

TARBU

FICTION PODCAST



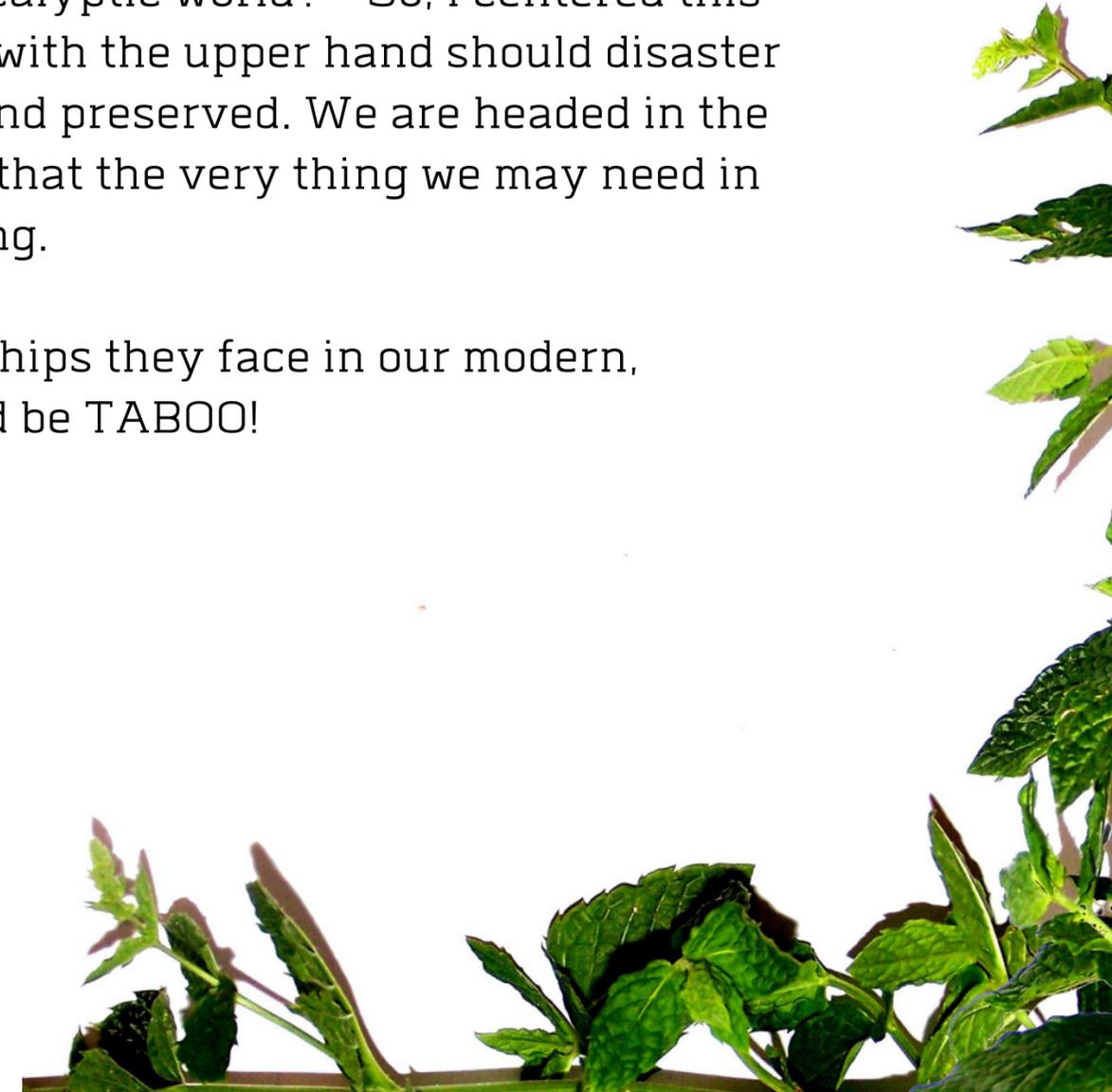
PITCH DECK

WHAT INSPIRED ME TO WRITE THIS SERIES?

My love, admiration, and respect for the rainforest, indigenous tribes, and to pay tribute to my own Native American ancestors, while providing an opportunity to combine my formal education in Art History and Cultural Anthropology with a greater global awareness.

I asked the question: "How would I demonstrate indigenous culture in a post-apocalyptic world?" So, I centered this series around the "Outsiders", and how indigenous cultures could actually end up with the upper hand should disaster strike. One thing would have to occur, the rainforest would have to be protected and preserved. We are headed in the exact opposite direction of where we would need to be. Tabu is a gentle reminder that the very thing we may need in order to survive is the very thing we are destroying.

This series is dedicated to all of the uncontacted tribespeople and the hardships they face in our modern, uncompromising world – and to the Amazon, which should be TABOO!

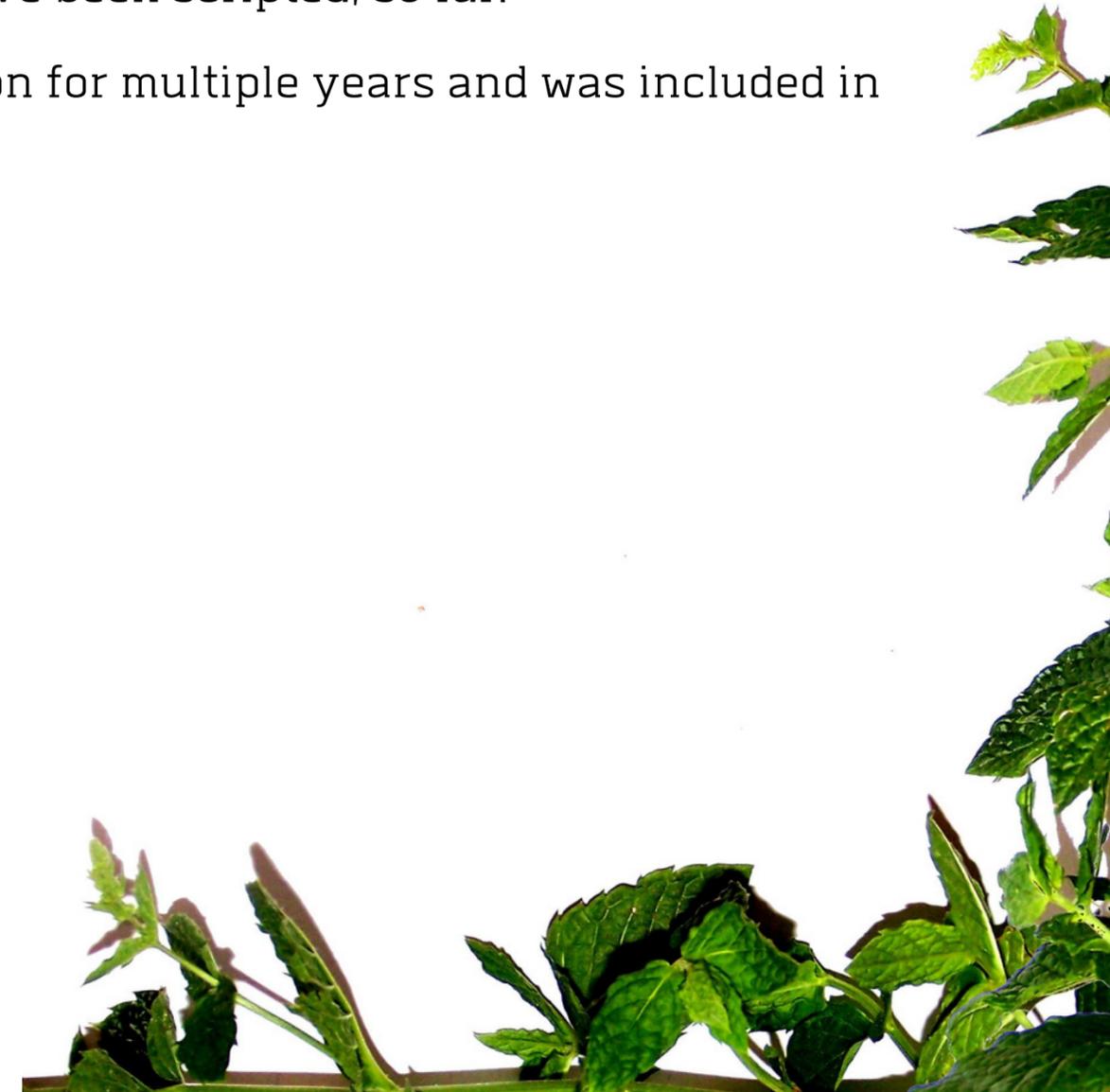


The Vision

The Tabu Fiction Podcast has been adapted from a television series and a graphic novel (artwork on cover).

The world and Esme's story was ideal for a podcast. Eight seasons have been scripted, so far.

The Tabu Podcast scripts have been featured in the Austin Film Festival Script Division for multiple years and was included in Gotham Week 2022.



The Narrator

Tonia Kempler, creator and voice of Esme, will narrate the story. The story will unfold as the protagonist documents the events unfolding around her on a dictaphone.

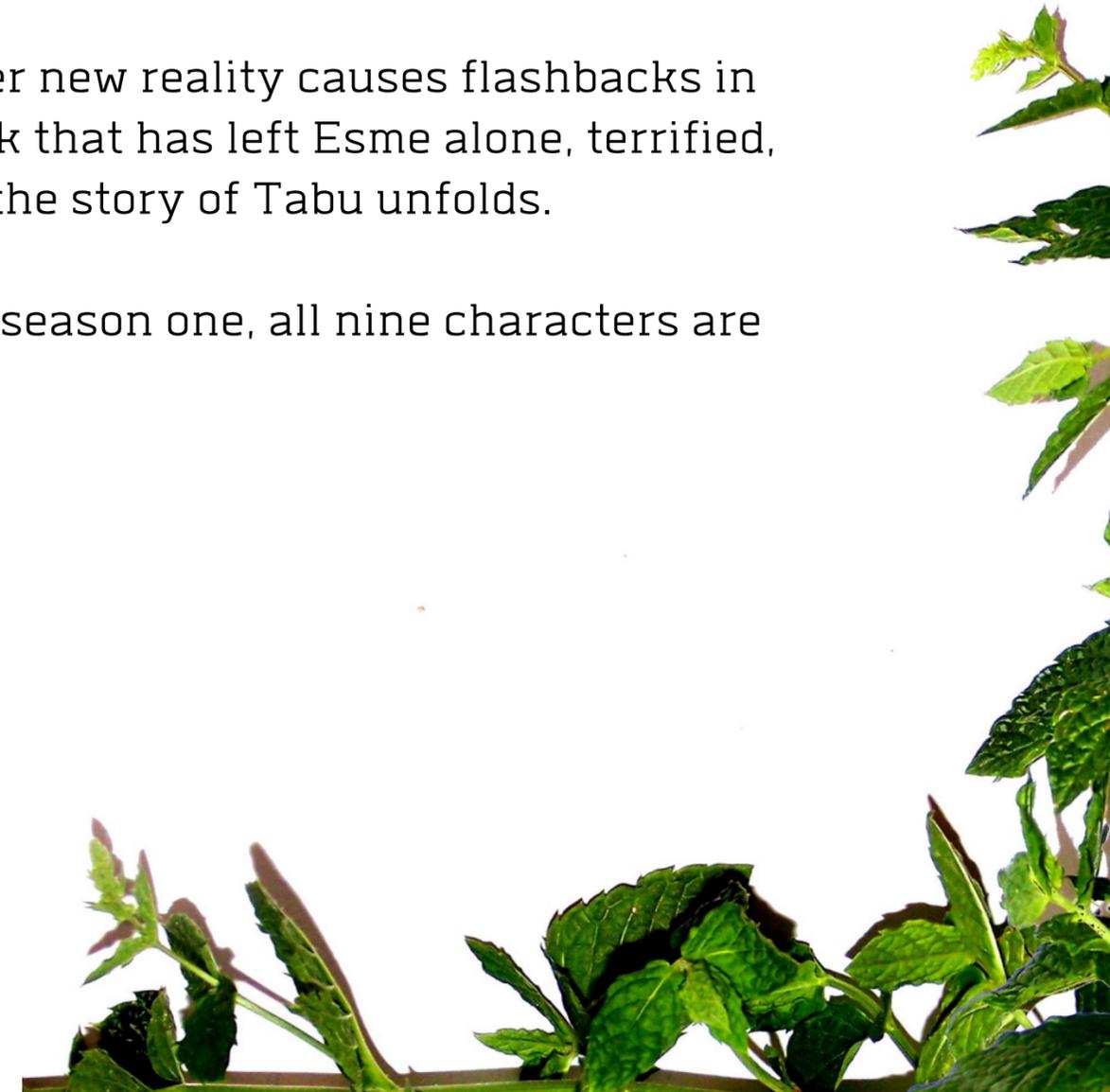


The Format

In the first season, Esme carries her dictaphone, documenting the current landscape. She's a scientist, sent to the Amazon for a reason - to find a cure for the world at large. She must remain true to that mission while caring for her unconscious friends and colleagues. It's all on her!

Esme explains what is happening around her in real time. Her interaction with her new reality causes flashbacks in each episode. In these flashbacks, we get a sense of the Amazon prior to the attack that has left Esme alone, terrified, and unsure! Characters are introduced in the flashbacks bit by bit, and the story of Tabu unfolds.

As the season progresses, the sleeping survivors wake one by one. By the end of season one, all nine characters are with us in the present time.



The Premise

Series Logline:

Generations after a biological war, a young female scientist, stationed in the Amazon Rainforest, fights to survive while researching a cure for the disease plaguing the Commonwealth.

Season Logline:

Esme, finding herself isolated in the Amazon Rainforest, fights to save her team and what's left of civilization from what lies behind their walls in the midst of striving to develop a cure for the disease that's plaguing mankind.

How Season One Unfolds for an Audio Experience:

Esme wakes from a deep sleep, alone and confused, finding most of her team has vanished. Only nine remain, wrapped like mummies and unconscious. Esme cares for the others while striving to find out what happened. She recounts on her dictaphone what the camp was like prior to this horrific awakening.

**It may appear at first glance that this is a huge, complicated world for an audio experience. The slow unraveling and the manner in which the characters are introduced and share their own experience make this entirely possible. The flashbacks give a chance for drama to unfold, and by limiting the amount of information shared, the story never gets overwhelming.*

*** The following pitch deck is written visually to paint a picture of the world in the mind's eye. The podcast, of course, would only use this world as a backdrop.*

The Introduction

(The following is the series background. The story itself is a very slow reveal, unveiled thoughtfully and with the listeners experience considered first and foremost.)

The Land is Sacred - It belongs to the countless numbers who are already dead, the few who are living, and the multitudes of those yet to be born."
Pena Sarawak, Malaysia

Tabu is a post-apocalyptic drama, with supernatural elements rooted in indigenous belief systems. The world is a mystery that will unfold over time, and the character's back-stories and motives are revealed slowly, heightening the sense of mystery and intrigue.

For World Building Vision:

The year is 2098, and civilization struggles to survive in a dystopian world ravaged by the effects of biological and chemical warfare administered by an Eastern crusade. Modern civilization, with its immediate, tech-driven sensibilities, is in decline. It was not prepared to withstand the attacks from the underground, eastern threat known as the Martyrs. The Martyrs' goal was to exterminate anyone outside their own ideology and rebuild the world under one supreme law.

A shadow is cast over the remaining civilization's fight to survive by the fear of what lies behind the massive walls they've constructed in various locations around the globe to lock out any unknown dangers, including cultures they deemed less worthy, or too savage for inclusion inside their secured safe zones. Their inherent guilt bred myths and folklore that governs the closed-off societies. They've been conditioned to believe a greater evil lurks behind their fortresses, waiting to attack. This struggling society is known as the Commonwealth and encompasses all of the various safe zones around the world.

The indigenous cultures living outside the walled-off compounds appear to be disease-resistant and untouchable. They are rumored to be immortal abominations, fueling bedtime stories and urban legends. These mystical tribes and clans flourished through the years and are growing in numbers with varying sects. Some are dangerous, some are diabolical, but most are misunderstood. In reality, they are more humane than the closed-off modern world taught to hate, fear, and destroy what they could not accept and understand. Their affinity to and knowledge of the land and its natural resources were their saving grace, equipping them with a survival mechanism modern civilization lacks.

'What dictates Nationalism? And what defines a 'savage?'

The Tone

The tone of the series is dark and mystical, with a healthy dose of both mystery and horror. TABU toys with our primal fears of being isolated and alone. Imagine being stranded in a remote, isolated rainforest, knowing your worst nightmares are real. Monstrous, unstoppable beings with cunning, adaptable abilities exist in your world. And to make matters worse, you are in their backyard – a stranger in a strange land. A faint recollection of Wrong Turn might drift into your awareness, making your hair stand on end. All of your senses would be heightened.

In the teaser, one of TABU's main characters falls down a steep ravine. She attempts to pull a bloody shard of bamboo from her thigh when suddenly she is yanked from view into the dense overgrowth by something unseen. She resurfaces later as our "harbinger of doom." The omen of "something wicked this way comes" plays a big part in the tone and theme of the series.

TABU is not a zombie apocalypse, a Mad Max, nor a Terminator. This world is reminiscent of The Village, with its successful governance of deceit. It's not dissimilar to Alice falling down the rabbit hole, waking up alone and confused, forced to navigate an unknown landscape and forge new relationships with unlikely allies.

The setting heightens the sense of foreboding, introducing additional dangers inherent to the landscape, such as fear of not knowing whether you are the hunter or the hunted. The sounds of the Amazon add to the intensity of each moment, whether it's howler monkeys screeching in alarm, the heartbeat of a distant tribal drum, the mesmerizing chant of the cannibals, or something as simple as the sudden croak of a toucan.

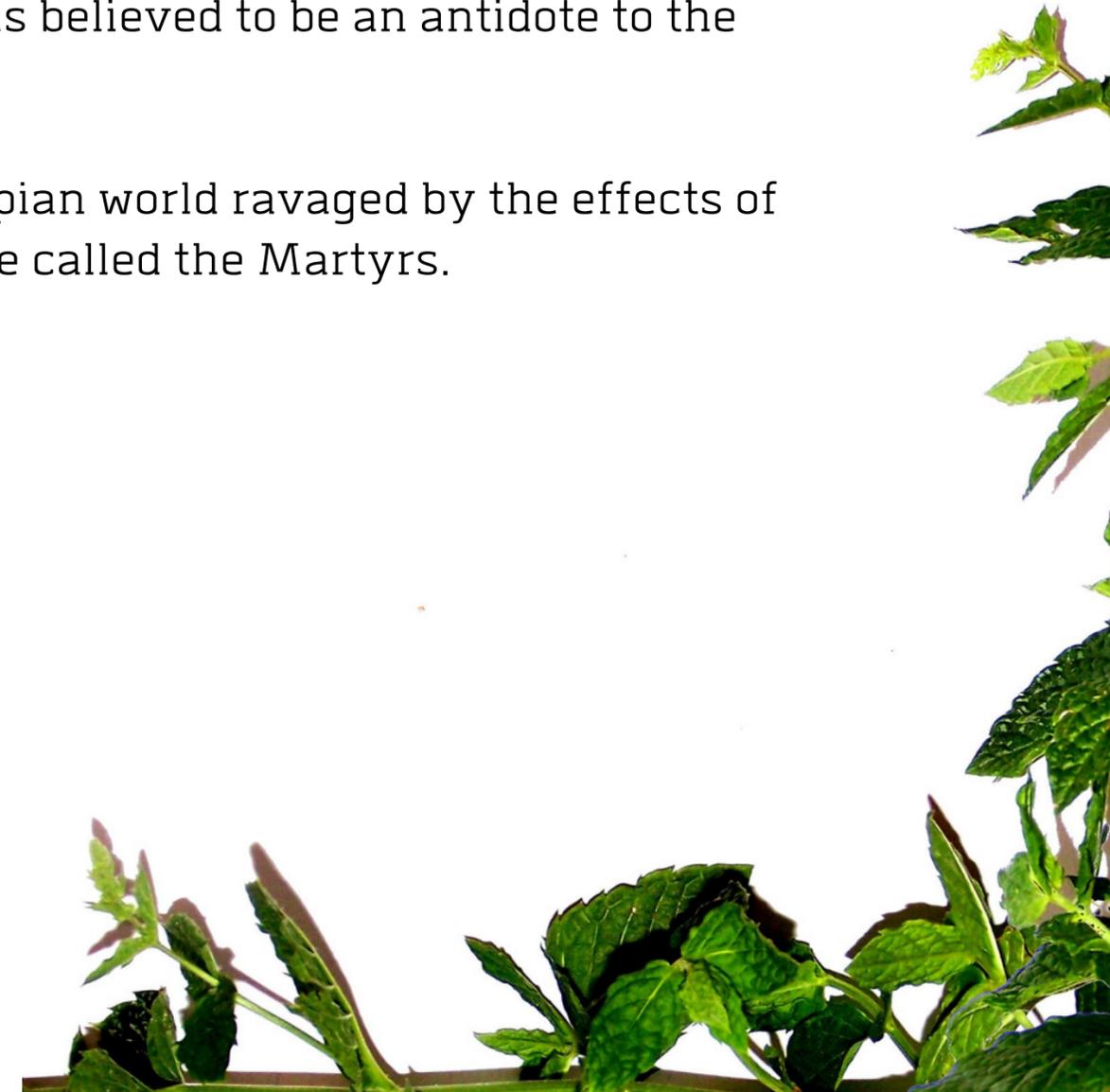
Tonal aspects of Kong: Skull Island or The Legend of Tarzan would be comparable.

The Setting

Set in the Amazon Rainforest in the year 2098.

A team of scientists (and the military that protects them) have been sent to the jungle with a single mission. They've been tasked with developing a serum made from a root native to the jungle that is believed to be an antidote to the disease eradicating humanity.

The team must combat monstrous outsiders while struggling to survive in a dystopian world ravaged by the effects of biological and chemical warfare administered by an Eastern crusade called the Martyrs.



The World

It's a recovering world suffused with shamanism, voodoo, sorcery, and the like; a world entrenched in ancient rituals and rites of passage, including sacrifice and cannibalism; a world full of lies, fear, and hatred for the "other" – and the fate of many rests in the hands of a small team of scientists tasked with curing civilization from its disease-ridden state. This team of scientists, along with military protection, has been stationed in a safe zone in the Amazon Rainforest. They've been sent to locate a root, thought to be a cure for the disease that plagues humanity. Their task is to develop a serum using this root – test, refine and send to the Commonwealth, so healing can begin for civilization.

The struggle with the East is still prevalent 78 years after the catastrophic attacks. Pathogens and toxic compounds were placed in bottling, food manufacturing, and distribution facilities, airports, playgrounds, schools, restaurants, and anywhere that might enhance lethal contact. The contagions spread fast, silently infecting populations across the world simultaneously. There was no cure. Most of the modern world was annihilated in a flash.

One strain of a rapid-spreading, flulike virus resulted in a murderous insanity for its victims, turning them into crazed cannibals overnight. Fear and panic resulted in massive walls being built around what was left of civilization. A new mythology and belief system began to grow within those cloistered societies determined to survive, terrified of the unknown.

This new ideology left an opening for the leaders of what would become known as the Commonwealth, to re-write history and govern for their sole benefit. Institutions and schools were formed to house the orphaned and homeless, brainwashing them generation by generation to play their part in society. Dedication to science and the Commonwealth would become their motivation, replacing any personal ambition or desire. "For the Greater Good" would become their lifelong mantra.

Birth defects, stillbirths, and deformities plague the current landscape. Life expectancy is around the mid to late 30s. Very few live to see their fortieth birthday. The fear of extinction grows as sterility becomes more prevalent throughout the Commonwealth.

The World Continued

The Martyrs' grip on humanity is fierce. They live normal, long, healthy lives. They had an antidote to offset the effects of the toxins they continue to inflict on the rest of the world. Their desire for total annihilation is succeeding. Their population multiplies, while the rest of what's considered "the civilized world," collectively referred to as the Commonwealth, diminishes with every successful strike, causing more birth defects and deformities while assuring guaranteed sterilization for future generations.

The indigenous cultures, roaming outside the realm of civilization, are immune to the attacks and have a mythical, superhuman ability to regenerate and shapeshift. They are a steadily growing, deadly, unknown force.

There are others who are more ominous and fierce, launching brutal, sadistic attacks whenever the opportunity arises. The varying indigenous tribes are wrongly accused of being one with these monsters. This misinformation comes at an expense to the Commonwealth, creating a bridge too wide to ever reunite successfully. This unity could be the answer for the cure the Commonwealth desperately needs, but becoming allies would undo the foundation that has become the Commonwealth.

Safe zones continue to be reinforced in an effort to provide security from the growing madness that lies beyond while trying to defend against the Martyrs. Civilization goes on as best it can inside fortresses built to keep out the monsters – the "Outsiders." The "stories of old" fuel suspicion and fear, keeping everyone safely guarded behind towering walls. In reality, the monsters on the outside are nothing compared to what lies within. Discovering the truth and exposing generations of lies and deceit will drive later seasons.

Groups in the World

COMMONWEALTH

Walled communities around that globe known once as modern civilization, now struggling to survive as one collective society – The Commonwealth. These communities encompass what remains of our once great cities and cultures.

MARTYRS

An underground movement from the East, thriving and continuing their reign of terror on the Commonwealth.

AMAZON TEAM OF SCIENTISTS/MILITARY

Ensemble, including the military sent from the Commonwealth to protect their mission, as well as builders, engineers, and laymen that make up their small compound in the Rainforest.

INDIGENOUS TRIBES/CLANS

Supernatural, mystical tribes and clans immune to the toxins and pathogens affecting the rest of the world. Some are helpful, some are deadly, and most are misunderstood by the inhabitants of the Commonwealth.

LOCALS/VILLAGERS

These locals are not indigenous tribes, but rather people who chose not to live in the walled communities or were exiled. They are a necessary part of the big picture. Some are farmers supplying food to the greater Commonwealth, some are protectors of the walled perimeters, and some are not part of any group: they are called “Drifters,” choosing to live their lives as loners or independents. These groups are still affected by the same germ warfare plaguing the Commonwealth and suffer the same illnesses and deformities, making them the perfect test subjects for potential cures.

THE ‘ OTHERS ’

These are the true terrors of the landscape, either driven mad by disease or are the soulless beings given over to the jungle as a sacrifice to restore and maintain the balance for the greater good.



COLLECTIVE GOAL

Locate and develop a serum made from a root that grows in the Amazon believed to be a cure for the disease(s) eradicating the Commonwealth, thereby giving the inhabitants a fighting chance of surviving against decades of relentless attacks from the Martyrs. None of that matters if Esme and Hunanti can't enlighten the Commonwealth societies of the deceit and corruption that governs their world.



Esme

Zone 28 I.D. ' Esme Flanders, 24, Ireland - Occupation: Researcher/Archeologist.'

Goal: To aid in securing the cure for the Commonwealth, save the Commonwealth orphans from questionable testing, and enlighten the members of the Commonwealth society to the lies and deceit keeping them locked inside fortresses. Her personal hardship is maintaining a relationship with Hunanti against all odds. This is key to lessening the void left by growing up as an orphan, not to mention the disenchantment created by Michael's betrayal and the Commonwealth's deception. In essence, she's been an outsider her entire life.

ESME

Growing up orphaned in a world of death and desperation equipped Esme with a relentless ability to suppress fear and take control. Her parents succumbed to madness, leaving her to be institutionalized for fear she may be contagious. Her natural desire to nurture and be a caretaker is shoved aside to lead her team through one harsh situation after another. We catch glimpses of her softer nature when it comes to the people close to her.

Being placed in a scientific environment to be raised with other children chosen for the same life path guaranteed certain ideals and beliefs were deeply instilled in her early years. She is tough and will stop at nothing to protect her team and their mission to rebuild civilization. She is fiercely loyal and dedicated to science. She believes in sacrifice for the greater good and for the future of mankind. Her sense of self in her early years was reduced to a more robotic notion of existence to serve a purpose to the Commonwealth.

Nothing sways her attention and drive until she explores Hunanti's reality through his eyes. Her first introduction to Hunanti's cannibalistic tribe is combative and horrific. Over time, she begins to understand and respect the spiritual elements of his belief system. This awareness begins to shed light on the misunderstood nature of the indigenous cultures she was taught to fear.

It's a love affair constantly torn apart at the seams, yet propelled forward by a common goal – to bring awareness to the societies imprisoned by the Commonwealth, join forces, and finally secure a fighting chance against the Martyrs. Their personal bond can never truly be realized. Their worlds are too far apart, and the battle ahead of them too immense. Once fully awakened to the truths of the world around them, there is no turning back. They're faced with constant challenges and danger as they embark on the journey to alter the current state of their dystopian world.

Esme trusts Michael and the Commonwealth unconditionally. When she discovers Michael's narcissistic desire for power was instrumental in the camp's demise, she makes a personal vow to find him and set things right. During her journey, she uncovers the Commonwealth's transgressions and the motives behind their agenda. A new war is waged when she teams with the outsiders, going against all she's been taught to believe.

Michael

**Zone 28 I.D. ' Michael Fischer, 36, New England Commonwealth, Washington DC -
Occupation: Commanding Officer/Military/Lead Scientist/Microbiologist/Anthropologist.'**

Goal: It appears Michael's goal is to cure the Commonwealth. This is his team. He hand-picked every member of the team sent to the Amazon. It is slowly revealed his desire all along was to secure a valuable mummified corpse to use solely for self-gain. He is ruthless in his attempts to achieve his goal. This includes leaving his team for dead, forsaking the Commonwealth, and ultimately joining forces with the Martyrs.

***Based on:** Percy Fawcett. A cartographer and archaeologist, he was obsessed with the idea that remnants of a lost dead civilization were hidden in the Amazonian jungles, and he disappeared in those jungles in 1925 on what would be the last of many expeditions to prove his theory. What became of him remains a mystery.*

MICHAEL

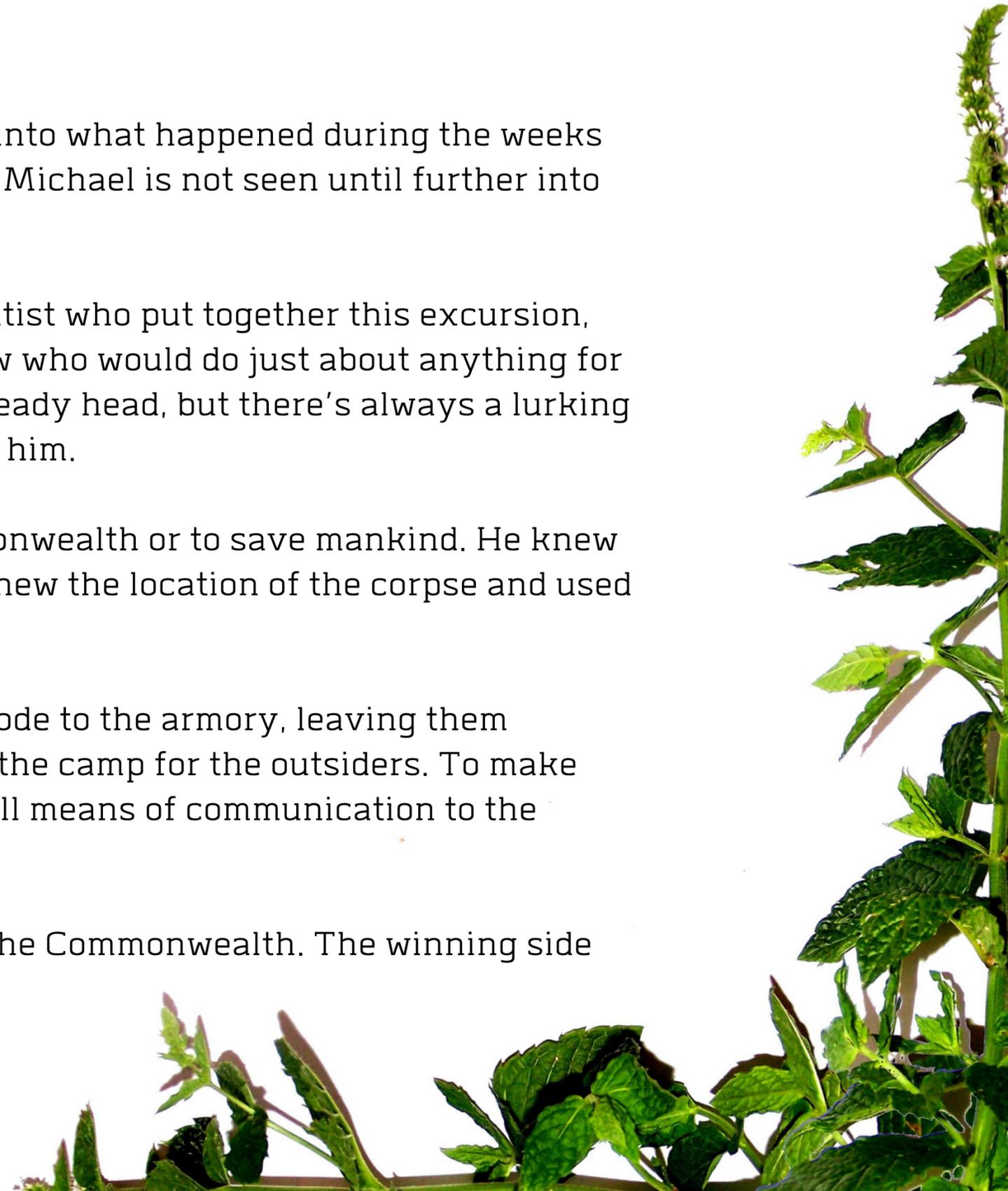
Other than flashbacks in the pilot, establishing a hint of backstory into what happened during the weeks leading up to the day Esme wakes up alone wrapped like a mummy, Michael is not seen until further into the season.

Michael is not what he appears on any level. He's the beloved scientist who put together this excursion, hand-picking each member of his team. He has a faithful, loyal crew who would do just about anything for him. He's their cheery, good-natured commander. He has a calm, steady head, but there's always a lurking edginess, establishing just enough fear that no one dares challenge him.

Michael's agenda was never about developing a cure for the Commonwealth or to save mankind. He knew the value of the mummy, particularly for the East. He believed he knew the location of the corpse and used the excavations as a cleverly planned deception.

Over the season, Esme discovers it was Michael who changed the code to the armory, leaving them defenseless, and damaged the generator, allowing easy access into the camp for the outsiders. To make matters worse, he destroyed their communications beacon, taking all means of communication to the outside world with him.

We discover Michael fled to the East, betraying both his team and the Commonwealth. The winning side was his safest bet.



Hunanti

Goal: Before meeting Esme, Hunanti's sole purpose was to protect the way of his tribe, a goal that never falters the entire series. Once enlightened to the larger world around him, Hunanti embraces his fate to deliver humanity from darkness. His personal obstacle is the constant inner struggle against being a loner, even when it comes to his feelings for Esme.



HUNANTI

Hunanti, mid-twenties, was abducted from the Commonwealth as a small child by Nessie, the high priestess of his tribe. He was given to a village chief to raise as his own. His pale blue eyes, long blond dreads, and immense size set him apart from the rest of his clan. The priestess heard whispers of a small child who could telepathically converse with animals. She believed Hunanti was the boy in her visions, the shapeshifter who would bring enlightenment and freedom.

Hunanti is a fierce loner. His only emotional bonds are to Nessie and the animals of the Rainforest. He's aloof, detached, and sinister, which makes him both revered and feared by the members of his tribe. He faithfully fulfills his position as protector and carries out Nessie's plans whenever she beckons. When he speaks it's succinct. He wastes no words or emotions.

Hunanti comes out of the gate as sadistic and threatening. And he is! It's the way of his tribe. They survive by keeping the balance of things – at all costs, even if that means sacrificing another's soul to do it. And cannibalism, well, yes, he's into that too – if you call eating the charred remains of dead relatives cannibalism! The tribe calls it setting their souls free. They wouldn't waste their time eating a stranger; it has to be an act of love and respect within the tribe.

Hunanti's pain and anguish upon discovering his father's tribe slain, and his childhood village burned, gives a fleeting glimpse into the true nature of the beast. It quickly turns to rage and revenge, fueling his course through the season.

Hunanti's relationship with Esme puts him at odds with Deacon McGregor, the camp's engineer and Esme's ex-love, fueling the separation that has already begun among the team of scientists stationed in the Amazon. This divide breaks the team into two factions, setting them against each other, even while battling a much greater evil.

TeQueiro (Kero)

Zone 28 I.D. ' TeQueiro (aka Kero), 26, London (Relocated from Galveston, Texas) Occupation: Chemist/Botanist'

Goal: As a botanist and chemist, TeQueiro's role in locating and producing serum is critical to the survival of the Commonwealth. She struggles with the testing protocol on locals and especially children, a sensitivity she shares with Esme. She lost her younger sister to an attack from the Martyrs. Her sister had no birth defects or bone degeneration and was TeQueiro's entire world. TeQueiro's personal struggle is reconciling who she was before waking from the deep sleep in the Amazon with her reality afterward – from being deformed and shunned one moment to revered and sought after the next.

TEQUEIRO (KERO)

TeQueiro's nickname is "Kero." She brightens every room she enters. She is the comedian in the group and finds something beautiful in everything. She is smart, witty, and yet, super naive. As the season progresses, it becomes clear that she was instrumental in helping Michael abandon his team, leaving them for dead. It's debilitating for her once this awareness sets in, and she realizes she was a pawn in such horrific events.

TeQueiro was born with severe birth defects as a result of a toxin used during the attacks of 2018 known to result in this particular deformation, affecting her arms, lower jaw, and teeth. Several generations have been born with varying degrees of the affliction, making their lips roll back and lower jaw protrude forward. Their arms are twisted and distorted and their fingers fuse, losing the thumb altogether, making eating and even daily life a daunting task. However, in the current world, she is really the normal one; those who appear as "normal" human beings, like Esme, Deacon, Benson, etc., are really much rarer. Individuals affected with this disorder rarely live past 30 years old. Living past 40 years of age is considered a miracle for anyone in the Commonwealth. Losing 10 years of an already shortened lifespan has to be rectified. This awareness was the driving force for the camp's research and for TeQueiro in particular, who is gifted in her profession.

TeQueiro is the first member of the team to discover the deep sleep they were all placed under was a healing period. When the bandages cemented to her skin are taken off, TeQueiro's face doesn't look as if it's melting like wax off the bone, while her body is restored, as if never having suffered birth defects at all. Someone or something has the ability to cure illness and disease while reconstructing bone, skin, and muscle. The purpose of which remains a mystery for most of the season.

TeQueiro works tirelessly attempting to discover the curing properties of a sap placed under the team's bandages while in their deep slumber. She also battles with the sheer joy of being normal, while trying to reconcile who she was before her bandages came off. Her initial giddiness soon wears off and a deeper reality takes hold of her emotions.

Benson

Zone 28 I.D. ' Benson Kesler, 39, London, relocated from Nigeria - Occupation: Surgeon.'

Goal: Benson's goal is to keep TeQueiro and Esme safe. He and TeQueiro both lost their families to an attack from the Martyrs. His allegiance to her is unwavering.

Benson has a very refined, confident air. He is a renowned surgeon, known for working with facial deformities, easing the pain and discomfort of the afflicted. He awakens completely shaken, finding most of the camp missing, while others lie motionless in a deep sleep, the bandages that wrap them fusing to their bodies so securely they are like an added layer of skin. He spends most of the first few episodes monitoring the sleeping team while helping Esme devise a plan to venture out of the safe zone for help.

Benson is a genius, with an almost autistic approach to life. He's fearful but motivated toward change. Acceptance comes slowly and with a price.

Throughout the season he must learn to become a fighter in order to survive. He transitions into more than a surgeon. He is the only one who can command a disjointed, confused team. By the end, of the season, Benson becomes the leader the team always needed.

Deacon

Zone 28 I.D. ' Deacon McGregor, 24, Wales - Occupation: Engineer./Military.'

Deacon has the most obvious transformation. In the pilot, he is still very green and unsure of his surroundings. He is a large, muscular, capable man, but still very much an innocent, terrified boy. When Dara, his girlfriend, is abducted, he changes, putting his own agenda over the greater good of the camp. This is the moment he and Esme split camp, heading into the wild, broken apart, leading two teams who will destroy each other if they get in the other's way. By this time, Esme has come to realize the natives aren't the enemy, but Deacon's rage becomes his own moral compass.

Clementine

Zone 28 I.D. 'Clementine Rainer, 26, New York - Occupation: Chemist.'

Clementine is the first to discover what truly lies outside the walls of the safe zones. She is abducted and forced to watch a sacrifice, but not a death - rather a transformation of one her fellow scientists into something ungodly. She is then set free to deliver the message of what's to come.

Clementine is smart and resilient. She is probably the most capable of the team, because of the awareness she possesses of the world around her. Nothing surprises her. She adapts quickly. However, a part of her is stolen while she's abducted and it's a struggle during season one for her to regain her composure.

Nessie

Nessie is the high priestess of the varying tribes of the Amazon. She has no singular allegiance, except to the land. She is ageless and mystical. She has long, flowing white hair and weathered skin. Her overall persona is light and ethereal. She's powerful and wise.

Nessie is rumored to be thousands of years old. Is she a healer? A God? Or something we'll never grasp entirely? One thing's for sure; she is one of a kind. She can cure. She can resurrect. And she can completely turn a man to madness, stripping away his soul or his flesh, whichever suits her purpose. She uses her gifts sparingly. She believes in the balance of things, respecting both good and evil. She straddles the precipice gracefully.

Dara

Zone 28 I.D. 'Dara Legat, 22, Montreal - Occupation: Scientist.'

Dara is in a relationship with Deacon. When she is abducted, Deacon will stop at nothing to get her back, even if that means torturing the natives who have helped his team fight against what lurks in the jungle. When Deacon does finally manage to find Dara, she is not herself. She's become something wild and unholy. He is, unfortunately, forced to kill her. This changes Deacon and sets him on an entirely different path than where he started. He wrongly blames Nessie, knowing of her ability to transform.

Tally

Zone 28 I.D. 'Tally, 18, Los Angeles - Occupation: Military.'

Tally is one of the members of the team abducted before our pilot starts. He is instrumental in freeing most of the captives in the jungle and keeping them alive while struggling to get back to camp. He readily agrees with Esme's plan to locate Michael. Having spent most his time imprisoned by the natives, he can vouch for Esme's defense of them.

Bull

Zone 28 I.D. ' Bull, 32, Savannah, GA - Occupation: Military/Sergeant.'

Bull is a fierce man with no remorse or feelings for anyone or anything. He quickly agrees with Deacon's mission to go after the natives and leads his growing team of followers. Having zero respect for women or outsiders makes this an easy path for him to choose.

Flora

Zone 28 I.D. 'Flora, 21, Morocco - Occupation: Nurse.'

Flora has worked closely with Benson since her training began at the London Institute. She was placed with the institute as a small child, chosen to be a caregiver for the Commonwealth. She doesn't remember her family. Benson is the closest thing she has to a father figure.

Jenis

Zone 28 I.D. 'Jenis, 31, Canada/Spain - Occupation: Biologist.'

Jenis is instrumental in helping TeQueiro figure out the mysterious sleep-induced state. He becomes the moderator between Nessie - who develops a fondness for him - and the camp.

Season Arcs

- A team of scientists have been stationed in the Amazon to locate a specific root native to the jungle. A serum has been developed utilizing this root as a means to cure the diseases eradicating the civilized world at a rapid rate. The process of extracting, making, and delivering this serum to the outposts and safe zones around the world as a means to rebuild and heal humanity is a driving force for Esme, Benson, and TeQueiro. Preserving and protecting this serum is a constant struggle.
- Outposts staffed with scientists and doctors have been set up in various targeted villages, using locals as guinea pigs. The serum appears to be working, and the world is counting on our super-star team in the Rainforest to finish testing and move on to curing the greater Commonwealth. Their efforts are continually thwarted throughout the season.
- The indigenous tribes are watching from both the canopy above and the shadows of the forest floor. The free-roaming monsters, as they are called, are angry. Our team of scientists have no idea what they are truly awakening by testing and distributing this serum. The natives know and react quickly in an attempt to circumvent supernatural disaster.
- A supernaturally-charged chain of events is set in motion the day a mummified corpse is found on a dig. The wrath of the Rainforest rains down heavily on our team of scientists, who naively believe they are safe in their walled compound.
- The team must find and return the mummy to calm the attacks from the tribes.
- The Martyrs continue their reign of terror on the Commonwealth throughout the season. By the end of the season, Esme and her new band of allies are in a position to start fighting back against the movement that's been wreaking havoc on the civilized world for decades.
- The team divides into two factions at odds with one another.
- Hunanti's tribe must deal with the repercussions that they chose to save the compound, instead of their own villages, naively believing they were immune from the supernatural elements unleashed. This creates animosity between the tribes and Esme's ensemble of followers. There is distrust and conflict on both sides that are constantly aggravated.

Character Arcs

- Esme discovers Michael, her mentor, and leader, has forsaken her and her fellow colleagues. In her search to discover what happened to their beloved leader, she learns of his previous knowledge of the mummified corpse they uncovered on an excavation. The priceless corpse is believed to be a god to the indigenous tribes referred to as the “outsiders.” Esme has to come to terms with the realization that the world and people she was taught to believe in are false. At the end of the season, she sets off to find Michael and confront the leaders of the Commonwealth.
- Esme transitions from the girl taught to suppress emotions and desires for the greater good of the Commonwealth into a woman full of emotional turmoil with a fierce drive for justice, based solely on her own decisions. Her overall goal changes from servitude to finding her purpose and place in life. Her first notion of family was the Commonwealth. As the season progresses, through her trials and tribulations, she discovers what it truly means to be a part of something more. She finds the meaning of family with her team, and later Hunanti and his tribe.
- Hunanti transitions from a ruthless savage into a man with a mission to serve humanity and set things right. His bond with Esme opens up a sense of belonging – a deficiency both he and Esme share in common. By the end of the season, their common denominator is a major emotional driver for the rest of the series. This bond does induce conflict from members of Hunanti’s tribe, still enraged by losing their loved ones while helping the compound of scientists. Hunanti has bouts of this rage himself, given his own father was one of the ones lost, while they were rounding the scientists and military, instead of their own.
- Michael’s true intentions and reason for setting up the safe zones and camp in the Amazon are unraveled over the course of the season. The priceless corpse was his sole motivation all along, not excavating for the root or developing a serum to cure the disease(s) devouring the Commonwealth.
- Deacon transitions from a frightened boy to a fierce vigilante capable of planning and executing horrific evils. He’s unable or not willing to see the truth of anything, except his own agenda, right or wrong.
- TeQueiro's transition from being deformed comes with a cost. She spends most of the season dealing with the implications of being outwardly healed, and what that means for others still in their coma-like state and the rest of the Commonwealth. Her joy from being cured slowly transitions over the season into understanding and loathing the biases against those like her. For a moment, she pulls away from Esme until she understands the struggle Esme herself faces as a child exposed to the “strain.”
- Benson transitions from a rigid rule follower to a natural-born leader, learning to take chances.
- Clementine struggles to trust and let go of preconceived notions. She strives to recover from being held captive and forced to watch a horrific sacrifice. She comes back changed as a result of her abduction. Her real challenge is accepting Esme. Their relationship has peaks and valleys throughout the entire series. Clementine’s loyalty to the Commonwealth poses challenges for Esme and Hunanti. Even when she sees clearly the right path, the affects of brainwashing from the Commonwealth run deep. Clementine’s inner turmoil creates continual conflict for our ensemble.

Series Arcs

- The series is filled with suspense, mystery, and horror as the team confronts the outside world, both human and supernatural.
- The negative widespread side-effects of the serum begin to take hold, and the resulting implications become obstacles for the Commonwealth to overcome. Only Nessie has the answers, but gaining her support and proving the innocence and worth of the Commonwealth populace is a daunting challenge.
- Pulling together the forces of the outsiders and the Commonwealth is necessary to combat the Martyrs, but the task is fraught with obstacles that may never be overcome. The goal to band together may never be fully realized.
- The overreaching question of who defines civilization and what defines a savage society permeates throughout the series.
- The struggle with the Martyrs and the Eastern movement is ongoing, and shifts focus and intensity each season, introducing new faces and storylines.
- In season two, Esme and Hunanti intend to head to the Commonwealth in search of Michael and confront the leaders of the Commonwealth. She understands the task of bringing an “enlightened awareness” to the subjects of the Commonwealth is difficult and dangerous. Her plans to confront the leaders of the Commonwealth are thwarted when Esme and her team set off through the Amazon, encountering a new set of antagonists. The Commonwealth believes the camp was a failure and the inhabitants are all dead, so no help comes. The side effects of the serum are ravaging the Commonwealth. A new madness is unleashed and deals a heavy blow to the remaining population.

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