

DEGENESIS

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Degeneration, the show we're bringing you today, is based on a roleplaying game - those addictive things like Dungeons & Dragons and World of Warcraft that have millions of fanatics worldwide. These games excel at building vast, thoroughly-imagined worlds, but the entry point for a casual fan can be a bit daunting. So our first task was to take this huge creation and make it instantly relatable. We found that relatability pretty quickly because:

DEGENESIS IS ABOUT THE DANGER OF EXTREMES

Our world feels like it is being ripped apart by extremes. Political extremes. Racial extremes. Religious extremes. Technological extremes.

*Degeneration is a version of our world... when a **cataclysmic event** forces everyone left on Earth to split among the lines of their own extremity.*

And to make sure you - and the audience - completely embrace this vast and complex science-fictional world, we will see it through the eyes of someone just like us.

*Just as *Lost* represented the easily-understood and much-pondered archetype of being stranded on a desert island like *Robinson Crusoe*, our lead character leans on the classic theme of a sleeper awakening out of time in a hostile future, like *Rip Van Winkle* or *Buck Rogers* or *Captain America*.*

This is the stuff of myth. To all these mythical names, we would like to add...

HAYLEY MCCOY

There's a reason we call her "Hayley" - our dream cast is Hayley Atwell from *Agent Carter*: a woman who exudes relentless tenacity. And with whom Jose has talked about finding a project on which to work together again.

Our lead character is our audience surrogate, our eyes into the show. In 2017, 35 year old Hayley McCoy was one of the US government's most prominent virologists. She was never an extrovert or a leader or even much of a people person, and never pretended otherwise: only the lab mattered.

No one was more surprised than Hayley when she fell for Major Terry Lopez of the Army's Aviation Corps: a gregarious Army helicopter pilot. They married within months of meeting and Hayley quickly became pregnant.

It was only one month into her pregnancy that she was visited by four men from the Recombination Group, a futuristic government think tank made up of the greatest

minds from every technological field. They informed Hayley that a cluster of meteors was hurtling toward Earth. Humanity had less than a year to live.

The event was given a name - the **Eshaton** - and Haley quickly learned that the RG had been preparing for the apocalypse for a long time. They'd built arks in which to shelter humanity's finest minds, and identified thousands of volunteers to enter cryogenic freeze in locations around the world. They wanted Hayley to head up one of the pods - to volunteer to sleep through a hundred-year nuclear winter and help them restart the world.

Hayley immediately found a way to improve humanity's odds. In addition to the ark inhabitants, she suggested that they add a hundred thousand embryos in a specially designed chamber to increase the chances of the species' survival...

... and those children would inherit a brave new world - a world unburdened by our countless mistakes. They could wipe the slate clean of our intolerance and short-sightedness and build something better.

What parent doesn't want exactly that for their children?

Hayley also insisted that the Recombination Group remove and freeze her unborn daughter along with the other embryos being safeguarded in a special ark she dubbed "The Cradle of Life." When she awoke, Hayley would spearhead the Cradle of Life project and usher in a new generation to reboot humanity.

And that's how Hayley saved her family and slept through the apocalypse. Hayley, her husband, and her team were meant to awaken a century later - along with dozens of other arks in locations around Europe and America - all of them with enough tech and personnel to restart civilization.

But when the meteors hit, it was worse than they expected. The Eshaton caused the equipment to malfunction...

She slept more than five hundred years.

SIZZLE!!!

AFTER THE ESHATON - THE WORLD OF DEGENESIS

When we meet Hayley McCoy, it's 2595...

Civilization was atomized in a cataclysmic hail of asteroids. Over five centuries, survivors formed Clans and fought over resources. Settlements eke out a living behind fortress walls surrounding the remains of old, familiar cities.

THIS IS A WORLD PLAGUED WITH DROUGHT, FAMINE, WAR AND - MOST IMPORTANTLY - DISEASE

After impact, the asteroids of the Eshaton loosed upon the Earth a spore that has become known as The Sepsis.

The Sepsis makes people sick.

The Sepsis causes people to mutate.

All life on Earth has reorganized around responding to the sepsis.

The last bastions of civilization are the Thirteen Clans- all of them extreme in their ways of life and modes of thought - and all of them coping with a planet that has been polluted by a disease that has made monsters of people...

YES, THERE'S MONSTERS THIS SHOW - JUST LIKE THERE'S MONSTERS IN GAME THRONES AND THE WALKING DEAD, WHICH ARE OUR KISSING COUSINS... BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, THERE'S CHARACTERS AND A UNIVERSE THAT DESERVES TO BE SAVED, AND WE WANT YOU TO HEAR ABOUT THAT FIRST

In our pilot, Hayley will be awoken from cryo-sleep by a coalition of members of a few of the major Clans - and the first half of our season will consist of her seeing firsthand the world of Degeneration as this team fulfills their mission of taking her to JUSTITIAN, the largest city in all of Europe, the last great bastion of civilization in the western world.

It's during this journey that Hayley learns that she is humanity's last hope for a cure. Her 21st Century DNA has never been exposed to the Sepsis, and the citizens of 2595 are counting on her pure blood to help them banish the Sepsis forever.

The team tasked with bringing her to Justitian will become her first eyes into our world - her first friends, her new family, and the people she must decide whether or not she can trust. They are:

TRISKO "TRIS" FURA (Male - mid 30s, think Chris Pine)

*Our male lead is part of the **Spitalian Clan**. Imagine them as warrior doctors: but where most physicians heal, these doctors wage battle on the Sepsis.*

Wherever the disease is to be found, so is the fire from their flame throwers. They know there is no cure for infection, so their organizing principle is to kill the Sepsis and anyone who is infected.

From an early age, Trisko's personality was molded by his Clan's mission: to literally save the world. He is a natural leader, charming and witty. As the first season goes on and Hayley's grief for her husband lessens, she will come to see in Trisko a kindred spirit. A doctor like herself, and a fiery fighter like her late husband. He will become someone who offers safety, companionship, and possibly even romance...

Tris begins the season as an adaptable, open-minded ally whose only purpose is to save mankind, but who eventually decides that only he and his clan know what's best for humanity, and all other ideas must be purged from the world. By season's end, Hayley's closest friend will become her mortal enemy.

PIXEL (Female - early 20s - imagine Chloe Grace Moretz)

Young PIXEL belongs to the technologically obsessed Clan known as **The Chroniclers**, a group consumed with recovering the knowledge lost in the Eshaton. If the Chroniclers were diagnosed en masse, they would all fall somewhere on the autistic spectrum.

Like most Chroniclers, Pixel avoids confusing and overwhelming human emotions, safe in the company of books and tech. Until she meets Hayley and a mother-daughter bond quickly connects the two. Hayley teaches Pixel that she is worthy of being loved, and that only by making herself vulnerable can she be truly happy.

Pixel's arc will see her evolve from a walking computer to a young woman eager and willing to make meaningful human connections. Pixel and Hayley will begin to fill the holes in each other's hearts that they didn't even know they had.

ANJA (Female - 30s- imagine Michelle Yeoh)

*Anja is a member of the **Hellvetic** clan, the most efficient army in the world. Hellvetics originated in underground bunkers beneath the Swiss alps, and are defined by a strict and ascetic personal code that rivals that of the Samurai. There's nothing more important to them than honor and duty - a code that will put Anja in frequent conflict with Triko's commands. Think of Anja as a Viking shield maiden - relentless, proud, and stubborn.*

But the true bane of Anja's existence isn't Trisko, but Pixel and her people, whom Anja blames for the secret tragedy that defined her youth. As our season develops, we'll wonder if Anja can be trusted to protect Hayley and Pixel, or if she's simply biding her time to serve up revenge?

When our season begins, the passionate Anja is someone who sees the world in black and white, right and wrong, but her time with the team will make her understand that most people live somewhere in between, and that choices aren't always so clear-cut. In the end, our three female characters will form the core of our show's dysfunctional family.

DOÁN (Male - late 20s - Imagine Gael Garcia Bernal)

Doán is a member of the Apocalyptic clan, a group of hedonists who chase pleasure above all. If the world can end at any moment, why not enjoy the time you have? Apocalyptics love to fight, fuck, and suck all the marrow out of life. Think of carefree, funny, unpredictable Sawyer from *Lost*, and you're starting to picture Doán. But Apocalyptics live fast and die young, and Doán's jaunty demeanor belies a soul haunted by grief and loss, pain he numbs with a drug known as The Burn -- a psychoactive derivative of The Sepsis.

Tris hates everything Doán represents - the indifference to the Sepsis, the casual sex, the disorganized mind - and his inclusion on Hayley's team causes the first real conflict between Trisko and Hayley. He doesn't understand what she wants with this consummate fuckup, but Hayley refuses to cut him loose.

Because, in Doan's pain, Hayley recognizes a man who understands family and loyalty - - and Hayley needs that on her team. Although Doán starts the season as a whirlwind of selfish chaos, he will quickly evolve into a trusted friend and Hayley's reliable work husband.

AND JUST AS EVERY RAG-TAG TEAM OF ADVENTURERS NEEDS A FATHER FIGURE... OR AT LEAST AN AUTHORITY TO PUSH AGAINST, WE INTRODUCE THE FINAL CHARACTER IN OUR ENSEMBLE...

DAMIEN DOURAND (MALE - 50s - imagine Jared Harris)

*Damien is a Commissioner in the **Judges Clan**, the representatives of Law and Order in the world of Degeneration and the ruling class of Justitia.*

Damien was born into a family of judges, and has lived a life of privilege. He has never known what it feels like to be hungry, poor, or afraid. All he has ever known is the black and white of the rules, and the various ways in which they can be used to his advantage.

Damien is our window into the Game of Thrones-like world of political chess players who pull the strings of our universe. He knows that Hayley is a holy grail, someone who can tip the scales of power - in his favor or against.

As the season marches on, Damien devolves from the consummate chess player into a blunt instrument of deadly force - from a scheming Littlefinger to a hate-filled Cersei. If Hayley won't do his bidding, then he will destroy her and all she represents.

- SO NOW WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE A CORE ENSEMBLE OF SIX CHARACTERS...

WHAT IS THE SERIES?

Degenesis is not a network show. It's designed to be a serialized ten to thirteen hour event. Our show is the genetic mutant offspring of *Game of Thrones* and *Walking Dead*, and like those shows, we intend to take no prisoners in showing Hayley McCoy's journey. And that journey is essentially to go from Marie Curie to Sarah Connor or Furiosa from Mad Max.

Hayley will start *Degenesis* as someone recovering from the trauma of losing everything, from her family, to the very world she knew... **but she is going to end *Degenesis* as a badass leader of men and women who will save the future from the past.**

Saving the future from the past is the theme of this show, and that's what the first season is intended to set up...

Our future is about looking the most horrible thing in the world in the face - the thing that makes you most uncomfortable - and realizing that if we do not embrace it, your life - and civilization as we know it - will be over. And when we talk about facing horrors, we're talking about an internal character journey, but also a literal manifestation of true horror.

REMEMBER WHEN WE TOLD YOU THERE'D BE MONSTERS?

Over centuries, the spores have mutated those who come in contact with them and turned them into a new and monstrous race of human being endowed with powers far beyond those of ordinary people.

These mutants are known as Homo Degenesis. They're not zombies, they're not white-walkers; they are very much alive, and imbued with powers beyond that of normal men. Some of them hide their psychic abilities behind their ordinary appearance, while others' mutations are evident at first glance. One thing they all have in common?

They are scary as hell.

And at the top of the Homo Degenesis pecking order? The Alpha Predators of this new world?

PSYCHONAUTS

The children born closest to the asteroid craters where the spore thrives are the most radically malformed - and the most powerful.

They may look like monsters, but their looks are deceiving: even a young Psychonaut possesses genius-level intelligence. A single Psychonaut will be the BOSS BATTLE of this season...

And it will be EPIC.

AND eventually, we will have to face up to the truth that there is NO FUTURE without them... but that's a truth to be learned over many adventures over many seasons...

PILOT STORY

We open on: DROWNING. We're in Hayley's POV as she is ripped from the amniotic goop in her cryo-bed and is literally and figuratively birthed into this new world. But there's no time to get her bearings - she's in the middle of an epic battle inside a futuristic medical vault, a battle being waged between the extraction team we just introduced you to and a swarm of mutants known as MARAUDERS. Marauders are terrifying, cybernetically modified reaver/raider/pirates.

For Hayley, this is the stuff of nightmares. She is terrified and in shock, ~~not to mention reeling from coming awake five centuries after going into cryo-sleep and buffeted by the loss of her entire life and civilization.~~ But her rescuers have no time to coddle her - they need to get out of the facility and to safety now.

But Hayley won't leave without awakening the other "sleepers" - specifically her husband, Terry. Amidst all the insanity, he's the touchstone she needs to keep her shit together. ~~Trisko thinks lingering endangers the mission, but the detour through the facility doesn't worry Anja, who takes point: she'll get them to Terry and to safety. Tris sends a communiqué to Damien, who tells Tris to play nice - they need this extraction to go smoothly, and now is not the time to draw a line in the sand.~~

Thanks to Pixel's eidetic knowledge of the facility, she's able to direct the team through back passages and secret corridors. As our team travels, we also get to experience two of the distinct tones of *Degeneration*... part of their trek is eerie, haunted, spooky... think Ridley Scott's *Alien*... and the other is a tense, action-packed battle against the Marauders... think James Cameron's *Aliens*. ****DOAN AS HAN SOLO HERE****

And, as our heroes traverse the cryo-depot, Hayley learns why Tris and Company were dispatched to rescue her. She learns about the Sepsis, and how the Spitalians hope her unpolluted 21-st century DNA may hold the key to a cure. ~~Instead of feeling like the potential savior of the world, this knowledge makes Hayley feel like a lab specimen - Trisko and the others don't care about her, just what she can do for them.~~

Hayley and the team barely reach Terry's cryo tube ahead of the Marauders... only to find his stasis chamber broken... and Terry dead.

Even worse, the Cradle of Life where her unborn daughter lies isn't in the facility. Hayley reels, realizing that the Recombination Group betrayed her: they broke the promise to keep the Cradle in the same facility as Hayley. They stole her chance at

motherhood -- literally with her own daughter, and metaphorically as the progenitor of the Cradle. In her grief and anger, Hayley goes rogue and breaks off from the team in search of a computer data bank that will tell her where to find her daughter.

*Hayley's recklessness thrusts the team into the teeth of the Marauders, who butcher Trisko's sergeant and threaten to massacre the team... until Doán -- who's been watching the facility from the outside, waiting for his moment -- swoops in like Han Solo to save the day. The reinforcement turns the tide in our heroes' favor and allows Hayley to access the data bank -- where she learns that she's been doubly betrayed. **Even worse is the realization that Terry colluded with the Recombination Group to relocate the Cradle, which she now learns from the facility's data banks is in a remote location on the other side of the continent. Why would he do that? That's a mystery that will haunt Hayley for a long time.***

Gutted and overwhelmed, Hayley lets her liberators lead her out of the facility and into her new world. The world of Degenesis.

SEASON ONE

The **first segment** of the season consists of the band's arduous journey from the cryo-facility to JUSTITIAN: shining beacon of civilization in the world of Degenesis.

Making their way through Western Europe, Hayley reels from her betrayal as she gets to know the members of her extraction team. Trisko and Anja chastise her for going rogue, but Doán empathizes with her emotional reaction. The journey is brutal, deadly, and the threat of Homo Degenesis lurks around every corner.

~~Hayley witnesses the aftermath of a Psychonaut firestorm when they pass through a scorched countryside that used to be home to thousands of simple-living villagers -- now home to nothing but their charred bones. **Hayley becomes convinced that the Spitalian cause is just: that she is here to save the future by wiping out the Sepsis and bringing back the past that was lost.**~~

Just when Hayley is at her lowest, they find a haven from the brutal wilderness - a village whose residents welcome our exhausted travelers. They feed and shelter our heroes, but Hayley quickly realizes that their hospitality isn't born out of kindness but out of fear: the villagers are terrified of Tris.

Doán takes Hayley aside and tells her why. He explains that Spitalians view the TRIBES - simple folk like their hosts - as walking Petri Dishes who threaten to spread the Sepsis. They've been known to torch entire villages at the slightest hint of the Sepsis. Spitalians would rather be safe than sorry, and damn the human collateral. That's why most people not only fear Tris' kind - they hate them. Meanwhile, Pixel scours the village and unearths journals of a long-lost scientist by the name of HERNEZ VASCO.

The journals suggest that the Sepsis is not something to be cured and eradicated but rather to be embraced as the next step in evolution. That Homo Degeneration aren't monsters, but an evolutionary leap forward for humankind. She doesn't know if there's any truth to the theory, but it makes sense. As they talk, Pixel's eyes begin to ooze pus.

Hayley notices that she's running a temperature. Did her young friend contract the Sepsis?! What will Tris do if he finds out?!

Hayley tends Pixel, keeping her illness secret from Tris, and a mother-daughter bond quickly connects the two. But when Tris learns of Pixel's sickness, he blitzes through the village searching for the source of the infection, and thankfully learns that it's nothing more than the 26th century equivalent of hoof-and-mouth disease.

Brilliant doctor that he is, Tris formulates a cure that not only saves Pixel, but the villagers and their livestock. ~~When Hayley apologizes for misjudging him, he brushes aside her apology -- he only cares about making peoples' lives better. He doesn't care whether he is feared... or hated. Hayley expresses her respect and admiration for him and his Spitalians, and Tris has to admit - to himself at least - how much that means to him.~~

The team resumes its journey towards Justitian, where they are hailed as heroes upon their arrival. Damien congratulates them on their safe return... and promptly orders Hayley quarantined in a sterilized wing of the Spital. The secrets in her DNA are too important to risk contamination. Hayley reels from another betrayal, and vows to take charge of her own destiny at the first opportunity.

Stuck in a single antiseptic room, Hayley's fears of being a lab rat come true. Trisko's visits become Hayley's only solace, and she understands that he can do nothing to free her -- it's above his pay grade. But there's something Doán can do. In another Han Solo move, he busts Hayley out of the Spital -- it's like *The Great Escape* here -- ~~and out into the dingy *Escape From New York*-like underworld of Justitian.~~

~~As she runs to safety, Hayley gets to see how the other half lives: the poor, huddled masses need help, and they're not getting it from those at the top of the pecking order.~~

Doán leads Hayley to a secret meeting - with Pixel, who we learn hired Doan to break Hayley out of the Spital. It turns out that the Chroniclers know about the Cradle of Life - they just don't know where it is. They want to exchange Hayley's freedom for the location of the Cradle. DO WE SIMPLIFY THIS AND SAY THAT PIXEL BROKE HAYLEY OUT BECAUSE OF HER BURGEONING AFFECTION FOR HER?

But when Trisko, Damien and Anja track them down with orders to apprehend Hayley by any means necessary, Hayley decides that she's had enough of this shit. She's taking control of her own fate.

She threatens to take a dose of Doán's Burn and pollute herself... unless she is given the freedom to go after the Cradle of Life. She needs a team and resources -- both of which Damien can provide -- but she's calling the shots now. Damien has no choice but to acquiesce.

Damien is pissed, but Anja is loving Hayley. She's impressed by her "warrior move" and has decided that she is a woman worth following.

But as the final preparations come together, Damien demands that Trisko keep an eye on Hayley and report back to him. ~~another plot develops behind the scenes. Unbeknownst to all but Damien and Tris, the fate of Justitian (and Europe) hangs by a thread.~~

~~*The city is being threatened by a powerful African Clan known as the Neolybians. Only a prize as big as the Cradle will unite Europe against the Neolibyans. If Hayley's mission fails, Europe will fall.*~~

~~*Trisko now finds himself in the position of having to both support and inform on Hayley to Damien as she prepares to recover the Cradle. He hates being yet another double-dealing man in Hayley's life. For the first time in his life, Tris is caught in a dilemma he can't solve with simple action - his emotions are torn, his loyalties divided.*~~

~~*But everything is thrown into chaos when the village that sheltered the team becomes the epicenter of a Psychonaut attack. And the possibility that this Psychonaut will advance on a genocidal course toward Justitian puts all other priorities on the back burner.*~~

~~*As the Judges muster a Spitalian army to take out the Psychonaut, our team faces a choice: divert from their path to the Cradle and help the villagers, or hope the Spitalians save the Tribe from their doom. Hayley has to sway Trisko, but he doesn't need much prodding. He's following his heart more than his mind now. Our team race to their old sanctuary, and it's in eve of this epic confrontation that Hayley and Tris finally fall into each other's arms.*~~

~~*But when our team arrives at the village, they find that the Tribe isn't under attack - that the villagers in fact worship the Psychonaut as a God! They've intentionally let themselves become infected with the Sepsis in an attempt to become more like it.*~~

Tris has no choice but to confess his dirtiest secret: the Spitalians know all about Vasco Hernez. They know that Homo Degeneration is an evolutionary leap forward, but they are still bent on destroying them. Hayley insists that they need to study the Psychonaut and learn from its remarkable evolution, but Tris will hear none of it. This new breed of creature must be destroyed so that humanity may return to the glory days of its past. And it's in their clash that we elucidate the central theme of our show:

THE IDEA THAT YOU SAVE THE FUTURE NOT BY WANTING TO BRING BACK THE PAST BUT BY EMBRACING CHANGE AND DIFFERENCE.

And therein lies the present-day relevance of our show. There are those who want to Make Degenerationland Great Again. Our heroes are the ones who want to make a world where every kind of being can coexist.

So now Tris is torn between his sworn duty and his desire to be with Hayley... and ultimately a lifetime of indoctrination wins out. He and Hayley have a gut-wrenching falling out - everything she never got to say to her late husband she now throws in Trisko's face. Trisko TORCHES THE INFECTED VILLAGE - incinerating the same people he saved earlier in the season - and by his aggressive action incurs the wrath of the Psychonaut.

The Spitalian army arrives and a pitched battle ensues between the Psychonaut and a squadron of Spitalians. The Psychonaut unleashes the awesome power of its mind - leveling the burning town and annihilating half the Spitalian squad with a single telekinetic blast - and the harried Spitalians counter with the blast of their flamethrowers.

Hayley, Anja, Pixel and Doan save as many villagers as they can, but ultimately they must all flee the flames and escape to safety - hoping to reach the Cradle before Trisko and his allies can follow.

Like when she was first approached by the Recombination Project, it's up to Hayley and her team to look to the future and forge a brave new world. But she'll be the one holding the reins this time. She can only hope to find the disciples of Dr. Vasco Hernez, and with them a way of life more open to the possibility of evolution than to the destruction of all that is different...

As the season ends, Hayley and her team push through a hostile wilderness and arrive at the Cradle of Life... only to find it empty. Not destroyed, but empty.

The embryos stolen... the future taken... but by whom?

*As we set up for a second season, Hayley is the enemy of the Spitalians...
-Justitian braces for a potential Neolybian invasion that may bring Europe to its knees...
-Trisko feels the sting of Hayley's betrayal and wants nothing more than to bring her back dead or alive...
-And the discovery of the looted Cradle leads to the dread that Hayley's unborn child might have been brought to term already... and may have become something horrible...*

Something horrible that threatens the entire world.