

'The 100' Season 4: 'The Earth Strikes Back' as Nuclear Apocalypse Looms

The cast and executive producer of "The 100" were on hand at Comic-Con to preview Season 4 of the hit CW drama, beginning with a sizzle reel that included a work-in-progress shot from next season that showed the Grounder city of Polis being overtaken by a dark cloud of radioactive fallout as Eliza Taylor's Clarke narrated via voiceover: "Our enemy isn't something that can be fought, it can't be reasoned with, it can't be killed. When all is lost, can hope survive? can we survive? After everything we've done, do we deserve to?"

Creator Jason Rothenberg said that if and when we see that shot in its finished form, it'll be later in the season, but the producers wanted to offer fans a tease for the season, given that they haven't started filming yet.

"The earth strikes back in Season 4, it is an unbeatable foe," Rothenberg promised of next year's story. "It quickly becomes about not how to stop it, because stopping it is not possible, but how do we survive? There aren't enough lifeboats, so who gets to choose who lives?"

Cast members Taylor, Henry Ian Cusick, Marie Avgeropoulos, Richard Harmon, Lindsey Morgan and Chris Larkin were present on the panel to preview what's ahead for their characters after the dramatic events of Season 3, which saw the deaths of major characters including Lexa, Lincoln and Pike.

Producer Applauds Social Impact of Lexa's Death

Avgeropoulos' Octavia killed Pike in revenge for his murder of her lover, Lincoln, and the actress promised that "Octavia will take a really dark turn" in Season 4. "She's going to do what she does best, which is killing people," and will be channeling her inner assassin, according to Avgeropoulos. "She really found her home within herself in becoming a warrior, and that's thanks to Lincoln and Indra."

Here's what else we learned on the panel:

"The City of Light is gone, the flame exists, and all the minds of the commanders are in the flame," Rothenberg says. "The finale was designed from day one ... we always knew Lexa was coming back in the finale, we always knew there was going to be this triumphant, emotional return, but it was also designed as a finale. So Lexa's gone, she's not coming back to the show, but ultimately the flame is an important thing, it's a political artifact."

According to Rothenberg, whoever is in possession of the flame has the power, especially since there are no Nightbloods who can ascend to the position of commander. "There is no commander, there are no Nightbloods that we know of, but there are Nightblood scouts, and we'll meet one" in Season 4. "It'll be an interesting thing for [the new character], when she shows up," because she'll be dealing with the fallout of the murder of the Nightbloods and the loss of the flame, causing the character to wrestle "what is left of her religion, her spirituality."

You can expect Clarke to be back in a position of power in Season 4, with less self doubt and more respect from the adults around her. "This season, Clarke owns her power, she's saved the world," Rothenberg notes. "Kane and Abby recognize that, they recognize that they're dealing with someone special, and it's her time to do it again."

After last season's ordeal with ALIE, Cusick is hopeful that Kane will once again be a leader in his own right. "Kane is fairly pragmatic ... he sees what needs to be done and hopefully won't delve too much into the PTSD," he said. "As a good leader, I would hope he'd put others before himself." The actor also revealed on the panel that he'll be directing an episode in Season 4.

Raven's close encounter with ALIE has changed her

forever, according to Morgan:

"It's not the same Raven, she got the ALIE upgrade, so she's definitely like a Raven 2.0," the actress said. "I think she went through an evolution, she's not only stronger mentally because of the knowledge ALIE left behind, but emotionally and spiritually, she's been to hell and back, she didn't die, so I feel like she's a totally different Raven on a totally different level, ready to take on the biggest enemy yet."

Larkin and Harmon both expressed optimism for their characters after the darkness of last season, especially since Murphy and Monty are involved in burgeoning romances. "He has a possibly blossoming romance, and the last moment between him and Jasper you feel hopeful for the first time in a really long time that they're going to be okay," Larkin said of Monty, who forged a connection with Harper last season.

Creator on Lexa Controversy: 'I Would've Done Some Things Differently'

Murphy, too, has a rare chance for an emotional connection thanks to his relationship with Emori. "He found someone he can share life with, for at least now. For the first time, I can see the possibility of maybe a happy ending for him, and that's really cool," Harmon said.

Rothenberg also revealed the original ending for the Season 3 finale, in which "Jasper comes out of the City of Light and goes and blows his brains out," but the showrunner admitted, "it was too dark, even for me ... It was a horrible way to leave what was a really dark season. Plus I felt like there was more in the tank for Jasper. It was something that I, in my gut, didn't feel right about, so I cut it and we found the better ending."

The cast shared another secret that never made it to

screen in the series premiere, it was originally intended for Kane to be Octavia's father, but the idea was scrapped after it was filmed.

Season 4 will also see Zach McGowan's Ice Nation King Roan return in a big way, since the actor has been promoted to series regular status, and despite Indra's



'The 100' Season 4 poster

grave wounds last season, Rothenberg confirmed that she is alive and that Adina Porter will return for multiple episodes in the new season.

"The 100" returns for Season 4 at midseason on The CW. — Reuters



BAYREUTH, GERMANY: This file photo taken on July 25, 2011 shows workers rolling out the red carpet in front of the festival house on the "Green Hill" prior to the Bayreuth music festival in Bayreuth, southern Germany. — AFP

Security fears loom over Bayreuth opera fest

Germany's legendary Bayreuth opera festival dedicated to the works of Richard Wagner opens Monday, but security fears and off-stage drama threaten to cast a long shadow over the 140-year-old event.

The curtain goes up just days after an 18-year-old German-Iranian went on a shooting rampage in Munich killing nine people before shooting himself. Only a week earlier, five people were after injured in an axe attack on a Bavarian train in Wuerzburg that was claimed by the Islamic State jihadist group.

Bayreuth is just a two-hour ride from both incidents. In the wake of the shooting in Munich, the regional state premier of Bavaria, Horst Seehofer, said the traditional opening banquet originally planned for Monday would be cancelled out of respect for the victims and their families.

Tighter security on Bayreuth's mythic Green Hill-on which stands the Festspielhaus festival theatre-has been in place since the start of rehearsals in June. Town authorities called for stepped measures following rumours that this year's new production, which no one has seen yet, of Richard Wagner's last opera, "Parsifal", could be seen as being critical of Islam.

According to media reports, subsequently dismissed by the production's director Uwe Eric Laufenberg, the "Flowermaidens" in the opera were to have worn burqas. Festival insiders say the heightened security could sour the hitherto idyllic summer atmosphere in Bayreuth's world-famous Festspielhaus, the theatre built to Wagner's own designs.

Star conductor quits

Some observers have even suggested that the extra security was one of the reasons why rising star Latvian conductor, Andris Nelsons—who had been scheduled to direct the glitzy opening gala—quit with just four weeks to go.

The opening night of the festival, one of the highlights of Germany's social and cultural calendar, is traditionally attended by the country's political and social elite. Chancellor Angela Merkel, a keen opera fan, has trodden the red carpet almost every year, but she will not be attending this year owing to a diary clash.

In contrast to past years, all bags and cushions will be banned from the auditorium as well as the cloakrooms and patrons have to carry photo ID with them at all

times. Meanwhile, the approach road up the storied Green Hill to the Festspielhaus will be blocked to cars. It is not only visitors who are affected. In one incident, star tenor Klaus Florian Vogt, who is singing the title role in "Parsifal", was stopped and questioned by security personnel during a rehearsal break, because he was wearing army fatigues as part of his costume. Conductor Nelsons, a notoriously shy and sensitive artist, may also have been put off.

The 37-year-old's management complained in a statement that the atmosphere "did not develop in a mutually comfortable way for all parties."

Bitter feuds

Given the bitter feuds between Wagner's descendants over control of the festival, founded in 1876, the behind-the-scenes machinations in Bayreuth are often more entertaining than the productions themselves, with every artistic tantrum and diva clash gleefully pounced on by the media.

This year, reports have suggested that Nelsons' departure was also due to constant meddling by the festival's general music director, Christian Thielemann. Last year, Thielemann was rumoured to have sacked one singer because she was close to rival Russian conductor Kirill Petrenko who pipped him to the post of chief conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic.

Petrenko, who has conducted in Bayreuth for the past three years, will also be absent this year and is being replaced by veteran conductor Marek Janowski. The genesis of the new production of "Parsifal" was also dogged by controversy. Originally, the German performance artist Jonathan Meese had been invited to stage the work. But the self-styled enfant terrible of the German art scene has never directed an opera before and was dismissed from the project because of cost overruns.

Laufenberg, who runs an opera house in Wiesbaden, was parachuted in to replace him. The Bayreuth Festival runs from July 25 until August 28 with 30 performances of seven different operas—"Parsifal", "Tristan and Isolde", "The Flying Dutchman" and the "Ring" comprising "Rhinegold", "The Valkyrie", "Siegfried" and "Twilight of the Gods". — AFP

New York summer camp students dig up ancient artifact

Some young Indiana Joneses in the making have dug up an ancient artifact dating back thousands of years while attending a summer camp at a New York college.

Officials at the State University of New York at Geneseo say fifth through 11th graders from Rochester public schools were excavating an area on campus when they found the base of a projectile point that's believed to be 3,000 to 6,000 years old.

The students are part of the Rochester Young Scholars Academy at Geneseo summer camp. It's the second time archaeology has been the theme for the 10-year-old program. Students in a previous camp also unearthed prehistoric projectile points.

Students will continue to do archaeological digs on the Geneseo campus through Friday. — AP

Artifacts to be returned by US to Guatemala

Seven priceless Mayan artifacts looted decades ago from Guatemala are returning to the land of their creation after a representative for an antiquities collector grew suspicious of their origin and contacted the FBI.

Experts called in by the agency quickly determined the limestone pieces, all more than a thousand years old, were removed illegally from two specific regions of Guatemala and sold to a California collector in the 1970s.

"Four larger limestone pieces date to 400 to 600 A.D.," said FBI special agent Elizabeth Rivas, whose specialty is art crimes investigation. "Experts believe they are symbolic of the Earth Monster connecting the Earth to the underworld."

Three smaller pieces covered in hieroglyphics likely once made up a calendar outside an ancient temple in Guatemala's Petexbatun region, Rivas said. They are believed to be 1,400 to 1,100 years old.

All seven were placed on display at Los Angeles' FBI headquarters Friday for a news conference attended by US and Guatemalan officials. The consul general to Guatemala's Los Angeles consulate called them priceless.

"They are part of our culture. Part of our people. Part of our earth. Every piece that is returned to Guatemala for us is very important," said Roberto Archila, who thanked the FBI and US government. He said Guatemala plans to ship them to a museum dedicated to Mayan artifacts and eventually put them on display.

Rivas said the FBI became aware of the artifacts' existence in the 1970s when authorities charged an antiquities dealer with illegally selling other pieces stolen from Guatemala.

"Because we could not determine where in Guatemala they came from or when they came to the US we could not prove they were stolen," she said of the seven pieces.

Had the agency had the capability to determine their provenance then, Rivas added, the dealer likely would have faced additional charges. She said officials believe the buyer didn't know they were stolen. "An innocent buyer who is a collector purchased the items inside the US and he had them for many, many years," she said.

After that person died an individual handling the estate discovered the pieces had no papers showing their provenance, or chain of ownership, which would also show if they left Guatemala legally. That's when the FBI and its experts were called in. Rivas declined to identify the collector or the third party other than to say they were from California. She said the person who contacted the FBI was happy to learn the pieces are going back to Guatemala.

Since 1970 the United States has cooperated with countries around the world in efforts to return looted artifacts. The FBI formed an art crime team in 2004 to help in that effort, and since then officials say it has recovered more than 14,850 items valued at more than \$165 billion.

"We're really happy to be part of this," said Deirdre Fike, assistant director of the FBI's Los Angeles office. "This is a good news story." — AP



LOS ANGELES: Los Angeles-based Consul General of Guatemala, Roberto Archila reviews pre-Columbian Mayan artifacts during a repatriation ceremony at the FBI Offices on Friday. — AP