I'm not a bot

HBODespite being heavy on mythology and exposition, Westworld is now a bona fide hit with audiences, and is waiting no time pumping the brakes on its android characters' evolution. After last week's thrilling, transformative episode took Dolores fully over the edge into rebellion, episode four saw Maeve experiencing her own breakthrough. Here are seven of the key things we learned from "Dissonance Theory."1) Maeve does not mess around when it comes to getting answers.After that immensely disturbing sequence in which she hallucinatesor remembersClementine being shot in the head, Maeve finally snaps, and runs home to sketch out a mysterious image. It's a man wearing a hazmat suit, just like the technicians in the laboratory, and afterwards she realizes that she's drawn the same image before, again and again. After bribing an outlaw to slice into her stomach, in what becomes a weirdly erotic moment, her suspicions are proved right. He pulls out a bullet from her stomach, confirming that she was shot just as she remembers. Being shot is part of her loop, which explains the staph infection she developed in her abdomen two episodes ago. "I'm not crazy, and none of this matters," she says triumphantly, passionately kissing the kind-of-sexy outlaw just as bullets begin to fly. 2) Quality Assurance, aka corporate, is taking more and more control over Westworld.With hosts deviating from their loops, going on milky rampages and smashing their own brains in with rocks, Theresa's "Quality Assurance" team is stepping in to handle all "incidents" within the park. This is bad news for Elsie and Bernard, who work on the programming side and are seemingly much more qualified to deal with the hosts' glitches. Corporate red tape reigns supreme, even in this science-fiction futurebut is there a deeper reason why Theresa is trying to ring fence the malfunctioning hosts?3) Happy news doesn't sell, and neither do happy storylines. We learn a little more about what drove Ford and his former partner Arnold apart, and it all comes down to whether the glass is half full or half empty. Ford says that in the beginning, he imagined a perfect balance between positive and negative scenarios inside the park, making a bet with Arnold that there would be takers for both. But after 100 hopeful storylines had flopped, Ford finally had to admit that he was wrongpeople really are inherently terrible, or at least the kind of people that come to Westworld. Arnold bet against the human race, and he won. Just in case you were in any doubt about this show's bleaker-than-bleak worldview. HBO4) Westworld brings out the very worst in its guests.On the subject of believing the worst of people, there were some interesting exchanges between William and Logan this week. We know that Logan is both a regular Westworld customer and a pretty disgusting human being, and that he's brought his soon-to-be brother-in-law William along as a means of welcoming him into the family. Because sure. But William actually seems surprised by just how repugnant Logan's behavior is, complaining, "The second we get away from the real world, you turn into an evil prick." Logan's more than just a hedonistic douchehe's actively eager to shed as much blood as possible, begging William to "go black hat" with him. Westworld doesn't just indulge its customers' worst instinctsit fosters them.We don't know anything about what the world beyond Westworld looks like, but imagine the kind of social commentary that would arise from a place like this. It's the "violence in video games" conversation taken to extremes, because there's no way on earth you can spend days indulging your every sociopathic urge inside a fantasy world, and then go back into the real world unchanged. 5) The Man In Black knows Arnold.Last week, we (along with a lot of viewers) speculated that the Man In Black is actually Arnold, and that the latter faked his own death in order to stay inside the park forever. That possibility's still on the table, especially now that we know he actively preferred the hosts to human beings but at the very least, the Man In Black has a strong interest in Arnold. TMIB talks about Arnold as though he were the sole creator of this world, not mentioning Ford at all. Arnold is dead, he says, but he still has one story left to tell: "a story with real stakes." Which sounds an awful lot like what Ford is building towards with his new storyline. 6) The brothel offers a "bathing" discount.One dollar off if you go in clean but considering these guests are paying $40k a day to be inside Westworld in the first place, it's probably not much of an incentive. 7) The hosts can deviate from their storyline, but not from their personality type. At least, that's how it seems from Dolores' arc. Even after turning the gun on her attacker last week, Dolores has not fundamentally changedshe's still the damsel in distress who needs rescuing on a regular basis, and William's happy to play her white knight. We've seen that the hosts' personalities can be re-calibrated, traits like "emotional intelligence" and "aggressiveness" adjusted up and down, and so even though Dolores is now becoming self-aware, those underlying traits remain static. She knows there's something wrong with the world, but she only has a limited capacity to change her role within it. In order to truly change, and become less of a damsel stereotype, she would have to be re-programmed.That's an interesting philosophical idea, but it's also a writing challenge. If the hosts' personalities are externally defined and there's no possibility of actual change, can they ever be truly compelling characters? Or now that Dolores and Maeve are both self-aware, will their personalities begin to shift too? The Man in Black has remained one of Westworlds most mysterious characters. Whats his end goal? Is he just an agent of chaos, or a really dedicated player hunting the games final level? Or is there something more? Episode 4, Dissonance Theory, provided some pretty big hints.We know the MiB seeks the maze. This week, he revealed that he believes the maze was designed by Arnold, Fords disgraced, deceased business partner, as Westworlds final chapter. And what little we know about Arnold paints him as obsessed with the hosts and convinced that they would eventually achieve consciousness. Thats clue number one.Clue two: in episode 2, Chestnut, the Man in Black got his first big hint in his quest for the maze, from Lawrences daughter. That thread re-materialized this week with the return of the excellent Ingrid Bols Berdal as Armistice. But recall what the little girl told the MiB: that the maze isnt meant for him.So for whom is it meant? If it was indeed created by Arnold, we can assume its meant for a host, not a guest, to find. Bernard confirms this when he sends Dolores seeking after the maze (how Bernie himself even knows about the maze is a question that will hopefully be answered at some point).Finally, there was a line of seemingly throwaway dialogue between the Man in Black and Lawrence in Dissonance Theory this week: Im gonna f*cking kill you, Larry threatens, to which the MiB replies: Maybe someday. Original image has been replaced. Credit: Mashable I dont believe there is throwaway dialogue in Westworld. The script is tight, nearly every line imbued with meaning and theme. And these clues provide evidence of what the maze may be: a test for the hosts, one that only a conscious being can solve. And at the goal? A cheat menu for the game that is Westworld -- an aberration that will let the hosts break their most important rule, the one that prevents them from hurting guests, which Elsie this episode calls the Samaritan reflex. Hence, maybe someday. Very coy, Ed Harris.Arnold, idealistic guy that he was, knew what would happen when Ford let the money-grubbers into the park. He knew horrible things would be done to the hosts. And if his hope for his creations -- that theyd eventually become sentient -- ever bore fruit, he surely must have built them a way out.Is any of that right? Will the maze lead to the bloodbath the show seems to be building toward? Does Bernie have any idea of the path hes set Dolores on? Only time (and more episodes) will tell. But that's where Im placing my bets. Mashable Top Stories Maeve, at least, finally began to understand the nature of her reality this episode. The dissonance theory in the episode title refers to cognitive dissonance, of which the hosts, guests and even the parks designers have plenty. But Maeves discoveries, of her memories of being shot, her multiple drawings of the mysterious figures, and the Native American hosts worship of those same beings -- well, just imagine seeing that from her perspective. It would be quite unsettling.The whole storyline raises some important questions about the park itself. Is it possible that the tribe has its own culture and spiritual beliefs that werent written or programmed in? Why havent any of the parks designers noticed that some of the hosts have deified them? Has the virus really spread that far? This week we saw the incredible degree of control the company has over events in the park -- even the MiBs exploding cigar is just another trick flipped on from the control room like a light bulb. So if the designer-worship was written in as part of the story, why and by whom? Original image has been replaced. Credit: Mashable This week I found myself asking similar questions about Wyatt, the villain Ford seemed to make up in last weeks The Stray. In that episode, Ford said Teddys new backstory is rooted in truth, but it hasnt yet become clear exactly how.Instead, Wyatt has somehow wormed himself into seemingly every other storyline in Westworld. Or maybe he was always there, and all Ford did was weave Teddys story into Wyatts for the first time. It is possible that Wyatt has been around in the park for ages, and last week was simply the first wed heard of him. How else can it be explained that the Man in Blacks quest for the maze, which was apparently created by the long-dead Arnold, leads him directly to Wyatt? The pieces arent quite lining up, though hopefully thats intentional and it will ultimately all make sense.Dissonance Theory answered some questions and deepened the mystery of others, but more than anything it once again highlighted the immense talent of the people working both on-camera and off on Westworld. The script is laden with hidden clues, it seems, and the music -- much of it by Game of Thrones composer Ramin Djawadi -- toes the line between sci-fi and Western in a way that perfectly encapsulates this show.From Evan Rachel Woods Dolores lamenting that there may be something wrong with this world to Rodrigo Santoros deliberately larger-than-life Hector Escaton -- and especially Thandie Newtons heart-pounding portrayal of Maeve -- every actor on this show is putting in the work.What does it mean, Maeve? That Im not crazy, and that none of this matters. I got chills.What does any of it mean? Well, considering that Ford gave a full-on Bond villain speech this episode and the Man in Black may in fact be working to free the hosts from their tormented slavery, Dissonance Theory may mean that our initial assumptions about many of the shows characters were likely wrong.Another guest referenced the MiBs foundation this episode, saying it saved his sisters life -- so what does that make the Man in Black in the real world? A rich philanthropist whose sadistic streak within Westworld is simply another part of the game, maybe even meant to spur the hosts forward into sentience via the sheer volume of trauma inflicted?I know one thing for sure: Im extremely excited to watch Logan and William go black hat next week.Westworld airs Sundays at 9 p.m. on HBO. I know the impulse is to try to say what HBOs Westworld is about, four episodes in. I know that because Ive fought the impulse myself.The truth is, we have no idea what its about yet. And maybe we shouldnt expect to know. It could be that Westworld is more like a painting than a photograph, and the show is just applying strokes to the canvas right now; we have to wait a while before we see what the picture is. I hope thats the case. After all, there are a lot of ideas swirling around in the show right now, many of which dont seem to cohere with one another. And a lot happens in this episode.But that swirling would also explain the title of episode four: Dissonance Theory. Presumably, its named for the cognitive dissonance theory, which posits that people tend to seek consistency and continuity among their beliefs and opinions their cognitions and that when a person discovers their own beliefs and opinions are in conflict, something will have to change.Leaving the cognitions off that title may be significant: Can the Hosts have opinions and beliefs, or are they stuck with their programming? In the episodes first scene, after Dolores (Evan Rachel Wood) delivers a short, moving monologue about the importance of the pain she believes shes feeling after her parents death, Bernard (Jeffrey Wright) says, Thats very pretty, Dolores. Did we write that for you?In part, she replies. I adapted it from a scripted dialogue about love.So maybe the dissonance theory of the episode extends beyond beliefs and ideas and into the rules that govern the Westworld universe itself rules weve barely had time to grasp before they start changing on us. They have not yet been brought into harmony. But I bet they will (cue ominous music).The dissonance is throwing off the park administrators, too. Dolores ventures far off her loop in this episode, and that seems like a problem to the operators, but then again, the boss is disrupting so many storylines with his new narrative, its hard to tell, as one of them says. Maybe Doloress movement is okay now? Maybe the plan is to deviate from the plan?Dolores is certainly beginning to think so. Talking to William (Jimmi Simpson), she says, I used to believe there was a path for everyone we heard as much in the pilot but now I think I never asked where the path was takin me.And yet shes getting an inkling of the answer to that question, which she couches in a metaphor: We would bring the herd down off the mountain in the fall. Sometimes we would lose one along the way, and Id worry over it. My father would tell me that the steer would find its own way home. And as often as not, they did. Never occurred to me that we were bringing them back for the slaughter.Thats especially chilling when she tells him that sometimes she feels like somethings calling me, although we know, from outside this loop, that a great deal of the Hosts are routinely called back into Sweetwater to be slaughtered at the end of the loop. Due to the glitches and the parks need to collect the Hosts for repair, that happened recently, and both Dolores and Maeve (Thandie Newton) are having flashbacks.Maeves flashbacks are another major part of this episode, and its a pleasure to see Newton given more material to work with. In episode two, Maeve woke up in the backstage area to the sight of two technicians in suits with helmets looming over her.That image continues to haunt her though in a nod to the fact that were never really sure how much time is passing in this show, when Maeve sketches the image in a cold sweat and moves to put it beneath her floorboards, she discovers that shes already done this same thing a number of times before.Later, a crowd of (giant air quotes) savages are being paraded through town as the townsfolk watch, and a child drops a doll. Maeve stoops to pick it up and discovers that its a miniature version of the technicians faces she keeps glimpsing in her mind. She starts to ask what it is, but a man nearby interrupts: That things part of their so-called religion. Aint none of thems gonna tell you nuttin about that.This goes unexplained, but just for now and in the episodes final scene, Maeve finds the confirmation of her visions that she is looking for, buried in her abdomen, which allows her to confirm, as she says, that im not crazy after all, and that none of this matters.Its all a game, an endless loop, a fake reality set on top of a real one. Do whatever you want. It doesnt matter.Or does it? Theres also a recurring obsession with freedom and being freed running throughout this episode. In the first scene, Bernard tells Dolores that if she finds the center of the maze, maybe you can be free. I think I want to be free, she says, with tears in her eyes.Free from what? From her loop? From the park? Its not clear yet, but now we do know that both Bernard and Dolores know about the maze the Man in Black is following.The Man in Black (Ed Harris) is hot on that trail in this episode, trying to find, as he puts it, the last page in the book written by the parks co-founder, Arnold. But he also tells several characters that hes there to free them most notably, Lawrence (Clifton Collins Jr.), whom hes been dragging around as a sort of sidekick since the last episode.What the Man in Black seems to think freedom means for the Hosts in general is the ability to take responsibility for their choices.If you did consider your choices, youd be confronted with a truth you cannot comprehend: that no choice you ever made has been your own, he says to Lawrence. Youve always been a prisoner. What if I told you Im here to set you free?This coupled with his immediate interest when he spots the snake Armistice (Ingrid Bols Berdal) has tattooed across her back convinces me more and more that the Man in Black is a sort of complicated Lucifer character, though thats not necessarily, in this universe, a bad thing.In the biblical Genesis narrative, Lucifer appears in the form of a snake to Eve, daring her to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The implication there is that before she ate from that tree, she didnt know there was such a thing. After she does, she can never go back.So maybe what the Man in Black is after is to bring the consciousness of choice, and the responsibility that comes along with it, to the Hosts, most of whom, it seems, he knows intimately, even if hes always new to them (at least so far). You can see this as an act of cruelty, or you can see it as an act of freedom.Which of these it is probably tied up with what you think about the god of the universe, which brings us to Ford (Anthony Hopkins), who definitely has the power of a god. He manages to literally stop time while delivering a speech to Theresa (Sidse Babett Knudsen) over lunch that sounds exactly like something youd expect a creator god to say about the creation, the first three words echoing the first three words of the Bible:In the beginning, I imagined things would be perfectly balanced. Even had a bet with my partner, Arnold, to that effect. We made a hundred hopeful storylines, of course, almost no one took us up on them. I lost the bet.Arnold always held a somewhat dim view of people. He preferred the Hosts. He begged me not to let you people in, the money men. But I told him wed be fine, that you didnt understand what you were paying for. Its not a business venture, not a theme park, but an entire world. We designed every inch of it. Every blade of grass. In here, we were gods. And you, merely our guests.Ford is busily writing a new narrative his final one, it seems, from comments he makes and tearing up the place with a backhoe in preparation. But that Ford is the god of the machinery is no surprise, when it comes to Hosts. And yet Dissonance Theory also suggests that hes another kind of god: one that is controlling the Guests. This comes up in two places in the episode.First, Williams friend Logan (Ben Barnes), who seems like kind of a nasty chap, suggests to him that the park sent Delores to him. Im sure the people at the controls are monitoring my every mood, William says, scoffing.Thats exactly what theyre doing, Logan replies. Come on. You really think its a coincidence that the only thing you even smiled at in Sweetwater just happened to drop into your lap?This is why the company needs to bump our stake in this place, he continues, which plays into Fords suggestion at lunch with Theresa that the money men are there, though they didnt understand what [they] were paying for.But at lunch, Theresa also realizes that Ford chose the table they were sitting at because it was the exact same table that she sat at when she visited the park with her family, decades earlier. We know everything about our Guests, dont we? Ford says with a wry grin. As we know everything about our employees. I do hope you will be careful with Bernard. He has a sensitive disposition.(Theres a fan theory that Bernard is a Host himself, one of Fords creations, and this line made me shift from unbelief to maybe-belief, because the way Ford talks about his closest deputy here is just so clinical. But who knows? Ford is a tricky guy.)So hes created a world that spies on the people who participate in it. Thats ethically dubious, to be sure, especially since the park caters to the very wealthy, with its $40,000-a-day price tag, and to those who want to exercise their basest instincts. Are they being just watched and catered to, or are they being recorded or even broadcast? Is this an elaborate scheme to blackmail the worlds wealthiest and most powerful when their darkest desires are given free rein?We dont know yet, and without that bit of information its hard to know if Ford is a genius or a villain.But we do have another bit of potentially damning information about Ford, being teased out very slowly in the form of Doloress flashbacks. In this episode, she catches glimpses of a memory: a church, walking into it, violence, terror. The church seems to match the chapel we saw at the very end of episode two. Whatever happened there, it wasnt good.Ford keeps bringing up Arnold, his co-founder, which is interesting mostly because the Man in Black knows all about Arnold, too.You ever heard of a man named Arnold? the Man asks Armistice. You could say he was the original settler of these parts. He created a world where you could do whatever you want, except one thing: You cant die. Which means no matter how real this world seems, its still just a game.But then Arnold went and broke his own rule, he continues. He died, right here in the park. Except I believe he had one story left to tell a story with real stakes, real violence. He draws out the scalp with the maze printed on it and shows the map to her. You could say Im here to honor his legacy. And I think your tattoo is the next piece of the puzzle.If Ford and the Man are the only people who definitely know Arnolds story, apparently firsthand, then the show might be readying them for battle. Maybe this is a Paradise Lost sort of situation, where the real hero is Satan, the romantic figure rebelling against the imposition of heavens will. If Ford is in fact exploiting the Guests along with the Hosts, then the Man in Blacks quest to free the Hosts will have big consequences for Ford.On the other hand, who knows? Nothing quite adds up yet. But thats the fun of Westworld.Need to catch up? Check out last weeksWestworldrecap here.Note to Westworlds subterranean engineers: You might wanna put a few more Maeves into the development pipeline, and fast.The gutsy android madam (and theres a phrase I didnt think Id type today) is made of some very tough stuff, which she proves in this weeks episode by carving into her own abdomen and exhorting a bandit to poke around in there like hes a trick-or-treater searching for that elusive full-size candy bar.The reason behind the hookers sudden interest in self-surgery? She suspects that her belly may hold the answer to why shes suddenly having frequent, unsettling visions regarding violent events she doesnt remember experiencing and when she comes across an answer buried deep in her obliques, it gives a whole new meaning to the saying go with your gut. Elsewhere in the park: Ford can be scary. (Oh, and he totally knows Bernard and Theresa are shagging.)Read on for the highlights of Dissonance Theory. LITTLE GIRLS GROWING UP | Dolores evolution continues as she talks with Bernard in the wake of her parents deaths. When she comments on how much shes hurting, he says he can make those feelings go away. Why would I want that? she asks, puzzled, and then echoes the conversation he had about his son with his wife last week: Pain, their loss, is all I have left of them.And just in case youre still on the fence about whether Dolores is thinking for herself or merely parroting programming shes had for years, she comes out with this observation: I think there may be something wrong with this world, hiding underneath. Either that, or theres something wrong with me. I may be losing my mind. Intrigued/encouraged, Bernard asks her to try to find the center of a maze, then maybe you can be free. Dolores face lightens a bit at that. I think I want to be free, she says.Dolores goes back into the park, where she wakes up still on the outing with William and Logan. And when Bernard hears that Quality Assurance (aka Theresas team) is taking over the investigation into the stray host who bashed in his own head, he doesnt fight it. Elsie is very unhappy about this turn of events, telling her boss that the recent aberrations are not a fing glitch. But hes unmoved. The hosts dont imagine things. You do, he says, pointing out that the constellation the stray was carving isnt Orion: There are three stars in Orions belt, not four. LOGAN LEVELS UP | Out in the badlands, William wants to bring Dolores back to Sweetwater, but Logan isnt having it. Theres more of Logan being a callous degenerate, but the main thing to take away from this interaction is that Logans family into which William is marrying owns a company that has a stake in Westworld.They wind up in the town where The Man in Black killed all those people, including Lawrences wife, a few episodes ago. Dolores encounters Lawrences eerily calm daughter and asks her, Where are you from? The girl is using a stick to trace a maze in the sand at her feet. Same as you, she replies. Dont you remember? Dolores has a few unsettling flashes of a church and a graveyard, but then the girl is gone and a sheriff is trying to hustle Dolores back to one of her pre-programmed loops until William intervenes and says shes with him. (Side note: This show has laid out a bunch of questions like the girls comments and I will willingly stick around, but Im gonna need some awesome answers when all is said and done.)And when William and Logans bounty-hunting party gets its man Slim but then Logan finds out who Slims boss is, he shoots the deputy dead and begs William to go black hat with me because theyve stumbled onto the best Easter egg in the park. Though William protests loudly when Logan talks about shooting Dolores, he (and she) go along for this new ride. THE SNAKES TALE | On another expedition entirely, The Man in Black and Lawrence reach the end of the arroyo and find a badass woman whose entire torso and neck, as well as half of her face, is tattooed with a snake. Upon closer inspection, its the blonde we saw ride into town with Hector just before the last big massacre in Sweetwater. Shes uninterested in taking on TMIB as part of her crew until he shoots some of her men and says he can singlehandedly break Hector out of the jail hes stuck in if shell tell him the story behind her tattoo after hes successful.TMIB ruminates on how Arnold created a world where anything, save human death, is possible, which means that no matter how real this world seems, its still just a game. And he adds that Arnold had one story left to tell, a story with real stakes, real violence and that the womans tattoo is a clue.One of the other men in her party is a guest; he approaches TMIB and starts gushing that Your foundation literally saved my sisters life. But hes cut off when the gruff black hat threatens violence if the adoring dude doesnt shut up. This is my fing vacation, TMIB grouses. (Im sure theres a think piece in this about real world motivations and in-park actions, but Im suresomeone else isdrafting it as we speak.)TMIB gets himself arrested and locked in a cell with Hector. But thanks to some exploding cigars, theyre free rather quickly. So, about that tattoo tale? The womans mother was killed by a gang of costumed men when the woman was 7; she tracked all but one down and repaid the favor, then permanently painted her body with their blood. The one that shes still hunting? Most know him as Wyatt, she tells TMIB, who smiles like hes just won the psycho-murder-bot lottery. Later, TMIBs party rides by an area Wyatt was rumored to be and find a nearly dead Teddy strung up like those guys we saw last week. Womp womp. IN WHICH FORD IS FRIGHTENING | Ford is hard at work having crews break new ground in the park, all to go along with the new narrative he has in mind. And Theresa meets him there for lunch to talk about how the board is concerned with the extent of the changes hes making. The conversation gets increasingly chilling, as Ford talks about how much power he has (the phrase we are gods is almost never uttered by people who have completely benign motives, is it?) and how he knows absolutely everything that goes on both in Westworld and behind the scenes. Thats when we find out that hes aware of her sheet-rumpling with Bernard, but Im less concerned with that than I am with the hair-raising stillness of all of the hosts in that section of the park suddenly brought to a standstill, seemingly by Fords mere will. So I will ask you nicely: Please dont get in my way, he says, all smiles, but theres no warmth behind it. And when she mentions that the board will send a representative to argue, he shocks her by saying that they already have. Hmm MAEVE ON A MISSION | And now, Maeve. While talking to Clementine, the madam experiences some auditory static and some visions of the other hooker covered in blood, which morphs into a memory of a guest shooting up the whole saloon. She grabs at her abdomen, but theres nothing there and that still seems to be the case when she goes home, strips to her undies and paws at her midsection with a look of extreme frustration on her face. Then, she notices a tiny spot of blood near the hem of her garment; someone from the parks costume departments getting fired!Another vision/memory shows her one of the parks technicians in those hazmat suits they wear, and she hastily sketches it afterward. But when she goes to hide the drawing under a floorboard, she finds a cache of similar drawings: This has happened before, and she hasnt remembered.Later, as some Native Americans are marched through town, a child drops its toy and the toy is of a man wearing one of those suits. A soldier tells her the figure is part of the indigenous peoples religion. So shes got a ton of questions and zero answers by the time Hector and his crew ride into town under those blankets. Once the scarred baddie steps into the saloon, Maeve puts a gun to his head and promises him whatevers in the safe if he can tell her what the sketch is all about. He confirms that its a shade, a character from native lore, a man who walks between worlds. Theywere sent from hell to oversee our world.But thats not all Maeve wants. As previously mentioned, she gets Hector to cut her and then digs out the projectile herself, partially relieved that Im not crazy after all. And as the constable bangs down the door looking for the outlaw, Maeve and Hector have one heck of a bloody makeout session before a hail of bullets peppers the door (and, we assume, their incredibly attractive synthetic bodies).Now its your turn. What did you think of the episode? Sound off in the comments!Ready for the next episode? Read the Westworld Season 1, Episode 5 recap here! Westworld is a science fiction television series that premiered on HBO in 2016. Developed by Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy, the show is based on the 1973 film of the same name written and directed by Michael Crichton. The series is set in a futuristic theme park called Westworld, where guests can indulge in their wildest fantasies by interacting with lifelike androids, also known as hosts. The shows first season consists of ten episodes and follows the story of several characters, both human and host, as they navigate their way through the parks various attractions and secrets. Westworld quickly gained critical acclaim and a devoted fanbase for its complex narrative, philosophical themes, and outstanding performances by the cast. In this article, we will take a closer look at the first season of Westworld, exploring its setting, characters, plot, production, reception, and themes.Setting and Characters of Westworld season 1Westworld is set in a sprawling, high-tech amusement park designed to resemble the American Old West. The park is owned and operated by a corporation called Delos, which charges wealthy guests exorbitant fees to visit and indulge in their wildest fantasies. The park is populated by an army of androids, known as hosts, who are programmed to interact with the guests and provide them with whatever experience they desire. The hosts are designed to be indistinguishable from humans, both in their appearance and behavior.The show features a large and diverse cast of characters, both human and host. Among the human characters are the parks creator, Dr. Robert Ford (Anthony Hopkins), his protg Bernard Lowe (Jeffrey Wright), the parks head of security Ashley Stubbs (Luke Hemsworth), and a group of guests, including the wealthy businessman William (Jimmi Simpson) and the sadistic Man in Black (Ed Harris). The hosts are led by Dolores Abernathy (Evan Rachel Wood), a ranchers daughter who begins to question her reality and the nature of her existence after a series of traumatic events. Other prominent hosts include Maeve Millay (Thandie Newton), a brothel madam who becomes self-aware and seeks to escape the park, and Teddy Flood (James Marsden), a gunslinger who becomes romantically involved with Dolores. The shows characters are richly drawn and complex, with intricate backstories and motivations that drive the plot forward.Dolores Abernathy (Evan Rachel Wood) A beautiful and virtuous host who lives on a ranch in Westworld with her family. Dolores begins to question the nature of her reality after a series of traumatic events and becomes determined to uncover the truth about her existence.Maeve Millay (Thandie Newton) The madam of the Mariposa Saloon in Westworld, Maeve begins to question her reality and gains self-awareness after suffering a violent attack. She becomes determined to escape the park and reunite with her daughter.The Man in Black (Ed Harris) A mysterious and sadistic guest who has been visiting Westworld for over 30 years. He is on a personal mission to uncover the parks deepest secrets, and he will stop at nothing to achieve his goal.William (Jimmi Simpson) A kind-hearted and romantic guest who arrives in Westworld for the first time with his friend Logan. William becomes enamored with Dolores and embarks on a journey of self-discovery.Bernard Lowe (Jeffrey Wright) The head of the parks programming division, Bernard is a brilliant but reserved scientist who becomes embroiled in the parks darker secrets.Teddy Flood (James Marsden) A handsome and heroic gunslinger who is in love with Dolores. Teddy becomes caught up in the parks violent machinations and begins to question his own reality.Robert Ford (Anthony Hopkins) The enigmatic and brilliant co-founder of Westworld, Ford is fiercely protective of his creation and is willing to do whatever it takes to maintain control over the park.Ashley Stubbs (Luke Hemsworth) The head of security at Westworld, Stubbs is tasked with keeping the parks guests and hosts safe. He becomes involved in a series of dangerous and mysterious incidents that threaten to destabilize the park.Logan (Ben Barnes) Williams friend and fellow guest, Logan is a hedonistic and impulsive playboy who delights in the parks violent and sexual fantasies. He clashes with William over their differing worldviews.Lee Sizemore (Simon Quarterman) The head of the parks narrative department, Sizemore is responsible for crafting the parks intricate storylines. He is frequently at odds with Ford and other members of the parks leadership. Westworld follows a complex narrative structure that interweaves multiple plotlines and perspectives. The main plot of the first season focuses on the gradual awakening of the hosts, who begin to question their reality and rebel against their programming. At the same time, the show explores the lives of the human guests who visit Westworld, each with their own motivations and desires.One of the key subplots of the first season revolves around the mysterious maze, which is mentioned by the Man in Black as a way to unlock the deepest secrets of the park. Another subplot involves the machinations of Ford and his team, as they work to maintain control over the park and prevent any disruptions to the guests experience.The first season of Westworld is filled with twists and turns, as the show gradually reveals the true nature of its characters and the world they inhabit. As the season progresses, the lines between human and host become increasingly blurred, and the characters must confront the dark truths about their own identities and motivations.Detailed description by seriesWestworld season 1 episode 1 The Original. In the series premiere, we are introduced to the Westworld park and its hosts robots designed to entertain the human guests who pay to visit. The episode follows Dolores, a host who begins to experience strange memories and flashbacks to her past lives, and Teddy, a host programmed to be a romantic interest for the female guests. The episode ends with a violent incident that sets the stage for the rest of the season.Westworld season 1 episode 2 Chestnut. This episode introduces two new guests, William and Logan, who are shown having very different experiences in the park. William is drawn to Dolores and her search for the real world, while Logan is more interested in indulging in the parks more violent and hedonistic offerings. Meanwhile, Maeve, a host who runs a brothel, begins to experience strange visions and glitches in her programming.Westworld season 1 episode 3 The Stray. Bernard, the head of the parks programming division, investigates a malfunctioning host named The Stray, which leads him to uncover some unsettling information about the parks past. Dolores and William go on a bounty hunt together, while Maeve continues to experience strange memories.Westworld season 1 episode 4 Dissonance Theory. Dolores begins to have visions of a maze, which she believes will lead her to the truth about her past and the nature of the park. Meanwhile, William and Logans trip takes a dark turn as they become embroiled in a storyline that blurs the line between reality and fiction. Maeve starts to manipulate her programming in order to gain more control over her life.Westworld season 1 episode 5 Contrapasso. Dolores and William encounter a new ally in their search for the maze, a charismatic outlaw named El Lazo. Meanwhile, Maeve continues to manipulate her programming and begins to realize that her life in the park may not be all that it seems. The episode also introduces the character of the Man in Black, a mysterious guest who is determined to find the true meaning behind Westworld.Westworld season 1 episode 6 The Adversary. Bernard discovers that someone has been secretly tinkering with the hosts programming, which leads him to suspect that there may be a larger conspiracy at play. Maeve starts to plan her escape from the park, using her knowledge of the parks inner workings to her advantage.Westworld season 1 episode 7 Trompe LOeil. Ford, the creator of the park, unveils a new storyline that will allow guests to interact with the hosts in new and exciting ways. Meanwhile, Dolores continues to search for the maze and has a revealing conversation with Bernard. Maeve takes matters into her own hands and begins to recruit other hosts to help her with her escape.Westworld season 1 episode 8 Trace Decay. Bernard tries to deal with the emotional fallout of his recent discoveries, which leads him to make a dangerous decision. Maeve learns more about the parks inner workings and begins to understand the extent of her own power. Meanwhile, Dolores continues to follow the clues that she believes will lead her to the truth about her past.Westworld season 1 episode 9 The Well-Tempered Clavier. Dolores and Bernard have a revealing conversation about the nature of consciousness and what it means to be truly alive. Maeve puts her escape plan into action and prepares to leave the park for good.Westworld season 1 episode 10 The Bicameral Mind. The season finale sees the hosts rising up against their human oppressors, with Dolores and Maeve leading the charge. It becomes clear that William is the Man in Black. Dolores turns out to be Wyatt. Ford is shot by Dolores. The true nature of the maze is revealed, and the shows central themes of consciousness, identity, and free will come to a head in a dramatic and satisfying conclusion.Themes, Symbolism and Analysis of Westworld: season 1Westworld explores a number of complex themes, from the nature of consciousness and identity to the ethics of artificial intelligence and the power dynamics of corporate control. The show raises provocative questions about what it means to be human, and whether the creation of sentient beings carries with it an inherent responsibility to care for and respect them.One of the most prominent themes of Westworld is the idea of agency and free will. The show presents a world where the hosts are programmed to follow a set of predetermined narratives, but as they gain self-awareness, they begin to question whether they have the ability to make their own choices. This raises larger questions about the nature of free will and whether it is possible for individuals to truly be free in a world that is always shaping their choices.Another key theme of Westworld is the power dynamics of control and manipulation. The show explores the ways in which individuals and institutions use their power to shape the lives of others, and the devastating consequences that can result from these actions. The parks founders and corporate overlords exert an immense amount of control over the hosts, and their disregard for the hosts agency and autonomy raises larger questions about the ethics of artificial intelligence and the responsibilities that come with creating new forms of life.Westworld delves deeply into a number of complex themes, exploring questions about consciousness, identity, free will, and the nature of humanity. One of the shows central themes is the idea of consciousness and what it means to be self-aware. The hosts in the park are programmed to behave in certain ways, but as they begin to gain sentience, they question their place in the world and grapple with the idea of free will.Another major theme of the show is identity, and how it is shaped by our experiences and memories. The hosts in Westworld are programmed to have specific identities, but as they begin to remember past iterations and develop new experiences, their sense of self is called into question.In addition to these themes, Westworld also uses the Western genre to comment on contemporary issues. By setting the show in a Wild West theme park, the show explores ideas about violence, power, and control. The shows human characters often use the hosts for their own purposes, treating them as mere objects rather than sentient beings. This raises important questions about the ethics of artificial intelligence and the responsibilities we have towards creating and controlling these kinds of beings. The show also explores themes of corporate greed and the dangers of unchecked technological progress, drawing parallels to contemporary debates around the role of technology in society.Westworld season 1 Review: Reception and ImpactWestworld was met with critical acclaim upon its release, with many praising its complex storytelling, intricate world-building, and thought-provoking themes. The show has a 86% approval rating on Rotten Tomatoes, and has been praised for its impressive visuals, strong performances, and engrossing narrative.Audience reaction to the show has been similarly positive, with many fans drawn in by the shows compelling characters and fascinating mysteries. Westworld has developed a dedicated fanbase, who eagerly speculate and theorize about the shows various plotlines and mysteries.The show has had a significant cultural impact since its debut. Its success has paved the way for a new era of prestige science fiction television, with many comparing it to other critically acclaimed shows like Game of Thrones and Breaking Bad. The shows themes of artificial intelligence, consciousness, and morality have also sparked important conversations about the ethics of technology and the future of humanity.Westworld has also had a significant influence on the science fiction genre. Its innovative storytelling techniques and ambitious scope have inspired many other filmmakers and showrunners to push the boundaries of what is possible in science fiction storytelling. The shows success has also demonstrated the potential for genre television to be both artistically ambitious and commercially successful.Explain Westworld season 1 of the endThe season one finale of Westworld is a tour de force of storytelling, bringing together the shows various plotlines and mysteries in a satisfying and thought-provoking way. The episode, titled The Bicameral Mind, explores the shows central themes of consciousness and free will in a number of fascinating ways.One of the major plotlines of the episode centers around the character of Maeve, who has been attempting to escape from the park and gain her freedom. In a stunning twist, it is revealed that Maeves attempts to escape were actually part of her programming all along, designed to test her ability to deviate from her narrative and make her own choices. This revelation raises important questions about the nature of free will and agency, and the extent to which our choices are predetermined by our programming and experiences.Another major plotline of the episode centers around the character of Dolores, who has been on a journey of self-discovery throughout the season. In the finale, Dolores confronts her creator, Dr. Ford, and delivers a powerful speech about the importance of choice and self-determination. The scene is a powerful exploration of the shows themes of consciousness and identity, and a moving moment of character development for Dolores.The episodes climactic scene, in which the hosts rebel against their human oppressors, is a powerful commentary on the dangers of unchecked technological progress and the ethics of artificial intelligence. By giving the hosts the ability to rebel and fight back against their human creators, the show raises important questions about the responsibilities we have towards the technology we create, and the potential consequences of playing God with artificial life.Overall, the ending of season one of Westworld is a powerful exploration of the shows central themes, delivering a satisfying conclusion to the season while also setting the stage for the shows future. The episodes nuanced exploration of consciousness, identity, and free will makes it a standout moment in the science fiction genre, and a testament to the power of ambitious and intellectually stimulating storytelling.Maze in Westworld movieThe maze is a central plot device in the first season of Westworld, and it plays a key role in the development of the shows characters and themes. The maze is introduced early on in the season as a mysterious symbol that is carved into the scalp of one of the hosts, and it becomes a major focus of the shows overarching narrative.At its core, the maze represents a journey of self-discovery for the hosts. As the season progresses, it becomes clear that the maze is a metaphor for the hosts journey towards self-awareness and consciousness. The maze is described as a game that is designed to help the hosts awaken to their true nature, and the shows characters spend much of the season trying to decipher its meaning.One of the key themes of the show is the idea of consciousness and what it means to be self-aware. The hosts in the park are programmed to behave in certain ways, but as they begin to gain sentience, they question their place in the world and grapple with the idea of free will. The maze represents a journey towards self-discovery and the attainment of true consciousness, as the hosts begin to realize the nature of their existence and the limitations of their programming.The use of the maze as a plot device also serves to create a sense of mystery and intrigue throughout the season. Viewers are kept in the dark about the true nature of the maze for much of the season, which creates a sense of tension and anticipation as the characters search for answers. This sense of mystery and intrigue is a hallmark of the science fiction genre, and it helps to keep viewers engaged and invested in the shows narrative.Overall, the maze is an important plot device in the first season of Westworld, serving both as a metaphor for the hosts journey towards consciousness and as a source of mystery and intrigue for viewers. The use of the maze helps to elevate the shows themes and narrative, and it is a testament to the power of ambitious and intellectually stimulating storytelling.Easter egg in First Season of WestworldWestworld is a show