

THE NEW LEGENDS OF MONKEY

TITLE PAGE



SERIES SYNPOSES

Series One Liner

A motley trio of fallen Gods unite with a young girl in disguise and begin a perilous journey into a world ruled by Demons.

Short Series Synopsis

A motley trio of fallen gods with magical superpowers and incredible martial arts skills escort a young girl disguised as a monk on a perilous quest to bring an end to demonic rule and restore balance to the world.

Series Long Synopsis

The world of *The Legend of Monkey* is marked by the clash of three beings: gods, demons and humans.

Traditionally, gods have used their power to counter the forces of demons, maintaining the cosmic balance that allowed the world to function as it should.

Five hundred years before our story begins, the world was in balance. Gods ruled peacefully, harmoniously. Demons were in hiding, their powers held in check by the gods. Humans were free to live a life unencumbered by the scattergun forces of darkness. There was happiness across the land.

Monkey, a young god born from a stone on a mountaintop, lived in plain sight, enjoying Monkey-ish pursuits with his monkey brethren. Monkey's very existence was special and he was earmarked for great things by the gods.

That's how it used to be...

But then everything changed.

A battle between the gods and demons, one that was unwittingly set into motion by the young Monkey god. What he did he do? Only Monkey can remember. As punishment the gods locked him in a statue, frozen in time. But it was too late. The forces of evil were now out in the world, which was plunged into an almighty chaos that has been raging for five hundred years.

Today the ranks of demons have swelled to the point where they are the majority. They inhabit the world inciting disorder and anarchy, as their power grows unopposed.

The gods, their numbers dwindling as they are hunted like animals, have gone into hiding. Their powers have been greatly reduced, almost entirely lost. And the people, abandoned and confused, have lost their way. A great darkness approaches and there is no end in sight.

A small group of gods in hiding are working together to put the world back into balance, trying to regain the godly powers they once had.

EPISODE SYNOPSES

Episode One

Episode One Liner

A young girl finds the lost statue of the legendary Monkey King, an ancient God who has been imprisoned for 500 years.

Short Synopsis

A girl uncovers a statue of the legendary Monkey King, but in order to release this ancient God from his stone prison she must first find his golden crown, a crown that has fallen into the hands of Demons.

Long Synopsis

A young girl sits on a cliff top, waiting for the arrival of two warriors and a young monk. The world she lives in is ruled by Demons. There was a time, many centuries before she was born, when the world was ruled by Gods. There was lightness and good, harmony and peace between all who lived. It was in this age that the Monkey King was born. Some say he was the mightiest of all the Gods, with powers and skills beyond all imagining. Until he was lost, locked in a statue by his enemies never to be seen again. The Girl doesn't know her parents. Her mother, fleeing the Demon hordes, left the Girl on the doorstep of a learned man – the Scholar. The Scholar raised the Girl, teaching her all that he knew. When the Scholar was a much younger man he found a golden crown in a stream – The Monkey King's crown. Knowing the statue must be nearby, he built his house there, planning to find the statue and release The Monkey King. The Scholar became the architect of the Resistance. The Girl has been waiting for this day all her life – the day the warriors arrive, and bring with them a young monk, who will assume the identity of 'Tripitaka' – a special name, saved for the one who will release The Monkey King. The Scholar believes in The Monkey King, and so does the Girl.

When the warriors and the young monk do arrive, the Girl leads them into the Scholar's house. The Scholar gives the young monk his new name, and reveals the crown. Then everything goes dark. A Font Demon, borne from the Demon fires, bursts into the house. He disposes of the warriors and of the young monk in one fell swoop. The Girl hides, watching on in terror as the Font Demon demands that the Scholar hand over the crown. The Scholar resists and meets his end. The Font Demon takes the crown, and drops a deadly orb that begins to destroy the house and everything inside it. The Scholar, with his last breath, tells the Girl she must find the crown and release The Monkey King, she's the only one who knows of the plan. Tears streaming down her face, the Girl runs outside as the house is destroyed. Running through the forest, she finds the Monkey King's statue, right near them all this time. But without the crown she has no means to release him.

The Girl ventures into the nearby town of Palawa. There she finds work waitressing in a tavern. One day as she pours wine for a customer, the Girl sees the reflection in a man's silver cup of the very same Font Demon that killed the Scholar. Then she notices the crown in his bag. It is the Font Demon in disguise! The Girl waits until the man starts dozing, then she chooses her moment and swipes the crown. The man realises the crown is gone and transforms into the Font Demon, pursuing the Girl. She takes shelter with the monks of Palawa, one of whom helps her disguise herself as a young monk. The Girl is terrified, escaping the Font Demon as the other monks hold him off. The Font Demon sees the girl escape, and follows her into the forest as she heads towards the Monkey King's statue. Just as the Girl reaches the statue, grappling to put the golden crown on its head, she is yanked back by the demonic power of the Font Demon. But it is too late. The Monkey King has been released. He appears, and parries with the Font Demon, eventually overpowering him.

Monkey turns to the Girl, who is this strange young monk? "I'm Tripitaka," the girl replies, "and I need your help."

Episode Two

Episode One Liner

Having released the Monkey King, Tripitaka is shocked to find him indifferent to the Scholar's mission.

Short Synopsis

Having released the Monkey King, Tripitaka is shocked to find him indifferent to the Scholar's mission. Struggling to keep him on side, and still being pursued by Demons, she finds help in the unlikeliest of places.

Long Synopsis

Monkey isn't convinced by Tripitaka. Why should he follow this young monk to the Western Mountains, as she suggests, and meet up with a so-called Resistance? Who was the Scholar? He doesn't know anyone by that name. Monkey doesn't even know how long he's been locked in the statue. When Tripitaka tells him, he screams. Realising how far away he is from anything he knows, Monkey goes in search of food. Tripitaka follows him to the same tavern she worked in, and while he eats, she tells him that she will prove that the mission is real. Heading to the monastery, Tripitaka asks the head monk to show her the ancient records. She has released the Monkey King. This doesn't elicit the reaction Tripitaka was expecting: the head monk is horrified. The Monkey King wasn't placed in the statue by Demons; he did something terrible, and was placed there by Gods. Tripitaka's world is rocked.

Meanwhile, Monkey has got into a fight at the tavern, having inadvertently thrown his fork at another customer. In the ensuing brawl he throws a young man out of the window, who turns out to be a henchman of the local Demon ruler, Princess Locke. Alerted to the presence of a young, handsome warrior, Princess Locke sends her guards to find out whoever he is and return him to her.

Tripitaka, burning with questions and alone, searches for Monkey. As she walks the town streets and night falls, he is nowhere to be seen. A young boy, Zeke, approaches Tripitaka and asks her if she needs food. As they talk, a tall spooky figure emerges from the shadows, lunging at Zeke. Zeke runs, and the tall figure follows. Tripitaka shouts for them to come back. Giving chase, Tripitaka can't seem to find them. But she does find Monkey. The two argue, Tripitaka accusing him of being nothing but an imposter, if the monk's word is anything to go by. Monkey, turning away from Tripitaka, disagrees. Suddenly Tripitaka vanishes into a puff of smoke, whisked away by a harmful force.

Some time later, Tripitaka wakes up in a dank underground cellar. The tall and spooky figure, a young blonde woman, has captured her. But when Tripitaka reveals her name everything changes. "My name is Sandy", the figure tells her, "and I'm a God". Sandy has been waiting for Tripitaka, ready and primed to help her, just as the Scholar said. But just as this strange new God warms up, Monkey bursts into the cellar and attacks her, trying to 'save' Tripitaka. Tripitaka can't calm Monkey down, and he won't listen, as she tells him Sandy is a God, not a Demon. It is only when Tripitaka recites an ancient sutra that the Scholar taught her, that Monkey stops. He howls in pain. Tripitaka's sutra is controlling Monkey's crown, tightening around his head.

Having stopped Monkey from destroying Sandy, Tripitaka explains that they are all destined for the same cause; the Scholar told her that the key to restoring balance to the world lies in retrieving the Sacred Scrolls, ancient texts that contain the wisdom of the Gods. As the two Gods cautiously assess each other it starts to rain. A cart heads past them, offering a free ride in the weather. But as Monkey, Sandy and Tripitaka get in the shutters come down, and Pigsy, the right hand to Princess Locke, is revealed. He sits at the reins with the Font Demon, and turns the cart around, headed back to Princess Locke.

Episode Three

Episode One Liner

Monkey and Sandy find themselves prisoners to Princess Locke, while an escaped Tripitaka must convince Pigsy to rescue her friends.

Short Synopsis

When Monkey and Sandy find themselves prisoners to Princess Locke, an escaped Tripitaka must convince Pigsy to abandon his mistress and help her rescue the two Gods.

Long Synopsis

Pigsy is with Princess Locke, a fearsome Demon who poses as the benevolent ruler of Palawa. Princess Locke is very excited at the capture of the two Gods, and less so about the strange young monk. She's made a deal with the Font Demon, who is still in the town searching for Monkey. Princess Locke will hand over the two Gods to the Font Demon in exchange for bags of gold. She tells Pigsy to chain Monkey and Sandy up in the palace dungeons until they make the swap later that night, but the little monk Pigsy must kill.

Pigsy leads Tripitaka through a forest path, her hands tied up with ropes. Eventually he comes to a clearing and releases her. He tells her to run as far as she can; she must never be seen in the town alive. Tripitaka doesn't understand, why is he letting her go? Princess Locke told him to kill her. Pigsy is many things, he says, but he doesn't kill humans. Tripitaka senses a good heart in Pigsy and begs him to help her go back into the town and free Monkey and Sandy. Pigsy is enraged she'd ask him this and abandons Tripitaka, who resolves to go back into the town regardless.

Monkey and Sandy are still locked up in the dank basement of Princess Locke's palace. Monkey is desperate to escape - he's spent the last 500 years in a statue, he won't be held captive again. Sandy tells him she can create a fissure in the wall of the cell by using her power of water, as there is a waterfall on the other side. But the plan fails, and ends up splashing only a trickle of dirty water on Monkey's face.

Back in the town, Tripitaka disguises herself and jumps over the rooftops, desperate to find a way back to Princess Locke and her captive friends. An old man starts to chase her, and when she sees his reflection, Tripitaka realises it is actually the Font Demon in disguise. Pigsy, back in the tavern with his beloved food, sees the commotion from the window. He realises that if Tripitaka is seen alive by Princess Locke he'll be in big trouble. He uses his rake to fish her out of Palawa's alleyways and into safety.

Tripitaka begs Pigsy to reconsider. He's a God; he mustn't bow down to Demon forces and accept that life is this dark. Finally coming round to Tripitaka, Pigsy agrees to help, and breaks into Monkey

and Sandy's prison using his set of keys. But Princess Locke is hot on their heels, bursting into the cell just as the heroes escape. Pigsy stays behind and throws all the booty he's been given by Princess Locke at her feet: He won't do her bidding anymore. "Someone's having a moment," she replies.

As Monkey, Sandy and Tripitaka make their way through town, they encounter the Font Demon, approaching with some Font Goons, ready to pay Princess Locke for her captive Gods. Pigsy and Princess Locke, fighting, fall down into the town square, and a mega-battle ensues. Monkey defeats the Font Demon, and Pigsy captures Princess Locke, freeing Palawa from her tyranny. The four are hailed as heroes by the townspeople, and off they set, united in their mission to reach the Western Mountains and find the Sacred Scrolls.

Episode Four

Episode One Liner

As the heroes set off towards the Western Mountains they are intercepted by rebel bandits who worship the legend of the Monkey King.

Short Synopsis

As the heroes set off to the Western Mountains they are intercepted by a gang of rebel bandits, who worship the legend of the Monkey King. When the leader discovers Tripitaka can control the crown he plans to capture Monkey.

Long Synopsis

Tripitaka, Monkey, Pigsy and Sandy have been walking for many days without food or water. They are exhausted, dirty, and near collapse; trying to eat rotten fruit to stave off their hunger. Sandy can smell a lake nearby, so they push on, finally splashing into the clear water and washing off. Tripitaka, worried the others will see she is a girl if she bathes, hangs back. Suddenly, there is a spear to her back, and a group of bandits hollering and whooping, ambush the group. The leader of the group, Affe, is dressed in an odd version Monkey's outfit. It becomes clear that this tribe of bandits is devoted specifically to the legend of Monkey. After fighting Affe and bringing him to surrender, the bandits bend their knee to Monkey and invite him back to their camp for a feast in his honour.

At the feast, Monkey is called on by Affe to give a speech and show off the powers they have all heard so much about and spent their lives worshipping. Anxious that his powers have yet to return to him, Monkey instead appeals to the bandits' bloodlust and amps them up to go Demon-hunting. Tripitaka is worried; this is not the Scholar's mission. Taking Monkey aside she appeals to him – stop this madness, it's only wasting time, and we need to find the Sacred Scrolls to restore balance to the world. But Monkey, puffed up on his own pride, is having none of it. The Sacred Scrolls are lost, and who cares what the Scholar thinks. In a fit of rage Tripitaka begins reciting the sutra, knowing it will cause Monkey pain. As Monkey writhes in agony Affe, hiding in the bushes, watches Tripitaka reciting the sutra.

The next day Monkey tells Tripitaka that he will help her find the Sacred Scroll that is guarded by the bandits. But after that, they are done; he has repaid her for breaking him free from the statue, and that's as far as their partnership goes. Affe sets off with Bobbi and Jiro, two bandits who are in charge of protecting the Sacred Scroll of the forest. The Sacred Scroll has been kept safe for generations through an ingenious system of booby traps. If only Bobbi and Jiro could remember them. In a hopeless effort, they manage only to whip up a storm of deadly Demon wasps, and unearth some deadly spikes that surround the Sacred Scroll.

In the melee Affe takes Tripitaka to one side, split off from the rest of the group. He urges her to have a drink of water. But it tastes funny. Before she knows it Tripitaka is spilling out truths, unable to hide her dislike of Affe. He's slipped her truth serum, and it's a ploy to get her to reveal the sutra. Back at the site of the Sacred Scroll, Monkey has had enough, deciding to cross the spikes and take the Sacred Scroll himself. When Monkey opens the casement of the Sacred Scroll it is revealed to be empty. Affe and Tripitaka appear, and Affe tells them the Sacred Scroll was sold on to a Demon many years ago. But that doesn't matter, as now he has the means of control. Tripitaka yells a warning to Monkey – Affe knows the sutra. But when Affe recites it, instead of controlling Monkey's crown, it does nothing. Tripitaka is amazed as Sandy tells her, only the pure of heart can use the sutra.

These events rekindle the closeness between Monkey and Tripitaka. They decide to continue journeying together. If a Demon already has one Sacred Scroll, he could have many others – not good.

As the heroes head off, the same shadowy figure watches, telling his Demon guard Raxion that Gods are venturing near; they must be captured.

Episode Five

Episode One Liner

Monkey, Pigsy and Sandy are glamoured by a mystical shamanic Demon and taken to a strange prison called the Breaking Ground.

Short Synopsis

Monkey, Pigsy and Sandy are glamoured by a mystical shamanic Demon and taken to a strange prison called the Breaking Ground. Tripitaka must use all her strength to break her friends out of this prison and find out what the Demons want with the captured Gods.

Long Synopsis

Tripitaka and the Gods are making camp for the night, when a strange music starts to fill their ears, and smoke floods the camp. Immediately Monkey, Pigsy and Sandy stand completely still, as if glamoured. Tripitaka waves her hands in front of Monkey, but he is frozen like a statue. Suddenly Raxion, with some Font Goons, storms the camp, and loads Sandy and Pigsy onto his cart. Tripitaka, panicking and not wanting to be seen, ducks out of sight as the Font Goons load Monkey on to their cart and head away from the camp. Tripitaka is terrified, what should she do?

The Gods are taken to a strange white compound where they meet the Shaman, a mystical Demon with the power to keep them glamoured. Raxion tells the Shaman they need to get these Gods translating, it will please their master. The Shaman speaks cryptically, telling the Gods that they will translate the ancient language for him, and then he will send them to the Library. He claps his hands, and suddenly Monkey, Pigsy and Sandy are in a different place, but awake. They're in a funky, colourful version of the Palawa tavern. Monica, the tavern lady, is there but she has bright sparkly clothing and she's asking the Gods to play a game: a memory game. If they play they can have all they want to eat. Pigsy is in, Sandy too. As they start to write the symbols that Monica holds up, we are back in the Breaking Ground as before, and Monkey, Pigsy and Sandy stand glamoured as before. Only this time, Pigsy and Sandy's arms are moving, drawing the symbols out for the Shaman and Raxion. The funky tavern isn't real, it's a fantasy created so the Gods will translate.

Meanwhile, Tripitaka is outside, calling out for her friends. When she comes to a great clearing, she gets a shock; there is something blocking her way, some force field that won't let her pass. As she throws a rock into the air it bounces back, as if hitting an invisible wall. This is the entrance to the Breaking Ground. Tripitaka hides, and waits. Eventually Raxion emerges, and Tripitaka takes her moment, running through the door he has created. Inside, Tripitaka sees her friends caught in the white space of the Breaking Ground, paralysed, with their arms writing out the ancient language. Try as she might Tripitaka cannot free them or break this spell.

In the funky tavern and Pigsy and Sandy are happily translating. But Monkey is not. When the others ask him why he reveals it's because he never learnt the ancient language, a shocking thing for a God to admit. Monica is desperate for Monkey to translate, but something about her manner alarms Monkey. And there are others in the funky tavern, a young man he recognises, but can't place. Eventually Monkey approaches him. Who are you? The man replies, "Yes we did know each other, at the God Academy. But those days are gone now, this is what we do. Translate." Monkey won't have it; using all his might he combats the spell by walking to the door of the tavern. He wants to get out.

Outside, Tripitaka realises that if she holds down Pigsy or Sandy's hands they stop translating. She can get them out of the tavern. But the Shaman has been alerted to Monkey's disobedience, and the funky tavern world is starting to disintegrate as the Gods wake up from the spell they are under. As Tripitaka brings Pigsy and Sandy back into the Breaking Ground, the Shaman goes in, desperate to stop Monkey walking through the door. That door leads to his past, the God Academy, and if he goes out there he will be lost forever. Monkey doesn't care; he needs to know what happened. Why was he put in the statue for 500 years?

Episode Six

Episode One Liner

As Monkey travels further into his past Tripitaka must act quickly and use the sutra before her friend is lost forever.

Short Synopsis

As Monkey travels further into his past Tripitaka must act quickly before he is lost forever. Using the sutra, she is able to find a way to go after Monkey, and in doing so unravels the mystery of his imprisonment 500 years before.

Long Synopsis

As Monkey exits the funky tavern the fake world conjured by the Shaman collapses. Tripitaka finds herself in the Breaking Ground with Pigsy and Sandy, but Monkey has fallen over as if drugged, and won't wake up. The Font Goons, on the orders of the Shaman, approach Tripitaka, but she won't run and leave Monkey there...

Monkey, meanwhile, has opened the doors of the tavern and ventured out. He is back in his past, reliving old memories. The Master, his mentor and leader of the God Academy, is telling him to learn the ancient language; it is what all Gods must do. Before they use their fists, they must learn their history. Monkey complains, he is a warrior, he shouldn't have to study. Later, as head of the palace guard, Monkey must stand watch at the gates, ready to fend off any foe that might attack. He is bored. There are no threats, not any that he can see, and inside the palace he can hear the other

Gods being taught fighting skills by the Master – not fair. Monkey leaves his post and climbs the palace walls to watch the fighting lesson.

Unseen by Monkey, a Demon creeps into the palace and attacks the Master. Monkey leaps into action, jumping down, and fighting off the Demon foe with a display of great skill. Expecting to be thanked and celebrated he is instead admonished by the Master in front of all the other Gods. Why did he leave his post and leave them vulnerable to attack? He will be disciplined at the assembly later that day. Upset, Monkey meets up with his human friend Davari. Davari convinces him that he is above this, he is a great fighter and should be promoted to a Master himself. Monkey likes that idea. At the Assembly, as Monkey is being reprimanded for leaving his post, he argues back – make me a Master now, let's all save time. The Master is shocked. There has been some grave miscommunication in his mentorship. But if Monkey is so hell bent on becoming a Master he must pass one simple test. The Master brings out a flower, a closed budded orchid, not yet in bloom. If Monkey can make it open its flowers, he can become a Master. Monkey tries force, but the flower crumples, he tries speed, but a whirlwind doesn't work either. Distraught and humiliated, Monkey leaves the Assembly.

In the Breaking Ground, Tripitaka knows she has moments before the Font Goons reach Pigsy and Sandy and a fight breaks out. Cradling Monkey's body in her arms she tries reciting the sutra. Immediately she is pulled into Monkey's dreamscape: she can see him! Monkey has just left the Assembly and has met up with Davari. Tripitaka observes Davari telling Monkey not to run away from his problems. If they won't give you what you want, then you have to take it, Davari says.

Later that night Monkey creeps into the Master's chambers. He plans on stealing his crown and wearing it for himself. Tripitaka watches, anxious to bring her friend back to reality. As Monkey lifts the Master's crown, the Master, awoken by the noise, stops him. But as he does a Demon bursts in, killing the Master. Monkey, distraught, is left holding the crown as the other Gods burst in. Immediately they assume he has killed the Master in order to steal his crown. Monkey finally becomes aware of Tripitaka, who is still in his memories via the sutra. She tells him to follow the Demon, and together they uncover his identity. It's Davari. Monkey's only human friend is actually his demonic downfall. Tripitaka watches as Monkey is put on trial by the Gods and imprisoned in a stone statue. At this moment the Demons attack, crushing the Gods. Tripitaka can't believe it. The darkness in the world was all caused by Monkey's friend Davari. He knew Monkey would steal the crown, and he knew it was the moment to strike and take out the Gods forever.

In the Breaking Ground Monkey wakes up, full of rage. He uses all his powers to destroy the Shaman's force fields and crush the Font Goons. The Shaman, however, has seen Tripitaka use the sutra. He knows that she can translate the ancient language so he must capture her. Our heroes escape, but it won't be too long before the Demons come after them.

Episode Seven

Episode One Liner

As Tripitaka, Monkey, Pigsy and Sandy flee from the Shaman and his Demonic henchman, they seek shelter in a sprawling forest.

Short Synopsis

As Tripitaka, Monkey, Pigsy and Sandy flee from the Shaman and his Demonic henchman, they seek shelter in a sprawling forest. When the Shaman and his men stop their pursuit the group think they are safe, but an even deadlier foe lurks in the dark undergrowth, ready to pounce...

Long Synopsis

Tripitaka and the Gods flee from the Breaking Ground into a dark and dispiriting forest. Raxion and the Shaman are in pursuit, desperate to apprehend Tripitaka knowing she can speak the Ancient Language. But Raxion spots a rune, the symbol of a powerful Kin Demon. They will follow the Gods no further; the Kin Demons are fearsome. The Shaman decides Raxion will speak to the Kin - and ask them to apprehend Tripitaka. The fearsome Kin Demons do not take kindly to Raxion disturbing them, but when he takes out a pouch of gold they agree.

Tripitaka, Monkey, Pigsy and Sandy walk further into the forest, not knowing they are being tracked. Monkey argues with Pigsy and Sandy about his role in the downfall of the Gods and the loss of the Sacred Scrolls. A Mole Kin Demon suddenly grabs Tripitaka and makes off with her. She is strung up and screams, alerting the others to her presence. But when it looks the Mole Kin is going to attack, another figure bursts out of the forest. This is Gwen, a God in hiding, waiting for the warriors to come her way. She saves Tripitaka just as Monkey, Pigsy and Sandy round the corner. Monkey knows Gwen. She is one of the Gods who helped wrongly send Monkey into the statue. Monkey makes his peace with Gwen as she offers them safe passage through the forest that is swarming with Kin Demon.

As they weave their way through the forest, the group is attacked by the deadly Shuriken Kin Demon. Gwen and the Gods put up a fight, but suddenly the Demon disappears. No accident, Gwen says, they got what they wanted. But what was it? Tripitaka looks down at her leg, she's been hit by a poison dart. The Demon's plan is to make Tripitaka sick and bump up the price for Raxion. If he wants Tripitaka alive he has to pay, and they will administer the antidote. Eventually Tripitaka collapses. Gwen runs to her aid, but when she undoes Tripitaka's robes she realises this is no monk, but a young girl. Who are you? Gwen demands. Tripitaka hands over the letter her mother left the Scholar, and when the sickness passes, she tells Gwen her true identity. Shocked, but moved by Tripitaka's heroism, Gwen uses her powers to suck the poison from Tripitaka. But this weakens her; she's taken it on herself.

Later that night, Monkey sits up at Tripitaka's bedside, still unsure whether she will get better, he tells her how much she means to him. In the morning Tripitaka returns to health. Everyone is overjoyed, but when Monkey questions Tripitaka, it is clear she doesn't remember what he told her the night before. They are again attacked by Kin Demon, but this time the Gods are ready. Monkey, Sandy and Pigsy fight off the enemy with ease, as Gwen leads Tripitaka to safety. As she does, Tripitaka realises Gwen is ill; she's taken on the poison that was inside her. Suddenly Raxion attacks. Against all the odds, Tripitaka fights off Raxion.

Gwen is gravely injured. With her last breaths she tells Tripitaka that she must not deny who she really is. Tripitaka looks to her mother's letter, knowing that Gwen knows her secret. But the letter isn't there. Raxion stirs, his hand gripping a piece of paper...

Episode Eight

Episode One Liner

Tripitaka leaves the quest to go in search of her mother, but Sandy won't let her travel alone, and the two journey to the North Water.

Short Synopsis

Tripitaka leaves the quest to go in search of her mother, but Sandy won't let her travel alone, and the two journey to the North Water. Meanwhile, Monkey and Pigsy decide to go in search of the Demons, before they are hunted down themselves.

Long Synopsis

Monkey, Pigsy and Sandy wake to find Tripitaka has left their camp. Sandy reads a note from Tripitaka, saying she's gone to find her family and not to follow her; they're to keep travelling on towards the Western Mountains. Monkey is angry that Tripitaka would leave them like this. Sandy, worried, decides to catch up with Tripitaka and accompany her on her journey. Monkey and Pigsy decide to hunt the Demons that have been hunting them through the forest since the Breaking Ground. They resolve to meet back at this spot in a few days time and continue their quest united.

Sandy catches up with Tripitaka. She's headed to the North Water, where she knows her mother is from. She needs to find her. Sandy can't understand why Tripitaka is so keen to find her family. Who needs one of them? When the girls get to the North Water they find a poverty stricken fishing town. The townsfolk are alarmed by Sandy's strange looks and don't take kindly to Tripitaka's questioning of them about a woman who could have given up her child. In desperation, Tripitaka starts reciting the letter her mother left with the Scholar, which she knows by heart. Eventually the crowd clears and Tripitaka notices a woman affected by her words. But before she can stop her, the woman hurries away. Tripitaka and Sandy follow, and eventually find a small fishing shack with two girls playing outside. The woman appears in the doorway, again catching sight of Tripitaka. The recognition is undeniable.

Monkey and Pigsy track Raxion and the Font Goons. Raxion has been charged with surveying a new site for the Breaking Ground after Monkey destroyed the last with his furious rage. However, the Gods attempt at tricking Raxion backfires and only alerts him to their presence. Monkey ends up tied up at Raxion's feet, and Pigsy has to rush in and save the day. But before he does Raxion makes a suggestion: What if they work together? His master, the Demon that has been tracking the Gods all along their journey, is getting out of control and Raxion's position isn't secure in the Demon hierarchy. If he breaks them in to the Jade Palace they can wreak revenge on his master. Monkey and Pigsy have no idea whether they can trust Raxion, but the offer feels too good to refuse. The Jade Palace is where he was trained at the God Academy, and Monkey knows there is no way in; he designed the fortifications.

Back in the North Water, Tripitaka and Sandy have been invited by the woman, Meera, to talk. She reveals she is indeed Tripitaka's mother. And what's more, she has two young daughters. Tripitaka has sisters. By this point Sandy has realised Tripitaka is no boy monk – she's a girl. But she doesn't care. This is the Tripitaka that has been sent, and the mission needs her right now. Sandy begs Tripitaka to leave Meera and come back with her. But Tripitaka, intoxicated by this new family, argues back. Sandy should leave. Distraught, Sandy does, heading back to Monkey and Pigsy empty-handed.

Meera tells Tripitaka that she and her daughters are planning on leaving the North Water. Tripitaka must come with them, to start a new life in pastures green. Tripitaka agrees, and they set off with all Meera's possessions. But along the way Tripitaka starts to feel anxious. The wagon they ride in is new and expensive, but Meera claims she has no money. At a crossroads Meera's cheeriness starts to fade, and Tripitaka notices she is shaking. Meera cracks, telling Tripitaka she was put up to it, that she's not actually her mother, and that this has been a trap to lead her into the clutches of the Demons. Tripitaka, knowing that to run will only end badly for Meera and her daughters, surrenders herself. She walks on alone to Meera's drop off point. Guards take her in chains to their Demon master.

Monkey and Pigsy have been smuggled into the palace by Raxion. Once loose they scale the walls, leaping from roof to roof in search of a hiding place. But then Monkey notices something, Tripitaka, being led in chains towards a figure, her jailor. Monkey recognises this Demon – it's his old friend Davari.

Episode Nine

Episode One Liner

As Monkey and Pigsy hide in plain sight within the walls of Davari's palace, Tripitaka realises why Davari is determined to translate the Sacred Scrolls.

Short Synopsis

As Monkey and Pigsy hide in plain sight within the walls of Davari's palace, Tripitaka realises why Davari is so determined to translate the Sacred Scrolls. Can she stop him completing the translation before it's too late?

Long Synopsis

Tripitaka is Davari's prisoner. He shows her around his Library, where comatose Gods sit, translating slowly from pieces of the Sacred Scrolls. Tripitaka is horrified, realising what the Breaking Ground was for – to damage the Gods before they are delivered to Davari, ready and willing to do his bidding. Davari is on edge. The Gods translate too slowly; he needs the wisdom that's in these pages. Tripitaka looks at him, Davari coughs. Is he ill, she wonders?

Monkey and Pigsy are trying to keep a low profile within the grounds of the Jade Palace, but they know that Davari has captured Tripitaka and that her life is in danger. Pigsy notices a strange figure beckoning to them in an alley. They follow the figure, who reveals himself as Raxion. He tells them that at the same time every morning Davari goes out amongst the common people, shopping in the stalls of his township and being at one with the proletariat. Raxion tells them when and where they need to be, and when he gives the signal, that's their moment to destroy Davari. The next morning Davari takes Tripitaka with him on his shopping trip, but when Monkey draws his fire arrow, taking aim from afar, Davari notices at just the moment, dodging out of the way and raising the alarm. Angry at intruders in his palace, Davari destroys Raxion as Monkey and Pigsy flee.

As the palace guards look sure to capture Monkey and Pigsy they find refuge with a family behind a fireworks stall in town. Shama and Lusio and their sons Silver and Oak explain that they have been waiting for the young monk and the three warriors for many generations, storing up weapons and supplies in hopes of unseating the Demon power at the palace. They are overjoyed to see Monkey. But where are Tripitaka and Sandy? Monkey explains Tripitaka is captive and Sandy is making her way back to them in her own special way. In fact, Sandy is gaining entrance to the palace at that very moment, defeating a guard and putting his uniform on as a surprise.

The family explains to Monkey and Pigsy that there is a banquet being held by Davari for all the other Demons the next day, and that's their chance to strike. Something about the banquet isn't right – Davari is planning something. They need to stop him before it's too late. They must smuggle themselves in, posing as actors, musicians, and palace performers. But Monkey is impatient, enraged that Davari would take Tripitaka prisoner. Before bed he raids the family's stores and takes invisibility potion, determined to break into the Palace. Finding Tripitaka in her cell, at first Monkey doesn't recognise her. The young boy monk he knows is now wearing a dress! "I've always been a girl," Tripitaka tells him. Monkey is shocked; at the same time the potion is wearing off and he's

becoming visible, with the guards soon to find him. Tripitaka tells him she's worked out what Davari is doing – he's translating the Sacred Scroll of immortality. He will reveal at the banquet that he can live forever. Monkey is aghast. They must stop him. He resolves to come back for Tripitaka, but in the meantime tells her to do whatever Davari asks; they can't risk losing her. On his way out Monkey can't help but visit the Master's old quarters, now Davari's bedroom. The two old friends come face to face, and a fight breaks out, with Monkey jumping out the window and escaping just in time. Davari is enraged. "Find him!" he tells the guards.

The next day Tripitaka is translating for Davari, and she reaches the last page. Knowing that to translate this will give her enemy immortality, Tripitaka decides to make a run for it. She's been practicing fighting in her cell, so she takes out the guards and runs. But on the other side of door is Davari, with the last remaining piece of the Sacred Scroll between them...

Episode Ten

Episode One Liner

While Monkey and Pigsy smuggle themselves into Davari's banquet, Tripitaka must work out the means of controlling the secret army of the Font Demons.

Short Synopsis

While Monkey and Pigsy smuggle themselves into Davari's banquet, Tripitaka must work out the means of controlling the secret army of the Font Demons before Davari can reveal the extent of his new powers.

Long Synopsis

Tripitaka has no choice but to escape from Davari and leave the last piece of the Sacred Scroll for him to find. She runs away into the depths of the palace, and eventually finding the Gods chained up. Tripitaka resolves she must find a way to release them. But Lior, a God from the Breaking Ground, tells Tripitaka they have already given her the means of control. Tripitaka doesn't understand. Sandy, meanwhile, is patrolling the palace grounds as a guard, looking for her friends, agonisingly close to Tripitaka, the two pass by each other without noticing.

Meanwhile, Monkey and Pigsy plan their disguises, hoping they can fool the Demons and gain entry to Davari's banquet. Monkey is anxious. He tells Pigsy that Tripitaka has been pretending to be a boy all this time. Pigsy is nonplussed. Let's concentrate on the plan, they must fool the Demons and strike once they are inside the banquet. Gaining entry, Monkey and Pigsy, along with Shamai, Lusio, Silver and Oak, perform a version of the legend of Monkey. It seems they have fooled everyone. That's until Pigsy sees someone he recognises – Princess Locke, having escaped from Palawa, taking her seat at the banquet. Uneasily, Monkey and Pigsy maintain their composure and hope she won't notice them.

Finally, Davari appears. The Demons hush quiet, as a tense pall comes over the room. Davari begins to speak. He is deranged, asking the Demons what the difference between a Demon and a God is. Gods last forever, while Demons die, but not anymore. He takes out the translated Sacred Scrolls and places his hands over them. The Godly power of the world starts transferring into Davari. But there's a glint in his eye, and he shoots some Demonic arrows at Silver and Oak, the young boys. He's known all along Monkey and Pigsy have snuck in. Holding the young boys hostage Davari has our heroes exactly where he wants them.

Tripitaka, roaming the palace for more clues, finds a dark room with a number of unactivated Font Demons. A terrifying sight, if only Tripitaka can work out how to activate them herself. There's a commotion outside and suddenly Sandy, dressed as a guard, bursts in. Tripitaka has never been so happy to see her friend.

Monkey and Pigsy can only look on in agony as Davari continues to become immortal. But then a noise – Tripitaka and Sandy burst in, at the head of a Font Demon army. Tripitaka has worked out how to control the demonic horde and turn them on their master. Destroy Davari, they chant. Davari retreats. Monkey and Pigsy burst into action, Monkey follows Davari, as Pigsy takes out Princess Locke. Sandy deals with the guards.

But Tripitaka is caught. The Shaman holds her captive, dangling her over the balcony. As Monkey rounds the corner he sees a choice in front of him – either stop Davari becoming immortal or save Tripitaka. As the Shaman lets Tripitaka fall Monkey is running, head first over the balcony after her. Sandy and Pigsy gasp, they can't survive this fall. The Shaman is pleased; Davari is the first Demon to survive immortality. But his grin drops as Monkey suddenly flies back up above the balcony on his cloud, Tripitaka in his arms. Davari steps up, ready to fight. That is until Tripitaka grabs the Shaman's deadly orb and throws it at Davari. He may be immortal, but he'll never be free. The orb encases Davari and is thrown from the balcony. The heroes celebrate. But there are more Sacred Scrolls to be found, Tripitaka warns, they must keep going towards the Western Mountains.

CHARACTER PROFILES

Tripitaka

Tripitaka is a sixteen-year-old girl who hides behind the identity of a boy monk. Tripitaka is resourceful, adventurous, idealistic, smart and as stubborn as an ox. Her pious appearance as a monk is a mask she must wear. However, it both protects her and stops her from being who she really is. She is constantly struggling with the fact that she has lied to Monkey and to the world by posing as the “chosen one”. Raised in a library amongst the ancient tomes of her adopted father, the Scholar, Tripitaka has a theoretical understanding of the world that will be tested by experience. She will have to learn that life is not a book, that humans break rules more than they follow them - and that her new friends break them more than most.

Lonely and driven by a need to understand who she is, Tripitaka’s deepest desire is to find her real parents. As her journey unfolds, there are hints that she may in fact be fulfilling her true destiny. But Tripitaka isn’t sure that she wants to be special – she just wants to find her parents and her home.

Monkey

Monkey is an enigma – a God. Monkey is centuries old but presents as a young man. Born from a rock on a mountaintop and raised with wild animals in a jungle, Monkey is the ultimate autodidact. Monkey was always the brightest, fastest and best. In today’s world he’d be earmarked for an athletic career but in the world of Monkey he was noticed by the Ancient Gods. They saw in him huge potential, a game-changing God who could harness powers of both good and bad to build the universe in perfect balance. Yet Monkey’s need for worship and adulation ran him afoul of the powers that be. The Gods were forced to contain his irrepressible energy in a statue that has stood untouched for five hundred years.

Monkey has incredible strength and acrobatic abilities. He has perfected all schools of Kung Fu, and fights with a legendary wishing staff that can change size at will. Monkey also has other powers to rediscover, which are dormant after being trapped in a statue. He is restless, ambitious, and irreverent. He’s prone to engage feet and fists before brain and is slow to recognise that doing so often leaves him in the wrong. He does have a wicked sense of humour and deep down a yearning to improve. He just can’t help but get into trouble; it’s in his nature. Monkey has always felt out of place.

When Tripitaka releases Monkey from his statue prison, she believes that Monkey is the key to the Scholar’s quest and her best chance at surviving in a brutal world. As their journey continues, Tripitaka discovers that Monkey was not imprisoned by Demons as the Scholar had lead her to believe, but imprisoned by the Gods for his irreverent nature. She learns she cannot completely trust Monkey, but she can trust a magical prayer that tightens his immovable crown to keep him by her side and in check. Tethered to Tripitaka, Monkey begins the journey waiting for an opportunity to escape and find his “fellow” Gods, in short supply these days. The whole world has changed in his absence. Monkey develops a sneaking suspicion that he might be responsible for the chaos he sees before him. As the gang pushes further into their quest, Monkey begins to care for his fellow travellers – in particular the equally headstrong Tripitaka.

Sandy

Sandy was once a strong and powerful water God, shamefully reduced to living as a reclusive sewer Demon. Sandy is socially inept and deeply sensitive. She is a “Bogeyman” presence in her hometown, a symbol of terror for children, however her anti-social exterior hides an overwhelming passion –

there's just nowhere to put this energy, and so she has learned to channel it into hatred and darkness.

While Sandy has lived for many lifetimes, she looks seventeen. With dark Goth clothing, flowing dreadlocks, strange markings on her arms and piercing eyes, it's safe to say that Sandy stands out in a crowd – which could explain her fear of them. Although she uses her exotic looks to keep the world at arm's length, the fact that she is viewed as a monster causes her deep shame.

Sandy has mastered the art of gathering intel by lurking and listening. She plots attacks on Demons and keeps an eye on new dangers in town. When Tripitaka shows up in the village, Sandy instantly recognises the name and knows the legend of her quest. Sandy joins Tripitaka, and quickly becomes a zealot, wanting to redeem herself and believing, for the first time in many years, that she has some good to offer. But the journey will force her to confront and accept her past. Sandy is agile and strong, excelling in the “soft styles” of martial arts like Aikido and Aikijujitsu that use an attacker's own force against them. She has the magical ability to find water, a skill that will prove infinitely useful on this treacherous quest.

Pigsy

Pigsy lived a life of indulgence as a God, enjoying all of the finer things that were on offer to him – food, jewels, clothing... you name it. Unable to give up this lifestyle when the Gods were forced into hiding, Pigsy has found himself in debt, working as low life henchman for Princess Locke who reigns over his village, shaking down the poorest villagers for their hard earned pennies and, worst of all, capturing Gods. When Monkey and Tripitaka meet Pigsy he is at his lowest, trying to fill his unhappy void with gluttony. At first he captures Tripitaka and Monkey under orders from Princess Locke. Tripitaka however recognises something in Pigsy and is convinced he is destined to join their quest. Pigsy is not so sure.

As the journey continues it becomes clear to him that what he is searching for lies within joining the group and their fight for the greater good. Pigsy's journey is one of redemption and rediscovering self worth; he often surprises himself along the way with his usefulness to the mission. After protecting a farmer from a Demon attack he is gifted a simple-looking rake, and Pigsy soon discovers its true earth shattering powers, with the ability to charge a target with enough speed and momentum to crumble the thickest castle walls. At full power he can also summon earthquakes, but he'd give all that up in a second to be truly loved and respected for who he is. If only he can find a way to show that self to the world.

The Font Demon

The Font Demon is a mercenary, conjured from dark forces, and controlled by those who have the power over Demon magic. His face is pale, with tattoos of Demon letters lining his neck and jaw. These letters spell out his commands. He has long silver hair, dark clothes, and is not quite of this world or the next. The Font Demon can disguise himself by shapeshifting into a human body. He does this often, from a man drinking in the tavern or a small child of Palawa.

Davari

Davari is Monkey's oldest friend, and over the course of the series becomes his biggest enemy. When Monkey was training at the God Palace, it was Davari he spent his time with, a young man who worked within the palace grounds. But Davari was not all he seemed. He was actually a powerful Demon, with designs on the palace himself. After he manipulated his friend into stealing the Master's crown the stage was set for Davari's ambush. When the Gods were all assembled there having imprisoned Monkey in a stone statue, Davari and the Demon hordes attacked. This led to

Davari taking control as the Gods were forced into hiding. Since this moment Davari has been hell-bent on retrieving the Sacred Scrolls, translating them, and so stealing all the power and wisdom of the very Gods he dethroned.

Princess Locke

After Tripitaka's home is destroyed and the Scholar is killed she ventures to the nearest town of Palawa, a dangerous place controlled by Princess Locke. Princess Locke is a Demon, posing as a princess ruler. She wears garish clothes and is interested only in power and possessions. Princess Locke has many guards and henchman at her disposal, and strikes fear into the townsfolk. She also captures Gods, with her prized possession being her henchman Pigsy. The two share a toxic bond, as Princess Locke manipulates Pigsy into doing terrible deeds in her name. When Tripitaka unites Monkey and Sandy against Princess Locke, Pigsy has no choice but to abandon his master. Princess Locke's days are numbered.

The Scholar

When the Scholar was a young man, he found the Monkey King's Crown in a stream. From the moment he found the crown he devoted his life to the search for the Monkey King himself, imprisoned in stone somewhere nearby. He built his home and collected, wrote and transcribed all the remaining knowledge of the Days of Gods. Along the way he took in a young baby, dropped on his doorstep with only a note, and he raised her, taught her the legend of the Monkey King – the most powerful of all the Gods, the greatest warrior and the protector of humankind. The Scholar told the Girl many times how the Monkey King had the strength to lead an uprising against the Demon overlords. Monkey could create an army from thin air and soar the skies on his chariot cloud. The Scholar believes in the Monkey King and so does the Girl. Unbeknownst to the Scholar, this girl will become Tripitaka.

Raxion

Raxion is a Demon, working for Davari, although he is not sure in exactly what capacity. As head of the Breaking Ground, Raxion is put in charge of capturing Gods and delivering them to the Shaman, who works his magic on them, grinding down their strength with his demonic power. When that's done, Raxion places the Gods in giant terracotta pots, and delivers them to Davari at the God Palace. Raxion doesn't know what Davari needs from the Gods, but to him, Davari is getting out of hand. He's consolidating his power and to Raxion, that isn't good news. Over the course of the series Raxion will decide to do the unthinkable – ally himself with Gods in order to take his Demon master down.

The Shaman

The Shaman is a mystical Demon with great powers. Unlike other Demons he knows exactly what must be done to drain a God of all their powers, rendering them useless. This makes him incredibly valuable to the ruthless Davari. In the Breaking Ground the Shaman creates fantastical fugue worlds in the minds of the Gods held captive. Slowly they break down and can be delivered to Davari. The Shaman is highly prized by Davari, and he is welcomed to the God Palace, where his story collides with our group of heroes. In the final scenes of the series he has the power to destroy Monkey and Tripitaka with his demonic orb.

BACKGROUND TO THE PRODUCTION

When a production company of the calibre of See-Saw Films – headed by Academy Award® winning producers Iain Canning and Emile Sherman – joins forces with New Zealand’s prestigious Jump Film & TV, headed by pioneering production executive Robin Scholes, in a co-production that immediately entices international broadcasters ABC, TVNZ and Netflix, there is already a quality quotient that ensures a wow factor guaranteed to captivate audiences.

Add to the mix a classic epic tale of mythical scope with a modern interpretation, some of the most exciting young acting talent on the local scene representing a diverse cultural mix, and a visual feast of locations and costumes, and you have *The Legend Of Monkey*, a 10-part half hour series inspired by the 16th Century Chinese epic novel by Wu Ch’eng-En, *Journey to the West*.

“The appeal of this show for the younger and older audience alike is escapism - a world of landscapes and structures that capture their imagination and transports them to a place that feels ancient but somehow timeless. It’s like a parallel realm between heaven and earth. Like a place that already exists somewhere in our dreams but with fully formed three-dimensional characters we can empathise with,” says director Gerard Johnstone. “Its stories take us through a maze of mysteries and hair-raising adventures for kids of all ages.”

New Zealander Johnstone, considered one of the most exciting directing talents to emerge in his home country in recent years, was brought on board precisely because of his insight and skill at broadening a story’s message, as demonstrated in his 2014 feature film *Housebound*.

Executive Producer Rachel Gardener says she and her producing partners were taken by “Gerard’s resourcefulness, his understanding of story, plot structure and his ability to juggle tone, offbeat comedy, inventive action set pieces and fast-paced work: “Gerard’s vision for the project dovetailed perfectly with our own intentions for the series and we knew that he could bring to life Jacquelin’s incredible writing and the world of *Monkey*.”

That’s Jacquelin Perske, the award-winning writer of *Spirited*, *Little Fish* and the highly acclaimed TV series *Love My Way*. Perske saw through the amazing labyrinth of storylines in the original source, *Journey to the West*. “It was looking at those characters and that scenario, which is really four orphans going on a road trip together, and how to make it interesting and fun and like a great adventure for a contemporary audience.”

The key was to uncover the endearing qualities of the Monkey fable that transcend time and culture, and to do so through a blend of earnestness and playful irreverence to the world in which the four heroes are journeying.

“It’s a serious world of rich people and poor people and devils and gods, and people can get wiped out really quickly and people fight each other all the time,” Perske describes. “It’s a rough and tumble dangerous world but our heroes are so irreverent about the whole thing. They walk through the world with such a kind of a delightful open goofiness that it’s just incredibly fabulous to watch that very different way of responding to the world, a serious martial arts world where people are very serious. It’s that irreverence which is so fun and universal.

“The reality is that our heroes are hundreds and hundreds of years old, it’s almost a kind of wisdom, too, and it is a very Buddhist thing, which is to treat each moment as it comes and to do it with joy and love and humour. There’s no one who exemplifies that more than the Dalai Lama, it’s that kind of spirit which I think is really appealing.”

Perske was responsible for writing five of the episodes as well as co-writing one with Craig Irvin. Irvin, best known for writing and directing the award-winning live action series *Nowhere Boys*, wrote another three episodes, and Samantha Strauss, creator of the hit Australian teen drama series *Dance Academy*, wrote one episode.

“I’ve never felt more confident going into a project,” says Johnstone, “Jacqueline’s first script captured my imagination and even had me in tears. The strength of her story and her take on this world doesn’t just pay homage to the original, it completely surpasses it.”

The themes of morality and spirituality that underpin the original story are brought into emphasis through the mythical adventure that Monkey and his three friends embark on. They experience a world populated by vastly contrasting characters at opposite ends of the morality spectrum.

“This is a world where there is good and there is evil, and where good deeds are seen as the realm of the gods and human beings are striving towards those things,” elaborates Perske. “And there are devils, or evil people, who are selfish and don’t work for the common good, who only work for themselves. These are things that are in our society and I think kids particularly can see that morality is at the core of a lot of storytelling. From *Star Wars* to *Monkey*, it’s a universally understood truth.”

Perske knew that if she was enjoying creating this world, then that would transfer to the creative team, the actors, and ultimately the audiences. “It was really fun. I’m used to writing adult dramas, and so to be in a space which was magic and wasn’t of our world, but also where you could really have some fun with the characters, it was a good space to be in.”

See-Saw’s Jamie Laurenson, co-executive producer of the series, says that the reason for making *The Legend Of Monkey* was very heartfelt and quite fundamental. “It wasn’t a strategic decision, it was a passionate one. We wanted to make a show that we could share with our kids and their friends.”

Laurenson says that while the visual style and action were key components in creating the entire concept for the series, one of the most important ingredients was the casting, “bringing a young diverse cast of actors together that feels as diverse as the international audience.”

Chai Hansen, who plays Monkey, is a Thai-born Australian of Thai and Chinese descent; Luciane Buchanan, playing Tripitaka, is a New Zealander of Tongan descent; Emilie Cocquerel, as Sandy, is a French-Australian educated in France and the United States; and Josh Thomson, playing Pigsy, is a New Zealand comedy performer of Tongan descent.

Hansen was attracted to the diverse range of characters in the story. “I think that’s great to represent different cultures coming together and overcoming adversity.”

Laurenson says that the diversity of cast is a deliberate part of the story’s message. “At its heart the show is about believing in who you are, in fighting oppression to realise your full potential, and we wanted to tell that story with as diverse a central cast as possible. My desire is that girls and boys start learning to spin a staff around like Monkey or find their hero wherever they see them in Sandy, Pigsy or Tripitaka.”

Realising director Gerard Johnstone’s vision of a world unique and fantastical, production designer Mark Robins’ drew from his experience on epic fantasy films such as *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, with an insight that was intrinsic to creating the dreamlike realm that Johnstone envisaged. From expansive rural landscapes to ramshackle urban dwellings, Robins and costume designer Liz McGregor made magic happen.

“I’ve literally let my imagination go wild. It’s been heaps of fun!” says McGregor. “Because we’ve created our own world and designed a unique visual that exists only in this world of *Monkey*, we’ve had to make everything from jewellery to footwear to clothing and leatherwear.”

Her costume team created thousands of looks for more than 40 characters, along with numerous featured extras and groups of background extras. As the four heroes of the story traverse their world, the looks of the supporting characters change. “Because as we travel through to the West we’ve gone through different villages and in each village we’ve given them their own culture, their own jewellery, their own things that are particular to that culture.”

Tripitaka, a girl dressed as a boy monk, was a particularly enjoyable character to design for, whether it was the deceptively simple monk’s attire or the beautiful nightgown she is given by the head demon, Davari. Hair and makeup was the domain of Susie Glass, who also enjoyed working on the look for Tripitaka, even when actor Luciane Buchanan insisted on shaving off her waist-length hair for the character. “Making that believable, that the audience could meet this girl at the beginning of episode 1 and by the end of that episode she’s a boy and you believe it, I enjoyed that immensely.”

Glass says the producers of the series gave her artistic free reign, which allowed her to create pure fantasy. Transforming the character of Sandy, who has been living in a sewer for hundreds of years, into a super-hero kind of goddess, and giving the Font Demon his long flowing hair, white skin and tattoos were among the highlights of the wild ride the entire design team went on.

Balancing the splendour and squalor of the *Monkey* world, intricately conceived and brought to life, injecting humour and pathos, fear and hope, and some exciting stunt work including authentic kung-fu fighting, was a challenge that Johnstone and the entire creative team took on with relish and watching the series come to life was the greatest reward. “Seeing it come together, walking on set – the sets are amazing, the costumes are amazing – and walking out when it’s all lit and seeing it on camera, on the monitor, and there they are, that’s it!” says Glass.

The Legend Of Monkey is a fable revisited for these times – a story of self-discovery, friendship, humanity and rising against adversity. It’s also a great romp through a fantasy world that never takes itself too seriously, but retains a thoughtful quality throughout.

Says Johnstone, “Protecting the integrity of the story and managing tone is the most important aspect of directing, and what’s unique about *Monkey* is that by virtue of its premise it blends fights, frights, humour and heart.” The heart of the story, which audiences are sure to be moved by, is not just *Monkey*’s journey of self-awareness; it is also Tripitaka’s search for family. Amid the laughs and action scenes there could be a few tears shed as well.

“Being able to invoke these feelings and emotions in the viewer is why this job gives us so much satisfaction,” Johnstone says. “We might not be saving lives, but we’re reminding people of the fact that we ARE alive.”

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

CHAI HANSEN plays MONKEY

Chai was born in Ko Samui, Thailand, and migrated to Australia at the age of seven. In 2007 he completed his scholarship and gained a Diploma in Performing Arts in 2011. Chai then went on to be cast as one of the leads, Zak Blakely, in the international Netflix series *Mako Mermaids*, which aired for three series. His feature film debut was in the film *Thicker Than Water*.

Chai has recently wrapped on the US series *The 100* shooting in Vancouver, in what was meant to be a two-episode guest appearance. However, this turned into a 10-episode major guest role in which an entire story arch was especially written for his character.

Having been cast in the title role of Monkey in the See-Saw Films, ABC and Netflix series *The Legend Of Monkey*, Chai has just wrapped filming in New Zealand.

Q&A

What is *The Legend Of Monkey* about?

The Legend of Monkey is inspired by one of my favourite books, *Journey To The West*. And it has been completely reimagined for the modern contemporary audiences. It is based on three fallen gods who escort a young monk on a perilous journey to restore light back into a dark world.

What are the differences between the kinds of characters in the world of Monkey?

The difference between a god, demon and a human would be that demons and gods possess supernatural power and great strength; humans unfortunately are sitting ducks in the equation, where they rely on who is the superior race. Unfortunately in this moment in time the demons have taken over.

What is your favourite thing about playing a god?

To me, good hair is what creates a god, and demons are very envious of that so they try and get their hair on point as much as the gods but they can't quite do it because gods just have naturally beautiful hair.

Describe Monkey's relationship with Tripitaka.

Monkey's relationship with Tripitaka is constantly changing. It's fair to say that he does resent Tripitaka at times, but I think as the journey goes on, Tripitaka and Monkey create a really good chemistry and bond. The quest for Monkey really is a chance for redemption. This journey is a journey of teaching him patience, understanding of other people not just himself, he gets quite selfish at times. To me the quest for Monkey doesn't mean much in the beginning, as he is on a different journey to seek vengeance. As time goes on he discovers that the quest coincides with the rest of the gods, when he discovers the state of the world and the threat, how real it is, it becomes more important to him. So it's a journey inwards for Monkey.

LUCIANE BUCHANAN plays TRIPITAKA

Luciane Buchanan's first screen role was as comedian Billy T James' daughter Cherie in Peter Burger's biopic *Billy*. She has since gone on to perform in *The Blue Rose*, *Power Rangers* and, most recently, as core cast in two seasons of *Filthy Rich* playing the role of Kennedy Truebridge.

Luciane is of Tongan descent but was born in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Her early acting training was with Fiona Edgar as a student of TAPAC's Acting for Screen course and it was Fiona who introduced her to her current agent Gail Cowan. Luciane has recently completed studying towards a Bachelor of Arts in Drama and Psychology at The University of Auckland.

Q&A

Where does your character fit into the world of The Legend Of Monkey?

In this world there are demons who are kinds of extensions of the darker sides of humans – the jealousy, the anger, the betrayal, the hedonism, the temptations – but they can live up to 500 years, so they've got more of a lifespan. Gods basically live for eternity; they are everything that we respect and admire in humans, all the positive traits of love and forgiveness and sacrificing your life for the greater good.

Tripitaka is a human, a young 16-year old girl who was brought up by the scholar, and he lead the resistance movement in this world that is ruled by demons. She kind of fell into the role of Tripitaka, and her quest is to find the sacred scrolls and take them to the western mountains. But she also has her personal quest, which is finding out who she really is and where she comes from and who her real family are.

How does Tripitaka react to Monkey when she realises he is a big part of her quest?

In the first couple of scenes where I'm introduced to his character and where Tripitaka figures out, oh, he's not the god that I think he is; he's quite flawed. But I remember seeing Chai in full costume for the first time and being so scared! He's so captivating and he brings so much to the character.

EMILIE COCQUEREL plays SANDY

Born in Sydney to a French father and an Australian mother, Emilie Cocquerel attended bi-lingual schools in France, Los Angeles and Houston before settling in Sydney. Studying at Sydney University she led performances in the Drama Society (SUDS), and finished runner-up in the Dungog Film Festival Speed Auditions. Emilie was then accepted into the prestigious Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) acting program. At the end of her first year she attended a three-month exchange program with the Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique de Paris (CNSAD) where she studied under renowned director Daniel Mesguish.

In 2016 Emilie was seen in the feature films *Joe Cinque's Consolation*, based on the book by Helen Garner, *Lion* starring Dev Patel & Rooney Mara and *Mormon Yankees: The Spirit of the Game*. She also featured in Rachel Ward's ABC telemovie *An Accidental Soldier*.

Emilie was a runner-up for the 2015 Heath Ledger Scholarship and is one of Australia's most intriguing recent graduates, recently inclusion in the *Australian Women's Weekly's* Generation Next portfolio.

Q&A

What was challenging about immersing yourself in the world of this story?

It's so different because we have a completely different universe and set of rules. I came in having read *Journey To The West* and done a lot of research and realised very quickly I had to let it all go because we're doing something very different. They've totally created a world that's not specific to a country or time and place, and with like little elements of the east and the west, so it's an amazing fusion and so beautiful.

How different is Sandy to the other main characters, especially to Pigsy, who she works closely with on their quest?

Sandy is a funny one. She's lived in the sewer for a couple hundred years and she has been disguised as a demon but is actually a god, and has been waiting for someone called Tripitaka to arrive so she can start her journey to fight the monarch reign that is happening at the moment. If you put them next to each other they look like they're from completely different worlds, and so when they come together you've got a very confident Pigsy and a very scared, doubtful Sandy. But they're both warriors and they come with a lot of different strengths, and it's because they're so different that it becomes a very funny and very heart-warming relationship.

What about the physical side of your role?

Even way back when I was auditioning we knew that these characters were going to be very physical, so the martial arts has led into the character, which has led into the martial arts, and it's a really great way to connect with her, 'cause she slinks about and she hides and she comes out of nowhere, and she's strong but she's delicate.

JOSH THOMSON plays PIGSY

New Zealander Josh Thomson is Timaru-born from sturdy South Island and even sturdier Tongan Island Stock. He studied Theatre and Film at the University of Otago. He arrived in Auckland to do stand up comedy and appeared in a couple of Pulp Comedy shows, but took up acting because, he says, actors get lunch, and most of the time they don't have to pay for it.

Josh has graced the small screen in some iconic commercials and TV series including *Terry Teo*, *Hounds*, *Coverband*, the voice of the tubby ginger kid in *Barefoot Bandits* and in his first feature film lead role as Gary in *Gary of the Pacific*.

Josh continues to work as an actor, MC and comedian when he is not appearing on the daily news show *The Project*. He's toured with New Zealand's best comedians from *7Days* doing stand up and the *7Days:Live* show around the country. In demand for his MC skills, he has hosted the New Zealand Film Awards, the 48Hour Film awards, various corporate events and guest spots at the New Zealand Music awards.

He still loves working behind the scenes as a director, writer, editor and whatever else he can do to pay for the new floor in the laundry since he broke the last one when he tried to fix it himself.

Q&A

Who is Pigsy?

Pigsy is a god who has fallen. He fell into debt and started working as a henchman. Pigsy's journey is a journey of redemption; he tries to make amends for all the bad things he did as a henchman for the demons, and actually starts fighting the demons with Monkey and Sandy and Tripitaka. He's a very, very strong god; he can summon his rake from anywhere, and can call lightning to his rake, and can hit the ground so hard with his rake that the earth will shatter like an earthquake.

How does Pigsy work with Sandy in the story?

Pigsy and Sandy really work together as the protectors of Tripitaka, because Monkey is so self absorbed and is completely unaware of what he's doing really, so they really help Tripitaka control Monkey, because he is the most powerful one of us.

How did you enjoy the action sequences?

Being in a kung fu TV series is really fun. I can't kick as high as the others but I'm sort of kicking so that's good enough for me. Learning the stunts and doing stunts was really fun. I spent my entire life wanting to be Jean Claude Van Damme and now I'm pretty close.

JARRED BLAKISTON plays FONT DEMON

Jarred Blakiston has had a busy and successful acting career in New Zealand since being awarded Most Promising Junior by the Young Dolphin Theatre in 2001. In 2012 he played Rivendell Elf in Peter Jackson's *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*. He also appeared in Peter Burger's 2007 film *The Tattooist*.

Jarred's television credits include *When We Go To War*, *Power Rangers* and *Power Rangers: Megaforce*, *Amazing Extraordinary Friends* (Series 2 and 3) and *Shortland Street*. He also is a busy theatre and voice over actor.

DANIEL SING plays SCHOLAR

Daniel Sing has 20 years of experience in film and television in New Zealand. His feature film credits include *A Soldier's Sweetheart*, *Little Saumurai*, *Orphans & Angels*, *World's Fastest Indian*, *Cafaye*, *Ice* and *Supercapitalist*.

Television series and telemovies that Daniel has appeared in include *Street Legal III*, *Fearless*, *Shortland Street*, *Power Rangers*, *A Thousand Apologies*, *Murder Is Forever* and *Brokenwood Mysteries 4*.

JORDAN MOONEY plays RAXION

Since bursting onto the Auckland acting scene in 2009, Jordan Mooney has amassed a huge body of work for someone so young. He is a regular in productions at the Auckland Theatre Company, and his recent television credits include *Westside*, *Hillary*, *Ash Vs Evil Dead*, *When We Go To War* and most recently *Romper Stomper*. In 2012 Jordan appeared in the feature film *3 Mile Limit* and in the same year he won Best Newcomer Actor in the Hackman Theatre Awards.

RACHEL HOUSE plays MONICA

Rachel House graduated from Toi Whakaari (New Zealand Drama School) in 1992 and has been involved in the creative arts industry ever since, both as an actor and a director. She has performed in numerous productions from contemporary Maori plays to Shakespeare, some of which have toured nationally and internationally. She has also performed in the international award winning feature films *Whale Rider* and Taika Waititi's *Eagle versus Shark*, as well as numerous television productions including the BBC co-production of *Maddigans Quest*. She also works as a director for both stage and screen and attended The Prague Film School in 2008.

In 2016 Rachel voiced the part of Grandma Tala in the Disney animated blockbuster *Moana* and the Disney On Ice production of *Dare To Dream*.

BRYONY SKILLINGTON plays PRINCESS LOCKE

Bryony Skillington graduated from Toi Whakaari NZ Drama School in 2007 and has been working extensively in theatre and television since. Her screen credits include the critically acclaimed feature film *The Rehearsal* and the television series *Shortland Street*, *Emu*, *Paradise Café*, *The Investigator*, and *Auckland Love*,

A talented singer, her most recent stage roles were in the Fortune Theatre's double-bill productions: as Feste in *Twelfth Night* and The Witch in *Into the Woods*. Her other notable theatre credits include Silo Theatre's *The Blind Date Project*, Auckland Theatre Company's *Billy Elliot* and Fractious Tash's *Not Psycho*.

JOSH MCKENZIE plays DAVARI

After graduating from Toi Whakaari (New Zealand Drama School) in 2010, Josh McKenzie trained at the Berlinale Talent Campus in Berlin, Germany, in 2012 through a Professional Development Award from the New Zealand Film Commission. Having already accumulated a robust list of theatre credits, Josh went on to feature in numerous television series including *Legend of the Seeker*, *Siege*, *Girl vs Boy*, playing the lead character of Tim, *Power Rangers: Megaforce*, *Nothing Trivial*, *Shortland Street*, *The Shannara Chronicles* and *Filthy Rich*. Telemovie credits have included *Tangiwai* and *The Kick*.

Josh starred in Brendan Donovan's feature film *Hopes & Dreams*, for which he won the Best Outstanding Feature Film Debut at the 2011 New Zealand Film & Television Awards. Other feature film roles have included *Amos' Wake* and *Mega Time Squad*.

SAMSON CHAI BOON plays LIOR

Samson Chan-Boon is a graduate of the Best Pacific Institute of Performing Arts (PIPA) and UNITEC. He has performed extensively on stage, including two seasons of David Mamea's *Goodbye my Feleni*, and Auckland Theatre Company's productions of *Sinarella* and *The Lolly Witch of Mumuland*. His screen debut was as Cormac in the MTV series *The Shannara Chronicles* and *Westside*.

JAYDEN DANIELS plays GAXIN

Jayden Daniels graduated with his Bachelor of Performing Arts, majoring in Acting for Screen and Stage, in 2014. He has appeared in the television series *End of Term* and *Shortland Street*.

CREW BIOGRAPHIES

GERARD JOHNSTONE – NEW ZEALAND EXECUTIVE PRODUCER / DIRECTOR

Gerard Johnstone is a New Zealand-born writer/director who first rose to prominence for twice winning the 48Hours film competition as a young filmmaker. His feature film directorial debut was the internationally successful horror-comedy *Housebound*, declared by Peter Jackson to be “Bloody Brilliant” – so much so that Jackson was instrumental in convincing New Line to option the rights for a U.S. re-make with Johnstone at the helm.

Prior to *Housebound* he co-created, wrote and directed two seasons of New Zealand’s most successful narrative comedy series *The Jacquie Brown Diaries*, which won Best Comedy at the New Zealand Film and TV Awards two years in a row. His most recent project was his 2016 TV series reimagining of the highly successful 1980s comedy *Terry Teo*, about a savvy 12-year-old surviving the mean city streets.

JACQUELIN PERSKE – EXECUTIVE PRODUCER / WRITER

Jacquelin Perske script produced the recent television series *Deadline Gallipoli* and *Seven Types of Am* and she was the producer, co-creator and writer of the first and second series of *Spirited*. She received the Australian Writers Guild award for Best Drama in 2010 for her pilot script for *Spirited*.

Jacquelin produced, co-creator and was a writer of the acclaimed series *Love My Way* and she was part of an international team of writers working on George Lucas’ live action series for television, *Star Wars: Underworld*. Additional credits as a writer or script producer include *Big Sky*, *Raw FM*, *Fireflies* and the AFI award-winning *The Secret Life of Us*.

Jacquelin wrote the film *Little Fish*, starring Cate Blanchett, Hugo Weaving and Martin Henderson. The received an astonishing 13 AFI award nominations. In 2013, she won the prestigious Foxtel Fellowship at the Australian Writers Guild Awards.

IAIN CANNING AND EMILE SHERMAN – EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Academy Award®-winning producers Iain Canning and Emile Sherman co-founded See-Saw Films in 2008 and have produced a number of prestige film and television projects, including six-time Academy Award® nominated *Lion*, the four-time Academy Award® winning film *The King’s Speech* and the Emmy Award winning series *Top Of The Lake*. Among See-Saw’s upcoming, highly anticipated, projects are *Mary Magdalene* starring Rooney Mara and Joaquin Phoenix, John Cameron Mitchell’s *How to Talk to Girls At Parties* starring Elle Fanning and Nicole Kidman, Steve McQueen’s *Widows* starring Viola Davis, Liam Neeson and Michelle Rodriguez and the recently released *Top Of The Lake: China Girl* starring Elisabeth Moss, Nicole Kidman and Gwendoline Christie.

RACHEL GARDNER – EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Rachel Gardner has Produced and Executive Produced a wide range of award winning film and television drama and comedy. Rachel joined See-Saw Films after joining forces with them on the 2013 produced NZ/UK co-production *Slow West* as the New Zealand producer. She currently heads See-Saw’s Australian film and TV slates as producer (film) and executive producer (television),

driving the development, production and delivery of renowned material that has ambition to speak to worldwide commissioners and international audiences.

Prior to See-Saw, until 2012 Rachel was a partner in Great Southern Television, a dynamic and independent production company based in New Zealand, producing over a hundred hours of prime-time programming in the seven years she drove the drama and factual slates. In 2008 Rachel jointly won the Independent Producer of the Year Award by New Zealand's Screen Production Association (SPADA).

HAKAN KOUSETTA – EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Hakan joined See-Saw in 2014 as Chief Operating Officer, co-running the TV division with its creative head Jamie Laurenson.

Throughout his career Hakan has overseen the finance and production of hundreds of films and television programmes and has recently overseen the production of *Top Of The Lake: China Girl*, the highly acclaimed second instalment of Jane Campion's Emmy and Golden Globe® nominated series *Top of the Lake*. Previously at See-Saw Hakan oversaw the production of mini-series *Love, Nina* for BBC1 written by Nick Hornby and based on the bestselling novel by Nina Stibbe.

Hakan is a council member of UK trade association [PACT](#) as well the [BFI launched commission](#) to investigate the health of the UK independent film industry.

JAMIE LAURENSEN – EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Jamie Laurenson joined See-Saw Films in 2012 to head up its newly formed Television department. Jamie most recently executive produced *Top Of The Lake: China Girl*, the highly acclaimed second instalment of Jane Campion's Emmy and Golden Globe® nominated series 'Top of the Lake' and is in development on *The North Water* to be written and directed by Andrew Haigh (*45 Years*), adapted from the novel by Ian McGuire.

Previously at See-Saw Jamie executive produced the mini-series *Love, Nina* for BBC1 written by Nick Hornby and based on the bestselling novel by Nina Stibbe.

Prior to See-Saw Films, Jamie was an Executive Producer for BBC Films and Commissioning Editor for Drama BBC4 where he worked on such films as *Quartet*, *Salmon Fishing In the Yemen*, *My Week With Marilyn*, *Project Nim*, *Brighton Rock*, *An Education* and television dramas *Enid*, *Room At The Top*, *Holy Flying Circus* and *Lennon*.

ROBIN SCHOLES – PRODUCER

Robin Scholes was a founding partner and managing director at high profile company Communicado, where she began working alongside a number of New Zealand filmmakers early in their careers, from Lee Tamahori on local blockbuster *Once Were Warriors* to Gregor Nicholas on *Broken English* and Christine Jeffs on *Rain*.

Her television drama producing credits include thriller/romance mini-series *The Chosen*, the ambitious British-New Zealand co-production *Greenstone*, and the series *Burying Brian*. On the big screen, Robin has *The Hopes and Dreams of Gazza Snell*, starring Robyn Malcolm, *Mr Pip* starring Hugh Laurie and Kerry Fox, and *Mahana*, reuniting her with *Warriors* director Lee Tamahori.

CRAIG IRVIN – WRITER /DIRECTOR

Craig Irvin wrote and directed the award-winning live action series *Nowhere Boys*, which garnered him both AWGIE and ADG Awards. The series also won the 2014 AACTA Award for Best Children's Series and the 2014 and 2015 Silver Logie Awards for Most Outstanding Children's Program. *Nowhere Boys* has been recognised internationally with a nomination for Best Children's Series at the International Emmy® Awards in 2014. Craig also wrote and directed the short film *Tethered*, for which he won the Rouben Mamoulian Best Director Award at the 2011 Sydney Film Festival. The film was selected for the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival in 2012 and Craig also received a nomination for Best Direction in a Live Action Short at the ADG Awards in 2012.

SAMANTHA STRAUSS – WRITER

Samantha Strauss co-created the hit Australian teen drama series *Dance Academy*, which screens in over 160 countries. It has been nominated for two International Emmys and won the Most Outstanding Children's Series Logie awards in 2012 and 2013. For her work on *Dance Academy* Samantha has been individually nominated for five Australian Writer's Guild Awards and won twice. She also wrote *Dance Academy: The Movie*, which was released in cinemas in 2017.

Samantha wrote the telemovie *Mary: The Making Of A Princess*, and has written for series including *Wonderland* and *Offspring*.

DJ STIPSEN – DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

DJ Stipsen's has shot the films *Billy*, *3 Mile Limit*, *Siege*, *Safe House*, *What We Do In The Shadows* and *Bombshell*. His television drama credits include *Murder Is Forever*, *Power Rangers: Ninja Steel* and *Power Rangers: Dino Charge*, *Dirty Laundry*, *When We Go To War*, *Harry*, *Under Belly: Land of the Long Green Cloud*, *The Jacque Brown Diaries*, *Outrageous Fortune* and *P.E.T. Detectives*.

DANY COOPER – EDITOR

Dany Cooper is one of Australia's most awarded editors. She has won three ASE (Australian Screen Editors) Awards, two AFI/AACTA awards and is a four-time nominee, a FCCA (Film Critics Circle of Australia) Award, plus IF nomination and Emmy nominations. Her numerous credits include films such as *Angel Baby*, *Queen of The Damned*, *Candy*, *Hey Hey It's Esther Blueburger*, *Beneath Hill 60*, *December Boys*, *Oranges and Sunshine*, *The Sapphires*, *Breath* and additional editing for Baz Luhrmann's *Australia*. Her television credits include *Battlestar Galactica*, *Redfern Now*, *Puberty Blues* and *Deadline Gallipoli*.

MAT EVANS – EDITOR

Mat Evans edited *From The Bottom Of The Lake*, a one-hour documentary on the creative process of Jane Campion, and was assembly editor on feature film *Tracks*, directed by John Curran, and the recent TV series *Top of the Lake 2: China Girl* directed by Jane Campion and Ariel Kleiman. His feature film work includes Kimble Rendall's *Guardians of the Tomb*, and as assembly editor on Garth Davis's *Mary Magdalene*.

Mat has edited numerous short films, music videos and commercials, include Mia Wasikowska's *Long Clear View* (for the short film anthology *The Turning*), Silverchair's Daniel Johns debut short film *My Mind's Own Melody* and the Sydney Film Festival Dendy Award finalist film *Pop*.

PETER VAN DER FLUIT – COMPOSER

Peter van der Fluit is a musician, composer, writer and producer. He was a founding member of the post-punk new wave band the Screaming Meemees.

Following a stint in London, Peter returned to his home Auckland, New Zealand. With former Meemees band mate Michael O'Neill he composed *Romeo and Juliet – The Rock Opera*, which premiered in June 2010 at ArtsEd in London. The partners have since adapted the show into a feature film, *Romeo and Juliet: A Long Song*, and are also near completion of a second musical-rock opera, about the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

MARK ROBINS – PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Leading production designer and art director Mark Robins has worked on major feature films including Mel Gibson's *Hacksaw Ridge*; Michael Apted's *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, the Hugh Jackman-starring *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* and Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers won him the Art Directors Guild award for Excellence in Production Design in a Period or Fantasy Film and *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* won the Online Film & Television Association award for Best Production Design.

His television work includes the telemovie *Jean*, the mini-series *When We Go To War*, *Deadline Gallipoli* and the series *High Tide*.

LIZ MCGREGOR – COSTUME DESIGNER

Liz McGregor was costume designer on *6 Days*, the feature documentary *McLaren*, the New Zealand drama *The Most Fun You Can Have Dying* and the animated adventure *Yogi Bear*. She was nominated for Best Costume Design in the 2017 New Zealand Film awards for her work on the Lee Tamahori feature *Mahana (The Patriarch)*. Liz was also costume supervisor on *Light Between the Oceans*, starring Michael Fassbender, and her numerous credits as assistant costume designer include *The Illusionist*, *Emperor*; *Mr Pip*; *Blood Diamond* and *Fool's Gold*.

She was wardrobe coordinator on *The Lord Of The Rings* trilogy for Peter Jackson, *The Last Samurai* starring Tom Cruise and the television series *Hercules The Legendary Journeys*.

SUSIE GLASS – MAKE UP & HAIR DESIGNER

Susie Glass has been the hair and makeup designer behind feature films including *The Light Between Oceans*, *Into the Rainbow*, *Mahana*, *6 Days*, *Billy T: Te Movie*; *10,000 B.C.* and Peter Jackson's remake of *King Kong*. Her television credits include *The Brokenwood Mysteries*, *When We Go To War*, *Pirates of the Airwaves*, *Spartacus: Blood and Sand*, *Wendy Wu: Homecoming Warrior*, *Riverworld* and *The Adventures of Swiss Family Robinson*.