.

**Austin:** It's not that Ging chose— maybe they've decided Ging was pulling a fast one on Kite.

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** Yes.

**Austin:** And that this was a way of bullying his friend Kite.

**Jack:** Ah, "friend"? "Friend"? We'll get into this.

**Austin:** Yeah, well.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Okay. Yeah, we'll get into it.

**Austin:** [sarcastic] A friend is someone you bully, Jack.

**Jack:** Ah, right, I see.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Into doing what you want.

**Jack:** Yes.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, I'm from New England. I've heard about this.

**Austin:** Or charm. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Jack:** For your entire life and—

**Sylvia:** Yeah, you're talking about Gon and Killua, right?

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

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

**Austin:** Well, they've both got silver hair.

**Sylvia:** Hmm. Hmm!

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Jack:** Before we even begin the episodes, we are given a new title sequence, and these title sequences [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] are always extremely fun for me, because they are usually a cavalcade of stuff that I don't understand. [Austin laughs]

**Keith:** Do you recognize someone from this?

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Keith:** Did you recognize a fellow? [Sylvia laughs quietly]

**Jack:** I mean...

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Jack:** I mean, Chrollo is in this title sequence, right?

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

**Keith:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** [evasively] Yeah, that's who we're asking about.

**Austin:** [evasively] That's who we meant.

**Dre:** [evasively] Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** That's who.

**Jack:** Oh, do you mean the bizarre figure from the thumbnail? [Sylvia laughs quietly]

**Keith:** That is who I mean, yeah.

**Austin:** That is who— yeah. Uh huh.

**Jack:** Yeah, so, I wrote down here—

**Sylvia:** Mr. Thumbs.

**Jack:** This— who, I suspect this is probably the Ant King. That's my guess, as we're going forward, but we shall see. This title sequence goes above and beyond, in terms of showing me stuff that I haven't seen.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** [laughs] You have no idea.

**Dre:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** You have literally no idea!

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Austin:** Stuff you will not see, in some cases. I just... [Jack laughs] You will. You will, but.

**Jack:** It's also worth remembering that, like, going into this episode, I did not know what a Chimera Ant is. The first thing we see is the moon, and then we see a gigantic bug with, like, a grinning mock skull face on its back.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** We haven't even seen ants that look like that yet. We have a ball of light in someone's hand.

**Sylvia:** That's the Queen, right?

**Austin:** That's the Queen.

**Sylvia:** That has to be the Queen, yeah.

**Jack:** Is that the Queen?

**Austin:** That's the face of the Queen.

**Keith:** I think that was the Queen, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Oh, sure. Right.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm, 'cause the Queen's got that gnarly face.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** I saw it as, like, a death's head moth or something, but no, that makes sense. We have the tailed muscled figure. [Sylvia laughs] We have them over a weird blue orb.

**Sylvia:** [quietly] The tailed muscled figure.

**Jack:** Gon and Killua have weird bugs.

**Sylvia:** I love that one.

**Jack:** Playing with a sort of massive centipede that squirms around.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, Killua with the big centipede is, like, such a...I don't know why it's like a comfort image for me. [Sylvia and Jack laugh] Like, seeing that happen, I get so happy.

**Jack:** A figure shows up in a lot of art here with a blue sort of beret, a sharp nose, and gray hair with a scythe with a toy on the top. We soon learn that this is Kite, but I had no idea who this was. Chrollo appears, leading a group of figures, including a person with, like, Ju-On style hair falling down all over her face. Hundreds of marching humanoid ants appear. [Sylvia laughs] New figures, like, tons of new weird figures [**Austin:** Yeah, yeah.] are dancing through the sky. Netero shows up.

**Austin:** The freaks are here. The weirdies have shown up.

**Dre:** Uh huh.

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Oh yeah.

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

**Jack:** There is a catgirl, a butterfly boy, and then finally the eyes of the purple-eyed figure over a planet, just their eyes, I think blinking? Or are they just looking out over the planet? This is a doozy of a title sequence.

**Austin:** Netero shows up also, briefly.

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

**Austin:** Right?

**Sylvia:** He's the "you can try."

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** Right, yeah. He believes that.

**Keith:** He's the famous "you can try."

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

## **Episode 76 [0:11:08]**

**Jack:** But we begin when we left off, as this tall blue figure—"blue;" blue-coated, blue hat, silver hair—turns around. This is not Ging. He knocks them back, and immediately summons a bizarre clown, who says, "In my mouth is a roulette containing the numbers one through nine." This is a Nen power, presumably, right?

**Keith:** Uh, well, do you have a name for this thing?

**Jack:** This is the Great Mad Clown, Crazy Slots. [Keith and Jack laugh]

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** I love Crazy Slots.

**Sylvia:** Crazy Slots, yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** It turns out that Kite can roll a dice to get a weapon via Crazy Slots, and in fact, when he summons a machine gun, he says, "This was a bad roll."

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I love it. [Dre chuckles]

**Jack:** And the clown snaps at him, is like, "Be grateful! I gave you a weapon!" [Sylvia and Keith laugh] And, you know, setting aside the fact that this is very funny, I think this is the first time we have seen Nen that acts, if not antagonistically, but kind of bickers with its user. Have we seen this happen before? Stands do this sometimes in JoJo.

**Sylvia:** This is such a Stand, by the way.

**Austin:** Oh, it's such a Stand.

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

**Sylvia:** Just to plant a flag there.

**Keith:** Yeah, this is a lot of a Stand.

**Sylvia:** This is the first of many Stand Nen powers.

**Austin:** I have a sense that— because I remember this happened, and I was like, “Heh heh heh, I love it when people and their Nen powers kind of, like, bicker and argue or when someone has a sort of antagonistic relationship to their power,” but maybe it hasn't happened before. Maybe I'm thinking forward.

**Sylvia:** I can't think of anything.

**Austin:** I can't name it off the top of my head, but...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** But yeah, it's great.

**Keith:** Yeah, I don't think anyone has that.

**Jack:** It's also ring the bell that happens any time Yoshihiro Togashi makes a sort of game system out of an element of his plotting.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Oh yeah.

**Jack:** This is not going to be the last time he does this in this chunk of episodes. You could argue that the Chimera Ants are also this.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** But Kite showing up and his Nen power being a game that he himself has to play



is very Togashi.

**Austin:** Oh, I know exactly what it was. It's from Greed Island. It is the fact that the Nen exorcist's [**Keith:** Right.] power creates a little...

**Keith:** A burden.

**Jack:** Oh, the fucked up guy.

**Sylvia:** Right.

**Austin:** The fucked up little demon guy who hangs— not a demon, but a little weird worm lizard thing.

**Sylvia:** [laughs] Got to be very clear.

**Austin:** Yeah, I'm going to make it clear. Not a demon. And like, that I loved. And he was like, "Well, now I gotta take care of you. Now I gotta fucking feed you, I guess. [laughter] I gotta deal with you until I can go clear the original thing."

**Sylvia:** I hate when somebody leaves a water bottle on the plane next to me. [laughter]

**Austin:** Exactly!

**Sylvia:** This has to tie into the Nen restrictions, right? Like, putting—

**Keith:** Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** Making your Nen power a little harder to use means it's more powerful.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, the chance to get a bad roll.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, exactly. And it's always a bad roll, in Kite's mind.

**Austin:** Right.

**Jack:** Ever since—

**Austin:** I mean, this is, like, a silenced, like, submachine pistol. It's fine.

**Jack:** It's, like, a high caliber—

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** But it's high caliber.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Although he's shooting ants, so I don't know.

**Austin:** Right, right, right.

**Keith:** I think it's less that he doesn't like the—

**Sylvia:** It's one of those salt guns.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** It's less that he doesn't like the weapon and more that he doesn't feel it's appropriate for this instance.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** That makes sense.

**Jack:** And he's right.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Because it turns out that what he's doing is the classic "I wasn't aiming at you, I was aiming at..." you know...

**Dre:** The thing that was going to kill you!

**Jack:** The thing that was going to kill you, which is no ordinary ant. This is a Chimera Ant. It looks like an ant. You know?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** It looks like an ant.

**Jack:** A few millimeters long. It has a little—

**Keith:** It's no ordinary ant. It looks like an ant.

**Jack:** It attacks Killua, leaving a little sort of wound, tiny ant bite wound.

**Dre:** I think you're underselling "attacks Killua," because this ant has been shot in half, [Sylvia: Yeah.] and its head, like, flies off of its body to bite Killua. [laughs]

**Austin:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** It is, like, dying, and it does this.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** That's true, yeah. But it was good to— look, I'm no fool. I know that you can't make an arc called the Chimera Ant Arc and the ants remain, you know, the size of regular ants for the whole thing.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm. [Sylvia chuckles]

**Jack:** There is something lovely about the first ant we meet just being, you know...

**Sylvia:** An ant.

**Dre:** An ant.

**Jack:** A small ant.

**Keith:** Yeah, this is what I was going to ask. I was going to ask this and then the followup later, but like, what were you thinking about the Chimera Ants when you first saw some Chimera Ants and they looked like slightly larger ants? [Austin chuckles]

**Jack:** Oh, I was thinking, “Here we go. Here we fucking go!” You know. I mean, what this turns into pretty quickly or might be heading towards is...no, it’s not quite solely sort of, like, a disaster story or a monster story. I think that Togashi is perhaps working in a different direction, and we’ll get to that. But something that always works really well in the, like, *Godzilla* story or the *Creature from the Black Lagoon* or any kind of story where, for example, like, nuclear waste in the river causes one of the fish to go really evil.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** I’m thinking of, like, Bong Joon Ho’s *The Host* or whatever.

**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah.

**Jack:** Is that very often you get these great premonitions early on, where it’s like, “Oh, it’s just a regular ant,” and everyone’s already like, “These ants are behaving a little strangely.”

**Keith:** Yeah. [Dre chuckles]

**Jack:** This, for me, is part and parcel of this kind of genre move, so there wasn’t a shred of, like, disappointment or anything when I saw one of these little aggressive ants. In fact, I was really pleased that this ant shows up and already Kite is saying, you know, “This is an aggressive carnivorous insect that has been designated Quarantine Level One.”

**Keith:** And they will not stop reminding you about that designation.

**Dre:** Mm-mm.

**Jack:** No.

**Sylvia:** We get some good, like, Hunter...or not good, but we get some drops of, like, Hunter structural stuff in these episodes that's kind of fun.

**Keith:** We do.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, we do. Before we move on from this scene, which is, to remind people from the last episode, this sort of weird mysterious foggy forest that also has this sort of cinematic cherry blossom tree, like, **[Sylvia: Yeah.]** throwing petals all over the place.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

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

**Keith:** It's very pretty, but then the music is really a tapestry of what we're going to be getting in this arc. It's a radical shift from— and we've had, you know, pretty varied tones. I think Yorknew is the most different from any other season so far.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** But the first half of this episode, 76, is frontloaded with the new sound of the season, I think. The first song that plays when Crazy Slots shows up—

**Sylvia:** Song of the summer.

**Austin:** Uh huh. [Dre laughs]

**Keith:** Is “In Front of the Old Mansion”, which is actually a song that played at the end of the last arc, Greed Island. That’s this one here.

[clip of “In Front of the Old Mansion” begins]

**Keith:** But this is, like, to me, very much a part of the season, this, like, kind of dark guitar and then the bass, the...

**Austin:** Yeah.

[music stops]

**Keith:** I think, Jack, this is the thing that tipped you off on a theory that maybe we're getting into some science fiction, the bass tones.

**Jack:** Yeah. Weird sort of distorted bass tones and things like that.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I love this sound.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And you're right. You know, already three episodes in. The tone shift that happens here, across just these three episodes, is remarkable. The scale that the story is trying to operate in shifts into such a different gear. And part of the way that I think the show manages to get away with that is that it commits to it as hard as possible. You know, as a viewer, you are like, “All right, fine. This is just the state of the world now.” There is no sort of equivocating about the scale that we are operating on. There is no sort of fakeout. Geopolitics start getting introduced.

**Austin:** Well, yeah. That, to me, is the funny thing.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Oh god.

**Austin:** Is like, when I heard those songs start to pop up [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] at the end of the last season, the place my mind went to was, like, military thriller, which is adjacent to a certain sort of sci-fi horror story, right?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** And I almost didn't want to say it, because I didn't know what we got in these episodes, [Sylvia chuckles] but we do straight up get lots of—

**Keith:** We do. We get a lot of, like—

**Austin:** Oh, there are these countries. There is global policy around them. They execute people who show up. We'll talk more about them later.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** But like, there's a real sort of, like, Cold War era...you know, you could put this stuff into *Metal Gear Solid 3* or *5* and it would work, you know?

**Jack:** Yeah, yeah.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Keith:** Totally.

**Dre:** Or a fucking Tom Clancy novel.

**Sylvia:** [cross] Yeah.

**Keith:** [cross] Yeah, it's very Tom Clancy.

**Austin:** [cross] I was actually going to say like a Tom Clancy book first, and then I was like, "Let's go for our audience. Let's say *Metal Gear*." [Keith and Dre laugh]

**Jack:** What's so interesting though, because—

**Keith:** Hey, Tom Clancy books are everywhere.

**Sylvia:** Sam Fisher is a Blacklist Hunter. [Austin chuckles]

**Jack:** I had no idea that even already the Chimera Ant Arc was going to explode the scale of the story to being like, now we're talking about different countries. We're traveling to different countries. The ants are able to move at a scale and pace that they are on a level with, like, global powers, [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] so we're going to be talking about those for the first time.

[clip of "New Mutation" begins]

**Jack:** And so it makes sense to me that when I heard those bass tones for the first time, I thought to myself, "Ah, creepy ants," [Austin chuckles] and not what makes sense to you, which is like, "Oh, this is a military thriller," you know, as we move into armies moving and things like that.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** But I think—

**Keith:** This is the other— oh, sorry. Keep going.

**Jack:** I think the— to your point, Keith, the other way that you get that tone shift [music stops] to move as sort of startlingly as you can is you throw in loads of new music, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** I don't want to keep hearing the same cues that we heard in Greed Island or in Yorknew, you know.

**Dre:** Mm.



**Jack:** The composer needs to come to the table with, what, 9 or 10 new tracks to get this thing feeling, you know, as different as they can. I think that viewers respond really quickly to “this sounds new.”

**Keith:** Mm.

**Jack:** And if that just keeps happening over this run of episodes, the whole thing is going to feel really different.

**Keith:** It really does, especially— it cannot be overstated how much of my music notes is in the first half of this one episode. [Jack chuckles] The song that plays right after “In Front of the Old Mansion” is a new song called “New Mutation”. I played a little bit of it while Jack was talking. And then it evolves into this very cool sort of synthy thing as well. I’m going to play just a tiny bit of that.

[different clip of “New Mutation” begins]

**Sylvia:** This is so *Metal Gear*.

**Keith:** It is very *Metal Gear*.

**Dre:** It is.

**Austin:** This is the track where I was like, “Oh, this is *Metal Gear* music.”

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

[music ends]

**Jack:** Well, it’s interesting that we’re talking about *Metal Gear* as well, and I think that, like...Tom Clancy is obviously a big inspiration on *Metal Gear*, but I think another really big inspiration is Michael Crichton and techno thrillers.

**Austin:** Sure. Sure. Yep.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Jack:** And I'm thinking of— who wrote *Day of the Triffids*? John Wyndham. Where these books in the early and mid 20th century—and then Michael Crichton writing in the late 20th century—that are all these sort of, like, very slickly made, very high paced speculative science fiction about, like, what happens if science goes wrong, or...

**Austin:** Right. What if a disease starts to spread? What if...

**Jack:** Yeah!

**Austin:** Yeah. Mm-hmm. Something leaks from...

**Jack:** What happens if bad actors, you know—

**Austin:** Right.

**Jack:** One tiny bad actor causes a chain of effects going on here. And I think this blending of the isolated technophobic community and possibly a drug cartel and ants that are mutating rapidly for reasons that are both within what we know about them and also, like, this is happening more rapidly and more dangerously than it has ever happened before is right out of that, like, techno thriller mode, I think.

**Austin:** And the little gang of amateur scientists trying to piece it all together.

**Sylvia:** Oh my god, yeah.

**Keith:** There's a little forensic things.

**Jack:** You just picture Laura Dern there, and...

**Austin:** [chuckles] Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Kite's grad students.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Dre:** [laughs] Literally.

**Austin:** Literally. Yeah. Which is the other thing that's interesting here too, is, you know, you talked about the scale getting bigger. Well, yeah. Gon is a real Hunter now. Gon has his Hunter's License. He has Nen, which means he's a real Hunter. He's passed the second secret test.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And he's passed the third test, his father's test, and so now he can operate at the scale that his father operates, which is a global, you know, shows up and handles—

**Keith:** Right, a Three-Star Hunter scale.

**Austin:** A Three-Star Hunter scale, exactly. Right. Yes.

**Keith:** So, before we get too far out of this opening area, the next thing that happens is that...

**Sylvia:** The starting zone. [Keith and Dre chuckles]

**Keith:** We actually have to go back to chapter one of the manga.

**Austin:** We sure do!

**Sylvia:** Yeah, we sure do.

**Austin:** Finally! Finally.

**Keith:** Finally.

**Sylvia:** Hey, Jack.

**Keith:** Hey, Jack. Kite is in the first chapter of the manga. He's actually a really big part of it. [Austin laughs]

**Sylvia:** Yeah. It's page 21 of *Hunter × Hunter* is when Kite shows up.

**Jack:** This is crazy. [Dre laughs] He shows up in his full costume design?

**Sylvia:** I saved it, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Hold up, yeah.

**Austin:** You have an image? Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I have the first two pages that Kite's in.

**Jack:** And he's a consistently drawn character? He behaves in much the same way?

**Sylvia:** It is the flashback we see in this episode.

**Keith:** The flashback we see [Dre: Yeah.] is from the beginning of the manga. Kite tells Gon what a Hunter is, tells him that his father is alive and is a Hunter, and sets him off—

**Austin:** He is the first Hunter we see.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** He's the first Hunter we see.

**Jack:** Wow!

**Dre:** Damn.

**Austin:** It is on page two of the manga, is "They are called Hunters," and it's a picture of Kite.

**Jack:** This is—

**Sylvia:** It is wild to me that they didn't include this.

**Keith:** Yes.

**Dre:** Isn't it included in the— I forget what year, but the original adaptation?

**Austin:** '99.

**Keith:** '99, yeah.

**Sylvia:** It is, yes.

**Austin:** '98, whatever it is, yeah. Uh huh.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** So, we've talked about this a few times. There are bits of the early episodes where, like, you can hear me be kind of frustrated that I can't talk about this.

**Austin:** Uh huh. [Dre chuckles]

**Keith:** Because it's a well known thing about the 2011 series, but it still felt like we couldn't tell you anything more than that there was a weird choice to cut, for time's sake, a chunk out of the first bits of the manga in order to, like, facilitate getting into it quicker.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** It is a cut with ramifications.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** You know, I can...at the most mercenary level of, "We are making the show. We need to get Gon off Whale Island as quickly as possible. I don't want to mess around here. We've got a lot to adapt," I can understand cutting it. But it produces a really weird effect. The first is that we get this flashback, and it feels like something that they think they have already told us. Because, you know, in the original thing, they have.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** But it feels so sort of cursory when it appears here.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** You know, Gon looks at him, and he says, you know, “This feels familiar to me,” and the first note I took was like, “Oh, are we going to be—” You know, you had talked about how Chimera Ant is not just plot-wise weird, it is also kind of formally weird, and so I was like, “Oh, are we doing, like, a time loop?” You know, Gon saying, “This feels familiar,” sitting by this fire with this man.

**Sylvia:** Oh, that would be so funny. [Austin chuckles]

**Jack:** But then as soon as we cut into the flashback, I was like, “Oh, right. I know exactly what has happened here. Yes, you put this on Whale Island at the beginning.” But putting meeting Kite and remembering Kite here right next to each other is bizarre. I would...the first thing I think is, “Oh, I would have found a place to put it earlier in the show. I might not have put it at the beginning, but I would have had, you know, a lesson that Gon learned with that fox bear while he was tracking or something, such that, you know, in an arc earlier, Gon can call back to this, so that when we meet Kite eventually, we can say, “Oh my god, it’s him. Look out.” Because here, it just comes straight out of the blue, and it’s especially odd, because—and we can use this as a way to jump into talking about Kite just in general—Kite is Ging’s pupil. Ging was Kite’s master. And as we have talked about ad nauseum on this show, *Hunter × Hunter* has some very interesting things to say about the relationships between teachers and pupils, figures of authority, and it is not stopping that.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** There is a lot of fascinating stuff already with Kite as a pupil of Ging’s, not least of which that he looks at Gon and Killua— he looks at Gon, and he says, essentially, “I want to treat you well and treat you with respect, because you’re the son of my master,” which is such an interesting line to begin with. But having Kite be the man who tells Gon

that Hunters exist way back at the beginning of Whale Island and that your dad is real and everything, and then later we learn, you know, that this is one of Ging's pupils, it adds so much more depth to that kind of moment that is, by dint of them moving it this far late, they sort of jettison all of the stuff that they could be doing with that, if that makes sense.

**Keith:** There's another moment too that it adds weight to, which is the very beginning of the story, Gon deciding to become a Hunter and to put himself through this thing. Him making that decision isn't something that we see in the 2011 adaptation. We don't know why he wants to do this, except for that he wants to find his father, and I think it is, like, a much stronger case for why Gon is the way that he is, that he, like, is saved by a student of his father who says, "By the way, your father's alive, and he's awesome."

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah. Because Kite thinks that Ging is great. He has a sort of...it's hard to know whether or not what I'm reading is frustration from Kite. Kite sort of talked his way into being trained by Ging. He says that, you know, Ging doesn't really like to do anything if it's a hassle for him, which is interesting. You sort of get the impression that Kite sort of badgered his way into being taught. And then he had to hunt for Ging, in much the same way that Gon is hunting for Ging. And I don't know, it's hard to read how Kite feels about this. I think Kite, like Gon, thinks that Ging is the real deal, you know, is a real good sort. But this is a figure who has already gone through the trial of "find Ging" once already, and I get a little weariness from that. I don't know if that's a misread.

**Keith:** I think that Kite is a weary character, and I think that one of the interesting things about these episodes is that we see a lot of Kite sort of feeling the weight of the Chimera Ant business that he kind of— he has this sort of, like, latent feeling that things are worse than they seem.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Keith:** And we sort of, like, watch other people, like, looking into clues and considering worst case scenarios, and Kite is, like, out in space.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And I think he's just got that— I think he's impressed with Gon, and I think that's the Gon formula, is like, people like Gon. I think that he reminds Kite of Ging.

**[0:30:00]**

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Big time.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** For better and— I mean, these episodes end with Kite looking at Gon and Killua talking, and talking about whether or not they would run away if things go bad, and it's so hard not to read into that him and younger Ging talking, at some point.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And like, him thinking about their relationship. They're, like, very efficient with the sort of, like, melancholy that comes along with Ging, who does not— like everybody else, does not get to— sorry, I said Ging. The melancholy of Kite, who does, like everybody else, not get to be with Ging, **[Jack: Yeah.]** but who has kind of reshaped his entire life around, you know.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I was so impressed. I mean, I'm regularly impressed by how fast on his feet Togashi is for character writing, in terms of— you know, we talked about this in previous



episodes. Getting us on side with Tsezguerra really quickly, giving Tsezguerra these little details. You get the impression Kite is a much more important character than Tsezguerra, but by the end of, you know, almost episode one, he is a really sharply drawn, really interesting character that I want to see more of.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** His art direction is great. He doesn't really look like anybody else. He has a very long, sort of narrow face, pale skin, dark lines around his eyes. He's very lithe.

**Keith:** He looks like he's nine feet tall.

**Jack:** Yeah. I don't really know why he has Crazy Slots, which doesn't seem both in line with his aesthetic— [Keith laughs]

**Sylvia:** I love that name.

**Keith:** It doesn't suit him at all! It's so funny!

**Jack:** And also a flashback reveals that— they say a couple of times in here. Ging claims that every single Hunter is well-liked by animals, which is a thing that comes up a few times, and also, you know, Hunters are very good at finding friends. I don't know if that's true, but in the past, when we see Kite in the past, he is hanging out with a sort of Disney-princess-style gang of animals. [Austin chuckles]

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** He has a gang of—

**Austin:** I thought that was— yeah.

**Keith:** He has an Oliver Twist-style gang of animal thieves. [Austin chuckles]

**Sylvia:** Oh my god.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Including one full horse that lives in the sewers. [Keith laughs]

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Dre:** Uh huh.

**Keith:** Yeah, I...okay. Let's talk about these two flashbacks really quick. I just want to—I don't think we actually said the specifics of the original flashback.

**Sylvia:** No, we didn't.

**Keith:** When Kite saves Gon, he's angry at being forced to take another life. In the dub, he says, "Dammit, I've got another pointless kill to my credit." That's what he says in the dub, which I think is a good line. And then Gon recognizes this sentence from when he was a kid; someone saves him from a foxbear, this huge, you know, sort of like hulking bear thing that Gon, as a like four-year-old kid, wanders into the den of. I don't know about the manga. In the '99 anime, he hangs out with that fox cub for, like, the first three episodes, four episodes of the show. [Jack chuckles]

**Austin:** Yeah, he raises that foxbear.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** He raises the foxbear.

**Dre:** Aww.

**Austin:** He says goodbye to it on the way out.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Like, when he goes to be a Hunter, basically.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Which is loaded in any conversation with Gon, right? You know, like, taking care of somebody that is in your care, that is vulnerable to you, that you are sort of, like,

guiding through the world. I think stuff like that is always going to be important when Gon and Ging are, you know, are in this story.

**Keith:** And another fun music fact. This is something that Jack has talked about a lot on the show. Melody's theme is what plays [**Austin:** Huh.] when thinking back about this, "A Field in Spring". No, "Field in Spring", that's the real song. Wait, which one's the real one?

**Jack:** "The Rite of Spring" is the real song.

**Austin:** "Rite of Spring" is the...

**Keith:** "Rite of Spring", okay. "A Field in Spring", that is Melody's song. And it's the only time that we've heard it played not during a scene with Melody, and instead it's during this, like, kind of dramatic naturey scene.

**Austin:** Well, and, sorry, in this flashback, we don't get Kite [**Keith:** No.] in this flashback explaining to young Gon about his father, right?

**Jack:** No.

**Keith:** No. It's very cursory.

**Jack:** It's very cursory.

**Austin:** Right, and what we kind of get is all of that conversation— so, in the manga, he's like, "Oh, wait a second, are you Ging's kid? Your dad's a great Hunter. I'm here. You know, Ging's my teacher. You know, to get his approval, I have to, like, go do a big test. I have, you know, da-da-da-da-da. And like, he's so smart..."

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And, you know, "Maybe your aunt hasn't told you about this." He's how Gon knows what a Hunter is [Jack chuckles] and that his father was a Hunter, to the degree that the end of the first chapter of the manga is Aunt Mito being like, "So you've known all this time what your dad does? Did you know he, like, abandoned you here?" Like,

and none of that gets transposed into the episode.

**Jack:** No.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Ohh.

**Austin:** But it's like, Keith, the thing you've been saying is, like, understanding the— and I guess I should also say it's not, like...I think that it's important that also Gon's love of animals and the wild and all of that stuff therefore gets tied up into—

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah!

**Austin:** “Here is this person who already does what I like but better, [**Keith:** Right.] and he knows my dad, who's taught him how to do this stuff. How could I not want to go do that?” you know?

**Dre:** Mm.

**Keith:** The backbone of why he likes nature and why he's, like, a wild kid from the forest is only ever kind of implied by the setting.

**Austin:** Right. He is from a small island. In the anime, it's like, oh, what he does— what kids from small islands do is, like, go fishing and go do nature stuff, right?

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Austin:** Instead of he had this life-or-death moment that reshaped him forever.

**Jack:** It is grim the way that Ging—like a massive gravitational object—is drawing everything into him, whether or not, you know, people want it to or not.

**Keith:** It's time to replay KOTOR 2.

**Austin:** I'm fucking telling you. [Keith and Dre laugh] Keith, I think about it all the time.

**Keith:** All the time. I think about it all the time.

**Austin:** I think about it all the time.

**Keith:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Jack:** As these episodes progress, a frightening new idea about Ging begins to take shape, and actually begins to take shape as they talk around this bonfire with Kite, which is: hey, how much of this has Ging orchestrated? Because we know Ging has the wherewithal and interest to orchestrate Greed Island, and it's said outright, as an elaborate game to train Gon. And if he can do that, you know, if he can bring in Razor, if he can bring in Dwun and List, if he can arrange it so that Gon can come and meet Kite here, how much of this is actually being set up by Ging? And everybody doesn't really have an answer to this, at this point. You know, Gon later begins to suggest that it might be a hell of a lot of it. There's a lot of really great moments of, like, watching Killua's face as he watches Gon talking to Kite.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** This sort of, like, "I'm not quite involved in this in the same way, and yet, at the same time, I'm being dragged along with it." And as this question of, like, "how much of this has Ging authored?" keeps coming up again and again, in just these first three episodes that expand into global geopolitics and a potentially lethal world-ending ant army, I feel like the viewer is just constantly being invited to ask: how much of this is Ging's doing?

**Austin:** Well, and the funny thing is we never get— the Ging that we get— first of all, we get two Gings, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** We get fuzzy haired Ging inside of the, like, turban, and his hair is, like, messy and coming out of it.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Right. Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And then we get, like, almost like a middle ground hair up like Gon's, you know, almost like a— I'm guessing it's slightly younger?

**Keith:** Bandana hair up Ging.

**Austin:** Bandana hair up Ging also. Same voice actor. Same, you know, more or less the same performance with those, but it feels like different stages of his life or something. But we never get him as— we never see him being, you know, a master planner or manipulator.

**Jack:** No.

**Dre:** No.

**Austin:** We've heard that he made one phone call once to change Dwun's legal name.  
[Keith laughs]

**Jack:** We never see him doing anything other than...

**Sylvia:** That's...

**Austin:** We don't see him doing anything except the type of stuff we see Gon doing, which is having, you know, a sort of innate charisma that others are drawn towards.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And then doing stuff that I think we've seen the other teachers doing, which is like, be kind of a shithead to people. [Austin and Dre chuckle]

**Jack:** Yeah, there's a bit where, after Kite— so, Kite is sent on a big hunt to find Ging. It's at this point that I'm like, "Oh, this is why it's called *Hunter × Hunter*."

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. [Sylvia chuckles]

**Sylvia:** Phoenix Down! [Austin chuckles]

**Jack:** Kite is sent on a big hunt to find Ging, and he does it. He finds him standing on this big cliff. And Ging— correct me if I'm wrong here. Ging essentially spells out that, like, Gon is going to come looking for me. And he, like, throws a punch and stops short from it connecting, just sort of, like, classic shithead Ging behavior. But it's very much Ging instrumentalizing another person in his life as an obstacle or guide on Gon's journey, right?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yep.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. That's what friends are for.

**Sylvia:** Hate him.

**Austin:** What was it that Hisoka said? That it was good to have friends as a Hunter?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah. [Jack laughs] It's good to have— yeah, I wish I had the exact quote.

**Austin:** Like, important as a Hunter to develop friendships or something?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I forget exactly.

**Jack:** Yeah, and you see that, on some level, with him and Illumi, you know.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I can't believe that I didn't put together until you said earlier in the episode that

Killua and Kite's color palette are the same.

**Austin:** It's the same.

**Keith:** The same, yeah.

**Jack:** And we have two K's, and we have Gon and Ging.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Really, really interesting. And we have one watchful, pessimistic, [**Austin:** Uh huh.] faintly nihilistic character.

**Austin:** Moody. [Keith and Dre laugh]

**Jack:** Yeah. With a dark background, you know? Kite also grew up in— god. The scene where Kite does the Artful Dodger but it's all animals to just steal some bread is so funny. [Dre laughs] At one point, two dogs tip buckets of trash onto the heads of the guys who are chasing him—[Keith laughs]

**Sylvia:** It rules.

**Jack:** And the two guys just sit down, like, "Yep. Yep. We got got."

**Dre:** "Yep. We got trashed by a dog."

**Keith:** There's a great thing that they do with the music. I didn't grab it, but when it goes from— so, the first thing that happens when he's sort of remembering his past and saying— he said, "Ging is the one who made me a First Class Hunter. He was my teacher and benefactor. If I'd never met Ging, I'd be dead now in an alley in the back of a slum long ago." When he's saying this, they're doing a sort of orchestration of "Reason" from the last season.

[clip of "Reason" begins]



**Keith:** It's like, very ooey gooey.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** Schmaltzy.

**Keith:** But then it cuts to— [music stops] It, like, goes right from that to the beginning of “Whale Island”, which, for me, is like a very pretty song, but the beginning of it is almost like an orchestra tuning up but, like, slightly detuned in this weird ominous sort of way, and then it never goes into the pretty part of Whale Island. It cuts right from that weird atonal part into the intense drum break from “Mano-A-Mano!” which is very cool.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** It was just very funny to switch right from the sort of saccharine “Reason” orchestration and into, like, weird atonal stuff, and then drums.

**Jack:** Yeah, look, as the Chimera Ant Queen has already taught us, you make use of what you can get your hands on, you know?

**Keith:** It's true.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Take the best bits.

**Keith:** That's good to point out.

**Sylvia:** God.

**Keith:** During all of this, we are getting, like, quick cuts to what the Chimera Ant Queen is doing, which is, like, sitting in a cave, missing a leg, eating a bunch of fish and being like, “I need more food!”

**Jack:** This is great, because we had the little ant shot by Kite at the beginning, you

know. We had a brief description of what the Chimera Ants are, and then we all just sit down around a fire and talk about Ging, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** It's like the ant briefly just falls out of the story, except for these very sudden cuts to the cave. The Chimera Ant Queen speaks. She has a sort of raspy voice and imperious delivery.

**Sylvia:** She sounds like a witch.

**Austin:** She does.

**Jack:** She does sound like a witch.

**Keith:** She does.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Jack:** And they—

**Austin:** She's got big mandibles but also teeth.

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Jack:** Human teeth.

**Keith:** Human teeth.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** That's, I think, how you can tell it's her in the opening is you get the big smile.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** And they are shooting her like a creature feature monster.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** In that they are not showing her directly. You know, we'll just get an over-the-shoulder shot. We'll get a shot of her horrible mandibles. We'll get maybe, like, a full-body shot in silhouette. This is really funny, because at about an episode and a half from now, Togashi abandons all pretense for the Chimera Ants. [Dre laughs]

**Austin:** Ahh.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And is just like, "Point! The! Camera at them!"

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Oh yeah.

**Jack:** But having the Queen here is really good and really scary. We learn some more stuff that Ging has done. Ging has his fingers in all sorts of Hunter pies.

**Keith:** Yeah. Can I—

**Jack:** He is a Triple— mm?

**Sylvia:** Mm?

**Keith:** Can I say, real quick: in the flashback of, like, of Kite as the Artful Dodger, and he's in the sewer, and he shows up, and Ging had been, like, watching him and is, like, down in the sewer waiting for him to come by. This is, I think, the most likable that Ging

has come across so far.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Where he's just, like, hanging out with all the animals, saying—

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** He says, "Hey, so, do you live down here with these guys? It looks fun."

**Sylvia:** It's so Gon too. [Keith laughs]

**Austin:** It's all there.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Right? Yeah, it's Gon.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Gon is here. And you get it for the first time, which I think is, like, one of the great struggles when writing a character who is supposed to be super charismatic but the viewer is also supposed to be skeptical of them.

**Keith:** It's tough.

**Austin:** Is it's very easy to produce skepticism in the viewer. It's very hard to make the viewer charmed once they're suspicious. And, I mean, later this episode, we get some of the worst stuff from Ging we've ever seen.

**Dre:** [chuckles] Uh huh.

**Austin:** Which I know, Dre, you're excited to talk about too. But here, you're right, Keith. I think that moment of "Hey," you know, "you live down here with all these cool animals? That sounds fun." Like, oh yeah, we've been prepped for, whatever, 76 episodes to respond positively to that cadence and that enthusiasm, 'cause it's Gon's.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And if anything, the thing that's happening here is the continuation of being like: hey, maybe you should be skeptical of that, like, all-in attitude that Gon always has.

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Austin:** You know?

**Jack:** Yeah. You can also get—

**Austin:** Oh, you just threw yourself into someone else's life and decided this is what you're going to wear for the next six months? [Jack sighs] You know? [Dre laughs]

**Keith:** And I feel like they introduce this in a way that makes me go, like...I think we've seen a lot of, like, "Uh oh, what's happening to Gon?" Like, what is Gon...what are these choices that Gon's making turning him into?

**[0:45:03]**

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** And I think the parallels with Ging do a really good job of being like, maybe that's been there for longer than we thought. Like, going back towards the beginning.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** Because especially, you know, we see the parallel between Killua and Kite and the way that Ging sort of makes these intense friends, people who care about him so deeply that he just leaves behind, and it's kind of exactly what Gon's story would look like if he didn't meet Killua.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** He has done that. He has done the same thing that Ging does to everyone he's met except for the one guy who won't leave his side.

**Austin:** Right. Right. And at this point, it's like, [Jack sighs] yeah, Killua's the one who won't leave his side, right?

**Keith:** Right. Yes.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Though he also goes and gets Killua after the Hunter Exam.

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

**Austin:** So like, we've seen that work in both directions at this point, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** But I think that that was massive for Killua, right?

**Austin:** Yes, yes.

**Jack:** Was having a friend come and get him out of the Zoldyck house.

**Keith:** Right.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Well, not get him out, 'cause he just left the Zoldyck house. He just walks out.

**Austin:** [laughs] Yes.

**Jack:** But you know what I mean.

**Dre:** Well, yeah. It was Killua feeling like, "Oh, somebody sees me as worth coming to

get out of the house.”

**Keith:** Mm.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Dre:** Which is a feeling that it seems like he has not really felt before.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-mm. Well, and the other—

**Jack:** Hey, is this show sad?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** This show might be deeply sad. [Keith laughs]

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Austin:** [knowing, sad chuckle]

**Dre:** Yeah, dawg.

**Sylvia:** [sarcastic] What gave you that idea?

**Dre:** Yeah, dawg!

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm...mm... [Jack laughs]

**Keith:** But then it's also like—

**Sylvia:** [sarcastic] It's a kids' show. I don't know what you're talking about.

**Austin:** Yeah, mm. Yeah, I'm just going to—

**Sylvia:** Doesn't everything that we watched scream kids' show? [Austin chuckles]

**Dre:** No, the kids are sad, Sylvi. [Jack chuckles]

**Austin:** [sarcastic] What do you mean?

**Sylvia:** No, I saw that guy and his little sister. They seemed great.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, there are little kids in these episodes. They do great. [Dre laughs]

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, they were laughing and playing. They were going fishing.

**Sylvia:** Don't tell me what happened. I haven't watched the last one yet. I'm doing it right now.

**Jack:** Start the clock. [Keith chuckles]

**Sylvia:** [feigned shock] Oh, jeez!

**Jack:** Let's see.

**Austin:** But the thing that I think— to kind of finish a thought I had before but didn't properly finish, what's interesting is we therefore see in Ging parts of what we know is true for Gon, which is Ging throws himself, you know, happily into new things over and over again.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** We finally get to see a little bit of that joy, but we also know that Ging is a planner or we've heard that Ging is a planner. We know that Ging, at the very least, asks for favors from people to do stuff, like, "Hey, my son is going to come find you one day. Don't hold back." Or basically the same thing. He basically kind of asks that of, uh, what was his name from Greed Island? And then also...



**Jack:** Razor, the murderer?

**Sylvia:** Razor.

**Austin:** Right, Razor. Razor the murderer, exactly. And then also—

**Sylvia:** That's his full name.

**Austin:** Thanks Kite for not holding back against Gon.

**Keith:** Yeah. "Thanks for clobbering my son," is what he says.

**Austin:** "Thanks for clobbering my son." But we don't see—

**Sylvia:** I hate him so fucking much.

**Austin:** Right now, we haven't seen Gon do that stuff. We have not seen— Gon is the opposite of a planner. He is not someone— [Dre chuckles] He, in fact, will disregard a plan and be, quote, unquote, "selfish" instead.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And he isn't— we don't see him asking for favors so much, 'cause he so far really wants to win on his own or with just his close friends, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** He's not like...you know, I guess maybe asking Hisoka for help last season, but like, he's not doing the thing Ging is doing at this point, which is...

**Keith:** There is one thing. This whole thing has been his plan.

**Austin:** Sure, but it's a different type of— he's not orchestrating.

**Keith:** He's not orchestrating, right.

**Austin:** As far as we can see, right?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** But he is, I think—

**Austin:** I'm just trying to draw the lines and think about these two characters, you know?

**Keith:** At this point, I think he's letting himself be orchestrated.

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

**Keith:** He feels like being orchestrated is part of finding Ging.

**Austin:** Yes. Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah, there's a really funny moment where— and this can sort of get us into beginning to talk about some awful Ging later, but we learn why they sort of found Kite, which is that Kite was brought into Greed Island by Ging a long time ago.

**Keith:** This is amazing.

**Jack:** And Kite sort of barely remembers this. You get the impression that his life with Ging was so varied and high intensity that, like, “you've entered a video game called Greed Island with Ging for a bit,” is like, Ging is just having us do this stuff all the time, and he probably got Kite to set up the nickname in that moment.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** And Gon, here, rather than going, “My dad is a bizarre master manipulator on scales that I don't really understand yet,” has a great, like, “Aw, he got me good!” reaction. [Keith and Dre laugh]

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. [sighs]

**Jack:** He's delighted by this.

**Dre:** Ugh.

**Jack:** He's like, "This is the game that I'm playing with my dad!"

**Keith:** It's their first game of catch.

**Sylvia:** Nooooo! [Keith laughs]

**Dre:** Oh, it kind of is.

**Sylvia:** You're not wrong, but god, that's depressing.

**Austin:** Well, and he's wrong about this, actually, because we learn in another flashback how it actually works.

**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah, that's true.

**Austin:** That Accompany brings— Gon is wrong about this. Gon thinks, "Oh, he gave you the nickname."

**Keith:** It was always going to be Kite is what he thinks.

**Austin:** It was always going to be Kite, but it—

**Keith:** It wasn't.

**Austin:** Right, yes.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** If he's going to use Accompany, it's going to be Kite.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Why is that?

**Keith:** Does someone have the quote here?

**Dre:** Oh, it's...

**Sylvia:** He says he's going to be embarrassed.

**Dre:** “If he uses Accompany, then he’s too much of a coward to face me without his friends, but if—”

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** He says, “If he uses Magnetic Force to see me on his own, [**Dre:** Yeah.] I’m willing to meet with him, but I can’t meet him if he’s so gutless that he has to bring friends.” And I can’t— they don’t say which of the entrance or exit—

**Sylvia:** Which of the twins.

**Keith:** Yeah, which of the twins this is.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Eta or...I can’t remember the other one’s name. Let’s just say that it’s Eta. [Sylvia laughs] She’s like, “This is so bad. I feel sorry for Gon.”

**Austin:** It’s Elena. The subtitles say it’s Elena, so.

**Keith:** Elena, right, okay.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** Shoutouts to Elena.

**Keith:** And she accuses him that more people would just make you self conscious.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** “He’s so weird, shy, and stubborn. I feel sorry for Gon.” And it’s sort of an interesting twist on, like, the first impulse is, like, take Ging at his word, and then Elena’s like, “No, he’s making excuses for being anxious.”

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Or something.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** This is great. It's a sort of first hint that we have that there is some sort of, like, roiling animus within Ging, other than "I want to test my son," you know? She describes Ging as very shy, right? And, you know, this is a character that has previously been a sort of, like, legendary figure on a pedestal pursued through a variety of games and tasks, and here in this moment we get to see that— we get to see what might be motivating his selfishness. We only really get a hint of it. You know, why is Ging like this. But I do think it was interesting that she specifically said, "You would feel self conscious if more people showed up."

**Keith:** But then it's also, it's impossible to see what we've seen of Ging and be like, "That's a shy guy."

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** It's crazy.

**Austin:** No, I don't—

**Jack:** I can see it.

**Sylvia:** More of a Toad. [Dre chuckles]

**Austin:** I can see it, totally.

**Keith:** I can see it.

**Dre:** Ging logging onto Twitter and saying, "Hey, if your leftist space doesn't make me— if it makes me feel bad about abandoning my son, [**Jack:** Ha!] then it's not a safe space." [quiet laughter]

**Jack:** I see him as this, like, deeply charismatic, [**Austin:** Yes.] anxious figure who is throwing himself [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] from task to task. Let me just see here. He discovered the Lurka Ruins. He discovered the Congo Gold Vein.

**Austin:** Yep.

**Jack:** We keep seeing— and again, we never actually see this happen, just people tell us about it. Ging throwing himself into these tasks of, like, he's a patron of a lot of important causes. He's rebuilding things and handing them back over to the people whose, you know, civilizations they were a part of. He's involved in philanthropic endeavors. We don't actually see any of this stuff. You know, all we ever see is him fleeing from his son over and over again.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** And then seeing the people that have met him be like, "Oh yeah, god, if you haven't met him, that sucks. He's great to meet," or, "He's the worst guy I've ever met. I hate him."

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Truly—

**Dre:** And then the people saying, "He's great to meet," then give examples of him being the worst.

**Keith:** It reminds—

**Austin:** Truly, on my worst days, I feel like Ging.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

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

**Austin:** In the sense that, like, I am— put me in the right circumstance, I can be

incredibly charming. People can want to hang out with me, and then I will fucking disappear on you. I will flake. I will not find the time to hang out. You will have a deeper connection with me than I do with you. I actually already have a really full dance card, so to speak, and like, somehow didn't, like, broadcast that well enough, and now...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You know, truly, I have made these mistakes. I don't know that Ging is making mistakes. I think Ging's making plans, and I think that's the difference.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** And I think that it's important that we see him...you know, he get a little bit of pushback here. Elena is like, "Are you sure you want to do that?" and he goes, like, "Nevermind! Ah, just do it! Aaah, I'm having a little tantrum!" And it's like, oh.

**Jack:** "Did you hear me change that man's name?"

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** Do you think Gon was a plan, not a mistake?

**Austin:** Well...sorry, say that again?

**Keith:** You think Gon was a plan, not a mistake? [Jack chuckles]

**Austin:** No, I think—

**Dre:** Jesus. [chuckles]

**Austin:** Well, I mean, we have no idea. We have no idea!

**Keith:** We have no idea. We have no idea.

**Austin:** Maybe. I mean, I...

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

**Austin:** I don't know, man. We're watching a season that's about passing on genetic strength, one generation to another.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And a sort of, like, undeniable biological urge to do that, so I don't know.

**Keith:** He seems—

**Austin:** And I truly don't know.

**Keith:** He seems to have put a lot of work into not being— not doing the work of doing a father.

**Austin:** That's right.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** That was your point.

**Keith:** No one has ever tried so hard to not raise a son. [Jack and Dre chuckle]

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And that was your point last season, right? Was like, if he really did build this whole game to train Gon indirectly, then that's an interesting...

**Keith:** Version of being a father.

**Austin:** It's not parenting, but it's not not parenting.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's something— you know? Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah.



**Dre:** Keith and/or Sylvi, I sent you all a thought in Discord.

**Keith:** Oh.

**Dre:** Can you read it and see if you think it is, like, clear for me to say this?

**Sylvia:** Uh, I think you could.

**Austin:** Oh, I think that's clear. Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, I think that—

**Dre:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, I think that that's fine, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** The thing I typed and that I believe [**Austin:** Agh!] is that Ging wants to put Gon through all of this because he thinks it's the only way to make Gon into a person that won't hate Ging for abandoning him.

**Keith:** And you know what's the saddest thing about that?

**Sylvia:** I could see that.

**Keith:** Is that he already didn't hate him from the very beginning.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Right. Right. Right.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** You ever notice how Ging, if there was an O in it, would be “going”, and Gon, if there was an E in it, would be “gone”?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, he named him—

**Dre:** Damn!

**Sylvia:** He named his kid after what he is: gone.

**Keith:** Wow.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** But this is—

**Austin:** So that he could remain going.

**Sylvia:** Instead of it being Ging Jr., it's just easier to say Gon.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You know? So that he didn't have to stop going, yeah.

**Jack:** This is also the thing that Togashi keeps coming back to again and again and again, right? Which is that, like, people are seeking games in order to render out some sort of meaning [**Austin:** Mm.] in their lives or in their relationships with other people, so what method would Ging take to ensure that his son didn't love me?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** I wasn't abandoning you.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I was setting up step one [**Keith:** Yeah.] in a game that's going to cause you to become a better person.

**Keith:** I was making global *Mouse Trap*.

**Austin:** [chuckles] I mean, and that— by the way, that was the thing that I hadn't taken from Greed Island the first time through that I really did this time, was— you know,

obviously going into it the second time, you know that it's something that Ging and all his friends built, and, you know, you have all this other context. But the idea—and y'all hit on a lot of this throughout—was like, oh, Ging thought people would play it one way, and they're playing it a different way, and all of the slippages between game and real. The fact that there's, like, the only person in the world that plays it right is Gon, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** He built a thing that works for Gon but nobody else, and that sort of feels like the way he sees the world, is that, “Oh, the world is a big game for me, [Dre: Mm.] and I can make it a game for somebody else,” but he doesn't really understand the, like, osmosis and the corruption and the way that that game will have knock-on effects for the way that the real world works.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** That play is meaningful.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Keith:** And also the cruelty of freezing a place in amber until you're ready for it also, is like, the only reason that Greed Island devolves into this horrible mess of murder [Austin: Yeah.] and violence and backstabbing is because it wasn't winnable until Gon got there.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah. Lex Luthor once said to Superman, “Well, why don't you put the whole world in a bottle?” and I think about that a lot. Because Superman famously put the last remaining Krypton city into a bottle. Or he didn't put it there, but he has it there. That's, like, the one remaining Kryptonian culture.

**Sylvia:** Ohh.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And kind of targeting— this is from *Red Son*, where Superman is the

communist Superman. The way that Lex Luthor, like, gets one over on him in the end is like, as he slips towards a sort of, like, authoritarian, you know, nothing happens without Superman's approval, is he says, "Well, why don't you just go ahead and put the whole world in a bottle?" and I feel like that is Ging's fucking—

**Sylvia:** Get him, Lex.

**Austin:** Yeah. That is Ging's whole thing, right? Is like, "Ooh, I could—"

**Keith:** Put a world in a bottle.

**Austin:** "How do I fix the world such that it has the outcome I want?" And I hadn't really thought about Greed Island in that way before, and it's interesting seeing it as it then spills out into all of Ging's interpersonal relationships going forward.

**Jack:** And then—

**Keith:** Another place where the world is in a bottle: the NGL.

**Austin:** Oh, sure. Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** And Gordeau.

**Jack:** Well, but it's not just that. It's like Greed Island comes right before an arc that, you know, contains little sub-bottles but is about this massive explosion in scale. You know, if Ging is out here being like, "I can predict how this is going to work, and I'm going to seal it in amber and set it up for Gon to arrive," and now we move into this, like, exponential chaotic global disaster unfolding.

**Austin:** Right, right.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Sitting those next to each other is meaningful, I think.

**Austin:** The lesson was he couldn't predict how it was going to go in Greed Island, [Sylvia: Mm-hmm.] or he did and didn't care.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Right? Like, he made game systems that were immediately turned towards— maybe not immediately, but eventually turned on their heads, because people realized it's better to be violent. It's better to kill. It's easier to steal than to play the quests, et cetera. And, you know, either he didn't anticipate that and his plan was bad, or he anticipated it and thought, "Okay, but it's still going to get my good outcome, which is my son is going to get trained up."

**Keith:** Right.

**Dre:** Or he thought, "Well, if they die in Greed Island, they should just have the common sense to not die in Greed Island."

**Austin:** Or, or, they agreed to play— yeah, they agreed to play in Greed Island, [Sylvia: Yeah.] where they knew the cost could be death.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** This is—

**Austin:** Which we know Gon has signed on entirely for, right?

**Dre:** I don't think we highlighted that, but that's me referencing the other part of him saying, "Thanks for punching my kid, Kite," [Austin: Yes.] was him saying, "I mean, it was common sense to not go in front of a foxbear when they're having their kits."

**Keith:** Yeah, when you're four. [Austin sighs]

**[1:00:02]**

**Dre:** Yeah. [Keith laughs] Man, who could have taught Gon that if he didn't fucking disappear, Ging?

**Sylvia:** Aaargh.

**Jack:** Yeah, I was going to say. In theory, very normal parenting. Don't play in the road.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** You know, if your ball rolls into the street, look both ways.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Don't go play in front of the foxbear. What method would you like to use to accomplish this task, Ging? Oh, elaborate world *Mouse Trap* game? [laughs quietly]

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** And yet, he does also have the foresight to make, like, the key to winning the game having to, like, think about the NPCs that you met and how to help them late in the game. Like, hey, remember those computer programs? [Austin chuckles] Maybe we can figure out a way to actually heal them. Like, that's such an oddly specific kind of compassion to then—

**Austin:** Well, we don't even— [sighs]

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** We don't even know if that's him though.

**Keith:** That was the one card! No one knew where it was.

**Austin:** We don't know if that was him, is the thing, right? 10 people made Greed Island.

**Dre:** That's true.

**Austin:** And so, one of the things I was thinking about when you were talking about—

god, the test at the end. The actual, like...

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** The quiz.

**Keith:** Where you have to know all the cards?

**Jack:** Oh, the quiz.

**Austin:** It's so easy to imagine— this is headcanon. This is not— it's so easy to imagine that, like, Ging was like, "And then you get all the cards, and you win," and someone in the 10 person group was like, "Wait a second, wait a second, wait a second. We have to make sure that they played the game. What if there's a test at the end?" and Ging was like, "I don't care. I'm going to go deal with another crisis. Sure. Add the quiz at the end."  
[Jack and Keith laugh]

**Keith:** Okay.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Okay, but if he does all this for Gon, it's got to be set up in a way to actually work.

**Dre:** Do you think Ging could pass the Greed Island quiz at the end?

**Sylvia:** No.

**Keith:** Yes.

**Jack:** No.

**Austin:** I think he could get the rewards from it without needing to pass the quiz.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm. That's fair.

**Austin:** They way that the Phantom Troupe probably could. [Dre laughs] But like, you

know, some...

**Keith:** I also think he could do that, yes.

**Austin:** Yeah, you know? Like, I think he could talk his way in and figure it out.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And that's all— I just want to be super clear. I am not talking about future knowledge Ging stuff. Like, I'm just talking about what we know here and now about Ging.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I truly don't remember off the top of my head if I know any of Ging's Nen stuff at all, so.

**Jack:** It's interesting that we don't. We have not been given access to this.

**Austin:** Yep.

**Jack:** In a show— I mean, this is part of the game of the show, is like, restricting knowledge about whose Nen is what.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** You know, you're sort of playing a "find the lady" game we Nen at all times.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** So I don't think it's unusual that Ging's Nen has been hidden from us, but he is this larger-than-life figure, and we know almost nothing about his Nen power. I have always assumed that it's like he is a Nen— we talk about people, like, writing Nen onto things, like, giving things Nen powers.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.



**Jack:** Like the cards, like the phone, like the game that sucks you inside.

**Keith:** Yeah, imbuing Nen into things, yeah.

**Austin:** Right.

**Jack:** Yeah. I think that that is Ging's sort of, like, main action.

**Austin:** Right.

**Jack:** Which also is consistent with the way that he treats humans, being like...

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** It's one of the main things we've seen him do.

**Jack:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Austin:** Except that, again, we keep learning that he often gets other people to do things for him.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And so.

**Keith:** And then it's also, because we don't know a lot about Ging, the line on, like, what he does and what he commissions is very unclear.

**Austin:** That's what I mean.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, exactly. Exactly.

**Sylvia:** He does have "idea guy" vibes.

**Austin:** He does.

**Keith:** [laughs] He does a little bit. There's so much meat on these bones. Chimera Ant

is so dense. We have had all of this stuff to say.

**Austin:** We have to keep going. Yeah.

**Keith:** We're about a third of the way through the first episode.

**Jack:** No, we're not.

**Austin:** No, we're not.

**Jack:** We're near the end of it.

**Keith:** We're not? We're near the end?

**Austin:** We're basically done the first episode.

**Keith:** No, there's tons of stuff.

**Jack:** The last point I'd like to make about Ging, and then we should move on, [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] is that this show has already had a really keen eye for the way that children think about things, the way that children think about, like, [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] fairness and unfairness, the way they think about anxiety and friends.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** And when we talk about, like, what is Ging's Nen power. Ging has relationships with people that he can call on for favors, and I don't really know who they are. There is this real, like, this is what adults are like.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** There's that sort of inaccessibility when you're a child, the inaccessibility of your own parents, of like, my parents have friends, maybe? I don't really know who they are. They go off to work. I don't really know what they do.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Ging is sort of like this ur absent inscrutable parent out there [**Dre:** Mm.] that can only be understood in these sort of, like, broad idolizing or anxious ways.

**Austin:** Right. Also, it goes unsaid, but during all of this, Killua is looking at Gon, as Gon hears and dreams about his father, and he smiles at Gon. Gon is so excited and happy. And you have to know, deep down inside, Killua is thinking about his own father and his own upbringing [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] and his father who is very present in his life [**Keith:** Yeah] in a very different way, you know?

**Jack:** Who literally tortured him.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Keith:** Hey, who would you rather? The extremely present evil dad or the—

**Jack:** Wildly amoral absent dad? [laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** The charismatic well-loved absentee dad.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Well, you know, maybe Killua's dad can turn into the guy from *Minions*.

**Keith:** Mm.

**Jack:** Oh, maybe.

**Dre:** You know, 'cause he's an evil present dad that becomes a good guy.

**Sylvia:** Gru?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Gru Zoldyck?

**Austin:** Does Gru become a good guy?

**Keith:** [chuckles] Gru Zoldyck. Gru does become a good guy, yeah.

**Jack:** Gru's famously a good guy, Austin.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I don't know anything about the Minions.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I don't know anything about that.

**Keith:** In *Despicable Me*, the—

**Austin:** Wait, do the Minions keep working for him? 'Cause they're not supposed to.

**Keith:** No.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** No, I think.

**Jack:** No, they do keep—

**Dre:** Well, sort of.

**Keith:** There's a *Despicable Me 2*, but then all the other Minion movies I don't think really have Gru in them.

**Sylvia:** Oh. They get, like, freed like the Genie at the end of *Aladdin*?

**Dre:** That's true. *Despicable Me* is Gru, not *Minions*. *Minions* is just the Minions.

**Sylvia:** Welcome to Minion Club Plus.

**Keith:** In the plot of *Despicable Me*, at the end, he saves a bunch of children that he's grown to care for. That's the plot of that movie.

**Austin:** And then do the Minions abandon him, because they have to work for an evil

person?

**Dre:** No.

**Jack:** No, I think the Minions also then begin to be like, "What if we can ask for better?" That's what I think.

**Austin:** They've been around since the beginning of history, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] and this is the first time they had a second thought?

**Jack:** People can change, Austin, and sometimes those people [**Dre:** Yeah.] are 500,000 small, like, [**Keith:** Carls.] bean-shaped people.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** With the power of Steve Carell, anything is possible, Austin.

**Austin:** [chuckles] Oh, okay. With the power of being locked in an ice cave while Hitler was in power.

**Jack:** Between 1939 and... [laughs]

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** I think that I have pretty much talked about everything I want to talk about in 76, but Keith, you say you have more here?

**Keith:** So, basically what happened is I have what looks like a lot more notes, because I wrote out the translated lyrics to the new ending song.

**Austin:** Ah, I see.

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

**Keith:** Because I think they're important. Oh, one note that I had, just going through my

notes that we didn't touch on. Gon eventually is like, "Maybe meeting Bisky and Tsezguerra are also part of Ging's plans." I think that he's being very silly. Like, the idea— like, not only is this overarching plan Ging's doing, but like, all of these little bits. He somehow got everyone in the right place, literally like pieces on a chessboard and not just kind of theoretically.

**Austin:** Is this where he's like, "Killua, maybe you're part of the plan too."

**Keith:** Yes. Yes. [laughs]

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And Killua was like, "Uhhh, I don't know, bud."

**Keith:** I wrote, "This seems unlikely," is what I wrote.

**Austin:** Yeah. [Keith and Dre laugh]

**Keith:** Oh, when Kite says that Ging isn't a Three-Star Hunter but qualifies, because there's apparently it takes a little bit of time to fill out paperwork and apply and everything, [Austin chuckles] and that's just not Ging's style. He says that there are—

**Austin:** This is what I'm talking about.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You're telling me that Ging has conducted, you know, worldwide *Mouse Trap* for his son, but he won't fill out a form or he doesn't have someone else who can fill out the form for him?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** But one of them is his interest.

**Austin:** Right. Yes. Yes. It's a special interest.

**Sylvia:** That is actually also very Gon, right?

**Keith:** Yes.

**Austin:** Yeah, it is.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Yep.

**Keith:** I just wanted to note that Kite says there are fewer than 10 Triple-Star Hunters in the world, so there is— we now have, like, a number to back up how impressive people say that Ging is.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** We got power levels.

**Austin:** Oh, wow.

**Keith:** Yeah, we have power levels.

**Sylvia:** Like, if you think about it, it is just kind of a power level, right?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. The thing here that I think is interesting too, to go back to Gon and Kite and Killua talking about Ging setting things up. A thing I was thinking about a lot during Greed Island also was the sort of, you know, to make a Michael Lutz maneuver here, [Sylvia chuckles] the sort of authorial, like, the kind of meta position here, which is: if all of *Hunter × Hunter* is Ging setting up and pushing things into motion and doing *Mouse Trap*, then Ging is— or if it's ambiguous what is and isn't, [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] there's something fun being said about authorship there.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** That Ging— yeah, Ging, you know, Gon is Ging's kid, and yeah, he set up

some games for him to play through, but he doesn't necessarily know how it's going to come out. Yes, he wants to push Gon into training into becoming a certain type of person.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** How much of that is hands-on? How much of that is hands-off?

**Keith:** Yeah, and I—

**Austin:** Was Killua part of his plan? And there's, like, a really fun commentary on authorship there that I think is fascinating, you know?

**Keith:** We do see, like, the two sides of this from Ging. Like, every time it comes up, Ging will say, like, "Be careful. He's my son. Like, he'll fucking get you." [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** Right. He's the protagonist.

**Sylvia:** My kid's gonna beat you up. [Dre laughs]

**Austin:** Understand: he is the special boy in this anime.

**Keith:** He's my son.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Keith:** But then the flipside is, like, he tells Razor, "Yeah, kill my son. You can kill him. It's fine." I think that he understands that—

**Austin:** That's not true. That's not true. What he says is, "Don't hold back."

**Keith:** Don't underestimate— don't hold back, right.

**Austin:** And Razor says, "So I can kill him?"

**Keith:** And then he says, "Don't underestimate him."

**Austin:** And then he says to Razor, "Don't underestimate him."



**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Parentheses: "He's the protagonist of this anime. He'll beat your ass."

**Keith:** But it never feels like Ging thinks that Gon can't die.

**Austin:** Sure. I don't know. It kind of does.

**Keith:** But they don't spend a lot of time on it.

**Austin:** Yeah. The other corollary to this, by the way, while I was watching Greed Island, the thing I kept thinking about was Bisky and Hisoka [**Keith:** Uh huh.] as very harsh critique of the viewer.

**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** Oh, you're so invested in these kids. You can't wait to see them get their shit kicked in. You can't wait to see them grow and get stronger. And like, yeah, some of you want that in different ways than other versions of you.

**Keith:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** Damn. I get—

**Austin:** Both of you are kind of fucking gross, you know?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** There's, like, a real...you know, obviously, Bisky, I think, comes out on the right side of that, compared to Hisoka.

**Keith:** Sure, yeah.

**Austin:** But there's, like, I hadn't thought of it before, but there's a lot of attention spent on the attention that they are spending looking at those two boys of objects of not just, like, gross desire but fundamental entertainment, you know?

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's interesting. Things to consider going forward, continually.

**Keith:** The last thing how that happens in this episode is the announcer coming in and the Chimera Ant Queen coming back in. The announcer says, "Kite, student of Ging. His meeting with Gon and Killua indicated a new adventure was beginning. Meanwhile, on the southern shores of the Balsa Islands of the European continent, a prologue to unparalleled fear was quietly unfolding." And then we get the Chimera Ant Queen talking!

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** She says, "I have a duty to fulfill. I have to give birth to the King."

**Sylvia:** We get— our good friend the narrator is going to be talking to us a lot this season.

**Jack:** I love the narrator.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I feel like this is the narrator is the secret protagonist of... [laughs]

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** Of *Hunter × Hunter*. It's not actually Killua Zoldyck.

**Sylvia:** Of Chimera Ant.

**Jack:** Yeah, I love the Ant Queen speaking, because while I have no idea where we're going, and I think this is actually worth saying [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] as we move into Chimera Ant, you know. At the end of the Hunter Exam, we had "we have to get stronger." Well, so, first we have to go and get Killua, so we know where we're going there.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Then we have to get stronger to beat Hisoka, then we have to go to Yorknew City to meet the Phantom Troupe. Well, that's not why we're going, but you know. Then we have to go into Greed Island.

**Austin:** To get Greed Island, right?

**Jack:** To find— then we have to go into Greed Island to find Ging. We have— you know, we teleport to who we think is Ging, and we are in completely uncharted waters.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** Not one shred of “here is what you're doing next.”

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I think that's really important to consider as we go forward, thinking about what Gon is looking for, in terms of guidance and goal.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yep.

**Jack:** Yeah. Well, actually, Kite offers him a little test, like a very classic Ging Freecss test, of saying basically, “I know where your dad is. Do you want me to tell you?” and of course Gon says, “No, I'd rather find out myself,” and, you know, Kite smirks and is like, “He's his father's son.” You know, all of this is just this sort of, like, Ging maneuvering that we're now very used to by this point.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** But I mention this about not really knowing where we're going, because as soon as we have the Chimera Ant Queen in the cave eating the stuff and saying, you know, “I have to be strong to give birth to the King. I'm the Ant Queen.” While I couldn't predict quite how things were going to develop... [Dre laughs]

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** The next couple of episodes slotted into place for me.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Like, this is so firmly within, like, a particular kind of creature feature or in, like, a particular kind of monster movie or, again, like a techno thriller mold, that having this, like, imperious raspy queen, you know, saying, “I have to be strong to birth the King.” [Austin chuckles] I felt like we were moving into a genre space that I was fairly familiar with. Togashi’s style, I think that that is broadly still true, but he is definitely making some interesting swerves, as we can begin to talk about.

**Keith:** Yeah.

## **Episode 77 [1:13:30]**

**Jack:** Togashi is allergic to creating any kind of character that he doesn't immediately show us just simply hanging out. [Keith and Dre laugh]

**Keith:** Yes. We have, like...we have these—

**Jack:** The speed at which the Chimera—

**Keith:** Yeah, we—

**Jack:** The Chimera Ants start just hanging out and chilling so quickly.

**Austin:** Yeah. Reading books.

**Dre:** Reading books.

**Keith:** We go from anthill to mutant queen to dorm room in, like, 30 minutes. [Austin chuckles]

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** He’s done this before.

**Austin:** That's just how people be. That's kind of the thesis, you know? [Keith laughs]

**Sylvia:** It's impressive.

**Jack:** Everyone is kind of this. But it is so— it will never stop being charming to me [Austin: Mm-hmm.] the way that Togashi is— you know, I jokingly say “unable to,” but probably uninterested in putting the scariest motherfuckers you have ever met on the screen and then immediately having them be like, “Hey, you got a headache today?” and they're like, “Yeah, I got a headache all right. You want to play cards?”

**Sylvia:** “I wish the Queen could just talk like a normal person.” [Austin laughs]

**Austin:** Speaking of the scariest motherfuckers you ever met, it's time to meet Kite's crew.

**Keith:** Oh my god, they're great.

**Jack:** Oh my god! Kite's crew are...Kite's crew are all protagonists from different mid-2000s indie games. [Dre, Austin, and Sylvia laugh]

**Keith:** I do want to shout out the new outro song real quick.

**Austin:** Oh, yes. Please do.

**Keith:** Oh, does someone know the name of this one?

**Sylvia:** No, I thought you had it.

**Keith:** It's called...oh, right. We actually got an instrumental version of it in the last episode that we recorded.

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Keith:** It's “Nagareboshi Kirari” is what it's called, and it's— I love it. I think it's great. I think that the actual, like, [clip of “Nagareboshi Kirari” begins] outro is really fun, like the visuals of it.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** The “la la la”s.

**Austin:** La la la la...

**Keith:** And I think it’s really—

**Jack:** [indistinct]

**Keith:** Sorry, go ahead?

**Sylvia:** Oh, go ahead.

**Jack:** Oh, it’s just really funny to me that, like, in the Heavens Arena Arc, the closing sequence into Yorknew City was like, [music ends] “We’re going to debut all of the Phantom Troupe members in the closing sequence. We’re going to show you the Nen wheel.” And here, as we move into Chimera Ant, the outro is this, like, fairly sedate music and then Gon and Killua throwing rocks into a starry reflected lake.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** It’s such a good juxtaposition, honestly.

**Keith:** I don’t know if you noticed. Jack, the rocks turn into shooting stars.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Dre:** Ooh.

**Keith:** They’re not going into the lake. They’re going into the sky.

**Jack:** Ohh.

**Sylvia:** Whoa.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Makes you think.

**Keith:** And the lyrics reflect, I think, the visuals. “In trusting wishes to the sky, unanswered feelings. Alone, looking up at the sky, beyond like this. Believe in yourself, believing that one day our hearts will become one. Sparkle shooting star, I see you in my dreams as a guide towards a different tomorrow. Convey those feelings in a single flash of light. I'll find something to do for you, be it beyond the sky. Let's go on a journey.”

**Jack:** The ants are, at least ostensibly, not aliens. But I will say: we don't know where the Ant Queen has come from. You know, there's some sort of mysterious hints as to her origins. Whether or not they're aliens—probably not [Austin chuckles]—constant shots of the moon, of stars, of, like, we see, like, a blue globe planet in the opening. You know, whether they are doing it to say these guys are aliens, we are being shown images of celestial objects, of celestial bodies, all the time from now on.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Yeah. I think a lot of this is the multiple references to Gon as light, as a sun, [Sylvia: Yeah.] [Austin: Mm.] as a star, as shining, as being bright.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** In positive ways and negative ways. Like, having the same sort of charisma as Ging but also, like...I won't go into it. I won't go into it. It's fine. [Jack laughs]

**Austin:** Okay. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yep. [Keith laughs] Mm-hmm. I know exactly what you mean, and yes.

**Jack:** In comes Kite's team. I mean, briefly, we get to see that Kite is a sort of beast hunter, like a researcher, and he's found some tigers that have learned how to use fire to cook.

**Sylvia:** Camp Tigers!

**Keith:** The Camp Tigers.

**Jack:** Camp Tigers!

**Sylvia:** They have horns. They're the first mammal that prefers cooked meat, other than some...I believe he said magical beasts?

**Keith:** Some magical beasts. Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah, we get to see a little shot of them doing it.

**Austin:** Now, why don't these count as magical beasts? [Jack chuckles]

**Sylvia:** That's my question too, Austin.

**Austin:** They got unicorn horns.

**Keith:** But they're mundane.

**Sylvia:** They're literally unicorns.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** Mm. They're Mundane.

**Keith:** They're mundane.

**Jack:** They're weak to, uh...what is Mundane weak to? [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** Oh, right. Sure, right, yeah.

**Keith:** Profane?

**Austin:** They're weak to Elemental, I think?

**Keith:** Oh, Elemental?

**Austin:** Or maybe it's Profane. Maybe it's... [Sylvia sighs]



**Jack:** These lions— “lions.” God.

**Austin:** Wow.

**Jack:** I would never besmirch a tiger by calling them a lion.

**Sylvia:** We gotta go back to playing the animal game before recording. [Keith laughs]

**Jack:** Yes.

**Keith:** Jack is forgetting.

**Sylvia:** We gotta bone up on our animals.

**Jack:** These tigers are basically a sight gag but I do think are pretty overt foreshadowing for “wouldn't it be weird if animals could start learning how to do things?”

**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah.

**Keith:** Oh, yeah.

**Sylvia:** You're right.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** Well, they were—

**Sylvia:** I just thought of it— oh, go ahead?

**Austin:** No, you go ahead.

**Sylvia:** I just thought, like, this is just a thing I love about Kite, is just seeing, like...it's another example of, like, remember when we got, like, early on, talking about, uh, mustache man from the exam who talked about finding...

**Dre:** Satotz?

**Jack:** Satotz.

**Keith:** Satotz, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Satotz.

**Austin:** Right.

**Sylvia:** Talking about finding ruins and stuff. And like, this is kind of similar, but it's like, [Keith: Mm-hmm.] oh, this is the type of work Hunters do, but also you get to see one being really passionate about it.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** The most Kite talks is when Kite is talking about animals.

**Keith:** It's also a reflection of, like, Kurapika's idea of what a Hunter should be.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** In all his arguments that he has with Leorio about, like, "Hunters become Hunters to become rich and powerful," and Kurapika would be like, "No, they do it to become conservationists!" [Austin, Keith, and Jack laugh]

**Austin:** Well, here's the conservation.

**Keith:** Here's the conservation.

**Austin:** It, of course, reminded me of the bit at the beginning of *Dragon Ball* superhero, the most recent *Dragon Ball* movie.

**Keith:** Oh, I still need to see that.

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** Where Gohan is revealed to be an entomologist.

**Keith:** Entomologist! Oh, I heard about that.

**Austin:** Do you remember what he's researching?

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Austin:** Did anybody see this?

**Keith:** No, no, I don't.

**Sylvia:** Is he researching Chimera Ants?

**Austin:** He's researching a new type of ant.

**Sylvia:** That's really funny.

**Dre:** Oh god.

**Austin:** That's called a Saiy-ant that can go Super Saiyan.

**Keith:** A Saiy— no.

**Sylvia:** That's not...

**Austin:** 100%.

**Dre:** [laughs] I forgot all about that!

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

**Sylvia:** Saiy-ants?

**Austin:** I think it's—

**Sylvia:** Saiy-ant it so, man. [Jack chuckles]

**Austin:** Yeah, I'll show you the image. I'll post the image, 'cause it's—

**Keith:** Who are you, steak dinner? [Austin laughs]

**Sylvia:** Oh. How dare you.

**Jack:** “We’ve found a new ant that can go Super Saiyan” is like us two thirds of the way through a Bluff City game.

**Austin:** 100%. [Keith laughs]

**Jack:** We’re tired.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** We’ve turned over a card that we’re excited about. Wow, that ant is going Super Saiyan. Look at that.

**Austin:** It’s so funny.

**Keith:** Is the ant going Super Saiyan why orange Piccolo exists?

**Austin:** No.

**Keith:** Do they use Super Saiyan Ant technology to transform Piccolo?

**Austin:** No. No, they’re— no, no, no.

**Dre:** No, it’s just a thing.

**Keith:** Okay. Okay.

**Sylvia:** What? Hold on. Hold on a minute.

**Austin:** It’s completely separated.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** Orange Piccolo?

**Austin:** Oh my god.

**Dre:** Oh, you don’t know about orange Piccolo?

**Keith:** Missed opportunity.

**Sylvia:** I don't know about orange Piccolo.

**Austin:** That's the new Piccolo form from *Dragon Ball Super*.

**Dre:** Yeah. Do you know about Gohan's new form?

**Sylvia:** This is why I don't watch this fucking show.

**Austin:** Sorry, do you know about which new form? What?

**Dre:** About Gohan's new form, Sylvi.

**Sylvia:** Is it orange Gohan?

**Dre:** No.

**Sylvia:** Is it Super Saiyan Four?

**Dre:** Uh, close, but no.

**Sylvia:** Gohan's beast form?

**Dre:** Yes. It's basically Gohan Blanco, TBH.

**Sylvia:** It is!

**Austin:** Uh huh. Yeah. Anyway.

**Sylvia:** This is stupid.

**Austin:** I think I've always thought that the Saiy-ant thing was a little Chimera Ant. Gotta be.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah, it's gotta be.

**Keith:** Oh my god.

**Jack:** In comes Kite's research team. Now, let's not beat around the bush. One of these people is a teddy bear man.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** Yep.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Very exciting. We can talk more about him as we go.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** But the crew is very excited to learn, first, that this is Ging Freecs's son. There's another sort of, like, fun sort of daisy chain thing happening here, where it's like, Kite affords Gon a certain type of respect because he's his master's son, and the research team affords Gon a certain type of respect because of this relationship with Kite and Ging. I think that that's really neat. Then they point at Killua and say, "Are you Ging's son too?" [Sylvia chuckles] And he says, "No. My name's Killua Zoldyck," and then everyone reacts like you would think, [Austin chuckles] and he says, "I have left the business."

**Sylvia:** It's great.

**Austin:** "I've left the business" is so funny. [Austin and Keith laugh]

**Keith:** These are the most—

**Jack:** Because he hasn't.

**Keith:** This crew, they have the most Live at the Table-ass names. [Austin laughs]

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Keith:** Not going to be in full season, not going on the main feed names.

**Jack:** Oh, the names are amazing.

**Austin:** Yep.

**Jack:** Keith, you had a—

**Austin:** It's out. That episode's out.

**Jack:** You have been on a run of names recently.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And that's not even the one I was going to say.

**Austin:** Oh.

**Jack:** The punchline of you, at the end of PALISADE, a show about us, you know, coming up with a lot of different names, [**Keith:** Uh huh.] revealing 14 names of your crew is so funny

**Austin:** That is the one I was going to say, Jack.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** But no, the one I was actually going to mention [**Austin:** Oh.] is that in the, uh...oh, what was that game called?

**Keith:** *Orbital*?

**Jack:** The *Slow Knife* game. "Eyes of a Killer".

**Keith:** Oh, okay.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Jack:** I want to shout out—

**Keith:** Oh! Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Jack:** I think Sanidine Vug? [Austin and Jack chuckle]

**Sylvia:** Yeah. That is Keith's character in that.

**Jack:** Which is just a pristine Keith name.

**Sylvia:** Keith does some good name work.

**Austin:** It's true.

**Jack:** Okay. Let's just go one at a—

**Keith:** I thought you were going to say the anagram that we found. That's what I thought.

**Sylvia:** That's what I also thought.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Oh, I don't think...I don't know about the anagram.

**Sylvia:** Listen to find out. \$5. Patreon.

**Keith:** \$5. It's the best anagram of all time.

**Sylvia:** [Friendsatthetable.cash](https://www.patreon.com/Friendsatthetable). Yep. [Jack chuckles]

**Jack:** Okay. Let's just go one at a time. I'll start. I would like to introduce Spinner Clow, who is a pink-haired woman, long pink hair. She is constantly blowing white bubble gum. She seems—

**Sylvia:** She's a *Nana* character.

**Jack:** I don't know what that is. [Austin chuckles]

**Sylvia:** Which is a very seminal shojo series.

**Jack:** Oh. She is—I sort of get the impression—the second in command.



**Austin:** Yeah, I had that vibe.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, I also thought that, yeah.

**Austin:** Or she does computers. Do you know what I mean?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Or she does computers, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah, she's the oracle of Kite's team.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Who's up next?

**Austin:** I got the next one here. Stick Dinner, who is Patrick Klepeck, my good friend.

**Sylvia:** I was going to say this too, but you know him, so it's probably better.

**Austin:** I'm allowed.

**Keith:** Stick Dinner has two things. What are Stick Dinner's two things?

**Austin:** Uh, I can say one of it is his afro, [**Keith:** Oh.] and the other one is his bad sense of humor.

**Keith:** He has a third thing, which is that he handles all the cooking, 'cause his name is Dinner.

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

**Austin:** Right, well, 'cause his last name is Dinner. Of course.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** He is— this is a show that is regularly very funny and knows that it is being very funny, and so it is therefore clearly deliberate that Stick Dinner's jokes are barely funny and barely jokes.

**Keith:** Yes.

**Jack:** He's often—

**Keith:** Although Gon laughs at all of them.

**Austin:** Gon eats it up!

**Jack:** Yeah, it's so... [laughs]

**Keith:** It is slightly— it's hard for me to believe that it's not at least a little out of politeness.

**Austin:** No, I think Gon is all in.

**Dre:** Gon loves this shit.

**Jack:** No, I think Gon thinks this is really, really funny.

**Austin:** Gon's like, "Why don't more people tell jokes like this guy?" [Keith laughs]

**Sylvia:** It's so...

**Keith:** Finally I can get these jokes.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** And Stick's just like, "Oh, finally I've met someone with enough brain injuries to enjoy my humor."

**Jack:** [chuckles] And it's really sweet writing from whoever has been adapting the manga into the screenplay here, where like, because the cast of the research team is

kind of large, and they're just bouncing around in conversation, [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] it's not like we're being inundated by bad half-puns from Stick, so much as whenever he speaks, which isn't very often, we just get a new one.

**Sylvia:** It's all he does.

**Keith:** Yeah, in two episodes, he does, like, three or four.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's wild.

**Jack:** All right, who's up next?

**Keith:** It's so funny. They're so bad.

**Sylvia:** All right. We have them on the sheet here.

**Austin:** We do.

**Sylvia:** I mean, I'd love to introduce Monta Yuras, who is the big bear man.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Right. He's a Chimera Ant?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I mean...

**Dre:** Wow. Wow. [Keith laughs]

**Jack:** He might be. We'll talk—

**Sylvia:** I'm just saying.

**Jack:** Listener, you might be thinking, "Aren't the ants bugs?" Well... [Keith laughs]

**Austin:** Hang tight.

**Keith:** Well.

**Jack:** We'll talk about that. But yes, he does look a bit like he could be a Chimera Ant. He looks...I described him as a teddy bear earlier instead of, like, a bear.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Because he sort of has, like, very fluffy sideburns, fluffy hair.

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** Like, a bear's snout.

**Austin:** His hair is—

**Keith:** He's the size of a bear, but he looks like he's made out of teddy bear.

**Sylvia:** He feels like— yeah, he feels like he should be a plush toy. Like, he is...

**Austin:** Yeah. He has two big buns on his head that would be where bear ears are, [Sylvia: Yeah.] but he also has human ears.

**Sylvia:** It's very cute. It's a really good design.

**Austin:** He's a cute guy.

**Jack:** He sort of looks a bit like he's wearing a ushanka hat.

**Austin:** It does kind of look like that.

**Sylvia:** Oh, a little.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** What if he took that off?

**Sylvia:** I would be upset.

**Dre:** Aaah.

**Austin:** I'd be upset.

**Sylvia:** I would not enjoy that.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** He is such a good reminder of this kind of, like...I talked about really loving this in original *Dragon Ball* too, the way Toriyama and Togashi also will just draw background characters purely for the fun— you know, not everybody here is a human. A weird demon will show up, you know, at some point.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Or like, this person is some sort of troll. This person's a lizard man.

**Keith:** Sometimes you get a martial artist who's an action movie hero, and sometimes you have a martial artist who is a dinosaur.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

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

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** So, it was really nice to see Monta Yuras, who is called Mon, showing up.

**Keith:** You have a short pink-haired girl. Her name is Banana Kavaro.

**Sylvia:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Dre:** I love her.

**Keith:** Strongly suggested to be Spinner Clow's girlfriend.

**Sylvia:** Yes, absolutely. Thank you so much.

**Austin:** Oh, yeah. They're dating for sure.

**Dre:** My description for Banana Kavaro is that she is the best friend tomboy character in, like, the '90s Disney Channel original movie.

**Sylvia:** Oh, okay.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Dre:** That then also became a sexual and/or gender identity awakening for a lot of people.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, again, Nana character for me, but I'm the shojo head here.

**Dre:** Mm, mm.

**Austin:** I think I saw her at Whole Foods recently, I'm pretty sure.

**Dre:** Oh.

**Sylvia:** Also kind of looks like the main guy from *Jujutsu Kaisen*.

**Austin:** Oh, does kind of look like the main guy from *Jujutsu Kaisen*!

**Jack:** The one that blew my mind is she actually looks a lot like the protagonist of the recent indie game *Dungeons of Hinterland*.

**Dre:** Oh.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

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

**Dre:** Austin, I would challenge your assertion. I think she is more likely to be an

employee at Trader Joe's.

**Austin:** I see. You know what? You're right.

**Jack:** Mm.

**Austin:** Well, that's the thing. Works at Trader Joe's; shops at Whole Foods. [Keith laughs]

**Dre:** Oh.

**Austin:** I was saying as a consumer, not as a worker.

**Sylvia:** Ohh.

**Dre:** I don't think so.

**Jack:** And that, Austin, of course accurately speaks to the fact that she has inherited wealth.

**Austin:** Right.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Because a Trader Joe's salary would not enable you to...

**Austin:** Oh, not...yeah, no.

**Jack:** And she has a dog.

**Dre:** I really thought for some reason, Jack, you were going to say, "And that implies that she has overalls," because she does, but I don't know why you would say that.

**Austin:** She does have overalls.

**Sylvia:** She does.

**Jack:** She does have overalls. I really like her character design. All these character

designs are great.

**Dre:** They're great. Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Togashi's such a sharp...you know, we see this all the time where he will introduce freaks and then get rid of them immediately, and we're about to see hundreds more.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** He can draw a figure so quickly defined.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** He has a gift for character design. Like, he really and truly does, and I think this arc in particular really showcases that, because—

**Jack:** Except...

**Austin:** Now, I will say...yeah.

**Sylvia:** Well, yeah.

**Jack:** The next two members are [Sylvia: Okay.] Podungo and Lin, who are—

**Sylvia:** The two racial caricatures?

**Keith:** Two racial caricatures.

**Austin:** Yeah, two racial caricatures.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, that is...I was talking, and then I was like, "Oh no, wait. There's a truck coming right at me."

**Austin:** Uh huh. [Keith laughs]



**Jack:** My first note here says, “Podungo and Lin are also on the team but not here right now.”

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Would that it could always have been so.

**Austin:** Yeah. [Dre chuckles]

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You know what’s wild to me is, you know, if it was just Podungo, I would have been— I’d have been like, “Damn, I can’t believe he did Black people so dirty with Podungo,” but because Lin is here, I have to be like, “Yo, let’s start on this awful Chinese caricature.”

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** We can take the Podungo stuff. We’re used to that. Have you seen *Dragon Ball*, you know?

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Mr. Popo is still a threat, still a problem.

**Jack:** They really are like a grim pair.

**Austin:** But Lin Koshi is...it’s bad!

**Keith:** It’s rough. It’s so bad.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** It’s really...

**Keith:** It’s really bad.

**Jack:** All the ugliest visual stereotypes of, you know, racial stereotypes throughout

movies and illustration and history. It's the worst.

**Keith:** Yes.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I don't want to get too into it now, because we will have more opportunities, but Togashi does show his ass on a few things during this arc.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** Interesting. Yeah, I haven't—

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah. I am...we can talk about it more when the ants really start kicking in, in the next couple of episodes.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** But I am beginning to get some suspicions about what this arc is about, and I am so curious to see if, A, that's true, and B, how they go about it.

**Sylvia:** Oh. I need to know what you think this arc is about, Jack.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** But when it comes— if you want to wait until we're further into these episodes, I understand.

**Jack:** Let's wait until we start talking about countries and...

**Sylvia:** Yes. Okay, cool.

**Austin:** Hey, I just looked up with Podungo looks like in the manga. [chuckles]

**Sylvia:** Oh no.

**Austin:** It's worse.

**Dre:** Oh no.

**Austin:** It's worse.

**Sylvia:** It's worse?

**Jack:** Oh, wow!

**Austin:** 'Cause it really highlights...

**Sylvia:** It's worse?! Oh, it's worse.

**Austin:** [laughs] It really...

**Sylvia:** Wow!

**Austin:** She has the thing that anime does sometimes.

**Dre:** Oh my god!

**[1:30:00]**

**Austin:** She already has the thing— in the anime, she has the thing where the lips are just, like, big and a different color [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] in a way that, like, calls to mind, [**Keith:** Right.] like, minstrel show blackface makeup, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Or like, you know, similar racial caricatures. But in the manga, instead of just drawing her face, he's done like a crosshatching of her skin to suggest that it's black.

**Keith:** Crosshatch, yeah.

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

**Austin:** And that makes it read as blackface more.

**Keith:** Yes.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And she has two little blush points on, which just make it look like blackface.

**Sylvia:** It really looks like Mr. Popo.

**Jack:** Wide, round eyes straight out of minstrelry as well.

**Austin:** It looks like Mr. Popo.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** It really does look like Mr. Popo.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Keith:** Yeah. It's bad.

**Austin:** Jack, have you met Mr. Popo yet?

**Jack:** I have not yet met Mr. Popo yet.

**Dre:** No.

**Keith:** Oh my god, no.

**Dre:** I don't know if Jack will meet Mr. Popo.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, there's a chance that might not happen.

**Keith:** If we do Cell, which we absolutely should...

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

**Austin:** Okay, sure.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Well, I'm going to prepare Jack.

**Jack:** Oh, jesus christ! [Dre laughs]

**Sylvia:** Yeah, it's bad. It's really bad.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Dre:** It's awful.

**Keith:** I've talked about this on Run Button before, but like, not— being, like, in the early 2000s and late '90s, being a white kid from a white town, not knowing the history of blackface or minstrel shows or anything, and Mr. Popo looking like that, I didn't learn what this was about until I was, like, 15.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** It's so— that's how bad it is.

**Austin:** Aaah.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** It's brutal.

**Keith:** 15 is old. I think maybe [**Austin:** Yeah.] I should have picked up on it. But like, when someone told me for the first time, like, what the fuck is going on with Mr. Popo, I was like, "What the fuck? Mr. Popo? Him?"

**Austin:** Not Mr. Popo! [Keith laughs] My friend?

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

**Dre:** He's just hanging out at the Lookout.

**Keith:** He's so nice! [Austin sighs]

**Jack:** The Chimera Ant train now starts to pick up speed a little bit.

**Sylvia:** Oh, it's going chugga chugga.

**Jack:** It will move faster, and I'm sure it will move even faster than I have seen it. But it turns out that sort of, like, a series of events have taken place that have caused Kite's team to get involved here. Southernbees— remember them? The auction house?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Have found an arm, a huge arm of a strange unidentified creature, and knowing that they can't sell it, because it would get— or rather, knowing that they can't put it on open auction, because that's not allowed, and it would get confiscated by the government otherwise, they are looking to sell it to a Hunter. This is right in the mold of the way these kinds of, like, techno thrillers tend to go, right?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Which is like, a government entity tries to— a government entity or a private entity tries to cut a corner somewhere [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] or tries to slip something under the table, and that lets you into this conspiracy or exacerbates the conspiracy. Kite and his team immediately recognize this as the huge claw of a Chimera Ant, and they are very worried about this, for a reason that is not exactly made clear yet, but given that— we learn later what a Chimera Ant is, and presumably Kite and his team know this, and so when they see a Chimera Ant arm this big, they are like, “All right, we have to find this ant. We gotta figure this out.”

**Keith:** We've got a new track for this. When Mon produces the Chimera Ant claw, we get a track called “Scariness”.

[clip of “Scariness” begins]

**Sylvia:** Oh. [Dre laughs]

**Keith:** This will play a lot. We will hear a lot of “Scariness”.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Properly named.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

[music ends]

**Keith:** And I also like the little sort of implication that one of the uses of a Hunter in this world, because...is it Won that explains, like, “Hey, we’d rather sell it to a Hunter than list it on the open auction, because—” Oh, yeah. Southernpiece— or Southernbees recently acquired a sample— okay, here it is, yeah. So, they’d rather sell it to a licensed Hunter at a nice price than have it confiscated by some government agency.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Keith:** And just this idea of, like, one of the good things about Hunters, one of the useful things, is that you can sort of launder gray market items through them.

**Dre:** Sure, yeah.

**Jack:** Yes.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Libertarians love them. [Keith laughs]

**Sylvia:** Also, not a government entity, as we learn now.

**Jack:** No. I was going to say, Sylvi.

**Keith:** Right. Famous NGO, Hunter Association.

**Austin:** Right. Sure.

**Jack:** This made me say, “Oh, shit. Togashi has remembered that governments exist,”

and a finger on the monkey's paw curled.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Speaking of *Metal Gear*, by the way.

[clip of "In front of the Old Mansion" begins]

**Sylvia:** Oh my god. Yeah, no, there's— mm-hmm. [music ends] Listen, we saw him playing video games.

**Austin:** That's true.

**Dre:** That's true. Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** In that one picture from last week.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Or last episode.

**Keith:** He's trying to make Outer Heaven.

**Austin:** Outer Heaven, yeah, uh huh. [Keith laughs]

**Sylvia:** He's playing MGS3.

**Jack:** The research team heads down towards near the vicinity of Yorknew City, where the claw washed up on the shore. They are trying to find the ant, presumably so they can sort of nip this in the bud. And they get there by driving in a big truck across the desert. This was notable to me, because we have mostly seen airship travel. We've seen, uh...what was I going to say? We've seen, like, a traffic jam in the past, as Gon and Killua were, like, running alongside a traffic jam at the end of the Hunter Exam. But something about, you know, we now have travel montages. People in big trucks rumbling through the desert.



**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** This way of, like—

**Austin:** I think the last time we saw a car driving in the desert was...

**Jack:** Was in the mafia showdown.

**Dre:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** In the mafia showdown or even— yeah, was Killua having captured—

**Jack:** Kurapika having captured.

**Austin:** Sorry, I said Killua. Yeah, Kurapika having captured Uvugin in the backseat of the car.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** By the way, remember that show?

**Jack:** I know.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Yeah. Remember Kurapika? [Jack laughs]

**Sylvia:** Who?

**Jack:** Remember Leorio?

**Sylvia:** Who?

**Jack:** Sorry, Reolio? [Keith laughs]

**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah. Oh, how could I forget Reolio?

**Austin:** Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. That old man? [Jack chuckles]

**Jack:** As we're traveling, we learn—

**Austin:** Oh, speaking of Kurapika, it's powerpoint time, baby!

**Sylvia:** Oh yeah. [Dre laughs]

**Jack:** It's powerpoint time. Have you—

**Keith:** Episode 76 was like one long conversation. 67: powerpoint city.

**Jack:** Have you ever had a powerpoint that, shown to you, makes you immediately go, "Oh no," and also, "This is about to be the whole thing." This is an illustrative powerpoint, as we learn what a Chimera Ant is. As I said at the beginning of this episode, it's exactly what it sounds like. Chimera Ants reproduce via something called Phagogenesis[pronounced: fay-go-genesis]. When the ant—

**Sylvia:** That's not how it's pronounced in the dub.

**Austin:** That's not how it's pronounced in the dub! [Jack laughs]

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I'm going to say how it's pronounced in the dub, 'cause I'm allowed.

**Jack:** Hit it!

**Sylvia:** It's Phagogenesis[pronounced: fag-o-genesis]. [Austin laughs]

**Keith:** When I was a kid, that was Adam. [Sylvia and Jack laugh]

**Dre:** Jesus.

**Sylvia:** YEAH! [Austin chuckles] And his friend Steve.

**Austin:** Mm... [Keith laughs]

**Jack:** It's a sort of Kirby-based system. [Sylvia and Keith laugh] The Ant Queen eats—

**Sylvia:** You're not wrong!

**Austin:** It's similar.

**Sylvia:** They're playing *Kirby Super Star*, and all the ants are the Queen's helper.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Jack:** The Ant Queen eats prey, and she passes down traits from that prey literally to the next generation. The next generation keeps reproducing, keeps gaining new traits, eventually birthing a new King— sorry, a new Queen, who births a new King, and, you know, that's how each brood is sort of ruled.

**Austin:** Well, I guess here's— I have a question about how it works.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Which I think I know how it works, but I'm going to ask it. So, the Queen eats—the image that they show us.

**Keith:** Right.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** They show us an ant. They show us—

**Jack:** And they show us it in a really nice little scale too.

**Austin:** It is.

**Jack:** They're eating, like, a grasshopper. They're eating, like, a ladybug. You know.

**Austin:** Yes. Eats, like...

**Jack:** These ants are probably about the size of maybe a joint of your finger.

**Austin:** Right. And so the examples that they show us, it's an ant that just looks like an ant, like a regular-ass ant, and then it eats—the first thing that we see is it eats a

praying mantis, right?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And then, suddenly, it has an egg, and then the egg pops out, and it's an ant that has praying mantis limbs in the front, the kind of, like, scythe-style, the Scyther-style front limbs.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Then—

**Keith:** I wonder if we'll see that literally today.

**Austin:** Maybe. Then, the regular ant, again, eats the praying mantis, a beetle, and a dragonfly.

**Sylvia:** Completely normal.

**Austin:** Has an egg, and those three things blend into another insect-looking, you know, thing that has the beetle, like, nose thing.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** The beetle extended thing, the dragonfly wings, and the praying mantis arms. Is it your impression that the stuff that was most recently eaten by the Queen goes into the next brood, or does she kind of, like, keep a lingering [**Sylvia:** Oh.] amount in there from— so, like, we see her eat a crab, for instance, right?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** If she— let's say she has the crab baby, right? And then she wants to have a crab and praying mantis baby. Does she just have to eat a praying mantis, or does she also now have to eat another crab, 'cause she already used the crab energies?

**Sylvia:** Well...

**Jack:** This reminds me of Chrollo.

**Austin:** It does. [Sylvia and Keith laugh]

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Sylvia:** Oh my god.

**Austin:** You're right.

**Sylvia:** I think I've read some fanfiction where he does this type of thing.

**Austin:** But I'm just curious, 'cause like, I left these episodes, and I know where we're going, but I left these episodes being unclear as to, you know, if she wants to put crab energy into something, does she have to keep eating crabs?

**Sylvia:** Yeah...

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** Or does it just kind of stay in her?

**Sylvia:** They don't get—

**Keith:** I believe that it is an in-then-out system of genes.

**Austin:** Interesting. Okay.

**Sylvia:** I think for— see, the thing that makes me think— here's how I've always pictured it, is that—

**Austin:** 'Cause I didn't see her eat some of the shit we see.

**Dre:** That's true.

**Keith:** Hey, things happen off camera.

**Sylvia:** She's got, like, a soldier ant stomach and a king stomach, you know what I mean?

**Austin:** Ohhhh, that's interesting!

**Sylvia:** 'Cause like, that's why—

**Dre:** Oh, that makes sense.

**Sylvia:** They're constantly talking about how the purpose of going out on these raids is to get her food to make the King, right?

**Austin:** Right.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** And so, like, to me, this is always like playing *XCOM* with the Avatar Project or whatever it's called is going on in the background as the King.

**Austin:** Right, yes, yes, yes.

**Sylvia:** And then she's able to—

**Austin:** Well.

**Sylvia:** Like, the higher quality stuff goes into the king tummy.

**Austin:** Right.

**Sylvia:** And then everything else makes the soldiers.

**Austin:** Well, and she even has regular ants, right?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Like, when we first see her in this episode with the eggs on the ceiling, they're just regular big ants up— they're not regular ants. They're gigantic, but they're just ants.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Up on the ceiling, presumably doing work for her, at this point.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So she's able to keep making those, as far as we can tell, too.

**Jack:** Because immediately, Killua says, you know, "Would suck if they ate a person, wouldn't it?" [Dre laughs]

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Ooh, dear me.

**Sylvia:** [sarcastic] Good thing we don't gotta worry about that.

**Keith:** Killua is voicing all of Kite's concerns, all of Kite's inner monologue.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Yep.

**Keith:** Killua is saying out loud and then making Kite go even more into outer space.  
[Sylvia and Jack laugh]

**Jack:** Yes.

**Sylvia:** Please stop making our guide dissociate. [Austin laughs]

**Jack:** It's great. And they're in this truck, sort of bumping around on their way to Yorknew City.

**Keith:** It's also— it's, of course, after this thing about Phagogenesis. It's mentioned for the fourth time that Chimera Ants are under designated quarantine level one.

**Austin:** Complete extinction, right?

**Keith:** Right. They will eat multiple...I think they said hundreds of times their body weight in a single day?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Many times over, yeah. Something like that.

**Keith:** And they will eat their preferred prey to extinction.

**Jack:** And something— so, this is interesting to me, because— and I don't know what this is about, and, you know, I have to imagine that exploring this might be some of what we're doing here. But it appears to me that this has gone wrong beyond ordinary levels, because obviously it would suck if a Chimera Ant is out there doing the stuff it does. It's sort of like a very dangerous invasive species, but the fact that the Chimera Ant Queen is already two meters long. Later the narrator— no, someone says that if a Chimera Ant gets—

**Dre:** It's Killua.

**Jack:** Gets bigger than two meters, humanity is threatened.

**Keith:** Oh, yeah. It was a combination of Killua saying, "That arm suggests that this thing is over two meters long."

**Dre:** Oh, right, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, mm-hmm.

**Keith:** And then Kite thinking about, uh...

**Jack:** You know, if one was that big, we'd be fucked.

**Keith:** Yeah.



**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** A human wouldn't stand a chance.

**Austin:** There's a great moment of Kite looking over as Killua says that, and it's just, the look he's giving him is almost like, "You weren't supposed to say that part out loud."

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Like, I know that, but no one here is, like, up for that.

**Jack:** It's great.

**Austin:** But now I have just say, like, "Yeah, if that happened, it would be really bad," you know? [Dre chuckles]

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** It's stuff like this that I was talking about when I talked about the speed with which Togashi and the adaptation team are able to get us on board with Kite. These little moments of, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] you know, bubbling out the character interactions. But yeah, you know, the dinosaurs in *Jurassic Park* are bad enough. [Austin and Sylvia chuckle] It is very dangerous to get eaten by a Tyrannosaurus Rex.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, but when you get eaten by a T. Rex, it doesn't learn how to talk. [Jack chuckles]

**Dre:** Mm.

**Jack:** What I was going to say was: the thing that does you in, in *Jurassic Park*, right, is that Nedry is fucking around with the electric fences or something. You know, even beyond the dangerous destructive power of the thing itself, something bigger has gone wrong, and I feel like the fact that we have a huge Chimera Ant Queen already suggests

that this is, you know, this is the worst case scenario here.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And Chimera Ants don't generally work like this.

**Keith:** And we do get a lot of sort of, like, forensic investigation on what's happening and where the ants are and how to pin them down, and this is sort of where that gets suggested, that like, maybe the arm spent longer at sea than the ant did, and the ant has already, like, gone and set up shop. Or maybe that's in a little bit, maybe, is when we get that.

**Jack:** We get a little bit of that, but first we have to meet—and, you know, this is just one sentence; I can say this, and then we can move onto the next bit—two doomed children.

**Keith:** Oh, yes.

**Sylvia:** [sarcastic] Oh, what do you mean?

**Keith:** Who wants to talk about Kurt and Reina?

**Sylvia:** They got a long life ahead of them.

**Jack:** Oh, these are children— remember how the scissors pervert had a backstory that was dispensed with as quickly as possible [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] just to get us onto this character? And similarly, Battera's much younger lover; that whole story sort of worked through quickly. Here are two of the most doomed children that have ever been introduced. [Keith chuckles] They say things like, "I'll keep you safe. That's what big brothers are for."

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** They go home to a house where the little kid has a cough, and her brother Kurt is like, "Don't worry, I'll look after you." It's just the mom.

**Sylvia:** It's great how many death flags there are, but not for, like, ants. [chuckles]

**Keith:** It's so many death flags.

**Jack:** It's just all of them. "Let's wake up early tomorrow morning and go fishing. We'll surprise mom."

**Dre:** "Let's get married when we grow up"? [Keith laughs]

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** You know.

**Keith:** She's, like, four, and Kurt's nine.

**Jack:** She's four.

**Keith:** And Kurt's like, "Yeah, yeah, it's fine. We'll go fishing."

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

**Jack:** Anybody who has ever seen a story is like, "These fuckers are dead." [Dre laughs]

**Keith:** You can watch— actually, if you turn the contrast up on your monitor, you can see their souls leaving their bodies during these scenes. [laughter]

**[1:45:00]**

**Jack:** Things have escalated now, so quickly. We are, you know, in our second episode of the Chimera Ant Arc, and we have already begun to go down the first drop of the roller coaster.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** As the Ant Queen is now walking upright and is humanoid and has birthed, you

know, a brood of extremely fucked up looking Chimera Ants.

**Keith:** [laughs] These guys are fucking sick.

**Jack:** I wrote down here, “They are a motley crew.” [Sylvia laughs] They— I understand now what people mean when they say, “Are Chimera Ants even ants?” and I will grow to understand that more over these episodes.

**Keith:** Oh, was that one of the first, like—

**Jack:** But this bunch—

**Keith:** You said that, and it just reminded me of you saying it before. Where did that come from? Where did you see that?

**Jack:** I heard you and Austin talking once. [Keith laughs]

**Austin:** Oh, that’s so funny.

**Jack:** You managed not to spoil anything, and it’s great that I only— but, you know, it was as one of you was watching the arc for the first time. It’s probably Austin. And the two of you were like, “You know, I don’t even know if these things are ants,” and I had no idea what that meant, and now I do.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. [Dre chuckles]

**Keith:** Or do you?

**Jack:** Or do I!

**Dre:** Oh shit.

**Jack:** First we have, like, we have lobster men. We have, uh...god, there’s just, like—

**Keith:** You can see that she has been eating from the river, 'cause they’re fish, lobsters, turtles.

**Austin:** Right. Crabs, turtles.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Crabs.

**Austin:** Yes, yes.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Jack:** And we get lots of—

**Sylvia:** I actually didn't catch that. That's really well done.

**Jack:** And she says, "I have a solemn duty to give birth to the King," and she sends them out to hunt for food, and the Chimera Ants immediately start raiding these sort of local— what I believe to be just sort of, like, rural communities up in the mountains.

**Austin:** I don't think that you need to think that. That's exactly what it is, right?

**Keith:** That's exactly what it is.

**Jack:** Oh, no, yes, but...it is notable that they are rural communities, and we can talk about that when we get to the NGL later.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Sylvia:** I was going to say. This is before we know what the NGL is.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Jack:** Yeah. I had thought of it as just, like, it's Whale Island.

**Austin:** I see. I see.

**Jack:** You know, they're...

**Austin:** Right, right, right.

**Sylvia:** Oh my god! Could you imagine...

**Keith:** Oh my god, wow.

**Sylvia:** If they landed on Whale Island first?

**Jack:** I mean, look. The Chimera Ants are really going for it. It's maybe only a matter of time.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** At this point, I would like to propose a new segment. Now, I didn't talk to you about this segment, so you don't have to come prepared.

**Sylvia:** Oh, I love those.

**Austin:** Uh huh, uh huh.

**Jack:** But it's just something to keep in mind as we move through the Chimera Ant Arc. I would like to discuss our favorite background Chimera Ants from these episodes.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Dre:** Ooh.

**Austin:** Sure. I have a really easy answer, but go ahead.

**Jack:** We'll meet some ants later that talk and stuff. These ants are automatically disqualified.

**Sylvia:** Oh, shit. Then I don't have an answer.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Jack:** I would like to introduce this fellow. We see him in one frame.

**Austin:** Great. Great.

**Jack:** He's...

**Sylvia:** OHO! [Dre laughs]

**Austin:** Looks like a tick with hair.

**Jack:** Yeah, by this point, most of these ants are humanoid.

**Dre:** He's got a reverse widow's peak.

**Jack:** This is not. He's a tick with a reverse widow's peak [laughter] and eight legs of different sizes.

**Sylvia:** A black widow's peak, right? The spider?

**Jack:** Oh, a black widow's beak.

**Austin:** Ohh.

**Dre:** Ohh.

**Sylvia:** Eyy.

**Jack:** And he is just bobbing around uselessly in a wide shot.

**Sylvia:** Just doing my Stick Dinner.

**Austin:** Yep. Here's mine. It's the one— it's a bug body with a cat or bat? [Jack laughs]

**Sylvia:** That's a bat head.

**Austin:** I think it's a bat head.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah, 'cause they show her eating that bat.

**Austin:** She eats that bat.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And it has, like...you have to—

**Sylvia:** It's got booby eyes.

**Austin:** It does.

**Dre:** It does have booby eyes.

**Austin:** You have to understand that these things, especially this first batch, look like...you know how there will be, like, a kids' book where there's, like, a page is cut in three.

**Jack:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Like a flip game.

**Austin:** And you can, like, flip through it to, like, make a face. [Dre laughs] Like, here's the top of the face. Here's the middle of the face. It's that but for animal people. Like, it does not— it is not meant to match, in some cases here. It's great.

**Jack:** It's wonderful.

**Austin:** Fish head on a big skeletal insect body, you know?

**Keith:** In every *Pokémon* game, there is, like, a couple fossil Pokémons that you get revived from fossils.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And in one of the recent *Pokémon* games, I think it was in *Sword and Shield* or maybe the one after. Maybe it was *Scarlet and Violet*. But they introduce this sort of parody of paleontology where you didn't quite know how the fossils fit together, so you would bring fossil pieces to get revived.



**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah.

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** And it would just, like, be a mishmash of three different things in whatever order you happened to bring them in.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** And that's what these Chimera Ants look like. They look like the made-up fossil joke Pokémon.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I love them. And he's drawn, you know, maybe 30 of them, just for this first episode. My suspicion is that what's going to happen is that the soldier Chimera Ants are going to get broadly standardized and we are going to have, like...I mean, towards the end of this, the Queen is talking about, like, elite commanders, and I think that that's where we're going to get the majority of our, like, diverse Chimera Ant design. But these early stages are just joyful, because every wide shot is, like, 25 new weird Chimera Ants. [Dre laughs]

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Then the two doomed kids get killed and eaten by—

**Sylvia:** On screen.

**Keith:** On screen.

**Austin:** On screen.

**Sylvia:** Notably. I feel like that's, like, a really important thing. We talked about, like, a tonal shift in Greed Island, and I feel like it gets cemented in that shot.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Like, you see Kurt get hit by this giant orange Chimera Ant.

**Jack:** And then, later, the Ant Queen is— we don't see her, like, eating them, but we do see their bloodied clothes on the floor.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** She tosses down the bow, and she says— she's basically like, "Oh, this is great." She says, "The best fodder. I must consume more of this species."

**Keith:** Yeah. What was that thing about ants consuming their preferred food to extinction?

**Jack:** Mm.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Jack:** Almost to extinction?

**Austin:** Mm.

**Dre:** It's probably fine.

**Jack:** I keep coming back to this, because it is so delightful. The comfort and readiness with which Togashi and the manga team are moving into, like, a disaster story or, like, a creature feature. You know.

**Keith:** He's so good at accelerating. It was only last episode where you were like, "I don't know how we're getting from here to ants," and the answer is just they go to them. They go to where the ants are.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** It takes one scene.

**Jack:** I mean, part of the reason he's so good at accelerating is that he doesn't give a shit [Keith chuckles] about, like, an on ramp.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Dre:** Mm-mm.

**Jack:** You know, he just turns the car. He strafes the car into the exit lane.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And this is Togashi's Trick. The on ramps for Greed Island and Yorknew City were the whole show before they appeared.

**Jack:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Keith:** So, you never know.

**Jack:** And it produces this really alienating effect, where I'm watching this and I don't know how fast the next move is going to be.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** I'm like, by the— it's no spoilers to say that by the end of the next episode, the ants have built, like, a citadel. Like, this immense citadel.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And I'm like, there's going to be 60 episodes of this.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** He's like a great pitcher who strikes people out just by throwing the right order of, like, fast and slow pitches, and it's just so confusing. Who knows how long anything is going to take, where he's going to go? And then all of a sudden, there's a curveball, and you're like, "What the fuck? What is happening?"

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Well, and it's so aggressive. He is saying, "This is happening on my terms." You know, "You want an on ramp? No. The ants are here now. Deal with it."

**Keith:** Having seen *Yu Yu Hakusho* many times, you can tell that this is, like, a learned behavior. [Sylvia and Dre laugh]

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Like, it's something that *Yu Yu Hakusho* is not good at and that Togashi seems to suffer for. Like, not being able to write at his own pace.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Mm.

**Austin:** It's worth saying that the manga did not take a break here, right? Like, the last episode of Greed Island, "Chance × Encounter", was out on June 9, 2003, and then the next episode or the next chapter was out on June 23, two weeks later. So it's not like there was, like...

**Keith:** Yeah, he didn't take a two year break and then go, like, "What the fuck was I doing?"

**Austin:** Correct. Yes.

**Jack:** That's wild.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** “What was I up to?”

**Austin:** “What was I up to? How do I make this pivot?” No, you just— there's one week off, and then he comes back, and there's a bug queen, and there's all these new weird freaks who work for this guy named Kite.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** It has not been remotely telegraphed. I mean, it has maybe been thematically telegraphed, but I would even argue that, like, whole swathes of this thing's thematic tone have not really.

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

**Jack:** You know, the scale is just ramping up.

**Keith:** It's hard to separate how long you've known about the ants with how no one would have known for even one second about them.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** For even a second. Yeah. Keith, you said something in a recent episode that was about something in Chimera Ant being teased in a previous set of episodes. Do you remember what it was, and is it a thing you can say yet?

**Keith:** [exhales] No. I don't.

**Austin:** Okay. That's fine.

**Keith:** I'll do my best to remember, but. [chuckles]

**Austin:** Yeah, it's fine if you don't.

**Jack:** I'm really glad you said that, Keith, about the distance between not knowing what an ant is and now knowing what the ant is. It's something that I've come back to and is, like, a weird side effect of this project where I don't know what's happening and y'all do. Where like, I think I said it before Greed Island, where I was like, “This is going to be the

last episode where I don't know— you know, where Greed Island could be anything,” as it were. You know, it is about to get solidified as one thing. Part of what's so much fun about the Chimera Ants is that baked into the way they work is that they could be shifting under your feet the whole time, you know? Like, I understand roughly how the ants work now, but built into that— and this is something Togashi loves to do, right? Is like, give himself the room to switch it up, to say, “All right, now this ant breathes underwater.” Or, here's a more specific example: a new brood of ants has hatched after, perhaps notably, after the Ant Queen has eaten the two doomed children. This ant has angel wings. He has a sort of buglike carapaced humanoid body.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** And a very strange pointed buglike human face, and he can speak. Interestingly, he says that he can speak so that he may receive, understand, and execute your orders. We'll talk about this a bit more in the next episode, but the ants are immediately getting right into, like, what does it mean to speak?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** What does it mean to have a name? You know, what is the function of speech? And it's lovely that this ant's first line is that I can speak so that I can receive, understand, and execute orders. That's the function of speech.

**Austin:** Where does that come from?

**Keith:** He seems to have a very, like...for us, we named ants “queens,” ant queens “queens” because we knew what queens were.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** Very interesting that this ant seems to understand what a queen is based on that also.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** That's why we call it money. [Keith and Sylvia laugh]

**Jack:** Mm. That's why we call it money.

**Austin:** Right?

**Jack:** I think it is perhaps worth saying, because there's really no way to get around it—and it might be that this is not as consequential as it is—this ant's name has been provided for me in subtitles.

**Austin:** Oh, really?

**Dre:** Oh.

**Keith:** Oh, yeah.

**Jack:** Yes.

**Keith:** I forgot that this— this has happened before.

**Austin:** The Netflix ones do not do that, I think.

**Jack:** No, no.

**Austin:** Just says "Chimera Ants".

**Jack:** No, I was watching on Netflix.

**Austin:** Oh.

**Keith:** Because these ants notably do not have names until the end of the...

**Jack:** Yes.

**Keith:** Until the start of the next set of episodes, actually.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** So, it's probably worth waiting to talk about this ant's name for when it is

introduced.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** But I think that there is maybe something with this ant's—

**Austin:** Wait, where does it start doing it? Because I think that's interesting.

**Jack:** Beginning of 78.

**Austin:** So it's not right away, 'cause right away, it's "Chimera Ant" in the subtitles.

**Jack:** It's "Chimera Ant".

**Austin:** So something changes in...

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Jack:** But by 78, they have started—

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And I watched the sub, so, you know.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Jack:** It was going to show up one way or another.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. For sure.

**Jack:** But yes, this ant is...and it's such a weird effect, right? As the, like, ants having names and talking about names becomes a plot point in the next episode, there is something really, like, formally fun about the medium revealing this to me before the fact.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Jack:** It is what it is.



**Keith:** We get some more ant-based music. This first one will be quick. This is a track called “Hopeless War”.

**Austin:** [chuckles] Just a recording of millions of ants walking and buzzing around.

**Sylvia:** It goes “bzz bzz bzz.” [Keith and Jack laugh]

**Keith:** Yeah, it’s actually what they played before they did “World’s Most Wanted Song”.

**Austin:** Right, right, yeah.

**Keith:** When we saw that live. They played the elephant stuff and then the ant buzzing.

**Austin:** And the ant stuff, yeah.

**Keith:** No, this is...when the queen is demanding bigger prey before they have humans. It’s a track called “Hopeless War”.

[clip of “Hopeless War” begins]

**Keith:** Extremely moody. Very just moody, sinister stuff.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** This is just right out of the palette of, like, horror movie music writing.

**Keith:** Oh yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

[music ends]

**Keith:** They have— this season is nonstop with the, like, trilling violins super high up on the neck. And then, when that first...when the first humanoid ants are hatching, it’s a song called “Hegemony of the Food Chain”.

**Sylvia:** Oh my god.

**Keith:** Which is a great title. [laughs]

**Dre:** Jesus.

**Sylvia:** They're cooking.

[clip of "Hegemony of the Food Chain" beings]

**Sylvia:** Oh, fuck yeah.

**Austin:** Oh, this fucking rules.

**Jack:** Hirano is so versatile.

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

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

**Austin:** "Hegemony of the Food Chain".

**Keith:** "Hegemony of the Food Chain"!

**Austin:** It fucking kicks ass [Dre laughs] for so many reasons, because it's like, the idea is [music ends] biology and the kind of, like, dog-eat-dog survival of the fittest, you know. If that's true, if the food chain is real, then it produces hegemony in the world, and I think that's going to be super interesting as we get into the Queen stuff but is even interesting in reverse, when you think of Netero's Hunter Exam produces—

**Jack:** Yes.

**Austin:** Is only— mostly solvable by good people.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** By Ging's—

**Jack:** Ging's Greed Island.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** Greed Island. It's all hegemony of the food chain, baby.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Like, it's all— hey, it's not— you know, right makes might. Or sorry, the other way around. [Keith chuckles] They believe that, you know, right will make you might.

**Keith:** Right makes might.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** They really do believe that. And the other way of thinking about it is, if we think about Greed Island specifically, there's, like, a real, like... [sighs] the belief that the system will stay contained in itself, you know?

**Jack:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And instead, you immediately have to start policing the borders. you have to start putting up border— I mean, this is the episode, in this third episode we're going to talk about, the ants start going, "Hey, listen, we should put up walls. We gotta get defenses going." The system will not just naturally defend itself, right? Society must defend itself, as Foucault would say.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It will start—

**Keith:** I just learned I'm a society.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. I just learned I'm society. Where are guns? We gotta get guns so that no one fucks with our society, our perfect society, which will run itself adequately, and good people will rise to the top. It's fine.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm. We should build this castle, and maybe we can, like, write a doctrine about it?

**Austin:** Maybe we should— exactly. [Jack, Austin, and Keith laugh]

**Sylvia:** God.

## **Episode 78 [2:00:23]**

**Jack:** As 78 begins, our friend the narrator reminds us how Chimera Ants work, over perhaps some of the most ominous photography we've had in the show yet. As the narrator is describing what a Chimera Ant does, we just have shots of humans working in the fields that are interrupted by the first of what is going to become an image that we see over and over in this episode, which is a raid on a human village by Chimera Ants. They just swoop in.

**Austin:** It is so important [**Keith:** Yeah.] that this happens at a farm.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Humans are also dedicated to finding food to live. It has to be that they, like, the sweetness, the sharpness of the place where they hit first is farms, because they are looking for food, and they disrupt human food production, is just so choice to me.

**Sylvia:** It's really well done.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** It's meat.

**Keith:** It's also— we also get the— the metaphor sort of works both ways, right? The ants are learning that they're a society [**Austin:** Yes.] at the same time as we see

humans in their most, like, worker-ant-like state.

**Austin:** Right. Exactly. Yep.

**Jack:** Yeah. By the end of this episode— so, at first, they just start swooping down and grabbing people. There are these wonderful wide shots, and there's one really distinctive wide shot of, like, 50 or 60 ants just carrying people. But by the end of this episode, they are rounding people up in, like, a village square before they take them.

**Keith:** Yeah. Do you know why? I realized why. I was like, “Why is this happening?” That squadron leader can't fly.

**Austin:** Oh, that's fun.

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

**Austin:** Wow.

**Jack:** The one with wings?

**Keith:** He's a turtle.

**Jack:** Oh, right! The turtle!

**Austin:** Yeah. Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** It's the turtle one.

**Jack:** Oh, yeah.

**Sylvia:** God. I didn't put that together either.

**Keith:** So he has to come up with his own methods.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** That's great.

**Keith:** All the other ones can fly, 'cause they're more ant-like. He's got to figure out his own thing.

**Jack:** Now, it's very odd that there are all these abductions, because meanwhile, Kite's team are sort of expecting to see abductions but aren't.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** In fact, there's no signs of anybody going missing from the Chimera Ants, and this is the—

**Keith:** Can I read this slightly earlier— I think it's right before that, that carry-off scene.

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

**Keith:** Kite explains, like, why it's so difficult to find the Chimera Ants. He says, "A Chimera Ant Queen stays on the move until she finds a site she likes, and during her search, she'll produce more and more soldier ants, building her own personal army. Once she's chosen a location, she produces a swarm of construction ants to build her castle with incredible speed. She will remain within that fortress until her death." And something I really like about this is how when we talk about animals that, like, do things, like when they build stuff or ants which have a kind of social hierarchy, we do talk about them like, "they do this, they do that," as if they have, like, a choice in the matter, but he actively is talking about— like, you cut to the Queen and go, like, "Okay, it's time to build my army now," which is very funny to me. [Austin, Jack, and Keith laugh]

**Austin:** Right. Right.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Versus ants like the ones he is hunting at the beginning of the episode, [**Jack:** Mm-hmm.] which are just— we would never say that they make that— or we might use that terminology, but what we would be implying is they have a biological instinct to do

these things.

**Keith:** Right. Yeah.

**Austin:** Not something that we would— we would talk about insect culture.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I think people who have studied insects are probably shouting about how complex insect culture is.

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

**Austin:** But I think that, generally speaking, people think about insects as being driven not by complex decision making but by a scheme of, you know, instinct and, you know, built-in behaviors.

**Keith:** Well, and it—

**Jack:** [sarcastic] Unlike humans, of course, who are...

**Austin:** [chuckles] Right.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Well, I think it speaks to the complexity of an ant society that, give them a voice and language and give them the technical ability to think and make decisions for themselves, and the thing they do is just fulfill the biological function anyway. [Austin and Jack chuckle]

**Jack:** Yes. Yeah. By the way, ant experts and entomologists who are screaming at the podcast right now: get ready, it's going to be a long year.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, write in.

**Keith:** Scream at us in a five star review on iTunes.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** On Apple Podcasts. [Austin chuckles] That's where you can scream about ants.

**Jack:** Now, I think that the easiest way to talk about the next bit is just to, rather than sort of, like, follow Kite's research team's conclusions through, just sort of spell out the situation that they find themselves in, and then we can dig into it. Because it turns out—and this was a real wrinkle that delighted me. I really wasn't expecting this. We start hearing about, like, *Hunter × Hunter* world geopolitics for the first time. Yeah, really for the first time.

**Sylvia:** We sure do.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Because it turns out that the ant is inside something called the NGL Autonomous Region. This is short for the Neo-Green Life Autonomous Region. That, in itself, is part of a group of— like a conglomerate called the Mitene Union, I believe?

**Sylvia:** Yes. That sounds right.

**Jack:** Is that what the NGL is in? Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, it is an island with, like, four small countries on it, one of which is the NGL.

**Jack:** Yeah, Gorteau, the Mitene Union, and the NGL. And the NGL are sort of, like, doctrinaire techtophobic— “techto.” Wow. Techtophobic.

**Austin:** Oh, techtophobic.

**Jack:** Doctrinaire technophobic people who will communicate mainly by mail, travel by horseback, and reject technology utterly, even going as far as to, like, arrest and execute people who they find using technology inside the country. This sort of gets mentioned several times. There's been a TV crew who a bunch of them got imprisoned and one of them got executed.



**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** There was a plague that swept through there a while ago, but they didn't allow international help, instead preferring to let nature run its grisly course.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And so this is such a interesting way to trouble “why haven't they heard about the ants?” and also give the ants a climate that they could exploit very easily.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** And also put stakes in the way for our characters to get into this place and kind of figure out what's going on.

**Austin:** Well, that's the thing, right? Is like, you know, they know about how Chimera Ants work, right? There is this quarantine on them. They show up. They have to be dealt with. There are policies and practices in place. Kite seems like someone who could handle this if it happened in Yorknew City.

**Keith:** In a diplomatically friendly country.

**Austin:** In a diplomatically friendly— if it happened to someone who was inside of the established game of the Hunter Association, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** We have rules for this. We know how this works. They would have reported it upwards. You know, our locally embedded Hunter would have gotten the news out. Whatever.

**Keith:** It's so great, because it's a little hand that reaches all the way back to, like, episode four, where they're talking about the benefits of being a Hunter, and it's like, yeah, all the countries that participate...

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Keith:** All the countries that participate give Hunters all these benefits. And it's like, well, what do "countries that participate" imply? The NGL.

**Sylvia:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** Yeah. Once again, I'm ringing my Michael Chrichton, John Wyndham bell here.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Where once again, another key part of this plotline is: if it didn't happen there.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Or, you know, if it had only gone this way or whatever. There is something about the ants taking a foothold in the NGL that is interesting.

**Austin:** But it's the sort of improbability but also the inevitability, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** The dread inevitability, right, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. Of course it would eventually. The right circumstances, in the same way that the circumstances for the incredible impossibility of life occurring on Earth happened, so too would one day the Chimera Ant step up on two legs, you know?

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** In the right circumstances. And grow to be two meters tall and eat hundreds of pounds of people a day.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Speaking of the ants, Togashi's great impulse has now finally kicked in, and the ants are simply vibing. They are now wearing clothes. [Keith chuckles] One of them is wearing a— an alligator ant is wearing, like, a wrestling singlet.

**Keith:** Now, I really—

**Sylvia:** Which is your favorite of these guys, Jack?

**Keith:** I really want to hear you say, percentage wise, how much of an ant is this alligator ant? [Austin laughs]

**Sylvia:** Yeah, that's a great... [Jack laughs] Great question, Keith.

**Jack:** Zero.

**Keith:** Zero percent.

**Sylvia:** Wow. I don't think that's fair.

**Jack:** He is a humanoid alligator wearing a wrestling singlet, and he is now in— you know, I was so delighted that when the Phantom Troupe show up, they're just checking their watches, wondering who's late. Togashi's great impulse to be like, "Hey, everybody is a protagonist. Nobody is—" When I say nobody is an unapproachable villain, you know, I could understand people thinking that I mean, like, in terms of their morality. You know, no one is too evil to explore their morality, and Togashi is also doing that. But I mean more that Togashi will put the camera as close as possible to any of his villains, with no real worry that he's, like, weakening them or dulling their impact. Alligator—

**Keith:** Once you've determined that someone is part human, they can't be evil 24/7. It's just too much evil to have in one day. [Jack laughs] The worst people in the world still need to have lunch.

**Austin:** Right. The thing that, like...

**Sylvia:** Good line.

**Austin:** There's a version of this where the Chimera Ants are...they all talk about the Queen constantly, and they're all like...or they're all—

**Keith:** "What's your favorite thing about the Queen?"

**Austin:** Or they're always talking in, like, droning language, or they're all— you know, or droning tones, or they have a special...you know, I think about Gene Wolfe, in *The Book of the New Sun*, there's a sort of collectivist enemy faction that shows up that only can speak in the sentences that are in a set of books that have already been approved, and so they're always just repeating the same sentences over and over again that mean something different in different contexts. There's ways you could communicate, “Ooh, these folks are not like us.” Instead, we get a big alligator man in a gym onesie. [Keith laughs]

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Who is like, “You want to do a game? You want to do a game?”

**Keith:** “You want to do a game?”

**Austin:** “You want to do a game? You want to do a game? I bet I could get more bodies for the Queen to eat than you can.”

**Keith:** We've been human for one minute. We've been on the screen in *Hunter × Hunter* even less time than that. We should do a game. It's about time we're doing a game. [Dre chuckles]

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Knowing that Togashi loves to do this now, you know, having seen him do this over and over and over again, part and parcel with that knowledge is the delight that I feel whenever I can— you know, whenever something like the Chimera Ants are introduced. I don't know why I didn't think he'd do it here. Of course he was going to do it, you know? [Keith laughs]

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Of course he's just interested in watching them all, you know, bop around and chat.

**Austin:** And—

**Jack:** There's a really funny moment here where the— oh, sorry, go on.

**Austin:** I was just going to say: I know what— you do your funny moment. Let's come back.

**Jack:** Oh, the alligator ant says, like, you know, "Let's do a contest to...you know, I bet I'm better at killing and getting guys than you," and [bleep] — Oh, sorry, [Sylvia chuckles] the ant commander is sort of like—

**Keith:** The unnamed ant. [Austin and Jack chuckle]

**Jack:** We can edit that out. We can bleep that. It's bleeping out Michael saying [bleep] in...

**Austin:** [chuckles] Uh huh.

**Keith:** Here, wait, I'll...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I'll drag this over. Hold on. [bleep] Okay. I'll use that.

**Jack:** Nice.

**Sylvia:** We'll just call him [bleep].

**Jack:** Well, now, hang on. Now we need to bleep that for... [Austin laughs]

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Jack:** The fans of *Homestuck Made This World*.

**Keith:** Hold on. Hold on. [bleep] Okay.

**Sylvia:** I did want to bring up *Homestuck Made This World* when Austin mentioned Bisky and Hisoka as fan inserts.

**Austin:** Oh, yeah.

**Sylvia:** I was like, that's an Andrew Hussy thing right there.

**Austin:** 100%.

**Sylvia:** This is my Michael Lutz moment.

**Austin:** 100%. [Sylvia laughs]

**Keith:** Yeah, sorry, which— what is the thing, having a character in your— having an audience insert that you're there to bash?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Exactly.

**Sylvia:** I would highly recommend checking out the fantastic podcast *Homestuck Made This World*, which I relistened to recently.

**Jack:** It's wonderful.

**Sylvia:** As just an interesting piece of both, like, looking at fandom and then also sort of internet, like, history, I guess in a way?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** I don't know how else to put it.

**Austin:** That's right. I think that's accurate.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah, it's like a cross section of a very particular kind of work and then also the internet at the time that that work was being made.

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Jack:** I like it a ton. Yeah, so, this alligator says to the leader, you know, “Let’s do a game, and I’ll be better than you,” [Sylvia chuckles] and the leader is like, “I’m not really interested in playing games,” and then the alligator says, “Well, when you think about it, it’s really about who provides the most good stuff for the Queen,” and the leader is like, “Oh, yeah, now that you put it like that way...”

**Keith:** “Now that you put it that way.”

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. [Dre chuckles]

**Jack:** “I guess games do have a sort of purpose within a society.” [laughter]

**Austin:** Which is something I was going to say, is like, it’s not— just to be clear, it’s not that they don’t always talk about the Queen. It’s not like they are just hanging out. There is still a little friction that means [Keith: Yeah.] they talk and hang out like us, but they are, like, oriented towards life in a different way than we are, because they have our affect, but they don’t have the, like, day-to-day life that we have. [chuckles]

**Sylvia:** No, yeah.

**Keith:** Here’s— I want to read the quote from the alligator. This is the bit that finally gets the original squad leader in on the game. He goes, “Hey, I know. I should get all the other squad leaders in on this. Make it a group thing. If we all compete against each other, we’re bound to capture more prey.”

**Jack:** These are Chimera Ants.

**Keith:** Make it a group thing? Yeah, it’ll be like a group thing. [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Jack:** Says one of the Chimera Ants.

**Sylvia:** I've found out about this thing called capitalism and the idea of constant growth.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** What do you guys think?

**Austin:** Yep.

**Keith:** But also just, like, six friends going to a movie.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Well, you know.

**Sylvia:** It's both.

**Jack:** So, by now, the ants are completely out there, because as alligator— out there in the sense that, like, Togashi's character design has completely gone for it, because as the commander leaves and alligator ant turns around, an ant is introduced who we'll see a lot more of later who is just a tortoise. One of them is now a penguin?

**Keith:** Hey, not just a tortoise. He's got long gray hair as well.

**Austin:** Yep.

**Jack:** He has got long gray hair. One of them is just a penguin!

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I love that guy.

**Dre:** Yeah, where'd the Queen get a penguin to eat?

**Jack:** From the ocean. [laughs]

**Sylvia:** From the ocean.

**Keith:** It does—



**Austin:** Well, so that's part of what was said that we kind of moved past, is we don't know where she— her arm washed up in one place, but was it [**Dre:** Mm.] dragged there by luck through the currents, through unpredictable wild currents?

**Jack:** Yep. Also Crichton-esque.

**[2:15:00]**

**Austin:** Right, and we don't know where she's been before she got to this island. Also, a lot of places that you would think are kind of warm, because we think of them as being in, [**Keith:** Right.] like, south of us are actually so far south that they start getting penguins.

**Dre:** That's true.

**Austin:** I'm thinking of South America.

**Keith:** The famous Galapagos Penguins.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Sure, totally.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Keith:** But the other thing is: if you look closely at the thing that does look very much like a penguin, it doesn't look THAT much like a penguin. It could just be some other kind of bird.

**Austin:** It's a penguin.

**Keith:** It is a penguin. But...

**Dre:** It's a penguin.

**Austin:** Well, and—

**Keith:** I wrote here, "Two more squadron leaders: an old turtle man and a strange penguin-like bird."

**Austin:** Importantly, the first squad leader we meet, you know, in terms of character design, could not be more different than them, is generally— is, like, thin and more human-shaped, more, like, traditionally human scale, has big white wings, has a bird beaky thing.

**Keith:** Has, like, eagle wings.

**Austin:** Yeah, has eagle wings. Has kind of a bird beak but, like, a human-colored face.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Instead of the alligator was like a big white albino alligator with, like, magenta hair on top. [laughs]

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Like, this leader...you know, the character design is doing a lot, in terms of “who am I supposed to relate to here? Who am I supposed to think is humanoid or humanish and who feels more monstrous?” Meanwhile, that’s the character who least wants to hang out and least wants to vibe like a person does.

**Jack:** Yes. They say—

**Austin:** And most wants to go do just the ant stuff.

**Keith:** Yeah. It is interesting. He does look the most like a human [**Austin:** Yeah.] but also acts the most like an ant.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** He says, after he has turned away— just great fast characterization on the Chimera Ants. They’re like, “He’s really earnest, isn’t he?”

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** You know, he’s just like, he takes everything way too seriously. [chuckles]

**Keith:** Yeah. Why do they say that maybe he's earnest? What is their hypothesis?

**Jack:** Oh, that he doesn't want to play.

**Keith:** They says, "I presume the human he was created from was also quite earnest."

**Austin:** That's right.

**Jack:** Hmm...

**Dre:** Ah. Huh.

**Austin:** Which suggests something else.

**Jack:** It does suggest something else.

**Austin:** It's not all going in there as a goop!

**Keith:** It's not all goop.

**Sylvia:** No.

**Austin:** And then the goop is comingling. There's a more direct— there could be, and maybe we get some more evidence of it in this episode...

**Jack:** In the next scene, in fact.

**Austin:** A more direct relationship between food in, baby ant out.

**Jack:** Yes. Because in the next raid, the poor mother who has come completely apart after her two children were...

**Sylvia:** Ugh. Understandably so.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** She doesn't actually know that they've been taken by Chimera Ants, but she's about to learn this.

**Austin:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Dre:** [indistinct]

**Keith:** It's so sad, 'cause we saw her sort of, like, [**Sylvia:** Oh?] pretending to sleep, sweetly listening to her kids make plans for the next day.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Oh, it's sad.

**Keith:** Not picking up on any of the death flags.

**Sylvia:** What's up, Dre?

**Dre:** Can we just highlight really quickly that when that very sad lady is, like, looking all sad and is stalking out into the woods, like, bleary eyed because she can't sleep, because she's so worried about her kids, one of the people in the village goes, "That's just what being a parent is. You know she'll never stop looking for those kids."

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Sure.

**Dre:** Just an interesting contrast to some other parenting approaches we've seen. [Keith laughs]

**Austin:** To some other parents we know.

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

**Austin:** Yeah. Uh huh. I mean, again, this whole season is about parents.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** The note I took— I hadn't—

**Austin:** This whole show is about parents.

**Jack:** I hadn't thought about Ging there, Dre, but I was thinking about the Chimera Ant Queen talking about, you know, this is just what it's like to be a parent, is, you know, like, looking for and preparing for and taking care of your children.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** Yeah. I mean, the whole thing the Chimera Ant Queen wants is what?

**Jack:** Make a son.

**Austin:** To make the strongest king possible.

**Jack:** Yep.

**Keith:** Which— but—

**Austin:** Which is what Ging seems to want!

**Keith:** But in a much more hands-on way, it seems like.

**Jack:** It's almost as if Yoshihiro Togashi—

**Austin:** No! No, no, no, no, no. Not more hands-on. She's eating.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** The hands are off. Her hands are the ants going around, doing the work of shaping the King.

**Keith:** Yeah, that's fair.

**Austin:** It's just, shaping it is a meal for her.

**Sylvia:** How many people did Ging eat?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** How many people has Ging ate? [Jack and Dre laugh]

**Sylvia:** I mean, like, to make that less of a joke, I mean, we've met a ton of the people that Ging has basically, like, gone through.

**Jack:** Yeah. Stripped for parts.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, in a lot of ways, right?

**Austin:** Yeah, how many people died in Greed Island? 'Cause they got eaten for the sake of Gon.

**Sylvia:** That's a—

**Dre:** Sure. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Exactly. Just that we saw on screen alone, right?

**Austin:** Yep.

**Sylvia:** 'Cause like, we get the body count of the Bomber and stuff, [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] and that's all— if you really think about it, Ging is indirectly responsible for that.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Probably over 50 on screen deaths in that season.

**Sylvia:** Easy.

**Jack:** We talk a lot about Togashi's sort of, like, brutal pacing, not just in his own work and in the stuff that it has done to his body, but you know, [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] we will joke about how Togashi swings us towards one plot element, you know, very rapidly.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** It is also becoming apparent, the more of this that we watch and talk about, [cross] how elegant a plotter he is at points.

**Keith:** [cross] Mm, more parent stuff. [Dre chuckles]

**Jack:** Right?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Where he's like, this is all here from the— you know, almost every main arc he is working through is coming back to the same two or three ideas. It's clear that he has sat down [**Austin:** Yeah.] to be like, "This is what this story is, and here are the ways that I am going to start expressing that."

**Austin:** Can I say something? This is a wild rewind, but it comes from a thing you just said, which is you're talking about the elegance of it, of the plotting. And this is not Togashi plotting, because it's anime plotting, separate from book plotting. I've been trying to turn over in my head the Kite stuff, and what you just made me think about was: what do we get by having Kite left out until now? And it lines up with another thing that y'all have been saying more and more on this show. Does anything know what I'm gesturing at?

**Sylvia:** Uh...

**Austin:** What if Killua is the protagonist?

**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah.

**Keith:** Right, right.

**Jack:** Right.

**Austin:** And we learn about Kite when Killua learns about Kite.

**Sylvia:** You know, Austin?

**Dre:** Mm.

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I had not considered that. I was always thinking about the Kite thing as an anime production thing.

**Austin:** Same, and that's probably right, right? But I think there's a nice...

**Sylvia:** Side effect of it.

**Austin:** Yeah, there's a nice side effect of that, which is like, oh, actually, if we start thinking about this as it's the show where Gon does the action but Killua is our perspective character, [**Jack:** Yeah.] this is a moment of real—I mean, that whole episode is Killua looking at Gon as the conversation happens. We are the watcher here too. And then, now, let's put Gon or Killua in the mix of people watching the protagonist of an anime [**Keith:** Yeah.] [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] and how do they relate to that person, and what's a healthy relationship look like, and all of that, right?

**Jack:** Yeah. No, I think you're spot on.

**Keith:** God, I wonder if that'll come back up. [Sylvia and Jack laugh]

**Austin:** I'm so curious.

**Jack:** I think that, like...it fits with the way that people talk about Ging. Or rather, it actually fits with the way that people talk about Gon and the way that they express their feeling about Ging, which is that he is this sort of luminous figure that everybody has the best possible things to say about, but also we don't fully know what's going on in there.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** You know, we actually—we only ever get to see the wrapping on the outside of the box.

**Austin:** Right.

**Jack:** And everybody else seems to have some insight. And I think that's totally consistent with Killua learning—oh, why didn't he tell me this? Why didn't Gon tell me this? You know?

**Austin:** Why didn't he fucking tell me this? Yeah.



**Jack:** Because—

**Austin:** And bringing it back to this, no one can call Ging right now. As far as we—

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Right now, like, Kite's response to "there are human-sized Chimera Ants" isn't "I've gotta get fucking Ging on the line." Maybe he thinks he can handle it himself, you know?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I could see why he—

**Sylvia:** They don't know how bad it's gotten yet.

**Austin:** You're right. They're not there yet.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Like, they're still operating under the assumption they can get there in time to stop it from eating people.

**Austin:** And actually maybe there's evidence in this scene that they could get there and stop it.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** 'Cause these dudes in white with submachine guns...

**Sylvia:** Oh, it rules.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Jump out.

**Keith:** Although, real quick, before we get to them, what happens at Kurt and Reina's home with the mom?

**Austin:** Oh, it's sad.

**Jack:** Oh, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Doesn't she try to protect a kid?

**Dre:** She does, yeah.

**Jack:** She throws herself in front of a kid to protect, and we just get the nice, you know, like, "Those winged creatures. They must have been the ones that took your kids."  
[Sylvia laughs] She throws herself over a kid to protect the kid, and the commander passes over her. You know, acknowledges her, looks at her and the kid, and passes over her.

**Austin:** [knowingly] Mm, interesting.

**Dre:** [knowingly] Mm. Mm.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** This is the little boy. You know. There is no way to— we are being invited to read this as Kurt.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** You know, Kurt's human DNA went into...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** This is also like, "Oh, the beast stopped when it recognized its own humanity in

its heart!" or whatever.

**Austin:** Yeah.

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

**Jack:** Part and parcel with this kind of storytelling.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** It's interesting.

**Keith:** Hey. I presume the human he was created from was also quite earnest.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Earnest and looked to care for those around him.

**Austin:** No, it was, uh, Kurt. His name was Kurt.

**Sylvia:** What? [Jack laughs]

**Austin:** Not Earnest. Different name. [Keith laughs]

**Sylvia:** Oh. He didn't go to camp?

**Austin:** Didn't go to camp.

**Dre:** Oh.

**Keith:** Didn't go to jail?

**Sylvia:** I love the way that they say that, by the way, where it's like, "If he wasn't as earnest, he wouldn't be as endearing," or whatever the line is. [Austin chuckles] It's really funny.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** It's like, I think it's the turtle being like, "Yeah, but that's why we love him!"

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** It is— I know Jack already said this. It's crazy how fast they go, like, "Here's three different squadron leaders and their whole personalities."

**Austin:** Yeah. It's so fast. I didn't remember this.

**Keith:** You have jackass gym guy, smart bird, [**Dre:** Yeah.] and like, kind of sympathetic old man.

**Jack:** Wise old.

**Austin:** Yeah. I thought this stuff was, like, 12 episodes in.

**Dre:** Me too.

**Sylvia:** Me too.

**Keith:** It's crazy how fast! It's crazy!

**Austin:** It's unbelievable.

**Sylvia:** It rules.

**Dre:** That is the biggest thought I keep having, as someone who's rewatching this show, is that, like, "Oh, I thought this didn't happen for," you know, insert X amount of episodes.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Jack:** Togashi and the anime team are quick on their feet.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** They are, you know.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** They clearly have something to get to, and they're on their way. [laughter]

**Keith:** I would love to know how many chapters this was. Actually, I can tell you.

**Jack:** Probably many more, right?

**Keith:** The manga debut was chapter 188.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** And let's see. Chimera Ants, uh...

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Manga...oh. Oh my god, it's even faster.

**Sylvia:** What?

**Keith:** The Queen is introduced in chapter 186.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah. It's, like, right away.

**Dre:** Wow.

**Keith:** And then [bleep] — hold on.

**Jack:** Beep!

**Keith:** I've gotta put another one in. Yeah, I gotta— [bleep] There we go. I'll just drag that back.

**Sylvia:** [bleep]

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Ah, [bleep]. [all laugh]

**Dre:** Sweet Bro and Hella Jeff. [Austin and Jack laugh]

**Austin:** I mean...

**Keith:** We get two chapters. What is that?

**Dre:** Tried to warn you about ants, bro. [Austin laughs]

**Keith:** How long is a manga chapter, like, 15 pages? I don't know.

**Austin:** Longer than that, but not by much.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. 20-something?

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah, it's like, right away. Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** That's nuts.

**Keith:** Because the thing we've referenced before is that Greed Island, at the point that it aired, was the most compressed from manga to anime, and Chimera Ant blows Greed Island out of the water.

**Austin:** In terms of compression.

**Keith:** In terms of compression.

**Sylvia:** In a lot of ways.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Dre:** Wow.

**Jack:** But this is part of what you need to do to get this tone, right?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Is like, part of the horror of the ants [Keith: Right.] as a plot device [Sylvia: Yeah.]

is, “Oh my god, they are more powerful than we thought. They are quicker than we thought. There are more of them. They are more prepared. They've been working away silently.” You know.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And part of the way that you—

**Austin:** I am curious how it will pace itself.

**Jack:** Me too.

**Austin:** Obviously, I've seen it before, and I love it, but I watched it in a blur the first time.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And in my mind, [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] I have it sort of divided into subheadings that I won't say out loud.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** In terms of, like, “Here's the part where blah, and then there's this, [**Keith:** Yeah.] and then there's this, and then here's the last part.”

**Jack:** “The ants eat Killua, and then Killua Ant shows up.”

**Austin:** Right, and the Killua ant shows up, and you have to de-antify Killua.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And I'm realizing that I think maybe the first bit, like, doesn't exist. I was wrong about there being a first bit. We're in the second bit already.

**Jack:** [laughs] Yeah, you were like, “Ant warmup,” and it's like, nope.

**Dre:** Nope.

**Austin:** Or the first bit I mischaracterized, and the second bit was— maybe I've forgotten about the second bit, you know?

**Keith:** For me, there's a 1, there's a 2A and a 2B. That's how this goes.

**Austin:** And that's it?

**Keith:** That's it.

**Austin:** I think there's a— I think it's four things, but we'll talk later.

**Keith:** Okay. All right.

**Jack:** Uh, okay. So, then a bunch of guys in very distinctive outfits—they're wearing sort of, like, white singlets, white puffer jackets, white surgical masks—come out of the crowd and start machine gunning the ants.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** This is—

**Austin:** In the words of Kendrick Lamar, sometimes you gotta pop out and show niggas. Like... [Sylvia, Dre, and Jack laugh] Certified boogeyman, I'm the one that up the score with 'em. So.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Well, this is Togashi—

**Austin:** And they do!

**Sylvia:** They do.

**Jack:** They do, 'cause this is Togashi pacing once again, because the ants just get obliterated by the automatic weapons.



**Austin:** It's so good!

**Keith:** Isn't this the country that doesn't allow any technology, and they killed a guy for having a film camera? What the hell?

**Jack:** It's very odd, because they say—

**Dre:** Well, how do you think they killed him? [Jack chuckles]

**Sylvia:** Mm...

**Austin:** Guns aren't technology. That's guns. That's different.

**Keith:** That's guns.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** They say, "Eliminate the bugs. That's Gyro[pronounced jy-roh]—or Gyro[geer-oh]—'s direct order," and the turtle ant says, "Well, who's Gyro?" or "What is Gyro?" and they say, "Well, he's our king." And I like this, 'cause they—

**Keith:** The dub calls him Gyro[jy-roh].

**Dre:** Gyro.

**Jack:** Gyro.

**Austin:** Gyro.

**Jack:** They completely no-sell "the turtle ant is talking to me." In fact, they also no-sell "there's a turtle ant."

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** But I like that they have this brief little, you know, call and response.

**Austin:** Oh, I have a new favorite background one.

**Sylvia:** Oh?

**Austin:** The big ladybug ant?

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Austin:** Did y'all see the big ladybug ant?

**Keith:** Oh, what about this mushroom one in...

**Austin:** Oh, I didn't see the mushroom one.

**Dre:** Ooh.

**Jack:** Put them in the chat.

**Keith:** In the very bottom center.

**Austin:** I'm trying to. It's moving fast. I've got to get a screenshot. Okay. There's a couple pictures that I can get here. Maybe I can just get— yeah, here we go. There's ladybug ant here. Uh, I almost put that in the way wrong chat. There we go. [Dre and Keith laugh] Right there, hanging out with a whole-ass ladybug shell.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Oh, small fry.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Ledyba's here.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. And then, from the front... [chuckles] Aw! It's when, like, her whole crew gets got. She looks up, as people are getting shot. [all laugh] I hope she got away.

**Jack:** This is the ladybug ant— this is how good the character design is. At times! I'm

looking at you, Lin and whatever the other one was called. [Austin laughs]

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

**Jack:** But like, these ants are, like, kind of funny and kind of cute.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And some of them are terrifying, and some of them are just like— for example, so, this ladybug ant is looking up as they're getting gunned down. The subtitle says, “[gunfire],” and then it says, “[gasps],” and standing to her left is the most, like, off-brand Chimera Ant you have ever seen. [Austin and Keith laugh]

**Keith:** Yes. Yes.

**Jack:** This guy looks like I drew him. [Keith and Sylvia laugh]

**Dre:** This is the “we have Chimera Ant at home.”

**Austin:** It is.

**Jack:** [chuckles] Yes.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And it's not just here at the bottom of the hierarchy. There is absolutely nothing threatening about the turtle and the bird.

**Austin:** No. No.

**Keith:** They are just kind of funny guys.

**Sylvia:** They're the poindexters.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah. The society needs all kinds of people.

**Jack:** It's so funny. The Chimera Ants are wild.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**[2:30:00]**

**Keith:** And then the crocodile's a crocodile, but he just seems more like a jock than a...

**Sylvia:** He's Vector from the Sonic games.

**Austin:** He's an *Animal Crossing* character. [Dre laughs]

**Jack:** He is! He is an *Animal Crossing* character. There's a weird *Animal Crossing* vibe, *Animal Crossing* villager vibes among a lot of the Chimera Ants, if I'm being honest.

**Keith:** Yeah. Antimal Crossing.

**Sylvia:** It's like what if the houses we're made out of ant poop.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Oh. I just—

**Jack:** Then Togashi—

**Dre:** I was going to shout out you for saying Vector, Sylvi, but then you said houses made out of poop, so I don't know.

**Austin:** Mm...yeah.

**Sylvia:** They make their house out of poop. We see it happening.

**Dre:** That's true.

**Austin:** Vector the Crocodile? The alligator?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** He wouldn't make his out out of poop, no.

**Austin:** He wouldn't do that.

**Sylvia:** But the Chimera Ants would.

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

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** He's just moonlighting as a Chimera Ant. I don't know how many Sonic games they were making with him in it at this time, so like, he needed the work.

**Dre:** Oh, Charmy Bee.

**Keith:** We get a short little vibey...

**Austin:** Charmy Bee.

**Sylvia:** Charmy Bee.

**Keith:** We get a fun little piece when the machine gun guys show up called "Shiver".

[clip of "Shiver" begins]

**Sylvia:** Ooh.

**Keith:** And it's just, like, this for two minutes. It's very cool.

**Austin:** Well, and here is another classic Togashi maneuver. Who do we...who do we associate with when the guys in white show up?

[music ends]

**Keith:** The ants.

**Austin:** Our new friends, our new best friends, the ants.

**Keith:** Our new friends, the ants.

**Austin:** Who are, like, up against these faceless— this is a thing I point out all the time.

**Keith:** [laughs] Who are these fucking assholes?

**Austin:** Who are these assholes?

**Keith:** Hey, they're not supposed to have those. [laughs]

**Austin:** They're not supposed to have guns.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** They're shooting MY ants.

**Austin:** Those are my ants! That's my own turtle friend.

**Sylvia:** Hey, leave turtle boy alone!

**Dre:** And like, seemingly...none of the farmer people are, like, freaked out, seemingly, by the presence of these people with guns.

**Austin:** Well, that's—

**Jack:** It's so funny the way he does this.

**Austin:** To be fair, the Chimera Ants were just killing all of them.

**Dre:** No, no, no, yeah, yeah, yeah. I get it.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I feel like I wouldn't question it.

**Dre:** Yeah. I'm not—

**Austin:** But yes, I get your point.

**Dre:** Yeah. I'm not saying that they're not, like, freaked out in general, but it seems like [Keith: Yeah.] they are not shocked to see a gun.

**Austin:** Yes. Correct. Yeah.

**Jack:** Part of the way that he makes this work, 'cause he does this with the Phantom Troupe, a group of genocidal, you know, murderers.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And, you know, we—

**Austin:** But they have cool names, Jack.

**Jack:** Yes.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, and one of them's really hot.

**Jack:** And part of the way he does it is he just sort of speaks it into the world. He's like, "You're with these guys now. Deal with it," you know?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** We're going to address the fact that they're— 'cause whenever we cut back to Kite, we're like, "Oh god, the Chimera Ants are fucking terrifying."

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** "They're going to eat all the people." And then when we cut back to the Chimera Ants, we're like, "You know, it was really sad when they all got machine gunned by those people protecting the villages." [laughs quietly]

**Austin:** Well, and this is why I'm talking about the meta maneuver of, you know, Ging pulling all the strings but also just the author. This is a show and a series that, like, it knows and is interested in: hey, how does the camera work? How do I tell the reader or the viewer who to root for, [**Keith:** Right.] just by perspective, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] by color, by, you know, all these other things? Who gets to gasp and who doesn't? How do we show it when someone is scared? You know, it's not a mistake that there's a cute

ladybug on screen when the white guys show— the guys in all white show up and start shooting these people.

**Sylvia:** [chuckles] The white guys.

**Austin:** When the white guys show up. Uh huh.

**Keith:** It's also, it's like, it's not— it's the opposite of *Jaws*.

**Austin:** Right.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Keith:** Where like, in *Jaws*, you have this horrible monster, who's like, as far as the camera is concerned, *Jaws* is evil. *Jaws* is out to get you.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Keith:** The sequels confirm this.

**Austin:** Yes. [Jack laughs]

**Keith:** It's in the marketing material. The shark is mad at you and wants to kill you for murder reasons.

**Austin:** Right. Right.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And *Hunter × Hunter* is like, no, we follow the shark go back underwater, and the shark is like, "I gotta get food for my mom." [Austin and Keith laugh]

**Jack:** Well, but then—

**Austin:** And then we see the shark, like, not eat someone, because there's some sort of inherited memory of that person, and then we see—

**Jack:** But then what's really funny though is that then we see the shark go back up and



just obliterate a bunch of beachgoers.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** While the sh...what's that guy called?

**Austin:** The sheriff?

**Jack:** That actor.

**Austin:** Who are you— wait.

**Jack:** The sh— the man in *Jaws*.

**Austin:** No, the mayor.

**Keith:** The mayor?

**Sylvia:** The mayor.

**Jack:** No, the good guy.

**Austin:** Oh, the good guy.

**Dre:** Oh.

**Austin:** Richard Dreyfuss. No, the other guy.

**Jack:** Richard Dreyfuss. Yeah.

**Austin:** No, 'cause Dreyfuss is not the main guy

**Jack:** Oh, no, not Richard Dreyfuss. He's the shark guy.

**Keith:** Yeah, the scientist guy, not the shark guy.

**Austin:** What the fuck is—? What's the main guy in *Jaws*?

**Jack:** What I mean to say is that Togashi won't just say, like, "Oh, but the shark has a

family, and he wants to feed the family.” He will then send the shark back—

**Keith:** Brody. Roy Scheider.

**Austin:** Right, right, right, right.

**Jack:** Roy Scheider. He’ll then send the shark back up to the beach community and be like, “This shark’s fucking terrifying.” [laughs quietly]

**Austin:** Right, well, because this is the power of the camera, right? Is like...

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You can— and this shark is terrifying, but it’s not terrifying in the same way it was an episode ago, right?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** You know, we— the first time they descend, they are shot like the shark, right? When they show up in the sky at the beginning of this episode and they are, like, the huge wave of them is in the air, and they descend and start lifting people away.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** But by the time these guys in white show up, like, they start being shot a little bit differently. Not unthreateningly still, you’re right, but like, it’s...the camera can play in both positive and negative ways, and I don’t mean...in both additive and subtractive ways, you know?

**Jack:** Yep.

**Keith:** You have to show that it’s terrifying and that everyone is scared before you normalize them [**Austin:** Right.] as part of, like, a food chain.

**Austin:** Well, and I think the thing that I’m— I think the thing that lifts this from just a

thing that's happening to something that's interesting is it feels like Togashi understands that this would be happening naturally as part of telling a story anyway, so how do we start playing with that? And by that, what I mean is: because we spend so much time with them, unless they are constantly being shot like Jaws, they will become— people will become endeared to them over time, in the way that you get endeared to villains in things all the time, right? Even before— let's, like, put Togashi stuff to the side. There's a reason why people liked Vegeta in *Dragon Ball Z*.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** He's great. It's 'cause he's good.

**Austin:** In the Saiyan arc. Not later stuff, even.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** You know what I mean? Early. Right away!

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** You're like, "Oh, this motherfucker has it." Like, he's funny. He's weird. He's, like, just fun to watch.

**Keith:** He's little.

**Austin:** He's little. He's a little guy. [Keith and Sylvia laugh] And when you spend time with people, when you put them on camera, when you aestheticize them in that way, there is an effect to that. And like, being thoughtful about how to deploy that and how to push and pull on that effect is what lifts something for me from "it's telling a story that I really like" to, like, "ooh, it's using the medium to do something in an interesting way." You know?

**Keith:** Just like an ant has to collect food for the nest and spit up mud to build their big weird castle, what else is the Prince of All Saiyans going to do?

**Austin:** That's right. [Jack laughs]

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

**Austin:** That's right.

**Sylvia:** Whoa.

**Jack:** I think you're absolutely right with all this stuff, Austin, but the thing that I keep coming back to is the kind of, like, unshaking confidence with which they do it.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Jack:** You know, to have the confidence and to have the skill, both in the manga and in this adaptation, because you're right, you know, a manga camera works differently—you know, there are similarities, but it works differently than a television camera, you know, than moving images. You can use montage differently.

**Austin:** Use color, importantly.

**Jack:** You can use color. Yeah, absolutely. But at the same time, I think that there is a lot of power in the way that Togashi just starts with— you know, he just acts.

**Austin:** Yep. Yep.

**Jack:** You know, here are the Chimera Ants, and they're saying, "Ugh, he'd be endearing if he wasn't so earnest," and you're like, "Oh, wow, we're here. It's happening."

**Keith:** Who wants to talk to me about D<sup>2</sup>?

**Jack:** Oh, god. Yeah, I was going to say.

**Austin:** Oh.

**Jack:** Togashi puts a lot of stuff on the table now very quickly.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And to my eyes—

**Keith:** This is almost like a re pilot. [Dre laughs] I can't get over how different— Gon and Killua are barely in it.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Like, this is the ant show right now.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** I think I said this last time. Chimera Ant, I think you could make the case, is it's own anime.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Like, structurally, at the very least.

**Keith:** This is the stuff I'm thinking about when we talked about the hot air balloon in Yorknew City.

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

**Keith:** Where it's just like, god, there's times it gets so far away from anything that it seemed like in the first 25, 35, 40 episodes.

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

**Jack:** Yeah, the thing that—

**Austin:** They teleported into a new show, you know?

**Keith:** [chuckles] Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah. The thing that Keith said was: when that camera follows the Phantom Troupe's hot air balloon up into the sky, the show is never coming back from that

moment, in the same way.

**Austin:** Mm. Yeah.

**Jack:** And I think you're right. Okay. So, there are two sort of things that happen almost simultaneously. The first is that Pokkle and Ponzu show up.

**Sylvia:** Yep.

**Jack:** And, to Keith's point, they show up independently. They are not showing up because Kite has called them. They are not showing up because Gon and Killua have encountered them. We have just cut to Pokkle and Ponzu.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, they're here.

**Keith:** Pokkle's sort of the start of his own little Magical Beast Hunter show right now.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah, because he has also heard rumors of the ants, and via his own crew, he has managed to sort of, like, get out a recording from one of the journalists that was arrested, or maybe the one that was killed. It's not clear. And the recording is basically like, "Agh, the Chimera Ants! They're going to get me!" So, being a Magical Beast Hunter, he decides to go in. Not clear why he's going in. The impression is this very sort of, like, Pokkle, "Well, I just, you know, I just want to be there and figure out what's going on."

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Wants to be a hero. He's a Magical Beast Hunter. This is his job.

**Jack:** And he is followed, following a little protestation, by Ponzu, because she says that her bees can act as communication devices in the NGL, which, again, to remind listeners who aren't watching this, is a violently anti-technology sort of country. The

second thing that happens is that...and I don't know why they're telling us this now. I mean, I know why, right? This is plot relevant. We're going to get there.

**Keith:** To explain the guns. [Austin and Jack chuckle]

**Jack:** Yes. There is a drug, D<sup>2</sup>, going around. It's propagating in, quote, "urban areas," and we see a shot of one of the white-clad men with the guns dealing it to some people in Yorknew City. We don't know what this drug does, but we know it is derived from the Bira tree, which is native to the Mitene Union. Now, keen-eared listeners will go, "The Mitene Union? Isn't that where the NGL is? And isn't the NGL where the Chimera Ants are?" especially because there is a nasty rumor that most of the Bira trees are in NGL territory. And you're sort of left to draw your own conclusions at this point. You know, they're keeping it up in the air whether the NGL is funding, you know, this drug scheme or whether a cartel is operating from within the NGL and smuggling stuff out. You know, they're not really saying, like, "Here's how it works," but there's something going on vis-à-vis D<sup>2</sup> and the Bira trees in the Mitene Union.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Which, again, is very Clancy-esque, right?

**Jack:** It is very Clancy-esque. Yes.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** Down to the sort of, like...you know. Let's see how it develops before I start throwing a deeper read.

**Keith:** Sure, yeah.

**Jack:** There is now a huge body pit of food in the castle.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Oh, I'm calling it a castle. That's right. The Chimera Ant Queen has built this sort of, like, ragged— no, she hasn't built. She has commanded her drones to poop out—

[Keith chuckles]

**Sylvia:** Yep.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** —stuff to make this immense ragged fortress in the middle of a forest. It looks like a termite mound, but like, you know, a kilometer tall.

**Austin:** It's gigantic.

**Keith:** It's huge.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's so cool.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** This is episode three of the Chimera Ant Arc, and they've already built a citadel. And the penguin, who it turns— right. The Chimera Ants have a penguin, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] and it turns out that the penguin is their librarian. [Keith laughs] The penguin is reading... [laughs]

**Austin:** I love the penguin.

**Keith:** He has this stack of books!

**Jack:** Has this huge stack of books, and he rapidly introduces wise turtle to, first, the concept of guns.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** And the Chimera Ants are like, "Interesting."

**Austin:** Mm, what could solve—

**Sylvia:** "These are objects known as guns!"



**Austin:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Great line.

**Keith:** “Guns?”

**Jack:** That line is really funny. He says, “What you saw were probably things called guns,” and then he also pitches names.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** The concept of names, which is not an idea that they're making use of. And he also briefly pitches: books. He's like, “These things are great, and you can learn from them.”

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, by the way, they're super useful.

**Dre:** You should take a look in this book.

**Keith:** It has a lot of stuff about human society in there.

**Austin:** Hey, penguin? How do you know how to read?

**Dre:** Don't worry about it.

**Sylvia:** Ate a guy that could read.

**Keith:** Came out knowing. They came out knowing.

**Austin:** Came out knowing.

**Jack:** Oh, Austin.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** Came out knowing how to read. Came out knowing what a queen was.

**Jack:** This is— right.

**Austin:** But not what names were.

**Keith:** The Queen's been—

**Jack:** No, this is— I can understand. This is a common misconception, Austin.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, sorry. Please let me know.

**Jack:** Penguins can read. [Keith laughs]

**Austin:** Oh, penguins can read!

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Now I understand.

**Keith:** Well, also, the Queen's been thinking to them telepathically in English the whole time.

**Austin:** Sure. Sure, sure, sure.

**Dre:** Oh.

**Keith:** Which is weird. Oh, we skipped, just really quick, some sort of important stuff here, of Kite giving Gon and Killua a second chance to back out before they head to the NGL.

**Austin:** Oh, this is the big— he says this earlier. Can we wait for this until we can talk about it all at once with the final shots of this episode?

**Keith:** Oh, yeah, sure, sure. Did I miss that?

**Austin:** No, no, no. I'm saying, like, [Keith: Oh, okay.] let's bucket those two things together.

**Keith:** Got it.

**Austin:** ‘Cause it ends returning to that big idea, and I don't want to [Sylvia: Yeah.] talk about that without the followup conversation with Gon and Killua, you know?

**Keith:** Sure. Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah. I mean, it's worth saying that maybe post this D<sup>2</sup> thing and the NGL sort of being introduced, like, this second Clancy-esque plot about this cartel, and then the ants immediately being like, “What you saw are probably things called guns. Humans have things called names,” I am beginning to suspect that this is an arc about—

**Keith:** Guns.

**Jack:** To put this another way, there is something here that I don't have enough to get a sense of yet, but I can feel moving like a dark shape sort of next to me in the show. You know, the combination of the geopolitics, the armed units, be they the ants or these white-clad people or the Hunters who are like, “We don't have friendly relations with this.” There is something about growth of a population, between the NGL as, like, anti-tech and the ants, you know, growing and learning, and then also control of a populace, the way that populations are controlled. There is something being worked here that I can't quite get into focus yet but I think is, like, sympathetic with a lot of the themes that are already being spun up. And this is really interesting and potentially tricky waters to sail through, because anytime you start comparing a populace to like, “these people breed like ants, and they grow, and they're voracious and all-consuming,” you start getting into some really ugly language.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**[2:45:06]**

**Jack:** And that could be being deployed deliberately. You know, that could be the road that we're going down. It could be being deployed thoughtlessly. I really have no idea where we're going here, but I can sort of feel these, like, these building blocks, of like, what does it mean to see the ants developing society? What does it mean that these ants are presented as a sort of apocalyptic inhuman threat but, at the same time, by

episode three, are already talking about the value of names? What happens when we thrown in this sort of, like, reclusive anti-tech country that is sort of bordered by these other things and then a drug cartel operating in and around it? I don't know. I mean, I can sense that the flags are being put down, and I am so curious to see the way the show starts to, you know, work those levers.

**Austin:** If I can problematize something too, you know, one of the things that I think is interesting is we've already started talking about, like, "oh, and yet, Togashi shows them as being just like us," which is a classic way to be able to have a sort of fictionalized and, you know, a fantasy other culture, right? In this case, these ants. And then go, "Well, wait a second. Like, they're not a direct stand-in for blah blah blah blah. Look. Or they're not monsters, they're just like us." This one wears a onesie.

**Jack:** Right, exactly.

**Austin:** This one reads books. There is the second step you have to then do as a reader and a critic and also as a writer or as a storyteller, which is, "Okay, well, how are we showing that they're just like us? Like, what are the behaviors that we are assuming are universal human behaviors that then indicate that they have some redeeming humany quality, and what are the ones that we're saying are monstrous qualities?" Do you know what I mean? So, like...and what ones are being, like, treated as if they're not anything at all?

**Jack:** Yep.

**Austin:** You know, so, you'll commonly have something where it's like, "Oh, here are orcs in *Lord of the Rings*. They bang on drums, and that is monstrous," right? And it's like, well, wait a second. That's a human-type quality, right? And then you have something like, you know, when we make our orcs in *Hieron*, the first thing we do is like, "Oh yeah, they, like, read books." And it's like, wait, what am I saying? Why is that the thing I go to to make them more traditionally— this is me doing a little self critique. Why was that where we went to, to be like, "That proves that they're not monstrous," right?

**Jack:** Yeah, the book is the site of a sort of, like...

**Austin:** Elevated...

**Jack:** This is where we find, like, a— yeah.

**Austin:** So, I see what you're saying. Like, in other words, yes, if you really go down this road, it becomes a bit of a minefield when you say there is this othered species that's a stand-in— that you're deploying a lot of real life terminology. They breed like insects, you know, they are part of this backwards part of the world, blah blah blah blah— quote, unquote, you know, part of the world, blah blah blah blah blah.

**Jack:** And then setting it on, like, a geopolitical scale too, right? With like...

**Austin:** Exactly. I think...I'm curious to see where you'll stand on it when it's all said and done.

**Jack:** Yeah, me too.

**Austin:** Because I do think, even from this episode, where I was, was like, "Okay, Togashi's going to tell a story about what it means to be human and what human society is," and less "Togashi has some ideas about the drug cartels," you know?

**Jack:** Yeah. Oh, yeah, definitely, but if there's one thing I know about Yoshihiro Togashi, he will do something like getting really excited about art forgery for, you know... [quiet laughter]

**Austin:** For, yeah, three episodes. Yes.

**Jack:** Yeah. Because now the ants are learning about names. They— our commander says, "Humans can do more than cry and—" no. Someone says, I think it's maybe the alligator.

**Keith:** The alligator, yeah.

**Jack:** "It turns out that humans can do more than cry and run away," and the commander says, "This isn't a surprise. Humans have unique traits. Their blood, after all, flows through our veins."

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** We get more of this new era of Chimera Ants. We get lady with pink hair. We get some sort of cheetah man.

**Jack:** Yeah, we are now completely off the deep end. It's great. [Dre chuckles]

**Austin:** We get some sort of panda bear or something? With, like, a durag and a gold chain. [Austin and Sylvia laugh]

**Jack:** Yeah, we get one, like, very pointy-nosed bug.

**Sylvia:** Oh, right.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Jack:** Like a sort of...like a bug leaning forwards?

**Keith:** I know exactly what that guy is.

**Austin:** Yeah, me too.

**Keith:** Should I tell you what he is?

**Jack:** Yeah, what is he?

**Keith:** He's, like, a crayfish. He's like a— yeah.

**Jack:** Oh, he's great!

**Keith:** He's a...

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

**Dre:** He's some kind of shellfish, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. I love the frog that you got here.

**Keith:** Yeah, the frog.

**Jack:** At this point...

**Keith:** Yeah, the frog with the cheetah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** This guy looks like he gets along with the bird.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** By this point, the pink-haired lady looks like she could just be one of the Spiders, you know? [Keith laughs]

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** She is a pink-haired human with a scorpion tail.

**Dre:** She's a *Darkstalkers* character.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** She is, yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. Big scorpion tail, and that's it.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Otherwise, she's in, like, beachwear.

**Jack:** The sleeves on the panda bear are so good!

**Austin:** I know. It has a cross on. That's a cross.

**Keith:** That's a cross.

**Austin:** Like, what are we doing?

**Keith:** Born with that cross.

**Austin:** Born with that cross.

**Sylvia:** They're Catholic.

**Austin:** They're Catholic.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Jack:** I did not predict that I might be joining the Chimera Ant war on the side of the Chimera Ants. [Austin and Keith laugh] Yes, this is—

**Keith:** It is an interesting wrinkle to the conversation, Jack, that you and Austin were just having about, like, what they're saying about the ants, that like, the thing that makes them human isn't necessarily the qualities that they have but that they literally received those qualities from an actual human.

**Austin:** From an actual human, right. [Jack laughs]

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** They have human blood, literally. Right.

**Jack:** Yes.

**Austin:** Also, like, some of them wear clothes. Some of them don't, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Which I think is actually a really smart way to circumvent some of the stuff I was just talking about.



**Jack:** They complain about having a headache when the Queen talks to us. She says, “If only the Queen could just talk like us.”

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** And then there's a little—

**Austin:** Because she doesn't talk.

**Keith:** No.

**Austin:** Vocaly.

**Jack:** No, she speaks telepathically.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Okay. Then there's a little sort of...the *Dragon Age: Inquisition* sequence as the Chimera Ant Queen takes her throne and the various squadron leaders come before her with plans. They ask if they can fortify the base, and the leader is— the Queen is like, “Yep, of course.” then they say, “We'd also like some names,” and the turtle describes the name as, “A label, my Queen, that can be used to identify.” This just made me think of the way that the commander described the value of speech as, like, speaking is for listening, [**Keith:** Mm.] receiving, and understanding orders.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Jack:** And now turtle is saying, like, a name is a label for identifying things.

**Keith:** You know what I always get from that? I get that he's kind of not telling the whole truth on purpose.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Oh, no. He's like...he is like...

**Keith:** He knows his audience.

**Jack:** He's like, "We want names."

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Oh shit. Should I reread *The Island of Doctor Moreau* as we move into Chimera Ant? [Austin and Dre laugh]

**Sylvia:** Bonus episode.

**Jack:** I'm like, there might be something here.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** We watch the Marlon Brando movie.

**Jack:** Oh god! [laughs] Holy shit.

**Sylvia:** I've seen that multiple times, for some reason.

**Austin:** Same. Yeah, for some reason.

**Dre:** Huh.

**Keith:** I have the Queen's quote here that I think is interesting, after they walk away. She's like, "Fine, get names. Do the defense stuff. I'm busy with the King." And then she's sort of thinking, "Curious creatures. They desire things called names to be distinct. I suppose I'm just as peculiar. Perhaps I too have faint traces of human blood within me," which makes a lot of sense.

**Jack:** It's, uh, scary.

**Keith:** She's talking to—

**Austin:** Are they even ants?

**Keith:** Are they even ants?

**Sylvia:** [hushed] Are they even ants?

**Keith:** She's talking to her unborn King. She says, "I promise you this. You will stand at the pinnacle of all species," and then she sees her three private eggs away from all the other eggs.

**Jack:** Sort of lieutenants.

**Keith:** And reveals that these are royal guards that she wants to name herself. This idea of names had stuck hard.

**Jack:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** What was it? The hegemony of what? The hegemony of...

**Jack:** The food chain.

**Keith:** The hegemony of the food chain.

**Austin:** Of the food chain. I think the top of the— listen, some ideas rise to the top of the food chain.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Names.

**Keith:** Names. Oh, that's a good one.

**Austin:** I mean, this is a real *Metal Gear* thing. You haven't gotten to *Metal Gear Solid 5* yet, right, Keith?

**Keith:** Uh, I've played—

**Austin:** Language ends up being—

**Keith:** That's the one that I've played.

**Austin:** Okay. Okay. There's a whole bunch of shit in that game [Sylvia chuckles] about language and language and virality and the power of a dominant language.

**Jack:** Oh, there's some amazing stuff with...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** The Queen has kind of a skull face.

**Austin:** She does. It's true. [Dre laughs]

**Sylvia:** Just saying.

**Austin:** Oh, ooh, ooh. Here's a game pitch. Ready? I know we talked in the past about, like, "oh, there should be a Greed Island game." Here's what I want. I want a game where you are— it's Outer Heaven, except it's the Queen's castle, and you are playing a random Chimera Ant, and you have to go recruit—that is, capture—humans who turn into other Chimera Ants.

**Jack:** Yeah!

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah, Fulton balloon them away.

**Austin:** Yes. And then, like, you call the penguin up on the Codec, and you're like, "What's this?" and then he's like, "Well, that's called a gun." [Dre and Jack chuckles] And you're like, "A gun?"

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And that's, like, you know, he's your guy who tells you about the human world. Give me that but *Metal Gear Solid 5*. Thank you.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** To your point about— and, you know, we're seeing this happen live in front of us, as Togashi and the crew are trying to do it as quickly and efficiently as possible in three episodes, and it is a delight to behold, in the same way that we're like, "What side are we on?" when the white-clad people show up in the Chimera Ant village. When the squadron leaders are talking to the Ant Queen, what side are we on?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. We're on the squadron leaders side, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Absolutely. We're, like, the Ant Queen is something different. She is, you know.

**Austin:** Yep.

**Jack:** And already a hierarchy, like a social hierarchy is emerging, because she's got her little elite royal guards kept away from the other people. She's going to name them herself. I would—

**Keith:** And they're kind of complaining about the Queen.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I would put money that when those three eggs hatch, invariably in the next couple of episodes, they are going to be strange frightening-looking Chimera Ants and not a panda in a durag, a woman with a scorpion tail, and a frog.

**Sylvia:** [knowingly] All right.

**Austin:** Interesting.

**Keith:** Let's put a mark on that prediction.

**Austin:** I'm just going to— I'm going to break one rule. I'm not going to say anything spoilery, but I am going to say that when they showed up, when the three royal guards showed up in the eggs, I popped in a way that I did not expect, so.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Oh, interesting.

**Keith:** I'm also excited for, in a little while, to be able to reveal the secret hidden screenshot that was deemed too spoilery.

**Sylvia:** Oh my god, yeah.

**Austin:** Oh, is this— ooh.

**Sylvia:** Yeah! Which you say like it's not.

**Keith:** What's that?

**Sylvia:** You say like it's not that spoilery.

**Keith:** I— again, I always thought it was on the line, which is why I presented it as, "What do we think about this? Is it too on the line?"

**Sylvia:** I'm glad you did.

**Keith:** And it's not that I disagree with the conclusion that it was over the line. I only disagree with how obvious everyone else thought it was that it was over the line.

**Austin:** Mm. [Jack laughs]

**Sylvia:** I think it's wild to me that you didn't.

**Austin:** I don't remember what it is, so someone will have to resend it to me.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** We have a lot of new music here, before we close out. I missed—

**Austin:** Well, we should go back and talk about the scene that we skipped over also.

**Keith:** Oh, sure. These are all ant songs, though, so maybe I should play them now.

**Austin:** Oh, yeah. Sure. Let's hear them.

**Jack:** Let's work through the ant songs.

**Austin:** Let's hear the ant songs.

**Keith:** Okay. So, when the...during the last invasion of the ants onto one of the villages, we have this song called "Nowhere to Escape". I really like this one.

[clip of "Nowhere to Escape" begins]

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Austin:** Ooh.

**Sylvia:** God, good soundtrack in this part.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

[music ends]

**Jack:** It's really hard to write like this. This kind of, like... [Keith chuckles] There's a great conversation quote from composer and musical writer Steven Sondheim where he remembers being a kid and asking his piano teacher—who was some, you know, legendary former composer—to teach him atonality, and the piano teacher said, like, "Look, you haven't mastered tonality yet. Talk to me when we're done with that."

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** "And, you know, then we can start teaching you that." And I think that, you know,

definitely when I was younger, I was like, “Well, atonality’s got to be easier, right? Because, you know, you’re not following the same rules of how tone works.” And it’s like, oh dear, you’ve turned and opened a much more complicated, much more involved box of how you think about sounds, how you think about sounds interacting. I find it a real headache to write.

**Keith:** A couple times this has shown up now. It is actually another one from the very end of the— the last episode of Greed Island had me saying, like, “It’s crazy that this is here. This is a Chimera Ant song.” This is “Unmasked Advice”.

[clip of “Unmasked Advice” begins]

**Keith:** To me, this is the Chimera Ant song.

**Sylvia:** It is. I think we talked about it a little last ep.

**Jack:** This is such a lovely cue. I find this...the tiny little...‘cause, like, the bass—

**Keith:** The bend in the bass.

**Jack:** And the sort of, like, hissing percussion are the really distinctive things, but you can also hear the harmony instruments playing these little third harmonies up on the strings behind it.

**Keith:** Yeah. Slow.

**Jack:** That really give it this color.

**Sylvia:** I will be real. I hear this, and I think, “Do you remember what day it is today, Jack?” which is from *Metal Gear Solid 2*, not our friend Jack. [Keith, Jack, and Dre laugh] ‘Cause it is so Big Shell Incident, but it also, like...

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Sylvia:** It is one of those things where you get kind of pavlovianly trained to, like, oh, this music cue is happening. Time for some sinister business.



**Keith:** And then the last one here. This is when the Queen is looking at her royal guards. This is “The Anthill”.

[clip of “The Anthill” plays]

**Jack:** Ditto, what key are we in? You know, we're definitely in a key, but how are you going to sit down and start writing that? It's great. It's great. I cannot believe that I had not considered for one moment that we would like the Chimera Ants. [Keith laughs] I just—

**Keith:** Do you want to remind people what, up until the very last minute, your guess was for the Chimera Ants? Because I thought it was really fun.

**Jack:** I thought we were basically going to play Cylon games. You know, I thought that a Chimera Ant was a shapeshifting ant, which I was sort of right about. They're not quite shapeshifting in that way. A shapeshifting ant, and we would go into a very large scale complex plot of “are you who I think you are, or have you been replaced by a Chimera Ant?”

**Keith:** *The Thing*. We're doing *The Thing* with ants.

**Jack:** We're doing *The Thing* with Chimera Ants. You know, we're three episodes into a 60 episode arc, and so I want to be careful about saying something like, for example, “the Chimera Ants are very simple.” But part of what is so interesting about this plot is that the thing that is driving them is a really straightforward narrative idea, right? Which is that, like, the Chimera Ant Queen consumes things, and then she produces traits of the things she has consumed, and you just spin that out into: “Here is an army of Chimera Ants. Oh, whoops, we've accidentally created society, and what does that mean?”

**[2:30:33]**

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** It's such a simple pitch, and I could see Togashi coming up with it and going, “Oh

boy. I'm going to be here for a while." [Austin and Jack chuckle]

**Keith:** These three episodes had nine new tracks, including one unreleased/unknown untitled song that I didn't play. And I can see here, on the site that I use, the Hunter × Hunter (2011) OST List website, that there are one, two and a half full CDs worth of new tracks for this season.

**Austin:** Wow.

**Dre:** Wow.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Jeez.

**Keith:** I counted it in the *Dragon Ball Z* episode. There was 54 new tracks for this, I think?

**Jack:** That's astonishing.

**Austin:** Yeah. [Dre chuckles]

**Keith:** It's crazy! And we heard nine of them today.

**Jack:** Can you think about how tiring that would be? [chuckles]

**Keith:** I know. I know. The pace is outrageous.

**Jack:** You know, you're making it over a long period of time, but at the same time, you are...

**Austin:** You are, yeah. Yeah.

**Jack:** You're being asked to write so— I mean, we're making it over a long period of time, but I don't know what the schedule was like for Hirano and his team, right?

**Keith:** Right.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** In terms of, like, when can you get the stuff that you can start composing to? You are obviously doing a lot of pre-prep stuff, right? You know, I imagine you would read the thing. You'd read *Hunter × Hunter* or you'd watch the '91 thing, and you would be like, "All right, I'm writing for Chimera Ants, you know, in probably this amount of time, so I'm going to start sketching for that." But, you know, you're probably not getting the episodes or rough cuts of the episodes for ages.

**Austin:** Sorry, to be clear, you wouldn't watch the '99 take on Chimera Ant, because it didn't exist.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** What?!

**Austin:** We're out of—

**Sylvia:** Couldn't have existed.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, we're out of that now, right? Greed Island was the end.

**Jack:** So, when does the '99—? It ends on Greed Island!

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** It ends before Greed Island. Right.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Ends before Greed Island?

**Keith:** Greed Island—

**Sylvia:** Greed Island's an OVA.

**Keith:** It ends where Greed Island starts.

**Austin:** I see. I see, I see, I see.

**Jack:** What's fun is that people who have read the manga are probably feeling the same was as we are, as we are about the '91 thing going, where, you know, they learn that the *Hunter × Hunter* anime stops at a certain point, and they're like, "Oh my god, but there's so much more!"

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** So, we're back on the airship.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Jack:** Yeah, actually...

**Austin:** Let's go back to this conversation.

**Jack:** Austin, do you want to jump back further and kind of introduce where you wanted to get into this?

**Austin:** Yeah, it's the scene that— yeah, yeah, 'cause Keith, you were going to go back to them waiting for the airship.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** Where Kite says to them— you know, they're waiting. Everyone has their bags. There's the sort of, like, departures sign, arrival and departure sign in the background. And Kite kind of walks up to them and says, "It might be a little late to ask you this, but are you sure you want to come along?" and basically explains, like, you know, I have this whole team of people. I have to keep them safe. Like, I can't guarantee your safety. I don't know what things are— I don't know what's going on in the country. You know, it

could be— it could already be chaos, right?

**Keith:** I was wrong.

**Austin:** It could already be— what's up?

**Keith:** The '99 anime does end after Greed Island. I don't know why I thought that it didn't include Greed Island.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Austin:** Yeah, I was pretty sure.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** I was pretty sure that was the case, only 'cause I was just looking at it.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** But yeah. So, Kite explains basically, like, it could be really bad in there. I might not be able to help you. Are you sure you want to come along with me? You're going to have to handle yourselves as Hunters, right?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** And of course—

**Keith:** 'Cause Kite has to handle his crew of non— of amateur Hunters.

**Austin:** Right, which we should have mentioned. They do not have their Hunter's Licenses, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Nope.

**Austin:** They do not—

**Dre:** Okay.

**Austin:** I don't know that they have Nen.

**Dre:** Yeah, I was going to ask.

**Sylvia:** Ponzu doesn't have hers either.

**Austin:** Right, Ponzu doesn't have hers, 'cause she just failed.

**Dre:** What makes them amateur Hunters? Is it just that they don't have a license?

**Austin:** They're being trained by him, but they certainly haven't gone through the Hunter Exam.

**Dre:** Right.

**Keith:** Yeah. I think probably the best way to take the Hunter Exam is to go in knowing it's a lock.

**Austin:** Right.

**Jack:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Keith:** That's how I would do it.

**Jack:** How Killua does it.

**Sylvia:** And Kite did it that way too, interestingly enough. Hey.

**Austin:** Yes. Yeah. Totally.

**Jack:** Yeah. Yeah, we hear earlier that Kite basically was like, "You know, Ging trained me, and then I took the Hunter Exam, and it was fine."

**Austin:** Right. So the, here's the crux of this scene, is he says to them, like, "You're going to have to protect yourselves." They say, "Yeah, of course, of course, of course." And then he says, you know, "And listen, like, if something happens to me, if I'm the one who's in danger, leave me there and get out. If something—" And Gon and Killua are, like, taken aback by the idea that he would even mention this, right? 'Cause he seems invincible to them, presumably. And he's like, "You got it?"

**Keith:** And he says as much too. He's like, "Do you think he was being serious when he said that?"

**Austin:** Yeah, 100%.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And we don't—

**Keith:** "Do you think it's even possible that Ging would know someone that couldn't handle themselves?" [Jack chuckles]

**Austin:** And that's the final conversation that they have in this episode, right?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Is, yeah, "Do you think that that's real?" and like, "Do you think we should escape if he's in danger?" And of course Gon is like, "Absolutely not."

**Sylvia:** We never would.

**Jack:** But Gon delivers a fun little new line here. Sorry, Sylvi. I interrupted you.

**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah? You might be saying the line I was about to say, so go right ahead.

**Jack:** So, I mean, I do really love that, yeah, to your point, Austin and Keith, the first thing Gon says is, "I'm not sure Kite actually could get into danger," which is like...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** It's worth saying that this is the most obvious flag being planted, for anybody who has ever seen a story, you know? You're like...

**Keith:** Yeah. Second most, Kurt.

**Jack:** Yeah, yeah, Kurt. Sorry, Kurt.

**Keith:** Sorry, Kurt.

**Jack:** RIP, or maybe not! Maybe a new kind of life.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** No, Kurt is dead.

**Dre:** Kurt 2.

**Keith:** A new kind of life with a slightly different sounding name. [Austin chuckles]

**Jack:** Yeah. [laughs] Yes. Which we'll learn, maybe one day. Gon says, "You know, I'm going to help him if he does get in danger, and you don't need to worry about it, Killua, because I've, like, run a lot of simulations in my head to, like, figure it out."

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

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

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Famous thinker, Gon Freecss.

**Jack:** It's so funny, 'cause like, you—

**Keith:** Killua—

**Jack:** I believe that he thinks he has, but what he's actually done is he's like, "If Kite had



a boulder fall on him, I'd save him! [Austin laughs] Um, if Kite was attacked by a bear, I'd save him! I'd save him!"

**Keith:** Yeah, Killua, when Gon is first like, "No, I don't think we'll run away. I've done a lot of thinking. I think that we should save him," Killua goes, "Damn it, you had such a serious look on your face. I was expecting something big. If someone says you should abandon them, there's no way you'd ever do it."

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** It's just like, same old stuff. This is just the same shit you're always doing.

**Sylvia:** Yep.

**Keith:** And then this is where Gon is like, "No, I really mean it! I was thinking about this."

**Austin:** Yeah. Well, and—

**Jack:** And then—

**Austin:** Go ahead.

**Jack:** Killua reveals that he hasn't actually decided what to do, or what he would do in this situation, or he says he hasn't. He says, you know, "I haven't resolved to stay yet." He says, "Look, I don't really do these hypotheticals. I never decide til it's time."

**Austin:** What did Killua's father tell him?

**Sylvia:** Yep.

**Austin:** Or not father, Illumi. Illumi, right?

**Jack:** When?

**Austin:** Forever ago.

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Jack:** Oh.

**Sylvia:** Don't fight anyone who's stronger than you? Is that what you're referring to?

**Austin:** Don't fight anyone who's stronger than you.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** I think— was it that, or was it directly “don't fight anyone that you, like, aren't guaranteed to beat”?

**Austin:** Aren't confident you'll beat, yeah.

**Sylvia:** I think, yeah, that's the more specific version.

**Austin:** And he was kind of dismissive of that because of who it was telling him that, but like, I don't know that it is true that Killua doesn't make hypotheticals. I think he just is different about them than Gon is.

**Jack:** He's cautious about [**Dre:** Yeah.] the ones that he's making, yeah. 'Cause we've also seen Killua put that advice from his older brother, [**Keith:** Yeah.] from his demonstrably capable, [**Austin:** Yeah.] demonstrably evil older brother, into action over the entire Yorknew City Arc, right?

**Keith:** Part of—

**Austin:** Right.

**Jack:** Killua was always the one saying, “Don't threaten the Spiders,” you know?

**Keith:** Part of what Illumi was saying wasn't just, “Don't do this, don't fight someone stronger than you,” he was also saying, “You WON'T fight someone stronger than you.”

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** You won't stick your neck out for someone.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** You will do the smart thing, do the safe thing, run away.

**Austin:** Right. Yeah.

**Keith:** You can't help your friend, and that's why you can't have friends.

**Austin:** And that's why you can't have friends. Meanwhile, Killua's saying, of Gon, "You would disregard someone telling you not to stay back and help them, even if it was someone you believed in and trusted and loved. No one will ever convince you not to try to save them."

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You will always try to save the person, right?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And it's not said in this language, but we're three episodes away from Gon being like, "I'm sorry for being selfish, but I want to [**Jack:** Mm-hmm.] beat Genthru by myself in a legit way."

**Keith:** Yep.

**Keith:** Yeah. I have a good idea.

**Austin:** Right? And there's all sorts of— we're pulling on all those throughlines here as we start a new arc.

**Jack:** This is part of what I talk about, in terms of Togashi's skill at weaving this all

together. Keith talked about in the past, you know, Togashi is constantly making use of stuff. He's constantly planning. He's putting stuff down. You don't know when he's going to pick it back up again. And often what that looks like in progress is this sort of scattershot, you know, what is on his desk, why has he chosen to put that there?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Mm.

**Keith:** Ging-coded.

**Jack:** But over and over. [laughs] Yeah, I mean, to Austin's point about authors, right?

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** Over and over, he is constantly saying, you know, "I'm resurfacing the potatoes in this stew."

**Austin:** Right.

**Jack:** Or I'm resurfacing the meat or whatever, and you're going, "Oh." [Dre chuckles]

**Keith:** I forgot this had meat. [laughs]

**Austin:** And all this, one more time, is just, you know, would he say this— would he have— okay. I think Killua's right. He wouldn't run away, no matter what. Would he have put the thought he did in? 'Cause I take Gon at his word here. I think you were saying, you know, this is one of the new things we heard, is the idea that he ran a bunch of simulations in his head, right? He started thinking through what the possibilities could be, right? Maybe a little early Ging planning happening here but much more childishly.

**Jack:** And probably not well, but he's trying.

**Sylvia:** He's trying.

**Austin:** Probably not well, but he's thinking through the scenarios and how to make them work in his favor. Would he do that if it wasn't Kite, the guy who saved him on

Whale Island, the first person who told him about his dad, the guy who, you know, was his dad's disciple or his dad's trainee or whatever, and—

**Sylvia:** Disciple works.

**Keith:** You're saying because it's Kite is the only reason he even considered running away.

**Austin:** No, no, no. Yeah. Or listening to the request.

**Keith:** Right.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Austin:** Not running away.

**Jack:** Yeah, I think you're right.

**Austin:** Taking the request seriously.

**Keith:** Right. If he wasn't Kite, if it was just someone else, he wouldn't even question running back into the burning building.

**Austin:** Yes. Also Kite who, again, has the same color palette as Killua.

**Sylvia:** Yep.

**Austin:** Who has the sort of mirroring of the Ging— sorry, the mirroring of the Gon and Killua stuff. Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** 'Cause I don't think he would.

**Jack:** No.

**Austin:** I think if Bisky had said, "And if it's me who goes— if something goes bad with me in this plan, you run away," he wouldn't have given it a fucking second thought.

**Keith:** Wouldn't this be such a sad outcome, for Killua to be Gon's Kite?

**Austin:** It would be so sad.

**Sylvia:** Well, so, here's— it would be.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** And here's something that, I don't know— we're going long, so I'm sorry for bringing this up now, but Kite is kind of both of them, right?

**Austin:** Sure. Sure.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Like, there's a lot of Gon in Kite too, it's just he has a lot of more of Killua's mannerisms, but like, when you look at what Kite is doing and the way, like, the traits that Kite shares with Gon, [**Keith:** Yeah.] there is the, like— we talked about it a little bit with the surrogate father stuff [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] that Ging kind of ends up playing with the, like, good with animals, obviously adoration for Ging, but like, seems to be— was a natural talent with Nen.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Or seemingly, like, could infer that, given the way that Ging talks about Kite, being like, "Oh yeah, you clearly have the potential to be a good Hunter, because animals like you."

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Like, it's— I think it's like— I don't know, just something to keep in mind, that like, this could be the grown up version of either of them.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** What that makes me think is, like, Gon and Ging are excited by lots of things in the world, and Kite [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] has found the thing that excites him, and Killua's said

multiple times, like, “I’m still figuring out what it is I want to do, so for now, I’ll just kind of follow you around.”

**Sylvia:** That’s true. I do think the comparison between Kite and Killua is a little stronger, but I just feel like [**Keith:** Yeah.] if I didn’t say that, it would be remiss, you know?

**Austin:** Right.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It’s like, if either Kite— sorry, if either Gon or Killua grew up to be Kite, that would be a really nice happy ending for either of them.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** But only Gon could grow up to become Ging.

**Keith:** Right.

**Sylvia:** Yes. Yes. Exactly.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Not that Killua couldn’t grow up to be a terrible person too, but a different type of terrible person.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, Killua could grow up to be Silva.

**Austin:** Right. Exactly.

**Keith:** I did say— I said earlier, a second ago, that it would be sad if Killua grew up to be like Kite. Specifically what I mean is if Killua grew up to, like, wish that he—

**Austin:** Yes.

**Keith:** Just following Gon’s trail around still.

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

**Austin:** Yes.

**Keith:** But like, Gon had blew past him and sort of left Killua to, like, live in the wake.

**Austin:** Right.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** If Killua ended up being just the first of many temporary really high intensity friendships Gon would to on to have [**Keith:** Yeah.] and then moved past.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

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

**Keith:** Do we have anything else for this episode?

**Jack:** Oh, just, I think it's notable, because so much of what we've talked about with Kite is him watching things.

**Sylvia:** Yes, yes.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Is, you know, reading his expression. This scene ends just so simply, with like, the camera pulling out to show that Kite has been watching them talk.

**Keith:** This show's so good at that, at just, like, having people watching.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

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

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Well, and it mirrors the previous campfire scene, [**Keith:** Yeah.] where it's Kite



and Gon talking, and Killua is the one watching them and, like, trying to read what emotionally is happening between the two of them.

**Jack:** Yeah, totally.

## **Final Thoughts [3:14:16]**

**Keith:** Well. Let's, uh...

**Jack:** Amazing episodes so far.

**Keith:** Yeah, you're into the ants?

**Jack:** Yeah, I'm into the ants. I'm pro-ant.

**Sylvia:** [chuckles] Me too, man.

**Austin:** Well, let's see if they can hold up for another 50, 60 episodes.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah. [chuckles] 59 episodes?

**Jack:** What is going to— I have no idea where we are going. Because here's the thing, right? Here's the thing. We talked about, you know, at this point, Austin, you were thinking, you know, he's telling a story about people, he's telling a story about, like, what it means to be a human. You know, I think I'm there too. I think we're working through that. We have all this interesting stuff with the cartel. We have interesting stuff with the NGL. You could do this arc in less than 60 episodes.

**Austin:** In 12 episodes. Right. Yep.

**Jack:** You know? It's big stuff to talk about, but Togashi has demonstrated that he can work through those ideas at almost any pace he wants, to greater or lesser success. Put it this way: Yorknew City was an extremely involved revenge story and cascading hostage situation.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** And, you know, moved through it fairly expeditiously. I don't think there is anything about “tell a story about a burgeoning ant society and discovery of, you know, the self, set inside an unstable political region” that requires it to be 60 episodes long.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** So what is going to happen?

**Keith:** It makes me think of, again, going back to *Yu Yu Hakusho*, a series that has multiple great short arcs, the most famous of which— the most famous arc, though, is the Dark Tournament arc, right in the middle of the series, which is 46 episodes long and comprises 41% of the entire run time of the show.

**Jack:** Wow. Wow!

**Sylvia:** Jack, you said, you, like, couldn't predict what's going to happen. Do you want to try, though? [Keith and Austin laugh]

**Jack:** Um...

**Keith:** Yeah, this is, like...it's not your last shot, but it's the best shot.

**Sylvia:** You don't gotta.

**Keith:** Right.

**Sylvia:** But I figured I'd ask.

**Jack:** Yeah. Okay. Let's see.

**Keith:** The closer we get from half court, the less satisfying the guess is going to be.

**Sylvia:** Exactly.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Jack:** You're right. It's the King. The Ant King is going to produce— is going to throw a wrench into the works, one way or another. Either initial ant expansion is going to be so mindbogglingly successful, so violently, like, consuming beyond their wildest dreams, [Sylvia: Mm-hmm] that the ants under the Ant King start operating on a much bigger level, and this becomes a story about the, like, full-scale fate of the world. Again, I think you could do that in a shorter run of episodes. My suspicion is that the Chimera Ants are both going to continue to grow and are going to start splintering in really odd ways.

**Sylvia:** Hmm.

**Jack:** You know, individual Chimera Ant factions are going to start. But I don't know why it— you know, something needs to happen that is, like, afterburners fire, you know?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** It's like, uh...

**Keith:** What do you mean by afterburners fire? Like...

**Sylvia:** Something needs to, like, propel things?

**Keith:** You need fuel for that to happen?

**Austin:** Yeah, you need, like, a big...

**Jack:** Why do y'all keep talking about propulsion and things?

**Sylvia:** I'm asking questions!

**Keith:** Oh, the— I need to solve that. The propel was just that they literally are, like, thrown [Sylvia: Yeah.] magically from Greed Island into where the ants are.

**Jack:** Oh, sure. I see. Okay. [chuckles]

**Sylvia:** Keith was doing wordplay that he really likes.

**Austin:** Mm. [chuckles]

**Keith:** I referenced it at the very beginning of this episode as well.

**Jack:** They are literally thrown into the Chimera Ant Arc.

**Keith:** Right, yes.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah, I don't know. I feel like...I feel like I am looking at two thirds of an object right now, and the one third of it is going to— and as soon as I see what that is, I'm going to be like, "All right, here we go."

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And I think it is something to do with the King. You know, we are building up to the King's arrival. I am almost certain that that's this figure that we've seen multiple times. It's...

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** We see its eyes over the planet or over a planet. That might be it.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Jack:** We might be moving at a much, much bigger scale.

**Sylvia:** Aliens!

**Austin:** Aliens.

**Keith:** Jack, looking at an iceberg above the water, saying, "I'm looking at two thirds of an object right now." [Keith, Austin, and Jack laugh]

**Sylvia:** Get 'em.

**Jack:** I'm thrilled. I'm so excited. You know, I said it before, but at the end of every arc, I've had a sense of where we're going next, you know, in terms of plot. And at the end of Greed Island, all I knew is: Chimera Ants are coming.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** What does that mean? I don't know. Where is it going to take place? I don't know.

**Sylvia:** ["I don't know" sound]

**Jack:** What are the stakes? I don't know.

**Keith:** It's 62 episodes of gorilla.

**Jack:** It is 62 episodes of the gorilla game, yeah. Absolutely.

**Sylvia:** Wow. What if Goreinu got ate? [Austin laughs] Would it make, like, gorilla ants too? Like, could the...

**Austin:** Oh.

**Sylvia:** Could the Queen eat the gorillers?

**Austin:** What would happen?

**Jack:** Here's my other question.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Jack:** Nobody has ever been more excited about anyone in the world than Yoshihiro Togashi has been about Nen, you know?

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Jack:** He wakes up in the morning—

**Austin:** Hasn't really shown up much in these episodes.

**Jack:** But it is weird how Nen hasn't showed up much in these episodes. [Sylvia laughs quietly]

**Keith:** It is weird.

**Jack:** So...so, the ants are going to get Nen, and all hell is going to break loose? I don't know! We also saw—

**Austin:** How would the ants get Nen?

**Jack:** Uh, well, because Nen is a thing that every— that is, like, a— it's like to do with yourself, right? It's like a part of selfhood.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** So, you know, if I was—

**Keith:** I thought it comes from Demon World.

**Austin:** Yeah, what happened to— oh, all of a sudden, Demon World Theory has vanished. [Jack laughs]

**Keith:** All of a sudden, Demon World...

**Sylvia:** Or selfhood comes from Demon World.

**Austin:** Ohh.

**Dre:** Ohh.

**Jack:** Quiet about Demon World Theory now. [Jack and Austin laugh]

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Uh, I don't know.

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

**Jack:** And then what's Chrollo doing? We see him in the title sequence with a bunch of weirdos. [Keith laughs]

**Sylvia:** Can I say? That wasn't him.

**Austin:** Yeah, I don't know why you thought Chrollo was in the title sequence.

**Sylvia:** That's not my boyfriend.

**Jack:** What? [Dre laughs]

**Sylvia:** That wasn't Chrollo.

**Keith:** It's very funny who you thought was Chrollo.

**Austin:** It's so funny!

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

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

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I've been sitting on that the entire episode, being like, "I can't bring it up. We moved past it."

**Jack:** I'm pulling up this title sequence. Well, I was like, "This is Chrollo plus some new Spiders," you know? Like...

**Austin:** Oh, buddy.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Dre:** Oh.

**Jack:** He's got new Spiders.

**Austin:** Sylvi, I'm sorry that your boy is being done like this.

**Sylvia:** No, it's okay. It's fine. Ironically, there's a character who has a relationship with that guy that I have with Chrollo. [laughs quietly]

**Jack:** Kite is here...that's Gon...who the fuck is that? I just saw a guy that I've never seen before. He's, like, flying through the sky. He's wearing, like, a purple jacket, [Sylvia laughs] and it looks like his arms and legs and head are falling off?

**Austin:** [knowingly] Yeah, weird. What's up with that guy?

**Sylvia:** [knowingly] Weird.

**Dre:** [knowingly] Weird.

**Jack:** He's got, like, a lantern following him? There's a catgirl.

**Austin:** I gotta tell you, Jack. If you thought you knew anything about what Nen could do... [Jack laughs] Buckle the fuck up, my friend.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Like, I am so glad we watched JoJo before getting here.

**Austin:** Oh, it's important.

**Sylvia:** I am so happy.

**Austin:** Yeah, I think JoJo and then eventually some of the Cell Saga stuff are going to be the two things Jack will have had to see by, like, the mid point of this season.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah. I'm pushing hard for Cell. Speaking of that, we did record the first *Dragon Ball Z* bonus. That will probably be up the week after this is up. We watched episodes—



Dre, was it 13, 14, 15, 16?

**Dre:** Yes. Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Of *Dragon Ball Z Kai* covering pretty much Goku's entire fight with Vegeta from the Saiyan Saga.

**Jack:** I'm pro-Vegeta. These motherfuckers won't show me any Piccolo. [Keith laughs]

**Sylvia:** Well, no. You saw Piccolo. He was just in a state that you weren't happy about.

**Keith:** He was just— right.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Delaware.

**Jack:** He was dead.

**Austin:** It is so hard to— Dre, you did a champion's job [**Keith:** Yeah.] trying to identify episodes to watch, because, like, I truly believe the thing you should do with *Dragon Ball Z* is watch it.

**Keith:** Watch, yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Is watch it, and I know that's not how, Jack, you work. I know that you're— the last episode I listened to, you were talking about, like, not being able to, like, do the classic sit down and watch 10 episodes of things maneuver, that that's just, like, not how you engage with media, which I fully understand.

**Sylvia:** And envy.

**Keith:** I envy. I don't understand, but I do envy. [Jack laughs]

**Sylvia:** I envy it so much.

**Austin:** All I want to do is finish Chimera Ant now.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Like, I just want to watch the whole of it, which I'm not going to do.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** But.

**Keith:** Although you do have a few more episodes to watch.

**Austin:** I do. That's true. We all do.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Hey, sorry. I've just been going through the title sequence.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, what's up?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm?

**Jack:** As far as I feel...you know, they're showing me this thing. I can't really gain—

**Keith:** We shouldn't have called attention to the title sequence.

**Austin:** We shouldn't have.

**Sylvia:** I'm sorry.

**Austin:** I'm a little mad about it.

**Jack:** No, no, no, no, no. No, it's fine, because they're showing me the thing.

**Austin:** Yeah...

**Jack:** What the fuck is this? [Keith laughs]

**Dre:** Oh.

**Austin:** That's a great question, Jack.

**Sylvia:** [knowingly] What the fuck is that?

**Austin:** It's very funny. Jack, I need to— wait, wait, Jack. Stop doing this right now.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Okay?

**Jack:** I have stopped doing this. [laughs] Okay.

**Austin:** Promise me you don't do it again.

**Jack:** Yes, I promise.

**Keith:** Don't do this again, yeah.

**Jack:** I will never do this again. [Dre laughs]

**Austin:** 'Cause there is...like, deadass.

**Keith:** There's fully—

**Sylvia:** No, straight up.

**Keith:** Frame by framing this is dangerous.

**Austin:** It's dangerous.

**Sylvia:** Well, like, this is something they've done before, and I didn't bring it up, because I didn't want— now that we're here and giving the warning, I guess I can bring it up.

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

**Sylvia:** They've given away every arc in every intro.

**Jack:** Have they really? Can you give me an example of that?

**Sylvia:** Genthru's entire shit.

**Keith:** Yeah. Genthru's entire shit is in there.

**Sylvia:** Like, Greed Island in its entirety is basically in the intro. I feel like Phantom Troupe might have been a little less obvious, but yeah.

**Jack:** Wow.

**Keith:** Yeah, because that was such a social conclusion.

**Austin:** Yes. And I think it's cool to have these big cool intros, and if you're watching it in a week-by-week format where you're not then talking about it for three hours with your friends.

**Jack:** Yeah, going through it with a fine toothed comb.

**Austin:** And identifying key themes every week.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You might not identify some of what is going on in the intro, and, like, recognize certain visual elements, for instance.

**Jack:** Yeah, no.

**Austin:** As I am DMing stuff to the group. [chuckles]

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I'm making a—

**Austin:** Which Sylvi just renamed to a thing that you said recently, Jack.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Sylvia:** On a *Dokapon Kingdom* stream.

**Austin:** On the *Dokapon Kingdom* stream, you guessed the name of a character was “Pitou Bricks,” and so now our little private group chat is called “Pitou Bricks”.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. [Jack laughs] Yeah, I thought it— like, it felt like a good time.

**Keith:** Who did you guess the name of?

**Jack:** Oh, someone in the chat said somebody was Pitou.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** Their username was Number1PitouFan.

**Austin:** Number1PitouFan.

**Keith:** Oh, okay, okay. I see.

**Sylvia:** They subbed to the channel. Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** No, I'm making a—

**Keith:** Yeah, this is what we were all referencing at the very beginning of joining the call, right? We all saw this and thought about this?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Okay. Great.

**Austin:** Saw what and thought about what?

**Sylvia:** The thing in our little chat?

**Austin:** Oh, the thing that— yeah, uh huh.

**Keith:** That you posted. Yes, okay, great.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Absolutely.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** How would I not?

**Keith:** I know. Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah, no. I hear the request.

**Austin:** Thank you.

**Jack:** I appreciate that you have said it.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I'm a big believer in, you know, they're showing me the thing, but at the same time, like you said, Austin, you're not going through it every— you know.

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** People are not watching the show in the same way that we are watching the show.

**Austin:** That is right.

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Jack:** I am making a vow on the podcast.

**Dre:** Ooh.

**Austin:** Ooh.

**Sylvia:** Thank you, Jack.

**Austin:** Like a Nen vow?

**Sylvia:** Oh my god!

**Jack:** A contract.

**Keith:** Yeah, one of the conditions is...

**Sylvia:** The dagger has pierced Jack's heart!

**Dre:** Play the music, Keith.

**Sylvia:** Keith, play "Chain Bastard"!

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

[clip of "Chain Bastard" begins]

**Austin:** Yeah!

**Jack:** Yeah!

**Sylvia:** Yeah! [Keith laughs] We gotta make up excuses to play "Chain Bastard" during this season.

**Austin:** Yeah, these days.

**Sylvia:** 'Cause I feel like we're going to need the pick-me-up now and then.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Keith:** How nice is it— I had it right there, though.

**Austin:** It was great.

**Keith:** It could have been on another page, but it was just right next to it.

**Sylvia:** No, I know. Listen, you knew.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** That was your Nen power, is knowing when to play “Chain Bastard”.

**Jack:** What the fuck does—

**Keith:** By the way, you know what button I made but didn't press during the *Dragon Ball* Z thing?

**Sylvia:** Hit it.

**Keith:** Krillin.

**Krillin:** Yahoo! Ahahah!

[laughter]

**Jack:** Oh yeah, this is when he's delighted that he's—

**Sylvia:** Wait, just keep that one on the board. [laughs]

**Dre:** Can you hit the one button that you played a lot from that episode?

**Keith:** No, I got rid of it, because of Sylvi's voice!

**Sylvia:** Because I was mumbling over it?

**Keith:** I was going to make a new one before the next time we record.

**Austin:** No!

**Sylvia:** That's fine.

**Dre:** Aw.

**Sylvia:** There's a really good bit. Enjoy when that comes out. [Dre laughs]



**Keith:** Yeah. So, you should definitely watch those, and...sorry, you should definitely watch those episodes of *Dragon Ball Z* that we talked about forever ago. It hurt my heart that—

**Austin:** Can you say what they were again? What were they?

**Keith:** They were 13, 14, 15, 16 of *Dragon Ball Z Kai*. It hurt my heart that we— there's just no way to watch enough *Dragon Ball Z*— there's no way to watch four episodes of *Dragon Ball Z* and have them mean something.

**Austin:** Yeah, it's so hard.

**Keith:** So we had to watch Kai.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** It hurt me when I couldn't hear my normal Gohan and my normal Bulma, but...

**Sylvia:** Hurt me when I heard that fucking busted-ass opening theme.

**Dre:** Ugh.

**Austin:** What's the opening theme on Kai?

**Sylvia:** It's just bad.

**Dre:** It's the dub version of the song is very bad.

**Austin:** It's the dub version of "Cha-La Head-Cha-La"?

**Keith:** Of "Dragon Soul".

**Dre:** No.

**Keith:** No.

**Sylvia:** No, it's not even...

**Keith:** It's the song called "Dragon Soul".

**Sylvia:** I'm going to...

**Keith:** The sub version I don't think is that bad.

**Austin:** It's not "Rock the Dragon". Did y'all talk about "Rock the Dragon"?

[all talking over each other]

**Dre:** Oh, don't worry. We talked about "Rock the Dragon".

**Jack:** We talked about "Rock the Dragon".

**Austin:** Yeah! [applauds]

**Keith:** People had very controversial opinions.

**Sylvia:** We beat Keith to death with hammers over it.

**Austin:** [imitating NorthernLion] Okay, okay.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** [imitating NorthernLion] Okay, okay. I'll rock the dragon. [Austin laughs] Rock this dragon. Rock this dragon right now. [Jack laughs]

**Austin:** Ohh.

**Keith:** Rock the Dragon, come get me.

**Austin:** Come get me.

**Jack:** What are we watching next time?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Next time, we are watching episodes 79, 80, and 81. Those are titled "No × Good × NGL", "Evil × And × Terrible", and... [Dre and Sylvia laugh]

**Austin:** Hmm.

**Keith:** And “The × Fight × Begins”.

**Jack:** And based on the pace of the last three Chimera Ant episodes, I'm sure we'll be in much the same place as we were by the end of that third episode.

**Sylvia:** I straight up might go watch them right now.

**Keith:** I'm sorry, there's one more. We're actually also watching 82, “Kite × And × Slots”.

**Austin:** Oh.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Jack:** Oh, Crazy Slots.

**Keith:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Crazy Slots. [chuckles]

**Austin:** Well, yeah. I guess Crazy Slots, right?

**Sylvia:** [laughing] Every time you say that, I think about, like, Inside the NBA for some reason, [Dre laughs] of them being like, “What’s it called, Ernie?” “Crazy Slots.”

**Austin:** Crazy Slots.

**Sylvia:** “I could hit Crazy Slots all weekend.” [laughter]

**Jack:** Why is his power Crazy Slots? His whole deal is, like, animals and shit. Why’s he got a clown roulette on his weapon?

**Sylvia:** Why not?

**Austin:** You get what you get, sometimes. What do you want?

**Dre:** Maybe clowns are animals.

**Austin:** Ohh.

**Sylvia:** Ohh.

**Keith:** Maybe the fact that it's incongruous with his personality makes it more powerful.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's totally possible.

**Sylvia:** Did I say that earlier?

**Jack:** It definitely makes it funnier.

**Austin:** That's a good point. That's a good point.

**Jack:** I think you might have done, yeah. Oh, you said that it was a contract that he'd taken.

**Sylvia:** Oh, okay.

**Jack:** It was like a condition, a Nen Condition.

**Keith:** Right. Oh, it's definitely a condition that it's more powerful that he doesn't get to pick, but then it's also [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] it's more powerful because it's annoying and he doesn't like it.

**Austin:** Right.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And it cusses him out every time.

**Keith:** Sorry to spoil it. He doesn't like it.

**Jack:** No.

**Keith:** [chuckles] He doesn't like Crazy Slots.

**Jack:** It's really funny.

**Sylvia:** Can't relate.

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

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I am so excited. You know, I mean—

**Keith:** Do we have any— sorry, go ahead, Jack?

**Jack:** I was just going to say, you know, I didn't hate Greed Island, but you heard how I feel by the end of that season.

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And, you know, there were some really high highs in Greed Island. We had, you know, listen to the antepenultimate episode of that to hear Jack being like, "Wow, this is great. I'm loving this."

**Jack:** And don't get me wrong: I am cognizant of what a 60-something episode run of a single arc might feel like by the end.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** But right now—

**Austin:** [sarcastic] I don't know anything about an arc getting out of hand and going longer than you intended it to go. [Keith laughs]

**Dre:** [sarcastic] No, what?

**Jack:** Yeah, right?

**Austin:** That's never happened to me.

**Sylvia:** Subscribe to PALISADE.

**Jack:** What was the, uh, "Palette of Colors" what, Austin? "Palette of Colors 9"?

**Austin:** I don't know. I don't really think about— you know, I think in different ways. That's...

**Sylvia:** You just think in wavelengths, not in episode numbers. [Jack chuckles]

**Austin:** Yeah, that's right. If you think about it, the digital root of 10 is 1, so really it was just one big episode.

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Sylvia:** Thank you. [Keith laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Mm, mm-hmm. Just like this is one big ant.

**Sylvia:** This guy gets it.

**Austin:** That's right.

**Keith:** Do we have anything else to plug? You should definitely go to [friendsatthetable.cash](https://friendsatthetable.cash) to watch the *Dragon Ball Z* episode when that's out next week and the *Dragon Ball* episodes and the JoJo episodes that are really good and funny. And yeah, that's what I got.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. We're hitting our stride, baby.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** All hits, no misses.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** From us, I mean.

**Keith:** This is the perfect time to jump into watching the show.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Oh, for sure.

**Keith:** Because you'll have plenty of time to catch up.

**Austin:** For sure.

**Dre:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Oh, yeah. I will say...we've said it before in the past, but it's worth saying again. If you are in a *Hunter × Hunter* fan community, such as one of the Reddits that I can't go to, because they'll tell me about the Grundler.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Oh, you don't want to hear about that.

**Jack:** Let them know about Media Club Plus.

**Keith:** Yeah, let them know.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I think we are making a really great show, and I know that the Chimera Ant Arc carries a certain weight with it, so if you think they might be receptive to hearing “here are a bunch of weirdies embarking on the Chimera Ant Arc,” now's the time.

**Keith:** Yeah. This is a great podcast, and I think that people that don't know us but do like *Hunter × Hunter* will like this show.

**Austin:** Agreed. I don't normally plug stuff on this podcast, 'cause it feels rude.

However, I do think there's an overlap here that people might not know about over on *Shelved by Genre*, [Sylvia: Yeah.] which I do with Michael Lutz, who I was just talking about, and Cameron Kunzelman.

**Jack:** And Cameron Kunzelman.

**Austin:** We are currently doing Junji Ito's oeuvre. We've done *Uzumaki*. We've recorded the one after that, the name of which I forget. We've done *Tomie*. Oh, *Gyo*. *Gyo* is the next one, which is about—

**Sylvia:** Ooh.

**Jack:** Oh, *Gyo* has some fucking wild shit in it.

**Austin:** *Gyo* is wild. I think *Tomie* is my favorite so far.

**Jack:** I've never read *Tomie*.

**Austin:** It's been a blast. *Tomie* has the first best chapter of anything I've ever read. An all-timer. All-timer, all-timer.

**Jack:** Also posits, bravely: what if a girl was evil?

**Austin:** What if a girl was evil?

**Dre:** Ohh!

**Sylvia:** I'm listening.

**Keith:** Is this the origination of "what if a girl was evil?"

**Austin:** That's right. No evil girls before that.

**Keith:** Is this the first ever girl evil?

**Austin:** Yeah, mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. No one's ever considered that women caused issues before.



**Austin:** Mm-hmm. [Jack laughs]

**Keith:** It's huge right now. There's never been a better time for "what if a girl was evil?"

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Do any of you know what the pitch of *Tomie* really— like, not the pitch, but the...

**Keith:** I actually don't know any Junji Ito.

**Austin:** I'll tell you after. I don't want to spoil it here. People should go read *Tomie* and then go listen to *Shelved by Genre's* Junji Ito unit.

**Sylvia:** It's good.

**Jack:** It's good.

**Keith:** And hey, I looked on Libsyn, and I saw that there's thousands and thousands of downloads from Apple Podcasts. It's far and away the biggest destination for people who listen to this show. I believe that that includes, like, other podcast apps that, like, pull from iTunes. But I'll tell you that we don't have thousands and thousands of ratings on iTunes.

**Austin:** Damn.

**Keith:** So you should go to iTunes and rate the show five stars and write a little nice thing, and we will thank you for it.

**Jack:** Make like the ants and be lots of you and you're all wonderful.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Um, I'm trying to find...I don't necessarily have a funny review, but I got a nice review.

**Keith:** Yeah, there's a lot of really nice reviews.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, so I'm going to read a nice review from ChicagoHayes8. This was on July 14. "Home run. I am not into this type of show. [laughter] But these people are amazing. So good."

**Keith:** Is the type of show that they're into Chicago baseball?

**Sylvia:** Maybe.

**Keith:** That's what it seems like.

**Sylvia:** Either way, we're amazing, so.

**Keith:** We're amazing. Yeah.

**Jack:** All time great review is, "I hate this shit, but I love this one." [Keith laughs]

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** That means you're doing it right, you know?

**Jack:** Oh yeah.

**Sylvia:** That's exactly what it means.

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

**Sylvia:** Thank you.

**Jack:** Well, good night, everybody.

**Keith:** Good night.

**Dre:** Good night.

**Jack:** Good night to all the ants.

**Austin:** Is that what you—

**Jack:** Tucking them into bed individually.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's normally what you say at the end of one of these, is "Good night"?

**Jack:** Good night.

**Dre:** Good morning.

**Keith:** Don't let the bedbugs bite. [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** What's it— ohh. Wow. Especially if they're Chimera Ants.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, it hurts. It hurt Killua.

**Sylvia:** They'll steal your personality.

**Austin:** They will.

**Keith:** The little one hurt Killua.

**Austin:** The little one, yeah.

**Jack:** Killua Zoldyck, kid who electrocutes himself on the reg.

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

**Jack:** He's like, "That really fucking hurt." Yeah.

**Austin:** Before we go, I do have one thing to say. I have not listened to the *Dragon Ball Z* episode yet, importantly, so like, I don't want to misrepresent [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] anything here, in terms of, like, you know, I don't want it to be, uh...is it not going to let me do this? Is it not letting me do this? Oh, there we go. Yeah, it does. It does. Here's the thing about "Rock the Dragon".

**Sylvia:** Yeah?

**Austin:** This rips!

**Sylvia:** Thank you. Thank you so much.

**Austin:** So.

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

**Austin:** I think the solo part is undefeated.

**Keith:** Yeah, that part is— sure, yeah.

**Sylvia:** I'm going to go learn how to play this, the second we get off call.

**Austin:** All right, good. Thank you.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Jack:** "Rock the Dragon".

**Keith:** Yeah, I like the solo part. I also like the scream at the very beginning.

**Austin:** Wait, I'm sorry. Is Keith's position that it's bad, and everybody else...?

**Keith:** Yeah, I hate "Rock the Dragon".

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

**Austin:** Keith doesn't like Rock—?!

**Sylvia:** Yes. Keith is the one who doesn't like "Rock the Dragon".

**Keith:** It's one of my earliest memories of disliking something.

**Austin:** I thought everybody else teamed up on Keith.

**Keith:** No.

**Sylvia:** No, I love “Rock the Dragon”.

**Keith:** No.

**Jack:** Oh, we teamed up on Keith, Austin.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Jack:** On the side of good.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** On the side of good.

**Sylvia:** Evil Keith is still here.

**Austin:** Apologies to my good friends who I thought had betrayed the dragon. [Jack chuckles]

**Sylvia:** I'm kind of hurt, but I'll forgive you.

**Dre:** Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. You thought Sylvi and I didn't like the nu metal song that was DBZ-themed? [Austin laughs]

**Sylvia:** That's my DBZ theme. That's the one I grew up with.

**Dre:** Yeah, come on.

**Austin:** I was confused!

**Sylvia:** I know. It's okay. I forgive you.

**Keith:** Maybe if they had gotten Crush 40 to do it, I would have liked it.

**Austin:** Oh my god.

**Sylvia:** Oh my— I would have ascended.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, Crush 40 *Dragon Ball* soundtrack when?

**Dre:** It'd be too much. It'd be too good.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** No, it would have been just enough. 'Cause, I mean, Vegeta is Shadow, [**Keith:** Yeah.] and Sonic is Goku, and...

**Keith:** Yeah.

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

**Sylvia:** You know.

**Keith:** When you said you would have ascended, you mean Ascended Saiyan?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I would have— no, I meant Super Sonic, actually.

**Dre:** Mm.

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

**Jack:** Good night.

**Keith:** Good night.

**Austin:** Good night!

**Dre:** Good night!

**Sylvia:** Bye. [Austin chuckles]

[bleep]

[laughter]