ACORN TV PRESENTS

A SLY FOX PRODUCTION

IN ASSOCIATION WITH FERNCROFT MEDIA & ZDFE



QUEENS OF MYSTERY

QUEENS OF MYSTERY

A murder mystery series

AVAILABLE AS 6 x 45 MINUTE or 3 x 90 MINUTE EPISODES

Sly Fox Productions: Linda James | Sly Fox Productions | Producer linda@slyfoxproductions.co.uk

Acorn UK:

Gareth Brown | Acorn Media Enterprises | Director of Marketing, Production +44 (0) 20 3734 8748 | gbrown@acornmedia.com

Acorn USA:

Chad Campbell | Acorn TV | VP, Publicity 1-301 830 6203 | ccampbell@acorn.tv

ZDF Enterprises GmbH:

Sarah Eichenlaub | ZDFE Drama | Director, Acquisitions & Sales +49 6131 991 1860

PAGE 3: CREDITS

Page 4: AN INTRODUCTION

Page 6: EPISODE SYNOPSES

Page 7-8: THE INCEPTION

Page 9-10: THE CHARACTERS

Page 11-12: CREATING THE WORLD

PAGE 13-15: THE CAST

Page 16-17: MEET THE MAKERS

Page 18: FUN FACTS

CREDITS

Juliet Stevenson

Created by Julian Unthank Directed by lan Emes (Episodes 1, 2, 5 & 6) Jamie Magnus Stone (Ep 3 & 4) Produced by Linda James Tim Vaughan **Executive Producers** Catherine Mackin for Acorn TV Laura Macara for Ferncroft Media Sarah Eichenlaub for ZDF Enterprises Associate Producer Savannah James-Bayly Written by Julian Unthank (Episodes 1, 2, 5 & 6) Matthew Thomas (Episode 3 & 4) Alison Dominitz Production Designer James Aspinall (Episodes 1, 2, 5 & 6) Director of Photography Arthur Mulhern (Episode 3 & 4) Charlie Knight Costume Designer My Alehammar Make Up & Hair Designer Tim Marchant (Episode 1 & 2) **Editors** Michael Harrowes (Episode 3 & 4) Alex Kalmakrian (Episode 5 & 6) Paul Englishby Composer Raoul Brand Sound Designer Ian Emes Titles Design and Direction Julie Graham Starring Siobhan Redmond Sarah Woodward Olivia Vinall and

With the voice of

AN INTRODUCTION

Imagine if a capable, dedicated young detective had three inquisitive crime-writing aunts determined to "help" her solve who-dun-it style murders, and constantly trying to set her up on blind dates.

Welcome to 'Queens of Mystery'.

At twenty-seven, Matilda Stone (Olivia Vinall) has just made it to the rank of Detective Sergeant. She's applied for, and has been granted, a posting to the Marsh Valley Constabulary. She's happy to be returning home to the picturesque town of Wildemarsh, to be reunited with aunts Beth (Sarah Woodward), Cat (Julie Graham) and Jane Stone (Siobhan Redmond), and to be living at 'Murder Ink', Jane's bookshop, where she will be staying for the foreseeable future.

But the bucolic Marsh Valley turns out to be a place where murder is far more frequent than you'd imagine. And Matilda's aunts — smart women who've made a living out of crime fiction themselves — are completely fascinated by Matilda's occupation, and just bursting to get out there and give her a helping hand. Exactly what Matilda doesn't want them to do...

Working alongside her colleague P.C. Terry Foster (Michael Elcock), and under the lugubrious gaze of her by-the-book boss, Inspector Thorne (Martin Trenaman), much of Matilda's time is spent fending off the intrusions of her aunts, who conspire to help solve her cases in their own unique way - and keep setting her up on blind-dates, when all she longs for is the embrace of the handsome local GP - and resident pathologist - Dr Daniel Lynch (Andrew Leung).

And there's another side to Queens of Mystery. Matilda's mother Eleanor, her aunts' sister, disappeared when Matilda was three. Nobody knows what happened, why she left, or whether she's dead or alive. Matilda was brought up by Beth, Cat and Jane until she was 18, when she left to become a cadet in the police force. Now she's a seasoned detective it's only a matter of time before she'll start asking questions and investigating her mother's disappearance. And we'll discover fairly quickly that Matilda's aunts do know some things about Eleanor - things they have sworn never to tell anybody... Matilda included.

Beth, Cat and Jane have always been devoted to Matilda, but the truth of Eleanor's disappearance will remain elusive... This is the mystery that Matilda must solve, piece by piece, series by series, with her aunts' help or without it.

But meanwhile, it seems that in the Marsh Valley, there will always be murders to solve...



EPISODE SYNOPSES

Episodes 1 & 2: Murder in the Dark finds the newly promoted DS Matilda Stone dispatched to Hiddledean Hall where all three of her aunts are attending the 15th Wildemarsh Crime Writer's Festival. In a crime as strange as the fiction on display, the prestigious Golden Pick Axe Award has been found buried in the head of a prize nominee, and pages from his latest manuscript have been stolen. Everyone present is suspect, from the rival nominees - including Matilda's Aunt Beth - to hot headed agents and slimy publishers, who all had something to gain from the death... Or does the solution to the crime lie in the fictional story that someone has gone to such extreme lengths to hide?

Guest Cast: Omid Djalili, Selina Cadell, David Bamber, Greg Chillin, Chu Omambala, Nancy Carroll, Georgina Rich, Joseph Millson

Episodes 3 & 4: Death by Vinyl gives us an insight into Cat Stone's years in an 80s new wave girl band and her love affair with Nikki Holler, its lead singer. "Volcanic Youth" and their entourage have been invited to record a reunion album at an exclusive retreat not far from Wildemarsh - but it's not long before one of them is found dead in the studio... strangled with a microphone cord. Matilda begins her investigations and soon becomes aware of motives for murder buried in the band's past, fuelled by drink and drugs. Only by teaming up with veteran ex-band member, Aunt Cat, can Matilda piece the fragments of these shattered lives together. But in assisting Matilda to nail the killer, Cat must confront the tragedies of her own past — emotions she'd buried decades ago.

Guest Cast: Michelle Collins, Frances Barber, Josette Simon, Mark Heap, Con O'Neill, Bob Goody, Sydney Rae White, Julian Michael Deuster

Episodes 5 & 6: Smoke and Mirrors is set in the Wildemarsh Corn Exchange Theatre, where rehearsals are in progress for an adaptation of Jane Stone's futuristic novel *The Macbeth Duality*, starring celebrated thespian, Sir Lawrence Shaw. Hopes are high, particularly as Sir Lawrence has managed to persuade his twice ex-wife Dame Blanche Chastain out of retirement to take a small role. But when a large sandbag falls from high in the flies, crushing one of the cast, Matilda's investigations lead her to conclude this was no accident. As Matilda works her way through her suspects the larger than life cast and crew of the play - Cat and Beth do some investigating of their own, and uncover bribes and secret obsessions behind the scenes. The plot thickens when a second body is found, and one of the remaining cast absconds... There will be more bodies on the stage floor unless Matilda acts fast...

Guest Cast: Carmen Du Sautoy, Ken Bones, Pippa Nixon, George Irving, James Doherty, Rebecca Scroggs, Rob Heaps, Natasha Calland



THE INCEPTION

Created by Julian Unthank (*Doc Martin, New Tricks*), Queens of Mystery seeks to refresh and revive a classic murder mystery format in a contemporary and playful way. Born out of a conversation between writer Julian Unthank and producers Linda James and Tim Vaughan of Sly Fox Productions, and inspired by Julian's deep knowledge of crime fiction, he pitched an idea about three crime writers who help a local detective solve her crimes, with each character reflecting a different sleuthing style. In collaboration with Sly Fox, the characters evolved into the Stone family. Acorn TV were immediately drawn to the premise, and thought it would appeal to their audience worldwide.

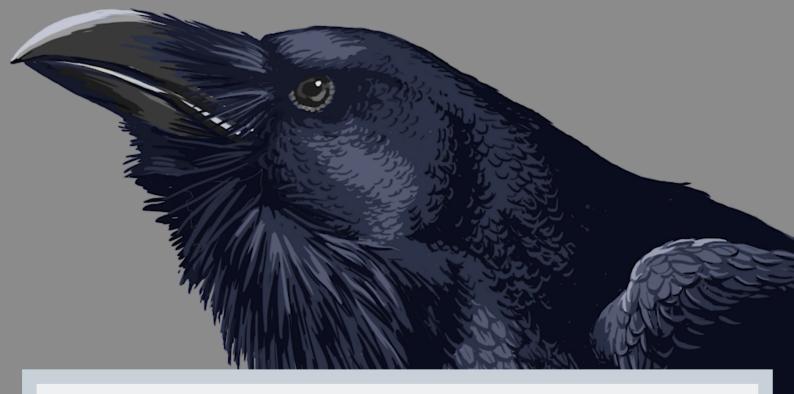
As Julian Unthank, creator and writer, observes:

'We'd been talking about how there weren't enough great roles for women over forty, so I wanted to develop a show that had a cast of women of that age as the main stars. There are a lot of 'Scandi-Noir' dramas on television at the moment... and I wanted to create something that was the absolute polar opposite of that. Instead of following the crowd, I thought: no, just look the other way and see what happens...'

With three of the four lead characters as writers, Julian was able to play with the genre in a knowing way, drawing inspiration from crime classics, with tongue gently in cheek. As well as the vast history of crime fiction, inspiration also came in the form of cinema.

On the filmic style, Julian Unthank continues:

It's joyful and it's heartfelt and it's warm, but it has emotional depth. One of the early pitches was: what would happen if Wes Anderson directed Midsomer Murders? All that colour, and that obsession with detail that Anderson has. The point was to make it visually as different as possible: colourful, like 'Delicatessen', 'Grand Budapest Hotel', films like that.'



Lead director lan Emes's take on the style very much aligns with the writer's concept.

'My style is very visual. I started as an animator and then moved into live action film-making. So in a way I would say that although this is television, it's cinematic, it's conceived cinematically, in the sense that I'm using big open spaces, confined spaces, sound, music, so there's a kind of spatial quality, as well as the use of colour and composition. All of which contribute to the storytelling, they're a part of it. Some inspirations are Hitchcock, David Lynch, The Coen brothers, Jeunet and Caro, who work with crime thrillers but have a very visual twist, so I think it's integral, and it amplifies the experience.'

lan Emes, Director

Creating strong female characters has been central to the project from the start. Often the portrayal of women in their fifties paints them as much more elderly than the reality. Queens of Mystery aims to depict a more accurate truth, of women who are still very much active in society, capable and full of life. The idea of a family of women also appealed to the team — women who support and care for one another, as well as challenge each other.

As Olivia Vinall who plays Matilda Stone says:

"It's wonderful to do a project that's so female led. It's just fantastic - the show focuses on these women who all work, and their professional insights, as opposed to any other elements to do with their lives. That was something so appealing about doing this project."

THE CENTRAL CHARACTERS

The four female leads were core to the genesis of the story, with each character subtly reflecting different tropes of detective fiction. Beth Stone as the 'intuitive', who solves crimes through her compassionate, empathetic understanding has Miss Marple-like abilities; Cat Stone, the 'rebel', a whisky-drinker with a maverick approach has echoes of Dashiell Hammett's Sam Spade; Jane Stone as the 'uberrational', whose analytical and observant approach uses stringent logic and reason, is drawn from Sherlock Holmes; and D.S. Matilda Stone is the 'normal', who solves crimes in a more procedural, real-world fashion. Alongside the fantasy element there's realism too, that informs the aunts' characters as well as the novels they write.

As Sarah Woodward, who plays Beth, comments:

'Beth's instinctive and nurturing, an earth mother. She's incredibly protective of Matilda and she's a connecter, a great organiser. Her novels are about a vicar in inner city Manchester, dealing with people society has forgotten. So she has a heart, and a conscience, which is important.'

Julie Graham remarks about her character, Cat:

'Cat is the black sheep. Like her edgy graphic novel heroine Roxanne Parker, she is opinionated, hard, intelligent, focussed and single minded... But in the real world that single-mindedness has its pitfalls. Cat is quite isolated, a loner. She has a daughter, but hasn't spoken to her for years — which she must resolve; and she has a tragic background in Rock'n'Roll that involves the loss of someone she loved — part of the second story.'

Siobhan Redmond, who plays Jane, observes:

'Jane's affectionate and kindly, but your classic nerd. Her relationship with the life of the mind is fully functioning; her relationship with the physical world, though, is rather less so. The fictional hero she's created in her books is an android - essentially, a computer. That puts her in an entirely different kind of landscape to the one that her sisters inhabit.'

Olivia Vinall, adds:

'Matilda has this questioning within her about who she is and her identity. She's searching for something. She doesn't know her parents. She loves her aunts, they're so different and distinguished, but it's a family with its own secrets. How much they know about what happened to her mother, we don't know, at least not yet. They might be hiding something from Matilda: yet they're only keeping these truths from her because they love her and want to do the right thing.'

Guiding us through the drama is our omniscient narrator voiced by Juliet Stevenson. As the author of Queens of Mystery, she has literally created everything: the stories of Matilda and her aunts all spring from her boundlessly vivid imagination. As the creative force behind everything in Wildemarsh she has somewhat divine attributes, able to see into the hearts and minds of all the characters. But because so many of her creations will depart from this life tragically early, she's ever conscious of the irony of existence, the folly of making grand plans and the vanity of human wishes. However, no writer ever remains entirely in charge of her or his creations; so it's possible that even the Author of Queens of Mystery might not be able to tell you with absolute certainty what will happen to Matilda, Beth, Cat, Jane or any of the other Wildemarshians they might encounter over the coming seasons.

Alongside our female leads there are three recurring men: PC Terry Foster, the eager to please young cop who's known and admired Matilda since he was a child; Inspector Thorne, Matilda's lugubrious, world-weary boss; and Dr Daniel Lynch, the local GP and resident pathologist, who in Series 1 has already become Matilda's ongoing love interest.



CREATING THE WORLD

In creating the world of Wildemarsh, the team wanted to find a visually distinctive yet typically English aesthetic that stands apart from the traditional half-timbered Tudor or Cotswold stone that are the quintessential "English look". Ian Emes quickly locked onto Kent as the perfect setting. Not only does the "Garden of England" have a beautiful natural landscape, it's also home to a specific architecture of white clapboard houses that are redolent of New England.



Director, lan Emes says:

I wanted something different, something a little bit strange, something a bit haunting. There's actually something slightly eerie about this part of the world, as well as something unique, an aesthetic which I felt hadn't really been seen on screen, and that's very much part of the show's character, the beautifully dramatic windmills, and the conical roofs of the Oast houses...

Production Designer Alison Dominitz took the white cladding, picket fences and bright flowers as the central motif of the exteriors and found inspiration in the likes of films such as Blue Velvet and Pleasantville, where the picture-perfect look belies the darkness underneath.



Alison Dominitz, Production Designer:

"On reading the first script, I thought 'Oh! It's a fairytale!" — Matilda is our young here protected by three aunts — like the three wise men or three witches. She goes out into the forest, and through being good, she exposes the wickedness in the world, and wins — and of course the compulsion to do all of that, the springboard, is Matilda's loss of her mother."

There is also a fairytale influence in the costume design by Charlie Knight which, along with the make up design by My Alehammar, was central to the creation of all four characters. Charlie Knight worked closely with director lan Emes in the creation of the costumes. Charlie and lan arrived independently at the same conclusions about the styles they were looking for...

lan and I were creating a version of 'The Wizard of Oz'. Beth's colours are natural and have a softness, because she has that 'earth-mother' feel - Beth is the lion. Cat was the scarecrow, because she just mixes and matches whatever happens to be on the floor at the time and has that rocky, edgy feel. Jane is the tin man - steely and classic; she has a plain silhouette; she doesn't have any jewellery, she's just a studious, straight down the line character. Finally With Matilda, or "Dorothy", we always had an element of blue; then whenever she's out of her work clothes we'd add red in for a nod to the ruby slippers, and a sense of adventurousness."

Charlie Knight, Costume Designer

Thinking about the story as a modern fairytale aligned with the goal of bringing a surprising and eclectic touch to a traditional format — to play with different styles and different periods, to experiment with colour and tone. The modern is contrasted with the ancient. Key episodic locations vary from an 11th Century castle to an ultra-modern private estate. Characters use modern cellphones but also typewriters; there's neon signage in the ancient village streets; Matilda drives a vintage Morris Minor that contrasts radically with modern police vehicles.

Lympne Castle is the location of a literary festival in Episodes 1 & 2 and is a grade 1 listed Medieval castle — built in 1080 and expanded in the 14th century. It features stunning views across Romney Marsh to the Folkestone coast and contains a labyrinthine maze of wood-panelled rooms inside.

Episodes 3 & 4 take us to Flint House in Oxfordshire. This dramatic modern home, winner of the 2015 Royal Institute of British Architects award and designed by Charlotte Skene Catling, juts out of the landscape in two tiered wedges, creating a striking outline against the sky. The location serves as home to the fictional Sir Ray Ives, music industry legend, whose home recording studio is hosting Cat's old band, Volcanic Youth.

The third principal location, as seen in Episodes 5 & 6, is Hoxton Hall, a rare and superbly restored music hall from 1860s London. Miraculously, the building was never converted, and served for a time as a Quaker meeting house before being returned to a performance venue after a recent restoration. The building serves as the theatre for an adaptation of Jane Stone's novel, *The Macbeth Duality*.



THE CAST

From the outset the casting was central to the discussions about the show. Matilda and her aunts needed to feel like a family, as well as each being distinctive as individuals.

Led by casting director, Louise Cross - whose 25 years experience on shows like *Midsomer Murders, Stella* and *Hinterland* made her absolutely fitting for the challenges of ensemble casting - a phenomenal cast soon came together.

The role of Matilda needed someone who could capture the character's radiant goodness, portray her rapidly working mind, as well as carrying a sense of solemnity stemming from the darkness of her past. In her audition Olivia Vinall showed she could do just that.

Olivia Vinall is one of Screen International's 2017 Stars of Tomorrow. Her screen career includes *The Woman In White* for the BBC, *Maigret* for ITV, *Apple Tree Yard* for Kudos and *Midsomer Murders* for ITV, and the recent feature film *Where Hands Touch*, directed by Amma Assante. She also has an established Shakespearean career, playing Cordelia for Sam Mendes at the National Theatre, Desdemona for Nicholas Hytner also at the National, Juliet at the Leicester Square theatre and Rosalind at Regent's Park. She originated the role of Hilary in *The Hard Problem* directed by Nicholas Hytner and played Nina in *The Young Chekhov Trilogy: Platonov, Ivanov and The Seagull*, directed by Jonathan Kent and adapted by David Hare. She was nominated for a UK Theatre Award for Best Supporting Performance 2016.

Having worked with producer Linda James on *The History of Mr. Polly* and with Tim Vaughan on *William & Mary*, the team immediately thought of Julie Graham for Cat.

Julie Graham is a well-known face on UK television, with credits that include BBC 1 mini-series One of Us, ITV's Benidorm, The Bletchley Circle, Survivors, Being Eileen, Rebus, Death In Paradise, New Tricks, Shetland, Midsomer Murders, Vera and At Home with the Braithwaites. She has over a dozen films under her belt and has worked with directors such as Simon Cellan-Jones, Michael Winterbottom, Rose Tremaine, Stuart Urban, David Hayman, David Leland, Philip Saville and John McGrath.

Siobhan Redmond immediately impressed with her take on Jane - giving a witty twinkle and grace to the character.

Siobhan Redmond has a huge track record in theatre, having worked with directors such as Greg Doran, John Tiffany, Tony Cownie, Vicky Featherstone, Neil Bartlett, Kenneth Branagh, Judi Dench, and Michael Boyd. Her films include *First and Only, The Party's just Beginning, Beautiful People, Captives*, and *Alice Through the Looking Glass*. Her TV credits include *Unforgotten, Lovesick, The Clique, The Replacement, Sorry About Last Night, The High Life, Between The Lines, A Relative Stranger, Sea of Souls, The Smoking Room, The Catherine Tate Show, Sweet Nothings and Bulman.*

Finding Beth took a little longer. A number of brilliant actors were seen for the part, but the character wasn't yet taking shape in the teams' mind. When Sarah walked in the door, that shifted. Suddenly the character could be understood in terms of an "earth mother" rather than the "mother hen" description originally used. Sarah carried a confidence and cool with her that grounded the character, and gave sense to the Beth's intuition.

Sarah Woodward is a highly-established stage, screen and television actor. Her theatrical work has taken her to the Chichester Festival Theatre, the Royal Court, The Tricycle, The Globe, the Almeida, the Donmar Warehouse, the Garrick, the Gielgud, the National, Regent's Park and the R.S.C. among others. Her television credits include New Blood, Endeavour, Outnumbered, The Prime Minister's Husband, Loving Miss Hatto, DCI Banks, Law and Order, New Tricks and Poirot. Film includes I Capture the Castle, Bright Young Things, Close Your Eyes and The House of Angelo.

It became apparent that these four women would make a perfect ensemble, with each of the quartet bringing something different and yet complementary.

On the casting process, lan Emes says:

"The read-through — the first time we all came together — was a magical moment — it was kind of like an instantaneous 'This is it'. We knew as soon as we saw the cast around the table that this was really going to work. It was an exciting moment."

The four actors bonded immediately - truly becoming 'family' over the course of the production.

"A particular draw to this production was the team of women at the core of the story, which is often so rare and was incredibly refreshing to read. It was a proper pleasure to work alongside these three incredible actresses and develop our relationships individually and as a family unit."

Olivia Vinall

The three male supporting actors were the next to be cast. Martin Trenaman as Inspector Derek Thorne, Michael Elcock as P.C. Terry Foster and Andrew Leung as Dr. Daniel Lynch.

Martin Trenaman started as a stand-up comic and won the prestigious So You Think You're Funny? award at the 1994 Edinburgh Festival. His first stage acting appearance was a ten-week sell-out run at London's Apollo theatre alongside Lee Evans. He has worked extensively in film and TV, appearing in both comedies and dramas alongside Ray Winston, Olivia Colman, Bradley Cooper, Daniel Bruhl, Sienna Miller and James Corden. He played Alan Cooper in the hit TV sitcom *The Inbetweeners*, and store manager Lance in the highly successful UK sitcom *PhoneShop*.

A newcomer to television, Michael Elcock graduated from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama BA (HONS) Acting (Musical Theatre) in the summer of 2018. His theatre includes *Heartfelt* at the Theatre Royal Stratford East. He also performed in *West End Live* as well as *Groove on Down the Road* with Zoo Nation. Screen work includes Vivienne West's short film, *Kitchen Sink* for Channel Four.

Known for his sensitive performance in the micro-budget feature *Lilting*, Andrew Leung had also performed in *Chimerica* at the Almeida and Harold Pinter Theatre, which was the winner of the Best Play Award at the London Evening Standard Theatre Awards in 2013. Since then Andrew has featured in many plays such as *Romeo and Juliet* at the Sheffield Crucible and *Snow in Midsummer* for the RSC. Andrew's television credits include BBC's *Doctor Who, PhoneShop*, and most recently *Flack* for Pop TV alongside Anna Paquin.

The final piece of the puzzle came in the form of Juliet Stevenson as the Author, and tied the whole world together with her warm, sophisticated voice and sharp, cheeky delivery.

In theatre, Juliet Stevenson has worked with top directors such as Trevor Nunn, Robert Icke, Jeremy Herrin, Katie Mitchell, Simon McBurney, Lindsay Posner and Howard Davies. Her television work includes *Riviera*, *The Enfield Haunting*, *The Hour, Accused*, *The Snow Queen*, *Cider With Rosie* and *The Politician's Wife*. Films include *When Did You Last See Your Father*, *Truly Madly Deeply*, *Being Julia* and *Bend It Like Beckham*. She has a Laurence Olivier Award for Best Actress in *Death And The Maiden* and Best Actress Award for *Measure For Measure* as well as six Olivier Award Nominations. She has been nominated for four BAFTA awards for Best Actress and won a Lifetime Achievement Award for Women in Film & Television in 2018.

Louise Cross was also able to cast strong ensembles in the guest cast of each episode: Comedic stars like Omid Djalili and Mark Heap; National icons such as Michelle Collins and Josette Simon; Fantastic character actors in the form of Frances Barber, Con O'Neill, David Bamber, Selina Caddell and Ken Bones; And even a Bond girl, Carmen Du Sautoy!



THE FILM MAKERS

Having worked together previously to produce *Without Motive* and *Wilderness* at Red Rooster Films - one of the UK's most successful and prolific production companies, which Linda James founded in the nineties - Linda and Tim Vaughan reunited in 2015 to form Sly Fox Films in collaboration with Acorn Productions, the UK rights and production arm of RLJ Entertainment.

Linda James is a multi award-winning, independent producer/executive producer of 20 drama series, 6 TV movies and 16 feature films. Her first company, Red Rooster was acquired by Chrysalis Plc in 1994 with Linda remaining as Chief Executive until 1998, when she left to float a media company, Alibi Communications Plc, on London's Alternative Investment Market (AIM), and where she ran the TV division for 5 years. She went on to run the Wales Creative IP Fund for Finance Wales and managed all aspects of the £12m fund, until it was fully invested in April 2011. In late 2014 Linda and Sly Fox Productions entered a collaboration agreement with Acorn TV and *Queens of Mystery* - an entirely original TV series - is their first comission. Linda is a long-standing Trustee of the National Film and Television School and in January 2019 was invited to join the Production Board of Britain's National Theatre.

Tim Vaughan has spent most of his career in police drama as a writer/script editor & producer. His credits include *The Bill* (writer/script editor), the multi award-winning *Between The Lines* (co-creator, script editor), *Wycliffe* (script editor), *A Touch of Frost, Without Motive* (creator/script editor), *An Unsuitable Job For A Woman, The Ruth Rendell Mysteries, In The Name of Love* (exec producer) and *The Last Detective*, (writer/executive producer). Outside of cop shows, he script edited *A Place of Safety*, script exec'd *Hornblower*, was a script editor on *EastEnders* and *Emmerdale Farm*, an executive producer on *A Line in the Sand, Walking on the Moon, William and Mary, The Innocents*, and *The Turn of the Screw*. More recently, Tim spent three years on *Strike Back* as a writer and co-exec producer.

Julian Unthank, the show's creator, began adult life as a soldier, then as a movie animal trainer, before being sponsored by Pinewood Studios to attend Bournemouth Film School and pursuing a career as a screenwriter. He's the writer of the multi-award-winning Oscar short-listed live action short *Love at First Sight* starring John Hurt, as well as being the writer of the zero award winning, 13% on Rotten Tomatoes, medieval slasher-fest *Sword of Vengeance* starring no-one in particular. He was a writer on BBC's *New Tricks*, and is currently writing his fourth season of the worldwide hit *Doc Martin*.

When Julian delivered his first script for *Queens of Mystery*, Linda's thoughts turned to her long term collaborator lan Emes for director. Ian is the winner of three BAFTA Awards, a Palme D'Or, a British Animation Award, and is an Emmy, Oscar and Palme d'Or nominee. With a background in animation and advertising, Ian gives enormous attention to visual detail.

lan Emes trained at Birmingham College of Art as a painter, sculptor, and kinetic artist, where his experimental film *French Windows* brought him to the attention of Pink Floyd. Ian laid the foundation for the band's future visuals and still remains influential to this day. His Camden studio became world-famous for its ground-breaking visuals and in 1980 Emes was cited as Britain's foremost animator. Ian diversified into live-action, writing and directing short films, amongst them *Goodie Two Shoes*, for which Emes received an Oscar Nomination and a BAFTA Award, before joining Ridley Scott Associates as an inhouse director. His career in film and television includes the series *How to be Cool* starring Roger Daltrey, adapted by Emes from the book by Philip Pullman, *Streetwise* starring Andy Serkis, and *The Invisible Man* for Universal Studios. Emes wrote and directed his debut *Knights and Emeralds*, produced by Sir David Puttnam for Goldcrest and Warner Brothers. TV credits include the cult film *The Yob* for The Comic Strip, *The Munsters' Scary Little Christmas*, and the critically acclaimed *Deadly Summer*.

Once commissioned by Acorn TV, Julian Unthank recruited his regular writing partner, Matthew Thomas, to write Episode 3 & 4.

Since the sale of his first spec movie script to the award-winning Potboiler Productions, Matthew Thomas has worked with many of the UK's most successful film and television producers. His original true crime drama *The Chameleon* won best feature at both the 2016 British Independent Film Festival and the 2016 Sydney Indie Festival, where it also received a best screenplay nomination. He has written over thirty hours of produced primetime drama for the BBC, ITV, ZDF, Discovery and now Acorn TV including multiple episodes of *New Tricks* and *The Last Detective*, and numerous international mini-series, starring major UK actors Charles Dance, Rupert Everett and Greg Wise as well as new generation talent Sophie Cookson, Perdita Weeks and Eliza Bennett.

All of the Queens of Mystery scripts were ambitious, striving for visual flair and scale, with set pieces such as car crashes, fight scenes and even an underwater sequence. Having seen his imaginative BAFTA nominated short film *Orbit Ever After*, and his quirky Sky Christmas special *The Last Dragonslayer*, Savannah James-Bayly, Sly Fox's Head of Production, thought that director Jamie Stone could be a perfect fit to the team for Ep 3 &4.

Jamie Stone studied film at the Edinburgh College of Art where he made the Scottish BAFTA nominated *Fritz*, about a German Spy who lives under a boy's bed. He won the MacLaren Award at the Edinburgh Film Festival and Best Animation at BAFTA Scotland in 2008 for his series of *Three Minute Wonders: The World According To.* Jamie attended The National Film and Television School where he wrote and directed his Student Academy Award nominated *Skyborn*, about a father and son stuck in a post-apocalyptic wasteland. His TV credits include *X Company, Tripped* and *The Village*. He is currently filming *Doctor Who* for the BBC, starring Jodie Whittaker.

With the core creative team in place, the team was joined by Line Producer, Carolyn Parry-Jones (*The Royals*). Experienced and talented creative Heads of Department were attracted to the project for its boldness and ambition, including Director of Photography James Aspinall (*The Durrells*), Production Designer Alison Dominitz (*The Scandalous Lady W*), Composer Paul Englishby (*Luther*), and Editors Michael Harrowes (*The Little Drummer Girl*), Tim Marchant (*Silent Witness*) and Alex Kalmakrian (*Call the Midwife*).

FUN FACTS

- Matilda, her Aunts Beth, Cat and Jane, Matilda's missing mother Eleanor and Cat's estranged daughter Annie are all named after Queens of England.
- The Jane Stone iDI Lambert books seen at the Wildemarsh Crime Writers' Festival are all named after well known industry figures who passed away in recent years and whose work and lives touched those of the series producers: Lucy Scher, Robbie Little, John Brabourne, Richard Attenborough, and Simon Relph.
- Cat Stone's Roxanne Parker book titles are all synonyms of well known Duran Duran tracks from the eighties.
- Waldo Butcher, the author in the grey jacket signing books in the opening shot of the Wildemarsh Crime Writers' Festival in Episode 1, and the cross dresser answering the hotel door in Episode 5 is the series creator and episodes' writer Julian Unthank.
- Young Sir Ray, in episode 3, is played by Jamie Stone, the episode's director.
- The various establishments frequented by the characters all have pun names based on famous novels including: The Crepe Gatsby Restaurant, The Farewell to Arms Arms, The Sound and The Fury record store, and The Donquix Hotel to name a few.
- Wildemarsh pronounced "Wild Marsh" is a reference to Oscar Wilde.
- David Hawcock the three-dimensional paper-engineer behind the pop-up artwork in the title sequences also designed and created the pop-up book for *Paddington 2* and assisted in the pop-up sequence in *Mary Poppins Returns*.

