

RADICALS



WRITTEN BY NANCY OSTERTAG & VANESSA RUANE



A radical Black midwife befriends a Queer, white, erotic photographer just as America is falling into civil war.



Sarah Brown

Sarah Brown is a twenty-four-year-old, healer from a family who've been free for generations. Along with her midwife practice, she manages a clinic and herbal pharmacy with her mother. Sarah wants to make an impact in her community. She is single-minded in that pursuit, even to the point of recklessness.



Elizabeth Shaw

Lizzie Shaw is a nineteen-year-old artist who comes to Washington to live with her grandfather, Dr. Randolph, after losing her parents in a hurricane. Rebelling against society's expectations, Lizzie refuses to marry and settle down. Instead, she wants independence, and adventure.

Sarah & Lizzie

“Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive.”

Anias
Nin



FROM DOCTOR AND PATIENT TO FRIENDS

Thrown together by circumstance, Sarah treats Lizzie's wounds and stands up for her when her grandfather thinks she has hysteria. They discover a shared interest in chemistry and build trust as they work together.

TESTED BY WAR & GRIEF

Sarah and Lizzie are each tested by war and grief. Separated, they communicate through letters, their friendship deepened by shared sacrifice. When the war ends, Reconstruction brings new challenges. Back in Washington full time, they begin working together again.

COMPATRIOTS

Sarah and Lizzie fight to stop Anthony Comstock from destroying all they've built.

Reverend John Hayden



Sarah's husband John is a devout minister, and conductor on the Underground Railroad. Together with Sarah and his sister, he leads a group of dedicated activists.



Peter Sullivan



"Sully" is a beloved actor and local celebrity. He is a hedonistic attention seeker, but also a true and loyal friend.

Jack Stephenson



Lizzie's partner, Jack is a businessman who runs the city's largest photo studio along with multiple side hustles.

Sully and Jack fall for each other the first time they meet, and remain together for the rest of their lives.



Charity Dodson

Sarah's oldest friend, Charity is a fourth generation midwife. She is confident and social, with a wicked sense of humor.

Teresa Bagioli Sickles



Lizzie's dear friend Teresa, the young wife of an influential Congressman, is classically educated, elegant, and a reckless narcissist having a scandalous affair.





Anthony Comstock



We meet Anthony, for whom the Comstock Act was named, as a young religious zealot who secretly harbors a chronic masturbation habit. After the Civil War, Anthony co-founds the Society for the Suppression of Vice in New York, and begins targeting publishers of erotica.

Episode One A Fearful Storm



Sarah falls in love and joins a group of radical activists. She bonds with Lizzie over a shared interest in chemistry. Lizzie clashes with her grandfather who disapproves of her photography and the company she's keeping.



Sarah and Lizzie build trust as they go from doctor and patient, to friends.



In early episodes, the Dred Scott decision is announced and bounty hunters flood the city, so Sarah and John enlist the DC midwives to help get undocumented people out. Lizzie leads a double life, becoming a prominent socialite while secretly making and selling erotic images. As their friendship deepens, Sarah invites Lizzie to join her underground network.



When the Civil War starts, everything changes. Grown-up Comstock tries to reform his fellow soldiers in occupied Florida. Lizzie disguises herself as a man to join a ring of union spies, and Sarah volunteers in the Freedman's Hospital, secretly distributing birth control pamphlets.



During Reconstruction, Lizzie and Sarah join the Suffrage movement. Sarah opens her own clinic, and founds a school for midwives. Lizzie expands to publishing, and they collaborate on a textbook, illustrated with photographs.



All the while, Comstock grows more powerful. Eventually, he comes to Washington and lobbies successfully for a National anti-obscenity law, which he uses to raid Lizzie's studio, and burn all her negatives. Sarah and Lizzie fight to protect what they've built as Comstock tries to destroy Sarah's clinic, ban her textbook, and force the closing of her school.

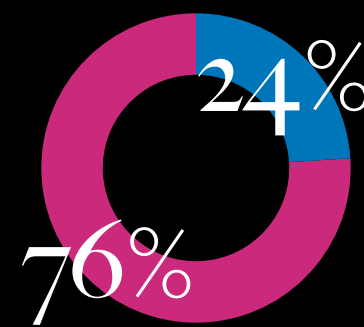
Radicals is a sexy, date-night drama, that combines the rich cinematography, and sweeping timeline of Outlander, with the youthful energy of Bridgerton.



Demand **31.52x** avg. **IX**

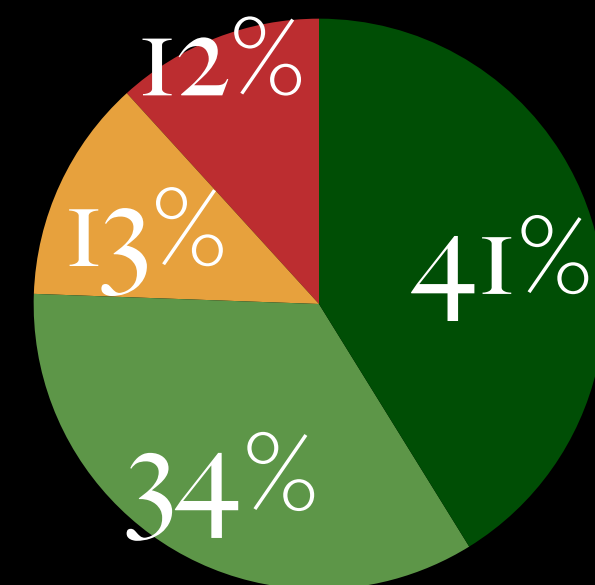
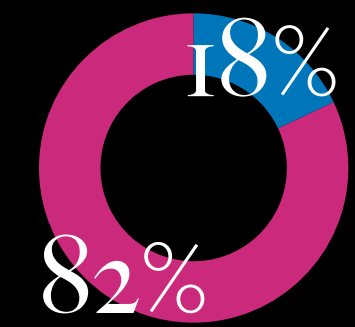
Demand **24.88x** avg. **IX**

There is a proven market for period dramas. With a clever use of interiors, casting fresh faces, and VFX set extensions they don't have to cost a fortune to make. And when they hit, they hit big.



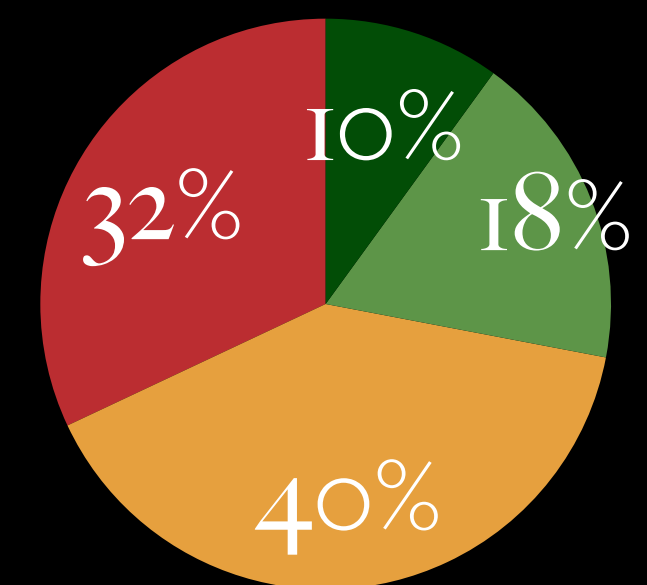
Audience by Gender

- Men
- Women



- 40+
- 30-39
- 23-29
- 13-22

Audience by Age



*data from Parrot Analytics 2024



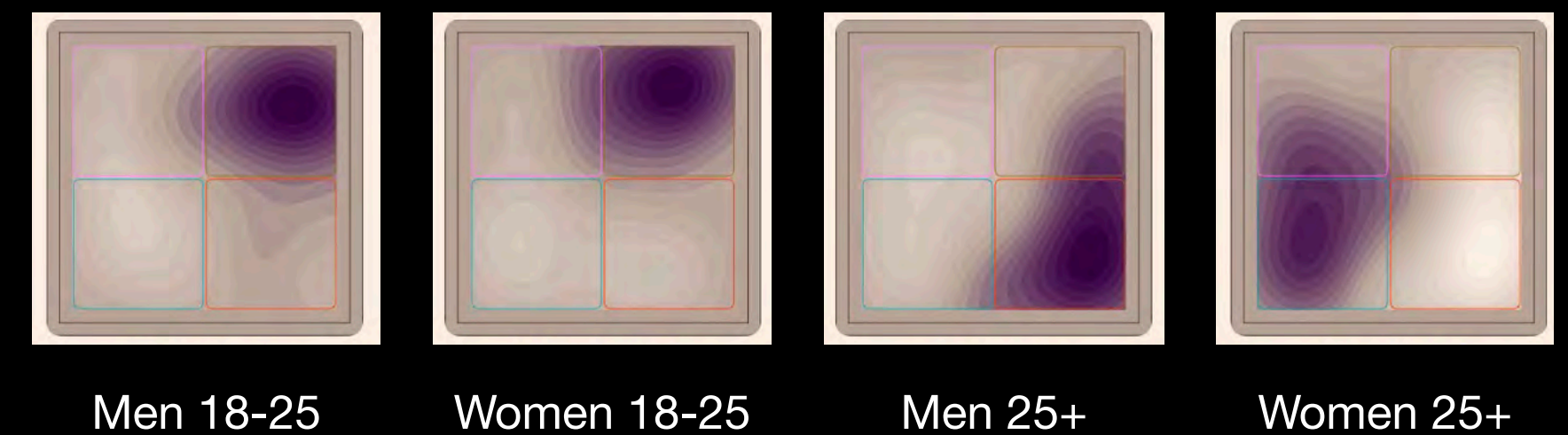
Our main characters are “Outsider Transformers” appealing most to audiences ages 18-25, and diverse audiences over 25.

Our target demographic is majority female, similar to Outlander, while adding Gen-Z viewers.

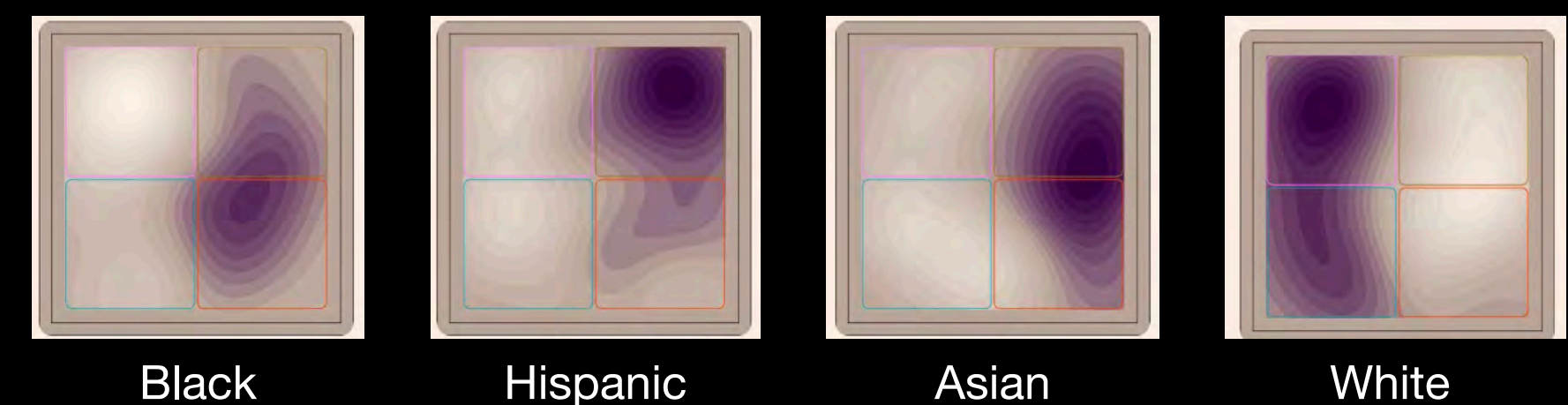
Four types of heros

<p>Insider Transformer</p> <p>Pushes systems forward from within</p>	<p>Outsider Transformer</p> <p>Evolves systems to include previously marginalized people or ideas</p>
<p>Insider Restorer</p> <p>Confronts corruption from within</p>	<p>Outsider Restorer</p> <p>Holds the system accountable</p>

Audience preference by Age/Gender



Audience preference by Race



*Data From Harmony Labs report, “The Power of Story to Grow Democracy.” January 2026

Radicals Co-Writers



NANCY OSTERTAG

"I am an army brat, and Vanessa is a firehouse kid. Because we both grew up in communities that centered around service, we share certain core values and experiences that have guided us as we've developed this story."

Nancy is a writer and photographer in New York who grew up with cameras as an integral part of her family culture. "If photography is a language, I'm a native speaker." Nancy started her career as an intern for Annie Leibovitz after studying Philosophy at Rutgers. "I had no experience. I walked into her studio with a blank resume and asked for a job." In the mid-nineties, Nancy followed another passion and moved to Los Angeles to work in the film industry. "I was one of those kids who watched my favorite movies repeatedly and could quote every line." She started shooting stills for Roger Corman productions, falling in love with the process of filmmaking. Nancy later worked as the photo archivist and staff photographer for the American Film Institute. "For seven years, I was immersed in a world of storytellers." It was at AFI that Nancy began collaborating with filmmaker Vanessa Ruane. Now on the East Coast, Nancy has spent the last fifteen years working for The Travel Channel, Discovery, and National Geographic. She is currently the photo editor for NatGeo's partner, Lindblad Expeditions.



VANESSA RUANE

"I believe in the power of storytelling to effect real change, and I know this is an important story to share."

My love of storytelling started with writing and acting. It eventually began to involve camera work, directing, and editing. As a child, I was an actress in NYC. I then traveled through Europe, writing and teaching English. In 1997, I moved to Los Angeles and began working as Writer/Producer Glen Larson's assistant. It was exciting to learn the writer's room and the pitching process. I spent six years traveling and learning directing while assisting Director John Badham. During those years, I also worked part-time as a photographer/videographer for the American Film Institute. Those years were full of learning, experimenting, and inspiration. In the early 2000s, I started making my own films and web series. I joined the Motion Picture Editors Guild and have worked in post-production for the last 15 years. In 2020, my work with Nancy Ostertag on Radicals was beginning to take shape, making me want to tell more of my own stories. We began writing and shooting short content, most recently collaborating in the Arctic and New Zealand for Lindblad/National Geographic Expeditions. I recently wrapped up my sixth season with the FX series Snowfall. Since then I've edited two features, one of which is streaming on Hulu and the other premiered at Tribeca 2025.