BAST

EPISODE AND SERIES FORMAT – A 10 x 1-hour Science/Speculative Fiction series

by

Rafeif Ismail

LOG LINE --- In a saga that spans space and time, three cousins navigate their fraught family history, while time-travellers and Djinn change their understanding of the world beyond recognition.

Twins Maia and Haydur Nuraldeen find themselves at odds regarding their relationship with their mysterious and estranged father. Maia is suspicious of the man who has been absent all their lives suddenly re-appearing, while Haydur is desperate to form a connection with him. After surviving what should have been a fatal car accident on their way to their cousin's wedding unharmed, they realise that their family holds more secrets than either could have possibly imagined.

Recruiting their older cousin Ayesha, they set about trying to find out the real reason their family left Sudan, why they decided to seek refuge in Australia, the disappearance of their father and put to rest the ghosts of their family's present. Unfortunately, it's not easy, they must deal with Basil and Amira's constant interference, both of whom claim to be from a disastrous future, with conflicting missions to avert it. At the same time, Roxana, a Djinn with a hidden grudge against their family, warns them about a war to end all worlds and provides a dangerous plan to subvert it.

The Trio realise that their history and future are deeply intertwined with Dana's, Ayesha's best friend and partner. For Ayesha and Dana, the knowledge causes a breakdown of their relationship. As Dana reluctantly works with Maha, a Djinn with an agenda to return the world back to 'normal'; Roxana guides Ayesha, Maia and Haydur on a fantastical mission that ends with Ayesha having to make a choice between her love, her cousins' lives and the world.

With their understanding of the world shaken beyond repair, Maia, Haydur, Ayesha and Dana must reckon with the consequences of uncovering what should have remained hidden, the cost of broken trust and the sacrifices they have to make to survive.

Why This Show and Why Now

BAST brings forward a form of mythology unseen on the Australian screen, through a relatable family saga. For similar tones think of Dark, The X-Files, Cleverman and Doctor Who with a touch of Dirk Gentry's Holistic Detective Agency, Troy: The Fall of a City and Haunting of Bly Manor. BAST explores the intergenerational legacy of dispossession and war, through the eyes of the ones removed yet still affected by the aftermath. There is a global, unabating hunger for complex and diverse stories, BAST is perfectly situated as a work which reflects contemporary Australian issues through a Black MENA speculative fiction lens. BAST is the kind of returnable series BIPOC audiences across the international market have been looking for with relatable dynamic characters and multifaceted storylines.

About Me

A creative with a Neuroscience and Medical Humanities background, Rafeif Ismail is an award-winning emerging multilingual storyteller and editor based in Boorloo, WA (colonially known as Perth). Rafeif's work explores the themes of home, belonging and the so-called 'Australian' identity in the 21st century through the lens of a refugee and third culture youth of the Sudanese diaspora. Rafeif's work has been published in anthologies and literary magazines across Australia and internationally, with a debut novel forthcoming. Deeply committed to creating diverse works and spaces and ethical storytelling, Rafeif is the current managing director of Djed Press, co-editor of Unlimited Futures: Speculative, Visionary Blak+Black Fiction (Fremantle Press & Djed Press, 2022), and a participant in the 2020 AFTRS National Talent Camp (hire me to be in your writer's rooms or write your next big Black sci-fi series or queer Black dramedy!). Rafeif learned English by reading comic books and relearned her first language (Sudanese Arabic) through poetry and theatre. Rafeif saw Black Panther about 28 times in cinema and can stand with the best of them on Doctor Who and Star Trek trivia.

BAST Treatment v6
Meet the (major) Characters

The Troublemakers

**Ayesha Zayed (23)** The baby of the family, Ayesha, is terribly in love with her girlfriend. Terribly terrified of ‘adulthood’ and is starting to feel like her sister’s wedding is more trouble than it’s worth. Her cousins’ accident spurs her into a role of responsibility she’s not sure she’ll ever be ready for. This is the stereotypical #carefreeblackgirl who is not so careful or carefree.

**Dana Hafiz (24)** Reliable. Responsible. Really tired of everyone’s shit. Dana is The Love Interest with a Secret Past. Having known Ayesha for years, she has spent a literal decade trying to keep her out of trouble while keeping her own grades up. Her family’s history weighs heavily on her, she’s trying not to break under such a legacy.

The Twins

**Maia Nuraldean (Ages: 19 and Unknown)** Curiosity killed the cat, but Maia’s now unkillable, so she attempts to sate hers by finding out why. It leads her on a strange journey she did not necessarily want to take. Maia, like younger twin brother, believes that she is absolutely right, and if she has to change all of history to fit her point of view, so be it.

**Haydur Nuraldean (Ages: 19 and Unknown)** Hungry for knowledge, Haydur always thought there was something more to the story of his estranged father. His world changes for the worst before he realises that some people should just stay gone. Haydur is fearless, reckless and sincerely believes that he’s doing what’s right. When you can’t fix the world, you might as well rule it.

The Time Travellers

**Amira (26)** A thief by trade, Time travel, inter-dimensional beings and being stuck in the early 21st century were not things she signed up for. Amira had wanted a payday when she signed up with PHOEBUS for the mission to ensure the survival of Maia and Haydur. Now, she has to deal with the collapse of the multiverse and work with her nemesis to ensure both of their (eventual) existence.

**Basil (25)** He absolutely signed up for this. Basil is adamant he is not a fanatic; he just very profoundly believes in the ideals of the HYPERION movement. Travelling to the early 21st century to kill Maia and enact a plan that would bring his movement control over humanity in his present was a sacrifice he was happy to make. What he did not expect was having to work with a PHOEBUS agent to save the world he spent his entire life trying to change.

The Djin

**Roxana/Sana (Age Unknown, looks to be early 30s)** Caught between vows, Sana is an unwilling soldier and spy in the siege of Iram accidentally transported to Perth. The safety of Roxana’s family depends on the assassination of Maha, the mad princess of Iram, the same woman who saved her life decades ago. Finding an alternative in the twins, Sana will do whatever it takes to get back home to avenge or save her family.

**Maha (Age unknown, looks to be late 20s/ early 30s)** A cursed and unheard prophetess, Maha has been dreaming of the fall of Iram since childhood. She fled the siege of the city-kingdom pursued by a familiar soldier and crossed into a portal that amplified her powers at the cost of her sanity. Hiding amongst humans, Maha has become overly fond of earth and Dana who she made a deal to protect. Maha is extremely annoyed at the people who keep messing with time and reality, it causes her migraines.

Major Supporting Characters:

Maryam Nuraldean Zayed and Layla Nuraldean (Sisters, parents of Ayesha and the twins); Aida & Yusuf Zayed (Ayesha’s older siblings). Malik (The twins’ father, a Djinn-king who has played a part in human histories and myths, known by many names, has more children than he can keep track of). Isra Hamid Khalid (Dana’s mother). Addison Lee (Maia’s best friend & love interest). Andy Jones (Haydur’s best friend, hated by Maia).

Jackson Khan (Amira’s roommate, baffled by and crushing on this strange woman). Cleo/Amani (A Djinn, works with Basil, the twins’ unknown half-sister). Ezra (a Djinn whose mission is to guard Cleo/Amani on Earth). Constance & Caroline Wei (Isra’s friend/neighbour and her daughter – who Dana does not get along with). Ali Holmes, PhD (Maryam’s friend, works at Ayesha’s University).