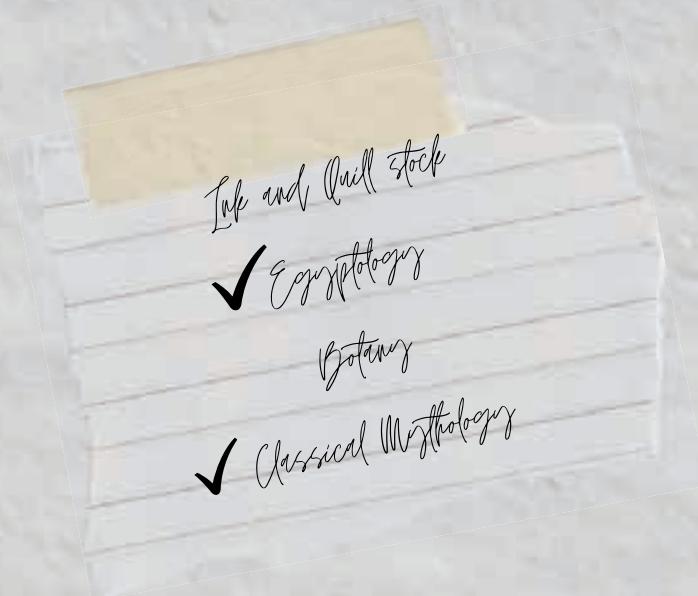


The Langston Family Business

SERIES OVERVIEW BY
MORGAN JONES



property of W. Langston



COBBLESTONES GLISTEN WITH RAIN. FLICKERING GAS STREETLIGHTS ILLUMINATE THE FEW CARRIAGES THAT STILL RATTLE ON AT THIS HOUR. ALL SEEMS QUIET.....

EXCEPT FOR THE CREATURE CLOAKED IN SHADOWS, LOOKING FOR ITS NEXT MEAL, AND THE YOUNG WOMAN WITH SAPPHIRE BLUE HAIR NOT FAR BEHIND. THE HUNTER AND HER PREY.

THE STREETS ARE FILLED WITH THESE MONSTERS OF DARKNESS, AND SHE WILL DO WHATEVER SHE CAN TO PROTECT THOSE WHO ARE UNAWARE OF THE CREATURES. IT RUNS IN HER BLOOD.

Welcome to the Family Business.

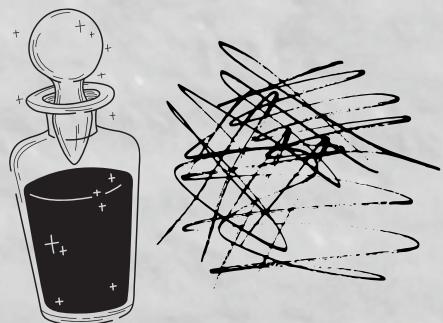


OVERVIEW OF THE LANGSTON FAMILY BUSINESS

Meet Winona Langston: the daughter of a world-renowned archaeologist and monster hunter who, against her father's wishes, is determined to find a way to end the monsters that have plagued her family for generations.

Drenched in rain where nightmarish monsters lurk around every corner, the tone of the series is dark and eerie, gothic and mystical. You never know what will be around the corner, but you know it could be either beautiful or absolutely terrifying. Or both. Naturally, with most of the internal conflict focused on a father-daughter duo, there are heart wrenching moments paired with well placed dashes of humor.

This series is intended for mature audiences interested in artistic animation with a blend of horror, fantasy, action, film noir, and steampunk.



THE STORY

Set in the fictional City, Winona Langston spends her days running a small bookstore, while her father teaches archaeology courses at the prestigious University. To the outside world, they seem like the model, well-to-do family, with Winona poised to inherit the Langston wealth as well as Montgomery's reputation as a famed archaeologist. However, all of that is a front crafted over generations for the real Langston legacy:

For generations, the Langstons have protected humanity from black magic monsters that hunt in the shadows.

Secretly, Winona has been researching a way to get to the core of why these monsters have been appearing for centuries, and she is getting closer every day. When one of Montgomery's colleagues, Barnabas Harrison Beaumont, finds an odd map that looks suspiciously like the source of the Darkness she's been searching for, Winona takes it upon herself, with her father reluctantly in tow, to beat Beaumont to where the Heart leads and maybe – just maybe – end the Langston legacy and have a chance at a normal life.

Visiting backwater towns, fighting airship pirates in the sky, and dodging ancient booby traps are just a handful of the problems Winona will face on her quest to find the true cause of the monsters. With the aid of her friends and the hesitant support from her father, Winona will do whatever she can to rid the world of the monsters and their black magic.

Of course, whenever magic is involved, things are never as easy as they seem, and finding the source of it all might open the door for a discovery far worse than the monsters.

The Series

EPISODE STRUCTURE

The series is serial in nature, with each hour-long episode consecutively following Winona on her journey to first piece together the Source then follow where it leads. The first season, comprised of eight episodes, is structured in three acts: Act I being episodes 1-2, Act II being episodes 3-5, and Act III being episodes 6-8.

FUTURE

The Langston Family Business will be split into two “Books,” or seasons: Book 1 is what is described in this document, and in eight episodes it will follow Winona as she races to the dig site and her final push to uncover its secrets, while Book 2 in eight episodes deals with the immediate consequences of the actions at the dig site back in the City and Winona’s last stand to end the monsters once and for all, bringing the series total to sixteen episodes.



CONFLICTS AND THEMES

The main, external conflict is between Winona and Barnabas Harrison Beaumont, a rival archaeologist with sinister motives for getting to the dig site. Betrayal, sabotage, and fighting to the finish (quite literally) are staples of this conflict, especially between Winona and Beaumont's rival ideals of safety for the world and personal success, respectively.

However, the internal conflicts between Montgomery and Winona of family, legacy, and destiny reflects those themes and are what make up some of the most interesting dynamics in the series:

-Family: Winona and Montgomery's ideas of family are very different. Montgomery firmly believes family is only those you are related to or those who have married in. Winona, however, takes the friends-as-family approach, since Montgomery is the only other Langston, and he is often busy working. When they refer to family, they are referring to two different concepts, which adds tension.

-Legacy: Winona believes legacy is the mark of an action you leave behind, while Montgomery believes legacy is passed down, like a tradition. Unsurprisingly, when Winona wants to end the monsters for good, that is met with protest.

-Destiny: Everyone in the series struggles with destiny and what that actually means. Are they fated for something? Do they just have a general trajectory? What happens if all of those questions are possible?



The Paperman (2012)
dir. John Kahrs



Inspiration

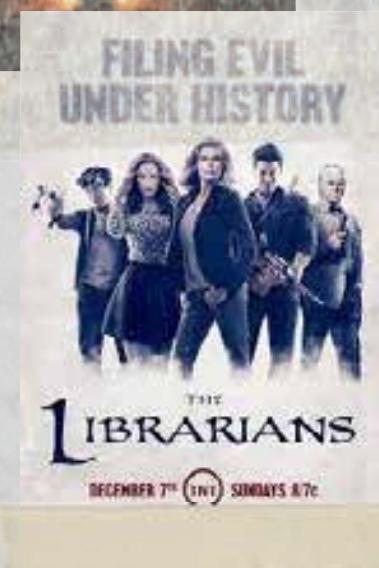


Love, Death & Robots SIE8
"Good Hunting"
dir. Oliver Thomas



Arcane (2021-)

Produced by Fortiche and Riot Games



THE LOOK

This series is built upon its beautiful visuals. A mix of 2D and 3D animation in stunning stylized grayscale reminiscent of film noirs with vivid accent colors, namely blue and brown, the animation is both an artistic wonder and enjoyable to watch. Aesthetically, the world of the series is heavily influenced by steampunk and decopunk aesthetic styles, blending the roaring 20s, the Victorian era, and futuristic technology into an anachronistic masterpiece.

Visually, this series draws upon works like Arcane (2021-); Love, Death & Robots S1E8 “Good Hunting” (2019); RWBY (2012-); and the Kingsman franchise (2014-).

THE GENRE

This series, at its core, is a classic action-adventure story, but reconstructed. Instead of a gruff, tough, male protagonist, a kind young woman is at the forefront. The inner struggles are familial (uncharacteristically seen in the third installment of the Indiana Jones franchise), which is uncommon in the genre. However, plenty of the staple dramatic fight and chase scenes are still present.

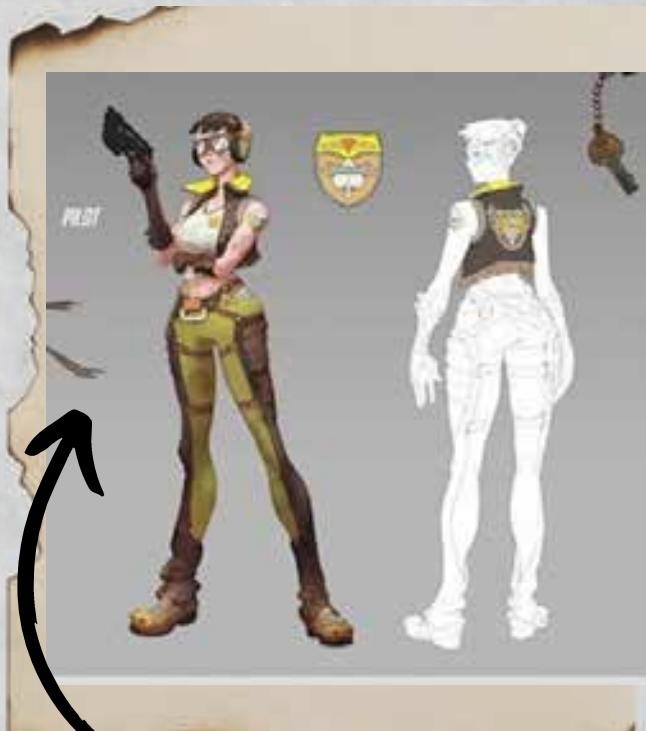
Narratively, this series draws upon works like Motherland: Fort Salem (2020-2022), The Librarians (2013-2018), Carnivale (2003-2005), Sanctuary (2008-2011), Van Helsing (2004), The Mummy (1999), The Night Circus by Erin Morgenstern, and the Indiana Jones franchise (1981-).

THE SOUND

The music is its own character, letting the character's thoughts be heard in ways that enhance the scene. Electroswing and jazz dominate the soundtrack, and with the music being a mix of diegetic and nondiegetic, it moves and enraptures the audience with the emotion of the scene and the tone of the world.

Musically, this series draws upon series like *Cowboy Bebop* (1998-1999) and the musical style of bands like Caravan Palace.





D.Va Scavenger Skin Concept
By Blizzard Entertainment



Via victorian-era.org

Characters.



Original art for Winona's
Monster Hunting look

A DAUGHTER. AN INVENTOR. A WITCH.

“Now, it would be rude of me to start a fight, seeing as I am a guest in your establishment. However, if you want to continue, by all means. I’m not opposed to finishing one.”

A young woman in her twenties, Winona Langston is our steadfast protagonist. Bright, clever, and compassionate, Winona is a rare, sweet soul in a family profession that thrives off of stoicism and violence. However, that does not mean she’s passive. Never one to start a fight, but always ready to finish one, Winona has learned where to strike for the best effect, literally and metaphorically, through years of experience. The last of a line of monster hunters, everything Winona has done with her life has been to serve the “family business,” even going so far as to learn how to wield magic for herself, a skill that no other Langston had ever mastered. Very intelligent but sometimes blind in her emotions, Winona can often be found working through the problem in front of her through logic and creativity, but sometimes how she feels about a situation can get in the way of the actions that she needs to take.

Winona understands times have changed from when the Langston line began fighting the “creatures of shadow,” and that their methods should change accordingly. She knows deep down inside that cleverness, ingenuity, and a respect for others are paramount to changing the world for the better, but the old ways of doing only what will serve you best still has a firm grip on society and the Langston name. If Winona can defeat the creatures with her method, maybe - just maybe - the rest of the world can follow suit.

She strongly believes that Cleverness and kindness should be the first option before force, and that friendship and connection hold the same weight, if not more, than blood relation, a sentiment not shared by Montgomery, her father. Winona also is not fond of killing the creatures she encounters, but rather hoping to find a way to free them of their curse. However, she is reluctantly resigned to killing them against her better judgement until she can come up with something that can be called a cure. And while the Langston family is important, the protection of the people at large comes first.

As a small child, her mother was fatally injured while on a hunt with her father, and she perished before making it to a hospital. With this seared into her memory, Winona has vowed to extend the same hopeful outlook her mother had about the world to her work as a monster hunter and to find a way to end the creation of the monsters for good. Unfortunately, working as a monster hunter for years piles on the stress and trauma of losing her mother, yet she perseveres.

Once half of a map comes into possession, Winona fights to find the other half and use it to reach a tomb in the desert that could hold the First Creature, the oldest and most dangerous of them all. Winona wants to get there first, with her father in tow, and beat their rival archaeologist, Barnabas Harrison Beaumont, to have a shot at taking out the worst monster, and hopefully all the monsters afterwards. During her trek and its consequences, Winona will transform from the relatively secluded daughter into the champion of good in a fight against unimaginable evil.

MONTGOMERY LANGSTON, THE FATHER

“You think you are prepared, but you are not. It will do you some good to listen to your elders once and a while.”

A stately man in his 50s, Montgomery oozes class and status. A professor of archaeology and anthropology at the University, he carries himself with an air of knowledge, and he has the degrees to prove it. As Winona's father and mentor, he is both her companion and shadow throughout the series. Like many familial relationships between adults, Montgomery simultaneously encourages Winona while actively misunderstanding her because of his own life experience as an older monster hunter.

Montgomery has a positive arc. When Winona dives headfirst into this quest to stop the creatures for good, Montgomery tags along with the intent of eventually taking over the reins when she realizes she's in over her head, because the next generation aren't capable of success if they don't appreciate the old ways of doing things. However, he must quickly learn that innovation does not mean abandoning the old ways, and he must catch up if he doesn't want to become creature food.

He believes legacy and commitment to one's family comes before everything but reputation. Keep the name and image clean and pass it down for generations to come. He is also very firmly in the camp of hit hard and hit fast. These creatures, from his experience, don't wait for you to decide.

When he was a young child, his father left him to fight a creature on his own to learn the importance of the family business, and he was left with a scar on his face and the idea that there is only one way to deal with these creatures. After the death of his wife, this was solidified. Violence sometimes is the only answer, and those you love must be sheltered at all costs. Because of this Montgomery falsely believes that the Langstons are the only ones who can keep the monsters at bay, and they must do it how they have been doing it for centuries.

ADA FITZGERALD, THE SOCIALITE

“Darling, do you take me for a fool? The fools are the ones over there who don’t pay attention to the secrets they let slip while the champagne and whisky flow.”

A socialite with more money than she has free time, Ada is an alluring woman in her 30s who is known for her legendary parties. Of course, one doesn’t stay on top of the social ladder without having a few tricks up their sleeve. When the booze flows, so does the secrets, and Ada uses what she learns to keep the elite of the City under her thumb and to help further her wife’s career with the inside information she learns. The only secrets she won’t spill are the Langstons’. While Winona believes her relationship with Ada is transactional (spilling magic secrets in exchange for keeping the family secret safe), Ada is a false opponent/ally, wanting to form a genuine friendship with Winona, because she is the first woman that has not only matched, but exceeded, her own wits.

Ada is all about secrets and knowledge. If it would make good gossip, she will do whatever she can to hear about it. However, she does have some lines she will not cross. She would do anything for her wife, and she knows that the Langstons’ secret is too dangerous to be let out. She might be one to stoke the fire, but she would never create a blaze.

When she was young, she was only valued by her family for her looks, so she refuses to let herself acknowledge how clever and tough she really is, masking her craftiness with a “airheaded socialite” persona. She believes she will only be valued by the greater world if she keeps up appearances, but she needs to learn that regardless of appearances, she is a capable woman who has many skills outside of gossip and party-throwing. Skills that could be very helpful in aiding Winona in finishing off the monsters for good.

She wants to know as much as she can about the elite of the City, presumably for blackmail, but she needs to connect with herself and let herself connect with others who could be genuine friends. She will go from a socialite who keeps her true emotions hidden to a good friend of the Langstons who seems to know exactly where to get what they need to stop the creatures.

LOTTIE KIM, THE MACHINIST

“Your dad says I’m a bad influence on you.... He’s right, of course.”

Spunky and sharp tongued, Lottie is a capable mechanic, and she lets everyone know it. Roughly the same age as Winona, the two of them were childhood friends up until Winona had to begin her hunting training. Still in the dark about why she was no longer allowed at the Manor Langston, Lottie and Winona find time to hang out, yet Winona has not let anything about magic slip. Working as a scrapper at an airship junkyard, Lottie desires to be able to work on the operating airships, but as for now, she’s at least making good pay.

She values brute honesty and strength of all kinds above everything. Realistic and blunt, Lottie likes machines because there’s nothing secret about them, nothing that must be interpreted or inferred. Her ghost comes from her first employer, who told her that she did not have the strength of mind or body to make it as a mechanic. Now, she has managed to convince herself that she is not good enough for the job, and she needs to push herself even more to make it. She needs to learn that right now she is strong of mind and body, but she needs to also be strong of will, and she needs to advocate for herself.

She wants to leave the junkyard behind and make it as a mechanic on a working, flying airship, but she needs to learn to balance her bluntness and her timidness about advocating for herself to make it as a team player. She goes from just one of many scrappers at the junkyard to not only a mechanic, but one of the heavy hitters of the new and improved Langston Family Business.

EDMUND DARWISH, THE STUDENT

“I signed up for an eight-week intensive course. Honestly, didn’t occur to me that ‘intensive course’ meant rigorous running from a monster!”

A dorky yet attractive student in Montgomery’s class, Edmund isn’t one cut out for adventure. Roughly the same age as Winona, he can’t seem to get her smile out of his head from the first time he met her. The son of the Governor, Edmund was raised with the expectation that he would go into law or politics to carry on his father’s legacy. However, Edmund’s desire to learn more about the world through archaeology and anthropology has completely derailed that plan, frustrating his family. Too eager for educational opportunities, Edmund ends up accompanying the Langstons to a dig site in the desert, completely ignorant of the fact that he is walking straight into the most dangerous experience of his life.

Edmund values the willingness to learn and be open to experiencing the world. Ever the pacifist, he is not one for violence or conflict in any form. He remembers his first mock debate with a fellow politician’s kid, where he was not prepared for the word twisting and underhanded comments that would come his way. He believes that conflict is so abhorrent that he cannot stand up for himself, but he needs to learn truth that while one can avoid some conflicts, they always need to be able to stand up for themselves.

At first, he wants to join the expedition to gain more experience (and get closer to Winona), but it quickly shifts to him wanting to get out of this mess alive, but he needs to learn how to stand his ground to do so. While he never becomes a fighter, he turns from a meek academic to a tried-and-true adventurer, who lets his curiosity take him where he needs to go.

BARNABAS HARRISON BEAUMONT, THE RIVAL

“Why does it matter if it’s dangerous? No good stories start with being safe! And if I get my name in a journal or on a plaque in a museum, that’s all that matters”

Suave but slimy, Beaumont is the primary antagonist of the series. An archaeologist in his 40s, he is trapped in a one-sided rivalry with Montgomery Langston. Desperate to prove himself among his more established colleagues, Beaumont is willing to lie, cheat, and cut corners to get what he wants, even if that means making a deal with a force of evil he cannot understand. A man all about image, he can’t stand the fact that he’s racing not his rival, but his rival’s daughter, to possibly the richest dig site in the world, not concerned with the fact that he has no idea what’s inside.

Beaumont has a corruption arc. He thinks that using any means to get ahead is totally fine if it yields results. Quickly, he finds himself seeking more dangerous and darker resources, wading deeper into the realm of dark magic the Langstons fight so hard to keep at bay. When he sees the corruption of those who continue down his path, he thinks he’s different. Better. Stronger.

He’s not.

Even though he is always focused on what the future has in store for him, Beaumont has never forgotten his childhood. He grew up the youngest of a large family, where he constantly had to prove himself, otherwise he would be forgotten, overshadowed by his siblings. He learned to lie and cheat his way to success. In his mind, it was less effort than working honestly, and to him, it will always yield the results he wants. He needs to learn that is not true, and his luck will eventually run out, forcing him to look for more dangerous ways to cheat the system if he does not try to succeed of his own hard work. He desperately wants to find the tomb before the Langstons and present whatever is inside in his own exhibit, but he needs to learn how to do things honestly before his lies backfire. Since he doesn’t, he goes from archaeologist on the rise to a servant of the creature that lurks in the tomb.

WIC, THE CAT

He is Winona's cat. Very catlike in all ways.





The World

Via Invaluable.com



by Arnaud Imobersteg via ArtStation



The Langston Family Business takes place in a world similar to our own, full of almost-but-not-quites, with many social, artistic, and technological differences. Steampunk and decopunk aesthetics cross over, despite being based on the late 1800s and the 1920s, respectively, and bullet trains exist with steamboats and airships. The rules and aesthetics of the world are built upon anachronisms on purpose, so that the audience can both be immersed in its familiarity while also being pulled in by its uniqueness.

THE LOCATIONS

The series takes place primarily in an unnamed City that all at once reflects London, Paris, and New York with minor influences from around the world. It is a global city, and it is deliberately unclear where the City actually is on the map, if the Langstons' Earth even looks like ours to begin with. The cobblestone streets are full of steam powered carriages, while elevated bullet trains and blimps fly overhead. The architecture is a hodgepodge of modern, Victorian, and fantastical styles, but it still remains grounded in technology, not magic. Many of the buildings are a combination of multiple styles. The Langston Manor, for example, is a large British countryside manor on top of shops and businesses in the heart of the City like many modern hotels and apartment complexes do today. Always drenched in fog or rain, the City evokes images of classic film noir cities and makes it harder to tell what evils lurk around the corner.

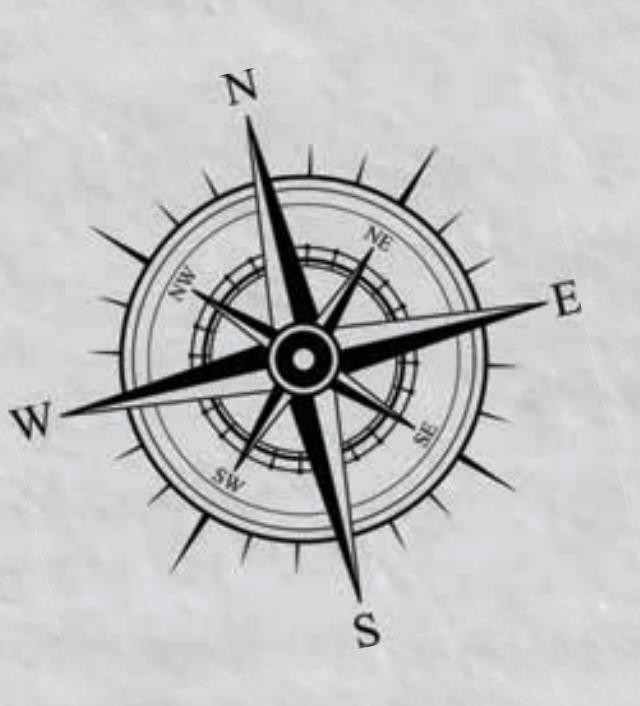
Manor Langston is the home of Montgomery and Winona. Passed down through generations of monster hunters, the stately manor has seen its fair share of wear and tear. Once occupied by a large family and their staff, only Montgomery and Winona remain. It is beautiful but eerie. Art of unknown origin peppers the walls, broken up by trophies of monster hunting expeditions. Since it is their home, the Langstons speak their minds here, and the echoing, dusty hallways are the perfect place to explore what legacy really means.

The Ink and Quill is Winona's bookstore. Tucked in between a pub and a law firm, it's Winona's little slice of magical heaven away from the Langston name. Piled high with tomes and volumes of every shape and size, its impossible not find something of interest. With its haphazard organization and small space, it's a wonder that anyone is able to navigate it at all. The Ink and Quill is our place for character introductions. It's where we meet Edmund and Ada for the first time, as well as the place where we get to know Winona as a person before seeing her role in her monster hunting family.

The University is Montgomery's domain. Here, Montgomery, and occasionally Winona, converse with other academics about their field of archaeology. However, Montgomery's fellow professors do not believe in magic in any form, and they find any notion of it ridiculous. The University offers a look into how most people in the City go about their lives, and where their scientific or fantastical sensibilities lie.

Branch City is barely a city. At best, it's a backwater illegal gambling town out in the middle of nowhere. At worst...it's a shithole full of people who are very aware it's a shithole. Crime runs rampant here in Branch City, and City folk are less than welcome. However, if you want a dirty deed done cheap, like untraceable airship passage to a cursed tomb, it's the best place to look.

The Tomb is the finish line. The corpse of the mysterious Champion, leader of the monsters, is said to be locked up here, and both the Langstons and Beaumont are putting everything on the line to get there first. The Tomb, in classic adventure genre style, is hidden away in a desert and laden with booby traps of all kinds. There are plenty of moments for action to get into the Tomb, and the inevitable fight to get out.





Via RWBY (2013-)



The Mythology



Critical Role fanart via Reddit



THE MONSTERS

No, these aren't monsters like werewolves or vampires. These are something new, something different. Created by tapping into uncontrollable black magic, these monsters, or "creatures" as they are often referred to, are mutated and corrupted people and animals that only hold faint semblance to what they once were. Cursed from the inside out, these creatures have one goal: to cause harm and chaos. Usually, they only make their presence known under the cover of night, but the occasional daylight attack is not impossible.

THE TWINS

One of the more elusive and enigmatic parts of Langston is the presence of the Twins. While they are never seen in full until Book 2, they are present in artefacts and artwork collected by the University and the Langstons, and a chess game played by the Twins appears frequently in Winona's dreams.

The Twins are, in essence, goddesses of balance: one of good, the other of evil. The Aether and the Nether. Constantly strategizing to conquer humanity but can never walk among them. The Nether offers power to those who serve her, but at the total cost of their humanity, turning them into horrid monsters. The Aether is more reserved in her gifts, but she watches over those who are kind, compassionate, and driven. She has been watching the Langston line for centuries, awaiting the return of magic to their blood.

THE MAGIC

Winona's magic follows pretty simple rules. She is able to manipulate the Aristotelian elements to a moderate degree without much strain. However, more difficult matters, like shields, healing, divination, etcetera, will require preparation - either a practiced incantation, potion, or similar method - and will exact a physical toll she must recover from before attempting again.

Winona believes that magic is something organic, something anyone can learn. That is not the truth. While magic is threaded through all of existence, humans are unable to access it under normal circumstances. Generations ago, the Langstons' ancestors sealed away a great evil with the blessing of magic by the Aether, and prophesy foretells that the birth of a "sapphire witch" of the Langston line will precede the reemergence of this great evil - the Nether's Champion - once more, and the witch will either save humanity or bring it to ruin.

THE NETHER'S CHAMPION

A man of great ambition and greed, the Nether chose him to bring about destruction and ruin in her name, and he almost succeeded until the ancestors of the Langstons killed him and entombed his body in Egypt, far away from his origin, to make sure his memory is lost to the sands of time. His heart was also calcified into a sapphire and separated from his body. Devoid of blood, he remains in a corpselike, catatonic state. However, devotees of the Nether found the heart, inscribing a map to the tomb on it in the hopes of the Sapphire Witch finding it, for only her blood in his heart can make the Champion rise again.





- ★ Get copper bats from toffie
- ★ pick up yed candlets