

Episode 52:  
Let Us Tell You Our Thoughts on Yaoi

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[0:00]

A: Hello and welcome to Be the Serpent, a podcast of extremely deep literary merit, with you classy and sophisticated hosts Alexandra Rowland, Freya Marske, and Jennifer Mace. On today's episode, we're discussing three of our favorite anime [Hikaru no Go](#), [Yakitate!! Japan](#), and [Princess Tutu](#).

[intro music plays]

A: Hello, and welcome to Episode 52: Let Us Tell You Our Thoughts on Yaoi. I'm Alex and I am Yukimura Seiichi from [Prince of Tennis](#).

F: I'm Freya and I am Haruno Sakura from [Naruto](#).

M: I'm Macey! And I am Touya Akira from *Hikago*.

F: We are three red-headed fantasy authors—

A: —and today we're going to be talking about some anime bullshit.

M: Yees.

A: Freya titled this episode and I didn't get the joke, so maybe you guys also don't get the joke? It's an ancient meme. Freya's going to explain it to us later. But before we get into all of that, what are we reading, fellow Serpents?

F: I have recovered from the reading slump that I was in when I was in the worst of [The Untamed](#) Hell bullshit.

A: Mm.

F: I am still in *Untamed* Hell Bullshit, fully.

M: Yeees.

A: Yes, yes.

F: Do not worry on that account. But I have actually also read seven books since we last recorded.

A: Jesus Christ.

M: Freya!

F: Yeah. Um, anyway! I won't tell you about all of them. Shout outs to [Harrow the Ninth](#), the sequel to [Gideon the Ninth](#), which I was lucky enough to get an ARC of and tore my way through that. It is extremely chewy and I think people who enjoyed *Gideon* will obviously like this one. It's quite a different type of book, but equally impressive and enjoyable and entertaining. I read [Gilded Cage](#) which was KJ Charles' sequel to [Any Old Diamonds](#). It is a very delightful book about a young woman who is a no-nonsense private investigative agent and the minor aristocrat-turned-jewel thief who she thought betrayed her when they were young, and now has to save him from being framed. It's great. It's KJ Charles, of course, it's amazing.

And I'm in the middle of a non-fiction book called [Mutual Admiration Society: How Dorothy L. Sayers and her Oxford Circle Remade the World for Women](#) which is about, obviously, Dorothy L. Sayers the detective novelist and basically about coming of age and being an Oxford student and her friendship circle at Oxford in the Edwardian and just after period. And then what those women did with their lives. It's really interesting and, of course, because of that I am now frantically rereading all of the Peter Wimsey and Harriet Vane novels, of which I have now read three and am in the middle of the fourth. So that's me.

M: Uh-huh. I have read quite a lot of fic. Quite a lot of fic. Probably at least 500 thousand words of *Untamed* fic.

A: Yeah.

M: Minimum, minimum. I can't even count.

A: Jesus Christ.

M: And, of course, we finished the show! Don't ask me about my drafts. I have a lot of them with tiny amounts in each because I am trash.

A: Drafts? Drafts of what? Macey? Do you wanna say that more clearly for our listeners?

M: Drafts of—No, no I don't think I do. Thank you.

A: Okay, sure.

M: And I also saw a *Star War*. [The new one](#). Which was fine! Like, it wasn't...bad. I think.

A: It was just fine.

M: No, it was—it could have been a lot worse. It was interesting. There were some fun beats. The cute puffin things came back, which is always appreciated. And I read the [Thief](#)—

A: Finally.

M: —Yes! As. F—*Listen*.

[F snickers]

A: Listen, I wasn't the one campaigning for you to read it. I liked it, it was fine.

M: Listeners, you have to understand that the next two books have been rec'd to me by all and sundry, and particularly these two. For a while.

F: Yeees.

M: But I just couldn't get past the first book!

A: Mostly Freya.

F: Mostly me.

M: Mostly Freya. *Thief*, the first one, is a novella with too many words in it. But it does the thing? And that's fine, and now I can read the next ones.

A: Yeah.

F: Yeeeee.

M: Yeah. That's most of what I've been doing. Other than lying on my floor shouting and not talking to Americans about British politics.

A: And learning recorder.

F: Yeah.

M: Oh, yes! I taught myself recorder.

F: And, look, we cannot actually throw too many stones about the number of drafts that Macey has opened because whom amongst us? Right, Alex?

A: Yes. In fact, let me tell you about my drafts. I will be more—

M: I have *seven*.

A: I have four.

M: Yes, but yours have more than a thousand words in each of them!

A: That's true.

F: Wow, I only have *three*.

A: Oooh, well! Everything is all screwed up.

[M bursts out laughing]

[5:02]

A: I finished watching *The Untamed*, and then I started watching the [animated version](#) of *The Untamed*.

M: Yep, that's a mood.

A: I read all of the sex scenes from the [novel version](#) of *The Untamed*. I read quite a lot of fanfic...of *The Untamed*.

M: Yep.

A: And I wrote twenty thousand words—and counting!—of fanfic of *The Untamed*. Then I went to New York City yesterday to visit the Tor offices and yell with our friend Ruoxi about, *The Untamed*, whilst the both of us were wearing closet cosplay of the two main characters.

M: Was not very fucking closeted.

A: No, it's called closet cosplay because you make it out of stuff you have in your closet. Rather than making new stuff.

F: It is a little alarming that you had such a great Wei Wuxian costume in your closet already.

M: It's really not. This is like, peak Alex. Reds and blacks.

F: Oh yeah.

A: I just have a lot of red and black in my closet, is the thing. Yeah so basically my whole life is *The Untamed* right now. Please leave me here to die. And also I want to know who is going to start *The Untamed* recap podcast with me?

M: No one, Alex. Because no.

A: I bet Rouxi will, so.

M: Alex.

A: What?

M: Sit. Stay.

A: No, I will not. You cannot—

[M laughs]

A: I will not be silenced, Macey!

F: It's alright, we can just have this and put it in a little capsule, and then when Alex comes back to us mid next year being like, "why do I have three podcasts??!" we can just be like: "tada!"

M: We can just be like, "Eeee?"

A: Everything is bad.

M: Everything is bad. Have you considered adopting another cat instead?

A: Mmmmmm, my cat doesn't get along with other cats, so unfortunately, it is just podcasts all the way down.

[M + F laugh]

M: What else do you have to tell us though, Alex?

A: I do have a small piece of news, which is that last week—for those of us living right now—we announced that I have a new book coming out next year!

M + F: [perfectly in sync] Yaay!

A: It is a “non-fiction” book, a encyclopaedia of where to find faeries in the modern world. Specifically in urban environments. There’s going to be a lot of stuff about climate change, and technology, and faeries of the internet, and the faeries of Chernobyl, and really fun stuff. It comes out next October. It’s called [\*Finding Faeries\*](#). Aaand, it’s going to be illustrated.

M: Ooooh.

A: So, all of that is pretty cool. Please when—I’ll let you know when preorders go up, it is not yet, but hopefully soon.

M: Yay!

F: Excellent.

A: So now, let’s have a fucking episode.

F: Yes.

M: Freya, you promised us a corner.

A: Yes! Freya’s corner. So early in the episode, goodness.

F: Well, when we were having our usual last-minute panicked discussion about “what do we call the episode, fuck we don’t have a title.”

A: This happens every time.

F: Every time.

A: Every time.

F: I said, off the cuff, well we can’t just call it ‘Let Me Tell You My Thoughts On Yaoi’ and in my foolishness, I assumed that was a joke that everybody would get.

A: It went right over my and Macey’s heads.

[Laughter]

F: Clearly I am just a crone who has been on the internet for too long.

M: That’s true.

F: Honestly, when I thought about it, I couldn't actually name where the meme came from, it's just one of those meme things that people say on the internet. So I had to go to [Fanlore](#) to look up where it came from. There was an inciting incident of somebody who went on a very long rant about their thoughts on yaoi, but it became just a catchall phrase that was kind of everywhere, and it's own punchline for a while. I can't believe I managed to haul it out of my brain, which is clearly full of useless internet factoids.

[M laughs]

F: If there's anybody out there who doesn't know what yaoi is, yaoi is a general term for, essentially, male/male manga and anime. Is that what we'd call it?

A: Yeah. The Gay Shit.

M: Yeah, the ones that actually get explicit, because otherwise it's BL.

F: Not just queer subtext, but actually explicitly...

A: God, this is giving me war flashbacks right now.

F: Let's get into those war flashbacks.

M: Do we get to have a conversation about the difference between lemons and limes?

F: Uuuugh.

A: Oh my god, that's some nostalgia right there.

M: Darling listeners! Welcome to the nostalgia anime episode.

A: We're getting—we're gonna do some nostalgating.

M: Just a little.

F: So, how about one of you tells me how you first got into anime. Tell us the whole sordid story.

M: So mine is somewhat like, baby-Macey's first fandom everything.

F: Excellent.

M: So when I was 13 there was an anime that showed at 6:40pm on Fox Kids. Back when we had one TV, it was the only place you could watch it, and if anyone else who was a parent was in the room, they got dibs. This anime was [Shaman King](#).

A: Mmm.

M: If anyone came across that one?

A: Mm mm [negative].

M: It was a vaguely necromantic fight anime? With summoning weapons and rivals. And a lot of sword fighting banter with pressing the other boy up against a wall stuff.

A: Wonderful.

M: Baby-Macey was fascinated. These episodes were 20 minutes long and I just had to know what happened next. Only one week, my dad wanted to watch fishing, and it was episode 7, and I'm like, "no you don't understand, I will never know what happens, it will never have a re-show." Because they didn't, there was no way to find it out. I was—tiny 13 year old meltdown. About like, [wailing] "I'll never know! It won't make sense! You don't understand how important this is to me! Why are you ruining my life?"

A: Yep, sure.

F: Except British.

M: Except—I mean, that's me and my voice. I don't know how much more British to be.

F: I wasn't sure if you were showing quite that much emotion.

M: Oh, I was 13.

F: Yeah okay, fair enough. So you weren't standing in front of the television with a single crystalline tear, being like—

A: 13 kinda trumps British.

[Laughter]

F: That's true. Yeah, yeah.

M: 13 overrules British, in this case there was a lot of sobbing. And so I went upstairs in a sulk, and was probably grounded for being rude. I was like, "I'm going to ask the internet." So I googled *Shaman King* and I found next to nothing, certainly no episode summaries, except I found one strange thing, which was when I googled the character names, of the two main characters—

A: Oh.

M: —there was this website called fanfiction.net.

A: And the rest was history.

M: With all of these quite smutty shipping fics—I guess it was such a small fandom that the ff.net purge hadn't really reached it—

A: Yeah.

M: [laughing] —and I was very confused.

F: I really hoped you were going to be like, “and the first one was 560,000 words long.”

M: They weren't, no one was writing that long, it was very sad. So that's baby-Macey's first encounter with anime that sunk its claws into my heart, you know?

A: Yeah, yeah.

M: I was like, this matters, somehow to me.

A: Yeah. For me, I was on NeoPets for a long time, back in the day, and I had a very good friend who was kind of responsible for getting me into a lot of stuff. For example, Nanowrimo, and also anime. I'd seen [Pokémon](#) when I was a kid, and also a little bit of [Sailor Moon](#), and I was like, “oh, these are cool, these are fine.” And then she was like, “I found this really gay anime.” I had never seen queer content before, in actual media. I'd been reading a lot of fanfiction at that time, but to actually see it, was something I had never seen before. It wasn't even very good, it was [D.N. Angel](#) was the anime that she rec'd to me. Even that one, I was fascinated, I watched the whole thing, but even still, I didn't really get into it. Then I watched a couple more. Then we really hit gold when she introduced me to *Prince of Tennis*.

M: Heh, oh dear.

A: I have written more fanfic for *Prince of Tennis* than I have for—I think?—any other fandom. Except until fucking now, now it's *The Untamed*. Shit. Well, fuck.

[Laughter]

M: Well Freya, don't think you're going to escape without telling your story.

F: No, no. I think, given our comparative ages, I think this was probably happening concurrently with 13-year-old Macey's entry into anime fandom. So I was 16 and my entry into anime and my discovery of online fandom happened all at once.

M: Mmmhmm.

F: Because I changed friendship groups at high school, just before I turned 16. It was going from the quite conservative straight-As orchestra and choir nerds group that I had been happily sitting in for four years, to the everybody's basically queer, we watch a lot of anime, that particular friendship group. So when I started hanging out with them they were like, "well we're getting together this weekend and watching some more [Fushigi Yûgi](#)." And I was like, okay, cool, anime, whatever. And I vividly remember that the way it was passed around was on disks. It was all on CDs that had been burned.

M: Yep.

F: There was nowhere that was screening most of the things we were watching in Australia. Literally all of this had been magically pirated by people in university, and then burned multiple times and passed down through the ranks to us, the high school arm of this pirate society.

A: The chapter, the high school chapter.

F: The high school chapter. And there were episodes missing and you just couldn't get hold of episode 16. But then somebody would finally burn episodes 17-20, and you'd watch those all at once.

[15:14]

F: The first anime that I ever watched all the way through was one that was, once again, handed to me on a disk, and a friend said, "oh we've all been watching this, it's your turn to have the disk. Oh, it's gay do you mind if it's gay?" And I remember being like, "I guess, no?" It had not actually occurred to me to mind, but again, I hadn't really seen a lot of queer content.

A: Mmhmm.

M: Right.

F: Exactly as Alex said. And it was [Gravitation](#).

A: Oh! Oh my god *Gravitation*! Oh my gosh.

M: Oh! Oh, *Gravitation*!

F: Yes!

[A + M fawning in the background]

F: So *Gravitation*, dear listeners, is not particularly great in terms of queer representation.

A: No

M: No [laughing].

F: But it was very explicitly—

[M laughing]

F: —it was very explicitly gay. A complete, fairly short anime about bands, like pop singers.

A: Yeah.

F: And about a tiny, pink-haired pop singer who falls in love with a dickhead author, essentially.

M: Yep.

A: I think *Gravitation* was the second one that I watched after *D.N. Angel*.

F: It had a fucking amazing soundtrack.

M: Mmm.

A: It did.

F: It was about pop-idols and they had real bands and real singers creating the music, and recording the music, and doing them in concerts that were enormously popular. And we all got thrown head-flung into that, and got obsessed with it. At the same time we were all watching *Fushigi Yûgi* and a couple of other anime, and looking at the fanfiction. Because a lot of those reverse harem anime fandoms got very into the slash fanfic aspect because they just had all of these spare male characters lying around.

A: Mmmhmm.

M: Yep, yep.

F: And they can just be paired up together. So at the age of 16, I fell head first into the queer content, discovering fanfiction, and watching anime all at once. All over one glorious summer before I started year 11.

A: Did anime make us all gay? Or rather, queer?

M: Noo, no I'm pretty sure I was already there.

A: Mmm. It maybe helped.

F: I don't know, my friendship group, I think, over the next two years, starting with the fanfiction and moving through things like *Gravitation*, and [\*Yami no Matsuei\*](#), and just seeking out all the gay shit. Most of us came out as bisexual.

[M laughs]

F: One by one by one by one by one.

M: I mean, at that point I was still at the all girls high school that no one ever successfully came out without being expelled for unrelated reasons.

F: Oh! Well—

M: There were a lot of gays there, but no one was *out*.

A: Mmm.

F: Well my school was a private Anglican girls school.

M: Yep, yep.

F: And because of our friendship group, they had to introduce a new rule, which was: no touching.

[Laughter]

F: Because two of my friends started dating and holding hands, and then the school was like [gasps]. "No touching! No touching, girls!"

M: No touching.

A: Wow.

M: Yep. But it was fascinating, within two or three years of graduating from that school, how many of the people that I knew were like, “yeah, I have a girlfriend now.”

A: Yeah.

F: Yeah, the baby queers—

M: But like, it wasn’t safe. It wasn’t safe to talk about it.

A: Right. So, Macey, do you want to start by telling us your tentpole of the episode?

M: Yes! I want to talk about my favorite anime, my longest running fandom that I have a huge amount of affection for. And is *Hikaru no Go*. *Hikaru no Go* asks the question, what if a family was a boy and a ghost and the boy’s rival?

F: Go on.

A: Yeah.

M: Basically.

A: And they play board games.

M: And they play board games together. [Laughs] It’s a sort of sports anime about the game of Go, which is very serious in Japan. There is a young hooligan boy who tries to steal a goban at the age of 12 and gets himself possessed by the ghost of the best Go player to ever live, who is a whiney Heian-era imperial pretty boy with purple lipstick, and a lot of hair, who just cries constantly if he isn’t going to be allowed to play Go. This pair venture out into the world and trip over a very serious young man, of the same age, who has been the son of the current best Go player in the world, and has been polished from a young age to be the best up-and-coming Go player in the world. And this soccer hooligan, who cannot even pick up the stones right wipes the board with him. And says “thanks for the game,” and bounces off. You can watch this other boy having an extremely confused and probably slightly gay crisis.

A: Yep.

M: In the middle of a Go salon, like, “[gasps] what is my life for?” And they are rivals ever since.

F: I do like a good rivals story.

M: It’s such a great rivals story, and one of the things that I really love with this, is that it starts out where this little boy is just being the hands for the Go playing ghost.

A: Mmmhmm.

[20:08]

M: He's just like *fine*, if you get me good grades on history I guess I will go play Go for you. But very quickly Hikaru, who is the hooligan child, discovers that he's actually really interested in this thing that the ghost is doing and in the connection with the player on the other side of the board, and he wants to play, too. So you get into this really crunchy situation where you've been given a skill by your elders and you're trying to make it your own and nobody wants to see you for your own skill. They just want you to bring out the skill you had when you were being fake, the ghost's skill. So Hikaru is kind of in a complex, competitive relationship with Sai, the ghost, because everyone looks at Hikaru's early games, the ones that were purely the ghost, and are like, "That was amazing! We want to play that version!"

A: Hmm.

M: And Hikaru's like, "Guys, I'm right here. *Hi*." Except ruder because Hikaru.

F: Is it one of those ones that's endlessly, endlessly long?

M: It's fairly long. They grow up slowly. So you start out with the kids aged 12 and I think they're 18 and moving out by the end of the show. They're professionals.

F: Oh, okay, that's a fair amount of time.

A: Wow, *aging*? In *anime*? Incredible!

M: No, yeah. They age! The character design changes. They have these adorable, tiny, round faces in the beginning that look like Ai Yuan from *The Untamed*, and it's very cute. They are *babies*. They are tiny and less-than-shoulder height on all the adults around them.

A: I watched this anime—I watched part of this anime—I watched up until the ghost Sai disappears. Because he was my favorite character and it was like: what-do-you-mean-he's-not-here-anymore so I ragequit.

F: Are you telling me, Alex, that the pretty boy who cries a lot with purple lipstick was your favorite character?

[M wheezes]

A: Shocking, I know.

M: And wears *robes*.

A: And wears long robes, yes.

F, unsurprised: I'm so surprised.

M: Did you read all of the Ogata-Sai fic?

A: I didn't read any fic for *Hikago*! None whatsoever.

M: There's a bunch! There's one where Sai loses his memory—comes back as a young e who has lost his memory—and Ogata pulls him out of a river and is like, "I'm gonna take you to the hospital. Who are you?" He's like, "I don't *know*!"

A: Yeah.

M: And then they play Go and Ogata's like, "I'm taking you home with me!"

A: Yeah. Anyway, I ragequit this anime, but my dad played Go. And so I stomped into the other room and I was like, "Dad! Teach me to play Go right now!" So I vaguely, vaguely, *vaguely* know how to play Go." Macey probably knows more because Macey has watched the whole anime.

M: They had these really cute little two-minute codas to every episode where an actual, professional Go player would sit down with some children and teach the children to play Go.

A: Amazing.

M: Like, a live action one. Like a video of these people doing the thing.

A: Anime is so educational.

M: It was very educational!

F: Have either of you watched *Knives Out*?

A: Mnnmn.

M: No, I was warned there was vomiting.

F: Yes, there is some vomiting.

M: Yeah.

F: I don't think you actually see the vomit, but yes there's someone who vomits several times during the movie. But there is Go playing in the movie.

M: Oh gosh. I do like a good Go game. I like being able to know when someone's fucked up. Like, I enjoy having enough Go knowledge to be like, "Oooh, that was a bad move."

A: Yeah.

M: I couldn't make a good move, but I can be like, "Ooh, not that one!"

A: We should play shitty Go sometime, Macey.

M: That's hilarious because Shidou Go (指導碁) is how you say 'learning Go'.

A, laughing: I did not know that! Well, cool.

F: Well it sounds like something I would enjoy watching even though I, personally, detest board games.

A: Yeah.

M: It's very dramatic and well done. The anime art style is a little bit dated at this point, because it is a bit old, but there's this earnest scene of Toya Akira under the falling sakura blossoms, appealing to Hikaru to be his rival. There's lots of, like, standing sadly in the rain.

A: We love that. We love to see it.

F: Some good old anime imagery there. Anybody standing under a sakura blossom, some deep shit is going down.

M: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly. Meanwhile, I hear that we have a *different* type of sports anime next!

A: We do. Alex loves a sports anime.

M: This is true.

A: And Alex's favorite sports anime is *Yakitate!! Japan*. I want you to imagine if [Great British Bake Off](#) was a sports anime, but it was always bread week. And some of the breads have magical powers.

M: There is a lot of cocaine involved in this imagining.

A: It is a satire anime, and it's satirizing the entire genre of shounen sports anime because of how it's structured and how—Like, it's doing a thing. On purpose. Rather than conforming to the structure because that's the structure, it's conforming to the structure because that's *funny*. So you have your initial, sort of, bread rival who becomes your teammate. Together you build your relationship and take part in these bread competitions. It's a lot. And the bread is judged and, of course, if it's really good bread, the judge has a Reaction which is this cut scene of really wacky stuff happening. But then, within a couple episodes, it turns out that this stuff is happening, kind of, in real life. There's one Reaction where someone turns into a cosmic turtle and spins around on the ceiling.

[M dies laughing, probably]

A: And breathes fire. Anyway, obviously, the people who are best at making bread have *solar hands*. And that is the magical ability of your hands being particularly warm. *Because it makes you better at kneading the bread.*

F: But you would be very bad at making pastry. You would probably need cold hands for pastry.

M: Yep! Pastry hands are cold.

A: Yes! In fact—

M: We had this conversation, didn't we?

F: I think we did.

A: I think we did. And in fact, there are also cold hands. Which are the King magical ability amongst people who specialize in pastry. It's a fantastic—it's a *legitimately* hilarious, fantastic anime that does not take itself seriously *at all*. And it also has a lot of actual, real true facts about bread because anime is educational.

M: Anime *is* educational! That's undeniable.

A: So that's what I've got for you today.

M: I have seen about thirty seconds of this and Alex is exaggerating nothing.

A: Oh, yeah, because I sent you the clip where—[there's the other magical ability which is the magical ability of your hands being particularly flexible](#). And there's thirty entire seconds of five different characters going, "What, you mean like this?" and then wiggling their fingers at each other.

M: It's like *Naruto* hand signs! What are you doing!?

A: And it makes like a weird squelchy noise the whole time!

M: Eeeee.

A: It's a fantastic anime, you should watch it. It *is* still on YouTube.

M: Ahh, Freya. Would you like to bring us back to the land of reason and sadness? I hear there's sadness in yours.

F: Sure. There is some sadness in mine. I do like a good satire-of-the-genre anime, and when I was trying to think about what I wanted to do for my particular nostalgia/sales pitch. I actually considered doing *Ouran High School Host Club*, which I think we're gonna talk about later.

M: I love itt.

F: Which is a satire of a different genre of anime.

M: Yeah.

F: I decided that I was going to talk about *Princess Tutu* which I watched a very long time ago, but it meant a lot to me when I watched it. What I could remember about it, I was like, "Yes! This is a good one to talk about." And then I went to try and find it and it is basically fucking impossible to find in Australia. It's not on Crunchyroll. I was about to pay cash money for this thing. It's not available on DVD, my only options were getting Blurays from American Amazon. Which, I don't have a Blu-ray player and I just... ugh. It was all too much bother. So I decided I would rely on recaps and music videos, went on a recap reading spree, and ended up with a *two page* document worth of notes.

[M cackles]

F: Because *I* was gonna take the assignment seriously! And also I have a targeted sales pitch for both of you.

A: Okay.

M: Oh God.

A: Give it to us.

M: Give it to me!! I'm PREPARED.

A: I'm prepared.

M: I am braced on my chair. Let's do the thing.

F: Let's go. *Princess Tutu* is set in a ballet school in a small village. The initial set up is that there is a fairy-tale structure around this, and there is a clear narrator who is also a character, but to begin with he's just the framing device. The whole thing is incredibly meta. It is about storytelling. It is about being a character within a narrative—

A: Fuck off, Freya.

[M cackles delightedly]

F: Yeah, oh I've got more for you, Alex. Just wait.

A: Dammit.

F: But the initial set up is a fairy tale about a prince who got into a battle with an evil raven. And he decided to sacrifice his own heart and his own memories to trap the raven. So his heart gets shattered into lots and lots of little pieces which get scattered throughout the town, and turns this town into a place where reality meets elements of unreality.

M: Hmm.

F: So it's not entirely a real place. Like, the head ballet teacher is a cat called Cat-sensei. There is a character called Anteaterina who is just a normal girl at the school, but is also an anteater. And the shards of his heart enter the hearts of other people, where they can change them or poison them depending on what the emotion, or the memory, was. So obviously it's already got elements of the Snow Queen fairy tale, and there's a lot of fairy tales that are referenced throughout it and a lot of ballet stories, as well. Each episode has a framing ballet—

M: Oh nice.

[30:11]

F: Like [Coppelia](#) or [Midsummer Night's Dream](#) or [Romeo and Juliet](#). And it has a lot of things to do with the [Nutcracker](#) and [Swan Lake](#) in particular, but also the [Ugly Duckling](#) and [Cinderella](#), because the main character is a duck. An actual, literal duck. Her name is Ahiru and she is given the opportunity by a mysterious storyteller to be turned into a girl with a magical pendant. So the duck is a magical girl who turns into a girl. And then her girl form has another magical girl form who is Princess Tutu—

A: —Lord God! Ok....

M: [attempting to muffle high pitched laughter]

F: She wants to become a real girl because she wants to dance with the prince. Like Cinderella. But if she does anything duck-like, she transforms back into a duck temporarily. Which you'd think was a bit of a weird thing, but it happens. And she has the chance, she's told, to save the prince because he is essentially an automaton. He has lost his memory, he's lost his feelings. He's this soulless but beautiful boy who does not remember who he was and is not a real person. And she can save him by getting his feelings back one by one, by getting these shards from the people in the town and helping the people who have them to work through their feelings via dance. This is the initial framing story.

M: [strangled laughter, gasping breaths, you get it]

F: It falls apart and twists on itself and goes in a completely different direction by halfway through the anime, but that's the initial beginning. And it has a lot of really interesting themes around when you decide to do something for someone because of what you want, are you doing the right thing for them? And so, this character, Ahiru, is trying to get the memories back of Mythos, who's the prince, who is another—they're all students at this ballet school. And his friend, Fakir, is the knight character to the prince, so he doesn't want her to do this. He's like no, leave him alone, he's fine. There's another girl who's called Rue, who's this mysterious, sort of perfect ballet figure, who's also in love with the prince and doesn't want him to change. She's like, no, he's perfect as he is, without feelings, because he's this very central, almost passive, feminized in sort of his role within the story. He's the prince but he's basically the princess. Everyone wants to help him—

M: —he's an object.

F: —posses him, protect him, and argue about what is best for him. But underneath this whole story is this thing that I was thinking about is essentially an [Omelas](#) parallel. If all it takes is one person losing their humanity to imprison a great evil, is it worth it? And what if that person is actually content? Because they don't know any better. So heaps and heaps and heaps happen in this to do with finding peoples—these emotions and then the roles of the four main characters keep shifting as which one of them is being framed as the villain, and they're all being manipulated by the storyteller. And they're being manipulated by the raven who is the evil, sort of antagonist figure. It is an incredibly clever anime, which also has some really funny and whimsical and lighthearted animation going on within it in terms of the characters and the interactions between them. And the way that the ballet is animated is absolutely gorgeous. It's very stylized and the emotion is very heightened, but that works, because ballet.

A: Yeah.

M: Right.

F: And so, yeah all these motifs and visuals and things come into it. And the themes are around like, yeah if you accept your fate you can be happy, but if you defy your fate you could become a glorious figure. Is it better to feel your negative emotions or not? Is it better to love someone for being a real and complete person rather than the idea of someone and what purpose they can serve for you? It's about shitty abusive parenting. But at the bottom of it, it's about being kind. Ahiru's great strength as a character is that she manages to win the day always by just being kind and empathetic and wanting the best for other people. It's got a very Pratchettian message underneath all of the narrative, gear turning bullshit.

M: Which I think is an interesting thing that you see in [Sailor Moon](#).

A: Mhm?

M: With the Sailor Moon villains, a lot of the times being defeated with empathy, but I'm also thinking about... it's also Naruto's super power as well. Outside of his punching, one of the things that he does is talks to his enemies and I'm just thinking of—have either of you two watched any *Naruto*?

F: [thoughtfully] Ye....es....

M: I'm thinking of him talking to Gaara.

F: Yeah, yeah.

M: And other stuff. A lot of the time he will convert an enemy who will later turn out to be a friend. Which I think it rare in shounen. I think it's something you expect more in shoujo.

A: [disapprovingly] mmmm.....

F: ... Yeah, I think—well, I'm trying to think. Naruto is kind of a very classic shounen.

M: It's very classic shounen. But I'm thinking about [Bleach](#), I would not expect characters to win by being kind. [Full Metal Alchemist](#), maybe? You could argue that one of the Elric Brothers' powers is kindness.

F: I think it's a fairly common strength of a protagonist to see, especially where the protagonist is not overpowered in other ways. It's like, even though Ahiru is this magical girl and she has these abilities, when she becomes Princess Tutu, she doesn't shoot magical rays or anything. Her entire power is in using dance to show empathy. And to show that she can express someone else's feelings and help them to work through them.

M: Is this something we see as much in Western film and television? It's something I feel maybe in children's media but not as much outside?

F: I don't know...

A: What, about empathy?

M: Yeah. Empathy as a superpower. Being kind as a thing that wins the day.

A: Well, here's the thing. You're using the phrase 'be kind' but I actually have a cool piece of academia to tell you about, which is a Japanese philosophical concept called *makoto*. Are you familiar with this?

M: Nope!

A: Okay. Makoo basically means earnestness. And it's that thing in anime where characters win the day by having good, true, pure feelings, so being kind is part of that. It plays into that. But it's also about being genuine and caring about other people and so forth. And so a lot of times the protagonists are winning because they are the most earnest one. They're the one with the good, true, pure feelings. I wrote an entire paper about this in college and the title of it was "The Importance of Being Earnest: Makoto as a Path to Success". Because you see when the protagonist starts to stray away from this path of like genuine, pure emotions, when they start being angry, or having a dark night of the soul, they get less good at the thing that they're supposed to be doing. And it's not until they regain that sort of pure emotion that they start triumphing over their rivals again. Right?

M: I think you're totally right. This is a really cool thing that anime does. I'm trying to figure out if it's a unique thing... Because it is something that I'm noting...

A: I think... I think it is.

F: I was going to say, I think it depends where you're looking. 'Cause I agree that I think—especially in, i suppose, middle grade—it would be a very common and I guess underlying character note, but I would also say that Romance, as a genre, in this vein, because it rewards sincerity and truth of feeling.

M: Yeah! I think that you're right! I think it's interesting that this is seen as a thing that only your intimate connections and children need.

A: Yeah. Rather than something you can espouse for how you approach the whole world.

F: I would absolutely agree that is the central, underpinning moral theme in *Princess Tutu*. About using that as a way to relate to people, because it's about seeing people for who they really are, rather than as objects, and the whole point is that the storyteller sees people as objects and

tries to manipulate them for his own amusement. And that's where all of the darkness in the story and the world comes from is when people are perceived as objects.

M: Mhm. Right.

F: Yeah. So, anyway. Final notes! Tropes that you might like: there's a very obvious high, dark femme/sunshine girl femslash pairing, which you might enjoy, Macey, which is of the central character and the dark swan. They have this very clear Odette/Odile, white swan/dark swan imagery going on, which is delicious. And for you, Alex, there is a sensitive, beautiful prince with a grumpy, protector knight who has made protecting the prince his entire mission since he was a child—

A: —dammit.

F: —and this knight also discovers he has the ability to control reality by writing stories.

A: Dammit!! Dammit....

M: [cackles]

F: And there's a very cool scene where he is fighting against the narrator of the whole story to try and change what's happening in the story and the narrator's dark intentions take over his hand so he stabs his own hand with a knife to make himself stop writing. It's... It's great.

A: That's pretty great. That's pretty great. You mentioned that part of the way that you sort of refreshed yourself was watching music videos. My entire experience—I think I saw like two episodes of *Princess Tutu* way back in the day, but my great familiarity with *Princess Tutu* is the music video '[Håll Om Mig](#)'.

F: I couldn't find a music video I actually liked, unfortunately. I just had a little bit of a flick through Youtube but I couldn't find any that I would link or espouse as particularly good at selling it as an anime. So what was this one that you remember watching?

A: It's one of the—like, I still have the link 'cause I watch it fairly frequently. It's one of the greatest music videos of all time. People have—anime music videos I mean. People show it at conventions and hold it up as a classic example of the anime music video genre. And I will link it to you in chat and the scribes will—scribes if you can't find it let me know! I got it for you.  
[laughs]

F: Excellent. Anyway. That is my sales pitch. I believe, Alex, you would have a good time with this. It's only 26 episodes.

M: And I will note it's on Hulu.

A: Okay.

F: Yes! So those who are lucky enough to be able to access Hulu, in, you know, countries that have proper streaming service options...

M: Yep. Sorry.

F: It's on Hulu! It's a great show! You'll enjoy it.

A: Would you prefer me to watch this show or keep writing *Untamed* fanfic?

F: As if I don't believe that you could do both, but—

A: —Okay.

M: Watch it in the summer. Save it.

A: When I'm not on deadline.

All 3: Yeah.

[laughter and reptile noises]

F: You should be doing deadline things, followed by *Untamed* things. This can wait. It's been around for awhile. It will wait for you.

A: It'll hold. Okay.

M: Meanwhile. I would like to talk about some categories of anime.

A: Alright.

M: And I wanted us to shout a little bit about sports animes. And also battle animes. Because I think we were talking about how those are slightly the same thing.

A: Okay.

M: Alex, this was your cue to shout about *Prince of Tennis* being a samurai.

A: Yes! Thank you! Yes. I will shout about how *Prince of Tennis* is about samurais because it is.

M: [choking or laughing? You decide!]

A: *Prince of Tennis* I got deeply, deeply into for several years actually. It is a whole metaphor of actual, historical samurai because they're all named after actual, historical samurai. Some of them have been split into two, for example my favorite ship Sanada and Yukimura, from my favorite team RikkaiDai—

M: —yes. The fancy, prissy ones.

A: No, no, no! That's Hyotei. Hyotei is—

M: —Is it? I always get this wrong.

A: Hyotei is the fancy, prissy ones who wear white and grey-blue. And then—

F: —I've never watched this, but they're my favorites.

A: They would be your favorites, actually, Freya. Yes, that's true. And RikkaiDai are the ones who wear mustard yellow and are the hardcore badasses and kind of terrifying, and everyone is like *whoa*—

M: —the thugs.

A: Ah. They're not really thugs.

M: Are they not portrayed as the image of thugs?

A: No, they are portrayed as the final boss battle because they're the reigning champions.

M: I think this is like... sports anime as a structure is really fascinating to me in there's just so many examples of it.

A: Yeah.

M: I think that it's still a sports anime. *Prince of Tennis* is structured by tournaments—

A: —Oh it is, yes.

M: —And by rivals and striving to better yourself and going to practice, unless you're Fuji.

[knowing laughter]

A: Yeah.

M: And there is a lot of slashfic in that fandom because there are like 59 million boys and two girls.

A: So, when I was in college, a friend and I were deeply into *Prince of Tennis* and we once sat down and counted how many characters there were. 126 male characters.

M: Uh-huh....

A: 6 women.

M: Yep. Yeah.

F: Ooh [shivers]

M: About that. And then you have something, which I think of as a battle anime, which is for example *Bleach*.

A: Mokay.

M: Or *Naruto*! Where it's not a competition, you are fighting for your life. You are trying to save people from monsters. You can kind of argue that *Full Metal Alchemist* is that as well.

A: Mokay.

M: And I think those are structured pretty differently, right? They're much less episodic.

F: The early stages of *Naruto* are structured like a sports anime.

M: That's true! Well, kind of.

F: Because they're about a tournament of all these series of duels between the young ninjas trying to prove themselves among one another.

M: I mean, that's after the first twenty episodes, which have quests.

[44:20]

F: That's true. I think there is a sports anime structure smack-bang in the middle of *Naruto*.

[M giggles]

F: I say this having watched a certain amount of *Naruto*—like quite a fairly big chunk.

M: Yeah.

F: And then having rage quit at a certain point when it just... there's just *so fucking much* of it.

M: There's so much of it.

F: I'd watched enough that I had enough feelings to go out and write quite a lot of fanfiction. And then I decided to move on. With a sigh of relief.

M: I think that the *Naruto* prompts memes—prompt memes—were some of my first fanfic experiences. I made my first fandom friend co-writing fic.

A: Aw!

M: In that and *Ouran*. We wrote *Naruto* fic and we wrote *Ouran* papa mama fic.

A: Oh nice.

F: Well, I like sports anime when it's about self-discovery within a found family. I think—

A: Yes! That's good shit.

F: And [Yuri!!! On Ice](#) obviously I watched because it was a figure skating anime—

M: YES!

F: But it's very much about self growth and self discovery within the context of making friends and having rivals.

M: I love it.

A: Mmm.

F: And obviously structured very much across a season's worth of the grand prix. And I think I've talked on this show a little— [mutters, poking fun at self] '*on this show*'... I have talked a little on this podcast about [Run with the Wind](#) which is a sports anime about long distance running and is also about a found family of idiots living in a house together.

[A laughs]

F: Recommend that.

M: And... then I am going to skip over the thing where I shout about my childhood trash favourite which is creature anime such as [Digimon](#) and [Beyblade](#) because it's humiliating...

F: [In her Disappointed Voice] And I have no comment on that.

M: Ah-a! And... anyone remember, oh, what the fuck was the one with Yami and like, the card game one?

A: Oh!

M: Uhhh...

F: Alex, I feel like you know this.

A: Ah, [Yu-Gi-Oh!](#)

M: *Yu-Gi-Oh!*

A: I did not see any of it.

F: I just... I never watched these. I never watched any anime that was actually on television. It was all about hunting down discs.

A: Yeah.

M: These are the ones that were like, mainstream enough that they were badly dubbed on Fox Kids.

A: Aw, I remember the bad dubs.

M: And not— they were not good? They weren't good?

A: No. They weren't good.

M: But I still read slash about it!

F: Fair enough.

A: [Laughing] Huge mood. Huge mood.

M: [Sighs] But speaking about slash — let's talk about some actually queer anime.

A: Yes! What are your thoughts on queer anime, Macey?

M: I wanna talk about gender non-conformity and [\*Ouran Host Club\*](#).

A: Oh please let's. Please let's do that thing.

F: I love *Ouran* so much.

A: Me too.

M: I love it! So the thing with *Ouran* is, it's about a girl who has to crossdress convincingly as a boy to go to a very fancy high school. And also, her father is a professional drag queen.

A: Yeah.

M: Or like, drag-like housewife? It's not very Queen. Like, he is a guy and he's happy being a guy, but he presents as a woman.

[A hums]

M: But he isn't a woman. Freya — you say you love this one. What did you love about *Ouran*?

F: I loved this one partly because, as I said, it is a satire of a particular genre of anime.

A: Yes.

F: So it is making a lot of sly jokes about itself, and to itself, in the context of the kind of anime that it is.

[M + A hum]

F: But I also just— I really love the dynamic between the characters. Because again, it's about a very tight-knit friendship group.

A: Yes.

M: They are disasters. Disasters and all gay as fuck!

F: They're all disasters. But into whom waltzes our POV character who is the one who dresses as a boy at this high school.

M: Who I want to say is hyper-competent? But who is also an idiot in her own special way.

A: Yeah. [Laughs]

F: Oh, yes. So it's got a lot of things to do with gender presentation, and also to do with class?

A: Mhm.

M: Yes.

F: And the self-consciousness she feels as being from a poorer background. Being— I think she's a scholarship student at this very fancy high school she attends. Anyway, I wrote like, OT5 fic for that fandom—

A: Wow. Oh *god*.

F: Because I had a lot of feelings about them all being in love.

M: I wrote... some of the main two leads of the host club. But the other thing about gender that this show does that's really interesting — it's about a male host club. Which is a club where a bunch of very rich, spoiled boys give attention and validation to girls.

F: In exchange for money.

M: In exchange for money. And that's really interesting to me.

A: Mhm.

M: Like, they serve the girls, they're at the whims of the girls, they choose to do this! They have plenty of fucking money! They don't *need* to do this.

A: Yeah.

M: And it's just... a really interesting concept, right? About the gender dynamics and the power dynamics there.

A: And they're doing it like, if I remember correctly... it's been awhile since I've seen it, but they're doing it from kind of a moral imperative? Like, it is *right* for us to do this thing. It is—

[M makes uncertain noises]

A: I mean, they're also profiting from it. But—

M: I think they're all doing it for their own individual reasons?

A: Mmm.

M: Like, the twins are definitely doing it from chaos.

A: Yeah. It could just be Tamaki who has like, the Noble Purpose.

M: Yep. Tamaki has, Tamaki has the... ah, disaster. Disaster noble prince.

A: Yeah, so Tamaki is doing it for a noble purpose. And then Kyoya is doing it for profits.

M: Money. Yeah. [Laughs] I wanted to talk about one of the only yaoi animes I ended up watching. Which is [Junjō Romantica](#), which I don't know if either of you have watched...?

A + F: No!

M: It is an anime about an 18 year-old boy who falls in love with an older author who is a dude.

A: Okay.

M: And moves in with him.

F: So kind of like... [Gravitation](#)?

M: Yeah, kind of. Except that he's a lot less of a dick. I think it's basically a sequence— each season is a different relationship. It's kind of like a compendium of novella-length romance animes.

A: Mhm.

M: In this circle of friends with writers, and agents, and editors, and publishers. And it's fun! But it has *extreme* yaoi hands.

F: [Makes shuddering noise] Oh, yaoi hands.

A: Oh god! Oh god, yaoi hands.

M: [Laughs] And like... this— yep, this sure is the genre that it is.

A: Yeah.

F: I think, I'm trying to think back— the two queer anime that made the biggest impression on me when I was younger was probably [Yami no Matsuei](#) which was very gay, it was about shinigami and... very pretty, stylised art. And [Utena](#).

A: Mhm!

F: Which was one of the few explicitly F/F anime that I'm aware of watching.

M: Right.

F: But also, I want to talk about my *favorite* queer anime for the next section — am I allowed to move on?

A: Mmm.

F: So right down the other end of what we might consider to be 'romantic', in *heavy* quotation marks....

[M cackles like a woods witch]

F: [Deeply excited] I would like to talk about [Tokyo Babylon](#) and [X/1999](#).

M: And how it influenced your writing!

F: Yes. So this is our 'How did anime influence our writing?' corner.

M: Yes.

F: And if you read even I suppose the most superficial plot summary of *Tokyo Babylon*, you will understand a lot about *me*. And... let me see how to put this. Alright: *Tokyo Babylon* is clearly a romance—

[A + M laugh]

F: About basically supernatural... I'm trying to think of how to say what they are in English. Yeah, there's a supernatural/occult mystery solving aspect to it for one of the characters. And the other one is an assassin.

[A giggles]

F: They meet when the assassin is probably in his late teens, and the other guy is a small child. And this extremely irresponsible/sociopathic teenager turns to the small child, 'Hmm. You interest me. Let's make a bet. Later on in your life, I'm going to come into your life for a year. If, by the end of that year, you have made me care about you—as more than an object—I won't kill you.'

[M starts to cackle]

F: 'Otherwise, I will. BYE!'... And so, *Tokyo Babylon* is about a 16 year-old, like, occult practitioner, who makes friends with this very kindly 25 year-old veterinarian who is actually an evil assassin.

[M continues to cackle in drawn-out wails]

A: Who's thinking about killing him.

F: Who's thinking about killing him. They fall in love, it's incredibly fucked up.

A: [Sarcastically] Wow. That's... *great*.

[M laughs again]

F: And look, Clamp. Clamp just... had some really weird ideas about romance? And then these two characters went on to feature in *X/1999* which is probably the first anime that I watched long-term. You know, start to finish. And... it has a very clear, sort of good-versus-evil ensemble, urban fantasy I suppose, kind of arc.

[A + M hum knowingly]

F: With some really heavy religious themes smushed on top of it. Subaru and Seishiro the characters from *Tokyo Babylon* feature in that, and their romance gets even more fucked up.

[M laughs]

F: But... very very formative for me, when it came to the kind of stories that I was finding digging their claws into my heart. And then I reached [Hannibal](#) fandom, and went 'OH!'

A: I was about to say... I was like, 'This is sounding a LOT like *Hannibal*, isn't it Freya?'

F: [Laughs] It... oh, yes. There is a lot about the *Hannibal* world dynamic that was very familiar to little 16 year-old Freya who was looking at this ship sidelong and going, 'I'm not quite sure why I'm into this, but I'm VERY into this.'

[A + M cackle]

M: It's a good dynamic.

F: Ugh, such a good dynamic. What about you, how do you think that anime has influenced... I guess your writing, and your taste in fiction?

M: So... um. How did it influence my writing. Well, *Hikaru no Go* fanfic was the first fiction I ever wrote. So there's that?

A: Okay.

F: Very influential.

M: Very influential. I think that something about the characters really dug its fingers into me. And I think part of that was just... the connection between them as rivals? And this sense that you could feel very deeply for someone not necessarily in a positive way, but it could be a force for good in your life and change you for the better.

[A hums knowingly]

M: And like, someone you could strive against and challenge yourself against. 'Cause I mean, at that age, I was a very smart kid being told constantly that being smart was a problem?

A: Mhm.

M: Or, being shown that it was a problem but being praised for it at the same time? And that was very confusing. And then you have this show, where Toya Akira is very buttoned down and unable to socialise, and super smart—intimidatingly smart. And there's this one boy who says, 'No, I'm gonna follow you anyway'. Right. 'I like you, I want to be your rival, I care about what you think, and I will be scary smart *with* you. And we can do that together, and against each other, and grow'.

M: And... yeah. I guess that's what I mean when I say that the Rival Structure is a romance arc for me.

A: Mhm.

M: And so, I think that that definitely influences my preference for writing books with at least two main characters. I don't tend to write books with one main character. I want to have the interplay and the weave of two people against each other, growing and pushing each other. Or knocking each other over!

A: Yes. That's great. I love that. And I think that you're super right, that having someone to push against—

M: Mhm.

A: Or someone to push you, is a *huge*—it's a really good way to instantly get some more character depth in there. Yeah.

M: Mhm. How about you?

A: I really think that anime influenced how I do humor beats? And I don't know that I have a grasp on it to explain it more than that. I think that it's a very subtle sort of influence. Of course... more obvious is—

[M laughs]

A: Is that anime gave me my favourite trope of all time, which is the trope of this romance between the liege and the loyal retainer. Because Japanese medieval literature *loves* that. And anime often draws on a lot of established tropes from medieval Japanese literature, 'cause anime is trying to be literary.

[M makes interested noise]

A: And it has deep literary merit, right?

M: It does.

A: That's what the whole podcast is about.

F: Yeah.

A: And so a lot of times they know exactly what they're doing... I would say *most* of the time they know exactly what they're doing when they're making references like this. For example, when *Prince of Tennis* is modelling its characters after samurai, and—

M: That's very by choice.

A: It's by choice. And it's a choice of deep literary merit that if you know history or literature, you're going to get those kinds of things. Anyway, so I have a lot of feelings about that, clearly. And... thank you anime for bringing this to me.

M: I think that this episode can more or less be summed up with... your Serpents, darling listeners, have a lot of feelings about anime.

A: Yeah.

[Outro music]

A: Hey everybody. Thanks for joining us for this episode of Be the Serpent, a podcast of extremely, extremely deep literary merit. Anime is fucking awesome, and I have picked up so

many hobbies and interesting bits of knowledge from it. So basically, if anyone tries to tell you untamedthat anime's dumb, you can tell them that your Serpent Friend Alex said that they're wrong. And also stinky.

A: Listen though, I am so fucking excited to tell you about our upcoming episode. Two weeks hence, on January 29th, we are somehow starting our third year of this podcast?! I don't know how that happened. We will be yelling about something that we have all been obsessed with recently. That's right — you asked and we answered. We are going to have an episode about *The Untamed*, and only *The Untamed*. Literally, that's our only tentpole. We also have a special guest joining us for the first time in fucking forever. So anyway, if you have a friend who is into Chinese dramas full of exquisite yearning and plot-relevant love songs, maybe give them a heads up. In the meantime, feel free to continue the conversation with us. Questions, comments, breathless adulations? Contact us at [serpentcast@gmail.com](mailto:serpentcast@gmail.com), @serpentcast on [Twitter](#) and [Tumblr](#), or join in on the conversation on our fan Discord chat, linked on the 'About the Show' [page](#) of our website. If you enjoy the podcast, please consider supporting us on Patreon, or leave a review on iTunes. And, by the way, do your best. I believe in you. *Ganbattel!*. Picture me like, clenching my fist in a supportive sort of way.

## What We're Into Lately

[\*The Untamed\*](#) & *Untamed* fic

[\*Harrow the Ninth\*](#) by Tamsyn Muir

[\*Gilded Cage\*](#) by K.J. Charles

[\*Mutual Admiration Society: How...\*](#) by Mo Moulton

[\*The Rise of Skywalker\*](#) (2019)

[\*Thief\*](#) by Ava March

[\*Mo Dao Zu Shi\*](#) donghua

[\*Mo Dao Zu Shi\*](#) by Mo Xiang Tong Xiu

## Other Stuff We Mentioned

[\*Prince of Tennis\*](#)

[\*Naruto\*](#)

[\*Gideon the Ninth\*](#) by Tamsyn Muir

[\*Any Old Diamonds\*](#) by K.J. Charles

[\*Finding Faeries\*](#) by Alexandra Rowland

[\*Shaman King\*](#)

[\*Pokémon\*](#)

[\*D.N. Angel\*](#)

[\*Gravitation\*](#)

[\*Yami no Matsuei\*](#)

[\*Great British Bake Off\*](#)

[\*Coppelia\*](#) (ballet)

[\*Midsummer Night's Dream\*](#) (ballet)

[\*Romeo and Juliet\*](#) (ballet)

[\*Nutcracker\*](#) (ballet)

[\*Swan Lake\*](#) (ballet)

[\*Ugly Duckling\*](#) (ballet)

[\*Cinderella\*](#) (ballet)

[\*The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas\*](#)

[\*Sailor Moon\*](#)

[\*Bleach\*](#)

[\*Full Metal Alchemist\*](#)

[\*'Håll Om Mig'\*](#) Princess Tutu AMV

[\*Yuri!!! On Ice\*](#)

[\*Run with the Wind\*](#)

[\*Digimon\*](#)

[Beyblade](#)

[Yu-Gi-Oh!](#)

[Ouran High School Host Club](#)

[Junjō Romantica](#)

[Revolutionary Girl Utena](#)

[Tokyo Babylon](#)

[X/1999](#)

[Hannibal](#)

**For Next Time**

[The Untamed](#)