Lights x Camera x Action

Posted originally on the fanfiction.lol at https://fanfiction.lol/works/1558.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Categories:	Slash (M/M), Femslash (F/F), Hetero (F/M), Getting Together, Casual
Fandom:	Hunter x Hunter
Relationships:	Kurapika/Leorio Paladiknight, Gon Freecss/Killua Zoldyck, Chrollo Lucifer/Shalnark Ryuseih, Phinks Magcub/Feitan Portor, Ponzu/Pokkle
Characters:	Kurapika (Hunter x Hunter), Leorio Paladiknight, Gon Freecss, Killua Zoldyck, Chrollo Lucilfer, Shalnark Ryuseih, Phinks Magcub, Feitan Portor, Pakunoda (Hunter x Hunter), Pokkle (Hunter x Hunter), Ponzu (Hunter x Hunter), Illumi Zoldyck, Hisoka Morow
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - Modified Canon
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of Actors AU
Stats:	Published: 2026-11-09 Words: 4,542 Chapters: 1/?

Lights x Camera x Action

by SilverHypnos

Summary

An alternate universe where Hunter x Hunter is actually a reality series filmed in the same universe. All of the “characters” were based on the actors who played them. The main difference is their backstory, age, slightly altered personality, etc. This story primarily focuses on Kurapika, a Hunter from an endangered clan who was offered this job and is struggling to connect with the other actors. But occasionally the story switches focus to the other actors and their struggles. From Killua dealing with his family issues to the Spider’s dilemma about how they wish to be perceived.

Chapter 1: Chapter x One

The light breeze tingled the boy's face as the wind swept through his golden locks. The people surrounding him were nothing but white noise as his gaze focused on the calm, boundless stretch of blue. The aroma of salty tang felt foreign. Had he been in a different situation, he would have relaxed and slumped over the railing, taking in the view. However, he must remain composed and poised in this scene.

To the cameras, he masked himself in this disinterested demeanor, a disposition of an individual who indulges in solitude. Someone that the audience will recognize as an 'important character' as the camera focuses on him. A stark contrast to the real him.

"ANNNND CUT!" The clack of the clipper was one of the few things that gave him a sense of relief. A noise that he now conditioned himself to associate with the freedom of being oneself. "EVERYONE, TAKE A 15-MINUTE BREAK!"

Ever since he obtained his Hunter License this year, who would have imagined that his first job would be as an actor? A Hunter reality show. Every character was based on each actor, just with made-up backstories and alterations of personality for the sake of the plot.

Kurapika had to play the role of Kurapika, a dramatized and idealized version of oneself. Reading the script was like looking into a mirror that showed an uncanny version of oneself. He looks like Kurapika. He sounds like Kurapika. But the reflection glares back with a preeminent aura, as if the reflection itself were judging what he saw.

Kurapika was a confident, level-headed individual who chose solitude out of the fear of losing more friends to death. Kurapika had this intense sense of justice, a drive for revenge, and a will to achieve his goals, even at the cost of his own life. Kurapika had friends who cherished and adored him no matter the times he pushed them away. Kurapika is this solid, consistent character that the real Kurapika was not.

While the other actors began scattering on board, forming their own little social clique, Kurapika remained where he stood. Turning his body to face the ocean fully, he inhaled the aroma before exhaling loudly.

"I wonder if anyone thinks I'm just like him," he whispered under his breath. It would be ambivalent if that were the case. There were aspects of Kurapika that felt like wish fulfillment. The strength of Kurapika was alluring to him. His ability to accumulate so many friends despite being seen as rude feels like a plot convenience. Unlike the real Kurapika, who only had one friend since childhood. Unlike the real Kurapika, who's practically scared of everyone and anything new. Despite all of the constant anxiety he feels, he's always been told that he has this resting bitch-face. A demeanor that told people that he was closed off and unfriendly. But who could blame him? He's not an actor, just a Hunter with a unique background that caught the attention of the Director.

Kurapika was sought out, as he was seen as a rarity. The Kurta Clan is a protected tribe, with a culture that's victimized by a slow-burn genocide. News of a member of a virtually extinct

clan becoming a hunter made headways in unforeseen ways. Thrusted into the limelight, Kurapika was never prepared. Turning down so many offers for an interview, or as a guest star over his bloodline. It was sickening. Every offer thrown his way made him feel like an object, something for people to dissect and study. Every offer, except one.

Perhaps the Director has a silver tongue. Initially, Kurapika turned down the offer. Something as bastardized as reality TV would only make a mockery of his culture. Placing an even bigger target on his tribe if more people knew about the Scarlet Eyes. Kurapika always had this rebellious personality, but anything that threatened his family was not something he'd like to humor. But the more he listened to his carefully crafted perspective, it became clear that this offer was a double-edged sword. A scale that tipped ever so slightly in his favor. At least, that's what he felt at the time.

The Director promised that the reality TV show would humanize the Kurta clan to the general public and expose the horror and tragedy of greed. It would allow the public to empathize with genocide. Although the character Kurapika is on a revenge path, he will always be characterized by his love for his clan and culture. With the additional bonus, if he accepted the deal, the studio would fund resources for the Kurta Clan as part of the payment for their likeness.

All of that sounded amazing, too good to be true. But Kurapika would be lying to himself if he didn't admit that the idea that Pairo would get immediate health care options was the major factor in his decision-making. The main reason why Kurapika became a Hunter, to begin with, was to help Pairo with medical resources. Then, there was that additional bonus of entertaining Pairo with outside-world adventures. When he told Pairo about the reality TV show, Pairo seemed to have shown excitement. At that point, it was too difficult to turn down the offer.

Listening to Pairo gush about how amazing it would be to hear Kurapika's voice on the big screen. Or how Kurapika would have so many unique behind-the-scenes stories. The simple promise that he made now feels unnecessarily daunting. He reminisced about when Pairo asked him to ramble about the differences between the actors and the characters. The concept of a reality actor has always felt fictional to Kurapika. People lie and behave as a version of themselves that doesn't simply exist for the entertainment of millions. Millions obsess over them, fully knowing it's all acting, yet some create a profile in their head. People get attached to the lie they love on screen, but the actor who wears the mask can still remain an enigma.

Kurapika shook his head. Unlike those people, he knew better than to fall for some actor's charm. He couldn't fathom the idea of falling victim to parasocial relationships like the people he looked down upon.

"Uh, Kurapika, we need you on set for the next scene." One of the managers was sent to fetch him.

"Ah! Sorry," Kurapika blurted out, dumbfounded with himself, realizing that he had been lost in thought for that long. Kurapika followed the manager, but the anxiety lingered.

He could only assume that Pairo would be as disappointed as he was. His perception of what co-star relations would be like turned out to be fallacious. Genuinely, Kurapika assumed that,

before filming, he'd had the chance to meet his co-stars. Assuming he'd get to know his co-stars a little since they all had to fake being friends on screen. He thought reality TV would be like a staged play. He would have the chance to practice acting with his co-stars. If only Pairo had seen the bewildered expression Kurapika had made when he learned that the first day he'd get to meet them was the first day of filming. It sounded like a mistake or an error on the management's part, but to his shock, this was a standard practice in the industry.

Nothing was comforting about being surrounded by strangers. However, it was nice for his agent to give him some insight into his fellow co-stars. For starters, two of the main four actors are minors, much like the characters they play. There wasn't much information about the boy who plays the main character Gon. Other than that, he was the kid who inspired this whole series. There was a rumor that the director, while getting his Hunter's license, met a twelve-year-old boy who took the same exam. The child was such a delight and an enigma that he spent two years finding that same kid for this series. However, rumors are rumors, and that one in particular was hard to believe.

The other minor, honestly, there was too much information on. A boy from a prominent family of actors. The Zoldyck family: Famous for starring in so many assassin-related movies and shows. That entire family has fifty years of acting behind their family name. Kurapika would have assumed that the children only got into the industry through sheer nepotism, but according to his agent, that family takes acting very seriously. It sounds absurd that the Director got almost every member of that family to appear in this series. Kurapika supposes that, perhaps, the image of the Zoldyck family being ruthless assassins was appealing. Though he couldn't fathom why they'd want to be villainized. Still, the idea of needing to act next to an over-experienced kid felt anxiety-inducing.

Then there was the other actor. The information on this man was diminutive at best. Some man named Leorio Paradinight, who's been primarily a background character or a side character in sitcoms. It sounded like, much like Gon, the Director personally met him and liked him enough to throw him in the show.

"Kurapika, please go and lie on that hammock and read this book. Make sure you continue portraying yourself as disinterested in your surroundings and a calm individual. Remember your cue in this scene as well." The manager said while handing him a book.

Kurapika nodded and did what he was told. Ever since he got here, he was constantly directed not to look at the others. To present himself as a loner, which wasn't much of an issue. Except he wanted to get a good look at the other actors. He's only been able to hear the other actors talk as they played out their lines. If only this book were more interesting than his surroundings. It was only a matter of time before he'd have to speak his first lines.

"ACTION!"

The captain gave a preeminent scoff of a chuckle, "What a laugh!" Judging the pathetic sight of men scattered and passed out with the crates. Groaning in pain, defeated by the harsh waves and the consequence of their own hubris.

"Here are some herbs!" The young boy's voice broke the Captain's gaze. The boy was aiding the sickly man leaning against the pillar. "If you chew on them, you'll feel better."

The man choked, with a dry, raspy voice, "W-Water."

The boy responded, "It's coming soon, so hold on!" Doing his best to comfort the man.

"That boy..." croaked the bewildered Captain.

That was the cue. The cue to change the position of his legs, making a noise with the hammock. The camera would now focus on him, so he had to do his best to remain uninterested. After that, it now should be that other guy's cue.

Moments later, Kurapika could hear the crunch of the apple. "Phew~ Now that's one sour apple." Yeah, his line delivery really is much like a sitcom. If this reality show were one, Kurapika would have expected to hear a laugh track right after.

The Captain remained quiet while staring at Leorio. In the final cut, the audience would hear the man monologuing his thoughts. Cue in the scrawny sailor who rushed in with a cup of water, blurting, "Excuse me!" as he pushed back the Captain. "H-Here's your water!" He says, handing it to the boy.

"Thank you." The boy accepts it and turns to the sickly man. "Now drink this up." That was the second cue for everyone. Slowly showing interest in the boy, by aligning their gazes to him. It had to be timed perfectly before the boy said the next line. "Thanks. I really appreciate it, Katsuo."

"AANNNNNND CUT!!! GOOD WORK! We're starting the next scene in the Captain's quarters. Gon, Leorio, Kurapika, Captain, Katsuo, and Sailor A & B, please head there. The rest of you can take a meal break!"

Kurapika took a deep breath, reminding himself to stay calm. This was it, his debut line for episode one. While entering the Captain's quarters, he had hoped his surroundings would calm him down, but the windows covered with the brightest neon color stood out. Right, he thought, in this scene, the ship would be sailing in a storm. However, due to the number of non-hunters on board, the filming team had acquiesced to decide it was too risky. Most of the storm will be computer graphics.

Kurapika could feel himself getting stiff as he got into position. Hopefully, that translated as defensive to the cameras.

"ACTION!"

The Captain stood before the three candidates. "First, tell me your names."

Gon perked up and raised his hand, both as a wave and as a gesture to indicate that he wanted to go first. "I'm Gon!"

Calmly, with little movement, "I'm Kurapika."

"It's Leorio," spoke begrudgingly.

"Why do you want to become Hunters?" The captain kept all of his interactions with brevity.

Leorio stepped forward, pointing accusingly towards the captain. "Oi! If you're not an examiner, you can't boss us around!" There was a purposeful tough-guy attitude in his delivery.

"Just answer the question!" The captain snaps back with the same attitude.

Gon gleefully answers, "My dad is a Hunter." The captain makes a grunt, reacting to the kid's response. "I left Whale Island because I wanted to know why my dad desired to be a Hunter so much!"

There was a moment of silence, as in this part, there would be some internal monologue before Leorio breaks it.

"Hey, KID!"

"Huh?" Gon's delivery felt so natural and soft.

"You're not supposed to answer his question!" Leorio positioned himself cartoonishly, lowering himself when facing the child.

"Why can't I tell him why I'm here?" The boy asked curiously.

Leorio started to talk expressively with his hands, "Not a team player, huh?" Then placing his finger on the boy's forehead, pointing assertively, "I don't wish to reveal why I'm here."

That's the cue. "I agree with Leorio."

"Huh?" Leorio blurted out. His attention was now on Kurapika, raising his voice while directing his point towards him, "HEY! Aren't you younger than I am? Show some respect!"

Shit. He flinched at being yelled at. He had hoped the cameras missed that, but **"ANNNNND CUT!"**

Kurapika exhaled, "damnit," he murmured under his breath.

Gon blinked around, staring at the man with the clippers. "Huh? What happened?"

It was embarrassing to admit, "Sorry, I didn't react in character." Kurapika repeatedly did the breathing exercises that one of his agents recommended.

The actor who plays Leorio seemed to have leaned forward. "Are you... nervous or something?" His voice was charmingly gentle, quite different from his previous delivery.

Kurapika didn't want to admit that, but lying would be stupid too. He tried dodging the question, sort of: "Apologise in advance, I'm not an actor, so I may mess up here and there."

Gon perked up; his demeanor was amiable, giving Kurapika a surprised hug with a loud gasp, "ME TOO! I'm not an actor at all! That makes me feel so much better now that I know I'm not the only one!"

Kurapika was dumbfounded by this situation. He didn't know how to react to the enigma that was hugging him. "Uhh..." was the only noise that escaped his mouth.

"Oh, is that so!" Leorio smiled. "I guess that means I'm the most experienced out of you two." He snickered.

The man with the clipper cleared his throat loudly while making a deadpan stare at the three guys. "Get back to position; we'll start from Leorio's first line towards Kurapika."

Leorio whispered to Kurapika moments before they started shooting, "Just remember that I'm not actually yelling at you. The real me is very harmless, okay!?" He winked before getting back in position.

"ACTION!!!"

"Huh?" Leorio blurted out. Recreating the same exact movements as he did before, "HEY! Aren't you younger than I am? Show some respect!"

He's not mad; he's just acting. Kurapika tried to filter out Leorio's delivery while delivering his lines, "Creating a plausible lie would be the simplest way to avoid such pesky questions."

Expressively, Leorio gets more irritated that the pretty boy he's addressing is ignoring him. "HEY! Are you listening to me?!"

"However, I find it quite shameful to rely on deceit. That said, if I were to tell you the truth, that would expose my deepest secrets." He closed his eyes and clutched his clothes around where his heart was. "That is why I cannot provide an answer."

Aggressively shaking his pointed finger, close enough for Kurapika to feel its presence, Leorio grumbled, "HEY, you! Don't ignore me!" Then leaned down and forward to glare intimately close to Kurapika.

Internally, Kurapika kept repeating to himself that Leorio wasn't mad. He's not trying to touch him. This was just acting.

The Captain bluntly responded, "In other words, you refuse to answer my question." He paused. "Hey, Katsuo."

"Aye, Captain." He timidly responded.

"Tell the examination board that we have two new dropouts."

Both Kurapika and Leorio looked surprised by that line. Reacting with a silent gasp.

Leorio turned to the Captain, "What do you mean?"

"What, you still haven't figured it out?" The Captain took out the pipe he was smoking, and his eyes met the candidates'. "The Hunter Exam has already started."

"What?" Luckily, they were able to get it on the first try, speaking in unison.

"There are as many Hunter wannabes as there are stars in the sky. The examiners do not have the time or resources to review them all." He explains. "So they hire people like us to trim that fat. I've already notified the board that everyone else on this ship had to withdraw."

On cue, to make a little grunt, something to indicate a reaction.

He continued, "If they couldn't handle a little storm, they'd stand no chance in the Hunter Examination's later stages. In other words, you'd only proceed to the main exam if I pass you." He paused, giving the other actors time to get into position. "So, think carefully before you answer my question."

Gon turned to Leorio. "So he says..." Leorio looked at him and silently grunted in defeat. Begrudgingly under his breath, "Should have told us sooner." He still continued the tough-guy act to hide his own embarrassment.

Kurapika internally sighed, trying to imagine what he should be like in this situation. It was harder for him to come off as genuine when he needed to profess a backstory that was full of lies.

"I am the last survivor of the Kurta clan." He spoke in a melancholy tone, with bitter acceptance. The real him would have broken down sobbing if this were true.

Gon and Leorio react to his statement.

"Four years ago, my clan was annihilated by a band of criminals." Kurapika gazes and turns towards the Captain. "I want to become a Hunter to hunt down the Phantom Troupe." It felt unreal to speak those lines out loud, confidently saying something so fictional as if it were true.

"So you want to become a bounty hunter? The Phantom Troupe is a Class-A bounty. Not even the most grizzled Hunters can touch them." The Captain dramatically gave Kurapika a direct glance. "You'd be throwing away your life."

Kurapika closed his eyes, but truthfully, he did not appreciate the foreshadowing that the scriptwriters kept slipping in. "I do not fear death; I only fear that my rage will fade over time."

"ANNNNND CUT!!!"

Kurapika sighed, knowing why the cut happened again.

Gon looked bewildered. "HUH? But why?"

Leorio blinked around, "Wait, didn't he deliver that line fine?"

Kurapika placed his hand over his chest. "I'm sorry, may I have five minutes to prepare that line? I haven't mastered deliberately showing it on demand yet."

"Showing what?" Gon tugged on Kurapika's sleeve gently. He's such a precious kid; if the rumors surrounding him were true, he understood why the director took a liking to him.

"Scarlet eyes." Kurapika turned his gaze toward Gon and Leorio.

"Scarlet- Wait, I thought that whole thing was made up. Like, editors were just going to use computer graphics to make it look real." Leorio sounded absolutely dumbfounded.

"It's not made up," Kurapika replied, but before he could say anything else, Gon interrupted.

"WAIT WAITWAIT! Does that mean your backstory is also real!!! OMGI'MSOSORRY THATYOUWENTTHROUGH-" He started to speed-run some gibberish, panicked to think Kurapika actually went through something as traumatic as being a survivor of a massacre.

"No, uh-" Kurapika wasn't expecting such a panicked display of emotions. Gon started to cling to him, creating such a scene.

Then, the man with the clipper spoke, "Listen up, the Director requested you all to take a thirty-minute break. Please drink some water and-" His gaze seemed to have turned to Kurapika. "Hash out anything you need to get out."

Leorio shrugged and patted Kurapika's shoulder, "Hey, let's go over to a different room and hash things out." He winked while pointing to the door.

Kurapika nodded and looked down at the kid. "Hey, uh, let's go..." The kid followed suit. Kurapika could feel his heartbeat, embarrassed by his own incompetence. What on earth did Leorio want to hash out?

Leorio sat down on one of the crates. He sighed before smiling, "So, let's not dance around the subject; we don't know each other at all."

Both Kurapika and Gon sat down on the available crates. Kurapika sighed, even though the other actors didn't agree with him, "Honestly, I thought it was a cruel joke expecting us to act as friends when we were never properly introduced." Kurapika crossed his arms and pouted a little.

"Well, that is the industry for ya." Leorio chuckled, but continued, "However, I understand how you feel. Being an actor is a romanticized dream for many people; the truth can be heartbreaking at times."

"Um, Mr.Paradinight, how long have you been acting?" Gon asked politely.

"Ahh, don't call me that, you're making me sound old. Please, call me Leorio. Hmm... About three to four years now."

"So, is acting your dream job?" Kurapika asked. Not that Kurapika was trying to find an excuse to look down on Leorio, but he couldn't help but feel suspicious towards actors.

"Nope, not at all." Leorio waved his hands as he shook his head. It seemed like, just like the character, Leorio was also an expressive person.

"Eh?" Gon blurted out.

"I didn't get to go to university right away; I was just taking in jobs to save up. I took an acting job by sheer accident and, well, look where it got me." He chuckled. "Remember, Leorio is based on me, right? Med school is ungodly levels expensive, but, with this gig, I'll be all set."

Kurapika's arm relaxed a bit, less closed off than it was before. Kurapika's gaze towards this man softened. "That's... really nice."

"Me. Me me me! I go next!" Gon jumped up from the crate with excitement. "My name is Gon Freecss, and I'm actually fourteen years old! I'm a Hunter, and my dream is to find my dad and explore the world's wonders!"

"H-HUNTER?" Leorio looked shocked. "You're actually a Hunter?!"

Gon gave Leorio a delighted "Ya!"

"Perhaps the rumors about you are true then." Kurapika tilted his head.

"Rumors?" Leorio turned his attention to him.

"I heard from my agent that this whole series was inspired by you. You met the Director during the 287th Hunter Exam when you were twelve." Kurapika smiled, secretly hoping it was true.

"Yup, wait, actually. Hmmm..." Gon paused for a moment. "I did meet him during the Hunter Exam, but the rumors give me too much credit. When I met him, he already wanted to make a reality TV show on Hunters, and the exam, I just inspired the main character."

"Oh my god, I can't believe I'm next to an actual Hunter." Leorio gushed a little. "Originally I thought about taking the Hunter Exam as a way to pay my college tuition but chickened out when I saw the death rates."

Gon gave Leorio a sympathetic pat on the arm before turning to Kurapika, "What about you? Is the backstory in the show the same as... yours?" Both Gon and Leorio gave Kurapika a condoling stare.

He wasn't a fan of the pressure, but he shook his head, "Not quite the same. I am from the Kurta clan, and while my culture is going through what we call a slow-burn genocide, there hasn't been a massacre in decades. There are still one hundred and twenty-eight of us left; the Hunter association designates us as a protected tribe."

Leorio tilted his head, "So if you're not an actor, how did you find yourself on this show?"

Kurapika sighed, "I was sought out by the Director. This year I passed the 289th Hunter Exam, and News Hunters looking for some dramatized scoop made a big fuss about me being a rarity. The Kurta clan rarely interacts with the outside world, so me being the first Hunter in decades caught the attention of many."

Leorio jumped up, pointing at Kurapika, accidentally startling him, "WAIT! You're a HUNTER TOO!?"

"Y-Yeah..." Kurapika blurted out.

Gon jumped up and gave him a tackling hug, "Oh my gosh, we're the same! We're both non-actors and Hunters!" Kurapika froze up; even in his own family, this level of affection was unusual for him. Kids these days are certainly something else.

"I can't believe I'm surrounded by two Hunters..." Leorio said nervously, "Hey, if we ever get into a fight, please go easy on me." It was hard to tell if that was a joke or a sincere request.

Gon looked up and pondered out loud, "What about the Scarlet Eyes?"

Kurapika's expression must have faltered a bit; indeed, the main reason why the clan remains isolated from the outside world is due to the eyes. However, the reasons aren't as simple as human trophy collectors with demands. Sometimes it's an issue of certain religions associating their eyes akin to the devil. Sometimes it's an even darker issue of human trafficking, as some people want to do terrible things to a living member. Things that aren't appropriate for a child to learn about.

"The Scarlet Eyes is a mutation with unclear origins but has existed in our culture for centuries. Less than thirty percent of the clan was born with it, myself included. When our emotions are heightened, our eyes turn into an iridescent hue of red, and our aura pikes up. I don't have full control over my emotions, so It's hard to deliberately cause it. I have to force myself to feel a strong sense of emotions, but the easiest trigger has been anger for me, so it's not the most fun sensation for me." It was, surprisingly, easy to talk to Gon.

Leorio slapped his knees before walking towards them, "Well, Kurapika, Gon, it's nice to finally formally meet cha!"

"Likewise," Kurapika nodded.

"Yeah! I'm looking forward to working with you guys. Let's become friends too!" The boy gleefully sprang up.

It was such a quaint moment before the manager came knocking in, "Boys, get to set in five minutes!" Kurapika thought to himself, maybe things won't be so bad after all.

Maybe.

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