

## [Intro]

I was rewatching One Piece with my mom when I realized I was looking forward to the fight between Zoro and Mr.1. It's an episode I remember disliking and being confused by, which made it even funnier when my mom had the same reaction.

"What! So he just cuts steel? Just like that?" [my mom shouts]

"Yes, because of the rhythm, like they said," [I said.]

][My dad shouts from the other couch, ]"Yes because of the rhythm!"

Honestly her reaction was hilarious, a few years ago, I also, thought it was bullcrap. How come he just learned how to cut steel, just like out of nowhere?

But as the years went by and I got further into the rest of One piece, I found that this episode had grown on me and that it felt very fitting.

However, I can understand why my past self had such a confused reaction.

## [Why I was so Confused]

On my first watch of One Piece most things happened within reason. The abilities and the strength of the main characters were human-like, and the internal logic of the devil fruit abilities helped explain away any of the weird stuff.

But something like cutting steel with a katana was something us humans can't do. It just didn't make sense. It was an insurmountable feat.

I could understand good sword fighting, I could comprehend even fighting with three swords. All of that was reasonable, but to surpass human limits, to cut steel with steel. It wasn't possible!?

But now, I think that because I had become so familiarized with the world of One Piece that I began to look forward to it.

## [The rules of one piece lean towards fantasy]

You might be asking me, what do I mean by that? Well as you watch through One piece, you start to pick up on the internal logic and rules of the world. And you come to realize it's completely different from ours.

- In one piece, broken legs and arms are healed within days.
- Insane lethal injuries that would kill the average person are just slept on.
- And explosions can damage you sure, but people are fine enough after them to stand up and keep on moving.
- There's also one major thing that's different which is that people in One Piece have an endless potential to level up their strength, their prowess and their fighting skills. They're not capped by realistic limits but instead they level up with each fight they get.
  - And the heights of their strength are impossibly high, as seen with Mihawk just being able to slice ships in half. That was an absurdly epic entrance.
- All of this stuff combined really helped to set up the groundwork for achieving the impossible.
- There's also some setup ahead of time with the challenge of breaking steel/iron being a constant thorn in the straw-hats side. It was inevitable that this was going to be the next challenge at some point. It just happened to be in Alabasta where it was life or death for Zoro.

## [Pulling something out of nowhere is now commonplace, and can be Rewarding]

- And with it being life or death, I feel like that might've been a part of what made Zoro really open his eyes to this somewhat mystical concept of harmony and rhythm and being in tune with his weapon and the environment around him.
  - The episode really shows how he changes as a fighter. At the start of the episode Zoro rejects the concept of a more spiritual approach to getting stronger. The flashbacks to his teacher talking about harmony and rhythm are pushed away to the back of his mind, and he instead tries to fight steel with more strength, more power. But as he fails, and fails, and fails, there's a point where he has to listen to his teacher's advice and finally, something clicks. This tug and pull of ideas and beliefs made Zoro's revelation and newfound ability all the more deserved.
  - And I find that the life or death situation making him realize something, is accurate to real life and death experiences. I can remember almost being run over as a kid and really evaluating my life choices.
- There's also something about this whole episode's logic that I find really captivating.

- The fact that the feat of cutting steel *is* such a feat and *is* so impossible and otherworldly means that making the way to cut steel follow a strange logic that we never really talked about before, makes sense.
  - There is a sort of mystical quality that accompanies this episode that makes me love it. Instead of having the cutting steel be something that oh, Zoro just had to train for another 1000 hours. It's instead a sort of ascended revelation about the world us lay people can't understand.
  - I think that's the only reason that nowadays I can forgive the unreality of the moment now. To achieve such a feat, means to pull from something otherworldly, a concept of being in tune with the rhythms of objects, it's definitely something foreign to the average working person.
- Besides that, the imagery and watercolor art of this episode helps a lot. The one thing I remember most is
  - Zoro brushing his sword against the leaves. It was so striking. A weapon, capable of violence, just brushing against leaves softly. It's an image so ironic and memorable that I think about more than the actual fight.
  - I don't think I'll ever forget it.

And that's why it is my favorite zoro episode.