

Is KPop Demon Hunters worth the hype?

It's no doubt that *KPop Demon Hunters* is a global phenomenon, amounting to a state of success and popularity that most movies barely achieve. Sony Pictures Animation's original animated film has broken several Netflix records, gaining around 236 million views worldwide since its release on June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025, making it the most watched film of all time on Netflix. The film's soundtrack has been topping Billboard and Spotify charts, breaking several music and K-Pop industry records. The soundtrack is the first in almost 45 years to have four songs in the top ten on Billboard's Hot 100s simultaneously. In addition, the single "*Golden*" has been at number one on Hot 100s for weeks, breaking even more records. The film's limited sing-along theatrical run on August 23<sup>rd</sup>/24<sup>th</sup>, made between \$18-20 million at the box office with around 1100 showings booked several days prior to its theater release.

The movie stars Huntr/x, a trio of K-Pop superstars, Rumi, Mira, and Zoey, who moonlight as demon hunters to protect their fans from soul eating demons. When his initial tactics consistently fail, the demon king, Gwi-Ma, sends Jinu and his demon boyband, the Saja Boys, to take down Huntr/x and to open the barrier between the human world and the demon world so that Gwi-Ma can come through and feast on everyone's souls. It's a battle for the fans as both Huntr/x and the Saja Boys fight for control over the Honmoon with the souls of eight billion people at stake.

With that being said, is a movie with this plot and title worth this amount of hype? *KPop Demon Hunters* has many strengths that appeal to a wide audience for many reasons. The biggest thing is that the audience is able to project themselves onto the characters and step into their shoes with perfect fitting. This is because the characters, specifically Rumi, Mira, Zoey, and Jinu, are flawed and imperfect people with common insecurities and understandable and deep shames. A big fan of the film, **Sebatian McCarren** (junior) stated, "I also think it hit close to home for me, it was really good at that."

In more detail, another big fan of the film, **Amalie Coss** (junior) stated, "For one I know Zoey's background had a lot to do with being a people pleaser... Mira's was a lot with her being blunt and kind of rude and using that as a shield since she broke away from her family... Rumi wanting to be accepted by her family and knowing that she couldn't be, and all that was really relatable."

To push these themes further, the attention to detail drives the story far ahead because of the amount of symbolism the film uses. The ideas are subtle and can go

unnoticed pretty easily, however, it doesn't take long to understand what the film is trying to express visually. There are many parts of the film where it conveys the characters' inner shames, growth, and personality's through the colors of the Honmoon and their weapons. The colors of the Honmoon represent the perfection that Huntr/x is aiming for and the change in the Honmoon's colors, going from gold to iridescent, signifies that they are finally validating and embracing their true identities rather than reaching perfection.

**Amalie** explained, "the difference between...trying to get the Honmoon to turn gold...versus when it turns iridescent... Instead of them rising to perfection, they're trying to be who they really are, and they're no longer hiding."

The film reinforces this idea of validating and self-embracing identities even more through the color of the characters' weapons, an already significant symbol representing their personalities. Just like the Honmoon changing colors, from gold to iridescent, the weapons changing from blue to pink convey the growth of Huntr/x as a team, going from being distant from one another to fully accepting each other's identities and embracing them.

**Amalie** explained further, "while Rumi slowly drifts from Mira and Zoey, the weapons turn pink and red, and then in the final fight scene, the weapons turn blue again." This is just one layer upon many, because the weapons are, again, already strong symbols for the personalities of Rumi, Mira, and Zoey. On a related note, **Amalie** stated "Zoe's weapons reflect that she's kind of two different people... so her weapons are both ranged and melee weapons, Mira keeps everyone at arm's length, so her weapon reflects that, and then Rumi, she's kind of the leader, so she gets the stereotypical leader weapon of a sword." *KPop Demon Hunters* is a layered film with lots of detail and nuance put into it, not only in its narrative and symbolism but also in its weird concept.

The film also does an admirable job at balancing its childish ideas with mature themes. *Kpop Demon Hunters* has a lot of very silly jokes, corny lines, vibrant and fun aesthetics, and a cartoony visual style. Even during its more serious scenes, the film still adds jokes here and there and will never take itself too seriously. Yet, it never forgets what its story is about, overcoming deep insecurities, self-hatred, and inner shame. During its emotional scenes where it must have serious tones for those scenes to work, the film doubles down on the characters' emotional responses and dark vibes in its cinematography. **Sebatian** went on to say, "Even though it seems childish it has a deeper meaning... like how childish it seems but how adult it really... Like hiding scars and stuff."

Though, despite this movie having such good qualities, it's not perfect and its flaws can be somewhat apparent, most notably the character development for Mira and Zoey.

*KPop Demon Hunters* has three main characters, but the main focus of the narrative is Rumi, who is a very well-developed character. The same isn't really said about Mira and Zoey because they somewhat lack the same amount of development. The film explores their insecurities and inner shames exceptionally well when it does through their personalities, symbolism, and their dynamic with the rest of Huntr/x. However, on the surface, Mira and Zoey can come across as shallow because the film doesn't spend enough with the characters to explore them further.

**Tommy Steimer**, a twelfth-grade film director, stated "the big blockbuster movies, top of the top charts...most of the time, almost every character that is important to the story, is well expanded upon...I think that Mira and Zoey are arguably just as important to the story...but they're just not expanded upon.

It's also important to note that this film is a pre-established world, leaving much of its audience with unanswered questions. If you pay attention to the opening fight scene, Huntr/x can conjure their weapons from the Honmoon, however, the film doesn't explain why these three girls are able to do this, nor does it explain how they were chosen as the current generation of hunters. **Tommy** stated "The script does not explain how they get their powers, that's completely untouched on in the entire movie... They also didn't explain how the original barrier separating the monsters in humans came to be." This isn't necessarily a bad thing since, being an established universe, the film can focus on the current events of the story rather than having an exposition heavy preamble or even being one entirely for a future story.

On the downside though, this does leave many audiences members scratching their heads about the origins of the characters and what happened to them. **Amalie** in fact states, "I feel like there are a lot of unanswered questions... what happened with the Sunlight Sisters and... everything with Celine... how Zoey and Mira [and Rumi] ended up teaming up. The movie was cut down in time, so they had to take out a couple of things." These are all valid questions posed because of the decision to cut the runtime down to ninety minutes. With an extra half-hour to an hour of run time added to the film, the audiences' question can be answered while also allowing the film to expand more on its important characters.

So, at the end of all this, is *KPop Demon Hunters* worth the hype or not? Through deep analysis of the film and through what the audience thinks of the film, the pros out way the cons. There is a reason why this is the number one movie in the world, why it has 236 million views, why its topping Spotify and Billboard charts, why its small theatrical run was a massive box office success, and a reason for why people love it so much. From its silly cartoonish comedy to its heavy themes, to emotionally poignant narrative, and to its

heightened symbolism, it's a movie that sticks with people one way or another. So, to answer my question, yes, *KPop Demon Hunters* is worth the hype depending on how you look at it. It's definitely not for everyone, but it's definitely worth a watch.

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